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*"This life is a drama. Body is like
a costume that you have put on in this
drama of life. You have to give up
attachment to the costume that you
have put on. You should always
remind yourself that you are the
embodiment of Atma."*



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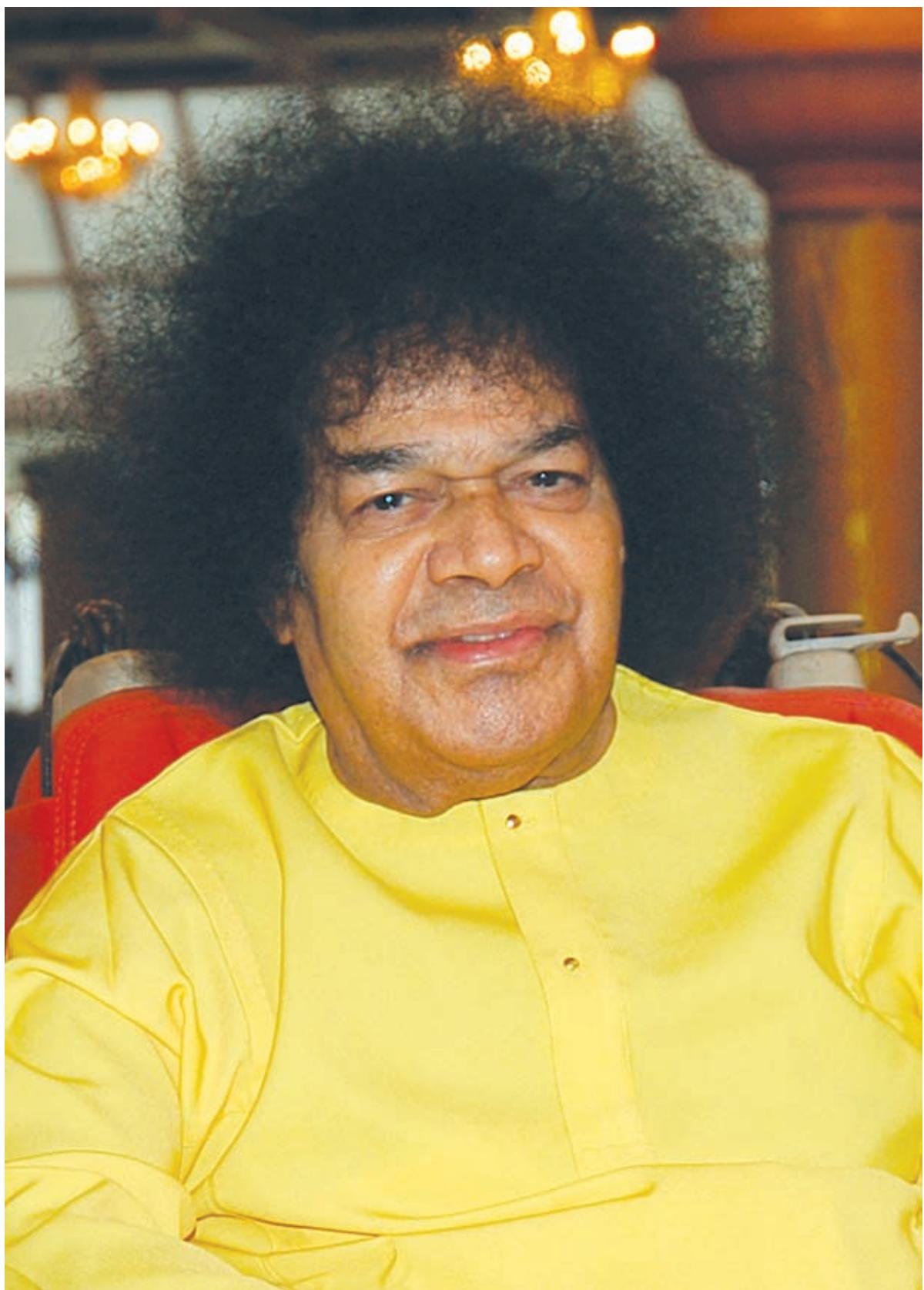
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Cover Page Photograph: Mahabharata scene as
portrayed in Bhajan Mandir, Prasanthi Nilayam.

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KNOW YOUR TRUE SELF

The sun appears serene and peaceful. The days have become shorter, and the cool wind is blowing.

(Telugu Poem)

CUTTING THE LITTLE I OF EGO SIGNIFIES CROSS

THE FARMERS ARE SINGING joyous songs because of the rich harvest they have reaped. This festive season brings bumper crops and all essential food grains. It confers joy not only on farmers but also on people in general.

In order to realise the Atma, you have to cut the little I of your ego. This represents the sacred symbol cross. This is what Jesus taught. It is the feeling of 'I and mine' that is the cause of man's bondage. When you eliminate this feeling, what remains is your true Self. Now you are with the body but tomorrow you have to leave the body. At that time, who are you and where are you? You do not know. Body is like a vesture; it is like a robe. When you give up attachment to this vesture of body, you will understand your true Self.

Bharat is the Birthplace of Avatars

People attribute happiness to God's grace. Where is God? God is everywhere – in you, with you, above you, below you. But God has no particular name and form, no birth and



death. Where there is birth, there will be death. Since God has no birth, He has no death. He is present in every living being in the form of Atmic principle. But the Bharatiyas today are unable to realise this truth.

Bharat is a sacred land which is the birthplace of many noble souls.

This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women like Savitri

who brought her dead husband back to life;

Chandramati who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth;

Sita who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed. (Telugu Poem)

Where else except in Bharat can you find such chaste women who could bring their dead husbands back to life? What a great woman Sita was! When she was subjected to Agni Pariksha (fire test), the fire god himself declared, "Oh Rama! Sita is a woman of great chastity and nobility. She never looked at the face of any male though she was held captive in Lanka for ten months." Consequently, Rama accepted her. Can you find such virtuous men and women in any country other than Bharat? No, no. In ancient times, every man of Bharat was a Purushottama (noble man) and every woman was a Pativrata (chaste woman). That is why this sacred land has been the birthplace of Avatars. Other countries might have given birth to prophets and noble souls but all Avatars incarnated only in Bharat. Unfortunately, the Bharatiyas today have craze for everything except God. They even leave this country to earn more money. It is only greedy people who leave the country for money. Those who are free from such mental aberrations remain in Bharat only. The Bharatiyas should not have greed for money.



Sanctify all your senses given to you by God by putting them to proper use. Offer this sacred body only to God. Do not put it to any abuse. Install God in the altar of your heart. Then, He will give you all that you require, and you will find God wherever you see. The sky is God, the earth is God and all the living beings are God. He is immanent in everyone. He is present in your breath in the form of Om. When you enquire into this divine principle, you will attain true knowledge. You cannot acquire true knowledge by merely reading books.



Human Beings should have Human Values

People attribute various names and forms to God. But God has no name and no form. God is one. He assumes the form in which you worship Him. If you want to have the vision of Jesus and contemplate on his form, God will manifest before you in that form. *Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). Every human being is essentially divine. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God is in the form of a human being). Therefore, a human being should have human values. There is no use if you merely have a human form without the human values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Under any circumstances, never tell a lie. When you adhere to Sathya, Dharma will follow you. Where there are Sathya and

Dharma, peace manifests there. Where there is peace, there is love. There can be no trace of violence where there is love. As love today has become extinct in the heart of man, you find violence everywhere. Man today has lost his peace. Many people undertake spiritual practices like Japa (chanting of God's name) and Tapa (penance) to attain peace. But peace is nowhere to be found. Wherever you see, you find pieces and pieces only. If man wants to have peace, he should develop love. When he develops love, violence will altogether disappear. Therefore, first and foremost, man should develop love. *Love is God, God is love. Truth is God, God is truth.* Truth and love are the very form of God. God has no desires whatsoever. He is totally selfless. He is beyond all thoughts and feelings. God always gives and does not receive. He expects only purity of heart and pure love.

Make Proper Use of your Senses

Though God is one, people call Him by various names such as Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana, etc. All these forms are pictures made by artists like Ravi Varma. They are not the real pictures of God. Artists make pictures of God after studying His attributes in sacred texts. It is only their imagination. None can say for sure that God has this particular name and that particular form. God is present in every living being, even in insects, birds and animals. Everything is God. (Bhagavan showing His handkerchief) This is a cloth. But it is not really a cloth, it is a bundle of threads. Many threads combine to make cloth. Likewise, desires of man assume the form of his mind. These desires are responsible for all his wicked feelings, wicked thoughts and wicked ideas. Why has God given you eyes? God has given you eyes to see all that is good and

nothing bad. Do you know why has God given you ears? It is only to listen to good things. Similarly, God has given you tongue to speak good words. Always speak sweetly. Never utter harsh words. Sanctify all your senses given to you by God by putting them to proper use. Offer this sacred body only to God. Do not put it to any abuse. Install God in the altar of your heart. Then, He will give you all that you require, and you will find God wherever you see. The sky is God, the earth is God and all the living beings are God. He is immanent in everyone. He is present in your breath in the form of Om. When you enquire into this divine principle, you will attain true knowledge. You cannot acquire true knowledge by merely reading books. There are so many so-called educated people in this world. But who has got true knowledge? A Jnani (a person of true knowledge) is one who has realised the truth, "I am not the body. I am not the mind. I am God and I am everything."

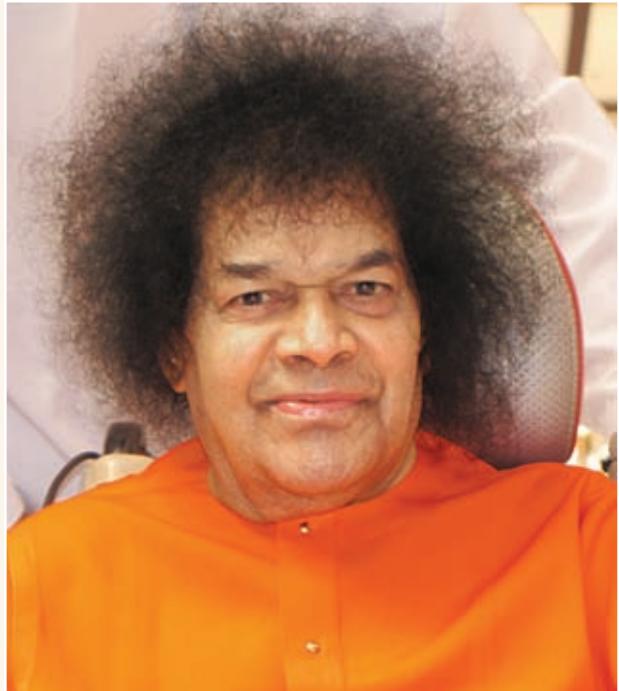
Know Thyself

When you say, this is my body, then who are you? The term 'my body' implies that body is separate from you. Similarly, when you say, this is my mind or my Buddhi, you are separate from them. Then, what is that which says 'my'? That is the Atma. In order to realise the Atma, you have to cut the little I of your ego. This represents the sacred symbol cross. This is what Jesus taught. It is the feeling of 'I and mine' that is the cause of man's bondage. When you eliminate this feeling, what remains is your true Self. Now you are with the body but tomorrow you have to leave the body. At that time, who are you and where are you? You do not know. Body is like a vesture; it is like a robe. When you give up attachment to this vesture of body, you will understand your true Self. You

are not one person, but three: the one you think you are, the one others think you are, the one you really are. True humanness lies in understanding this truth. When somebody asks you your name, you say, "I am so and so." But the name that you have is given to you by your parents and not by God. When you ask God, "Who are You?" He will reply, "Aham Brahmasmi. My name is Brahman and I have no other name except Brahman." When someone asks you your name, you should also say, "I am Brahman." When you understand this truth, you will realise the Atmic principle. If you realise this, there is no need for any other spiritual practice. When you meet your friend, you greet him, saying, "Namaskar". In fact, you are offering Namaskar not to your friend, but to Brahman within him. Therefore, do not entertain the narrow feeling of 'I and mine'.

Everything in this world is your own reaction, reflection and resound. This life is a drama. Body is like a costume that you have put on in this drama of life. You have to give up attachment to the costume that you have put on. You should always remind yourself that you are the embodiment of Atma. (At this point of time, Bhagavan asked the audience) Do you still have any doubts? If anyone still has doubts, he is really an ignoramus! When you do not know who you are, then how will you know God? Therefore, first and foremost, know yourself. Always ask this question, "Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?" Then you will realise, "I am I, I am Atma, I am I, I am Atma." When you forget that you are divine, you will be drowned in deep wine! You should know that you are divine. That is your real name.

The same person is referred to by different people in different ways on the basis of their



A human being should have human values. There is no use if you merely have a human form without the human values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Under any circumstances, never tell a lie. When you adhere to Sathya, Dharma will follow you. Where there are Sathya and Dharma, peace manifests there.

physical relationship with him. One person says, "He is my son-in-law." Then another says, "He is my son." The third one says, "He is my brother." As man develops more and more physical relationships, he is bound more and more. Where has this bondage come from? It is all of your own making. After your

Continued on page 41...

CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF BAL VIKAS CHILDREN OF DELHI-NCR

A GROUP OF BAL VIKAS CHILDREN of Delhi-National Capital Region along with their parents and Gurus came on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from 25th to 29th December 2009. 85 of these Bal Vikas children presented a dance and music programme in the Divine Presence



Bal Vikas children of Delhi-National Capital Region presenting a beautiful Rajasthani dance on 29th December 2009.

of Bhagavan on 29th December 2009. The programme started with a beautiful song and dance by Bal Vikas boys in praise of Lord Ganesh which was followed by a song and dance by Bal Vikas girls, describing the glory of Bhagavan. The next item was a Rajasthani song and dance by Bal Vikas boys who performed with gusto in their colourful Rajasthani dress. The last song and dance performed by Bal Vikas girls conveyed the message of unity of mankind as taught by Bhagavan. This was followed by Bhajans which were also led by

Bal Vikas children. Meanwhile, Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to all. At the conclusion of Bhajans, Bhagavan blessed the children and posed for group photos with them. He also materialised a gold chain for one of the children. The programme which started at 5.10 p.m. came to a close at 5.55 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

PILGRIMAGE OF INDONESIAN DEVOTEES

More than 400 devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam on a pilgrimage from Indonesia from 16th to 30th December 2009 and experienced the bliss of Bhagavan's proximity. On 30th December 2009, a group of these devotees presented a music programme in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The programme began at 5.15 p.m. with prayer to Lord Ganesh which was followed by five devotional songs by the ladies singers. All the songs were marked by the melody of singing and deep devotion of the singers. This was followed by Bhajans which were led by both ladies and gents singers. At



Devotees of Indonesia presented a programme of devotional music surcharged with deep devotion on 30th December 2009.

the conclusion of Bhajans, Bhagavan blessed the devotees, posed for group photos with them and distributed clothes to them. He also materialised a gold chain for one of the ladies singers. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.40 p.m.

ALUMNI MEET 2010: SRI SATHYA SAI UNIVERSITY

More than 1,300 alumni of Sri Sathya Sai University came to Prasanthi Nilayam from all parts of the world to participate in the Alumni Meet 2010 and refresh the memories of the golden days spent by them as students of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The meet held on the auspicious occasion of New Year Day coincided with New Year celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam and included many delectable music and cultural programmes.

Idiye Premabandhamu (this is the relationship of love) – A Drama

On the New Year eve, 31st December 2009, the alumni staged a beautiful drama which showcased the eternal bond of love between the students and their Beloved Lord, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The story of the drama was unfolded through an innovative and interesting dialogue between Lord Ganesh and Hanuman who as eternal witnesses of the saga of love between Bhagavan and His students over the years recounted many touching stories of this everlasting love. As the drama progressed, Narada, the celestial bard and Yama, the god of death also joined Hanuman and Ganesh to narrate some more such touching stories. Besides presenting these episodes from the lives of students, the drama highlighted the unique system of education of Sri Sathya Sai University which



A very innovative drama was presented by the alumni of Sri Sathya Sai University which refreshed the memories of golden days spent by them as students of Bhagavan.

was producing not merely highly educated intellectuals but men and women of high character who were totally dedicated to the Divine Mission of Bhagavan of unity of mankind and selfless service of society. The drama gave the message that Bhagavan was always with His students, and every corner of the world could become Prasanthi Nilayam when the students performed service to society, keeping Bhagavan constantly in their heart. A brilliant presentation of an episode from the Ramayana enhanced the value and impact of the drama. Above all, the innovative use of appropriate video clips on the screen made all the incidents come alive. The audience expressed their joy and appreciation of the drama by a thunderous prolonged applause when it concluded. The drama which commenced at 5.45 p.m. came to a close at 6.35 p.m. Bhagavan watched the entire drama, blessed the students and gave them the coveted opportunity of group photos with Him. After distribution of Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan, the programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.50 p.m.

Joyous New Year Celebrations

On the joyous day of 1st January 2010, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall in His sparkling yellow robe at 10.15 a.m. amidst singing of Bhajans by a huge gathering of students and devotees. On reaching the verandah of the hall, Bhagavan lighted a candle on the New Year cake and performed the cake cutting ceremony. After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, the brass band of Sri Sathya Sai University made its devout musical offering to Bhagavan by playing some scintillating numbers which included "Ganga Jathadhabra", "Gopala Radhalola", "Durge Jai Jai Maa" and "Murali Krishna". This excellent musical presentation of four instrumental numbers by the band group of the university was followed by four Carnatic music vocal pieces by the singers group of the university. Starting with "Vatapi Ganapatim Bhajeham", the talented students enthralled the audience with "Entha Bhagyamo" and "Mohe Lagi Lagan" and concluded their presentation with a dazzling piece of Thillana (a classical composition). Ecstatic audience responded with a thunderous applause at the conclusion of this soul-stirring musical presentation of the students. After distribution of Prasadams blessed by Bhagavan, the morning programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan at 11.30 a.m.

Music Programme by the Alumni

Bhagavan was offered traditional welcome with Poornakumbham amidst Veda chanting by a group of alumni when He came to Sai Kulwant Hall in a grand procession at 5.00 p.m. on the afternoon of 1st January 2010. Besides the Veda chanting group, a group of flag-bearing students, a student carrying a colourful parasol and two students carrying



Music group of the alumni made a thrilling band display on the New Year Day, 1st January 2010.

traditional fans formed part of this procession. After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, many of the alumni got cakes and other items blessed by Him. After this, the music group of the alumni made a thrilling thematic band display and offered a bouquet of selected devotional songs at Bhagavan's Lotus Feet. The songs were interspersed with narration of many touching incidents which brought forth the Divine glory of Bhagavan and His limitless love for students. The entire presentation was made lively by showing video clippings of relevant incidents on the screen. In the middle of this presentation, Bhagavan also blessed volumes 15 and 16 of the series of CDs entitled "A Bridge Across Time", containing Bhajans sung by the alumni. This was followed by two solo devotional songs, after which Bhajans were started by the Bhajan singers group of the alumni. Thereafter, there was distribution of Prasadams to the entire gathering in the hall. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.35 p.m.

Showers of Blessings from Bhagavan

Bhagavan showered His love and blessings on the alumni and their families in a special meeting held in Poornachandra Auditorium

on 2nd January 2010 before they returned to their respective countries. Bhagavan came to the auditorium at 4.40 p.m. amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by a group of alumni. At the outset, two distinguished speakers addressed the gathering. They were introduced by Sri K. Chakravarthi, Secretary, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. The first speaker was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai University. Illustrating his talk with slides and video clippings, Dr. Venkataraman explained how such stupendous projects like Super Speciality Hospitals and houses for flood-affected people of Orissa were executed by the Divine Will of Bhagavan. Giving the latest example of Bhagavan's Will, the eminent speaker remarked, amidst a prolonged applause of the alumni, that Radio Sai was the only channel on air in Asia from 31st December 2009 after the recent WorldSpace financial crisis. The next speaker was Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Sri Srinivasan dwelt on the salient features of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of India and gave details of the present set-up of the organisation. The Sai Organisation, the distinguished speaker said,

was making remarkable progress in the areas of water purification, organic agriculture, non-conventional energy system, low-cost buildings and micro power projects. The projects on hand, he added, were National Archival System and Sri Sathya Sai National Narayana Seva. Reminding the former students of their responsibility as students of Bhagavan, Sri Srinivasan observed that it was from their behaviour, their speech and their service with love that others should recognise them as the students of Bhagavan. After these speeches, many groups of the former students came to the dais and showed to Bhagavan the service projects they had undertaken in their countries. Bhagavan interacted with them and gave them valuable advice. Bhajans commenced after this. Meanwhile, Bhagavan went into the rows of the alumni, accepted their letters and showered His blessings on all. The meeting came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.50 p.m. Thus concluded Alumni Meet 2010 of Sri Sathya Sai University, and these "flowers in God's garden" and "stars in God's sky" took leave from Bhagavan to return next year with added enthusiasm and greater dedication for Bhagavan's Divine Mission.

...Continued from page 37

marriage, you say, "She is my wife." But who is she before marriage? Prior to marriage, you do not know who is who. You also do not know what happens after one leaves the body. The relationship is only for the period in between. Hence, do not brood over the past. Past is past. What lies in the future? That also you do not know. You know only the present.

Therefore, live in the present. That is the only truth.

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

**– From Bhagavan Christmas Discourse in
Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 25th
December 2009.**

UNDERSTAND THE DIVINE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE

In His immense compassion, Bhagavan gave daily Discourses for nearly two months in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam starting from 16th June 1996. These Discourses cover a vast variety of spiritual topics of practical utility for modern man and highlight the rich cultural heritage of Bharat which is rooted in the Vedas. As the readers themselves will see, this is a rich treasure of soul-elevating spiritual knowledge which can enrich, illumine and transform mankind. This issue carries Bhagavan's eighth Discourse given on 23rd June 1996. Sanathana Sarathi will publish these Discourses from time to time which are appropriately named Amrita Dhara (ambrosial stream).



*A knotted gnarled tree trunk may be made straight as a pole,
A shapeless hunk of rock may be carved to form a beautiful idol,*

But, is there anyone who can change human mind?

(Telugu Poem)

GOD ASSUMES HUMAN FORM TO DEVELOP DIVINITY IN MAN



MIND IS EXTREMELY QUEER and fickle. It is very powerful and can move very fast. A person may be sitting at a certain place but his mind may fly away thousands of miles away from him in a moment, visualising something at such a long distance. That is what Arjuna also said to Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita, *Chanchalam Hi Manah Krishna Pramathi Balavaddrudham* (this mind is very unsteady, turbulent and powerful), and asked Him how he should control such a powerful and fickle mind.

Associate yourself with Good Company

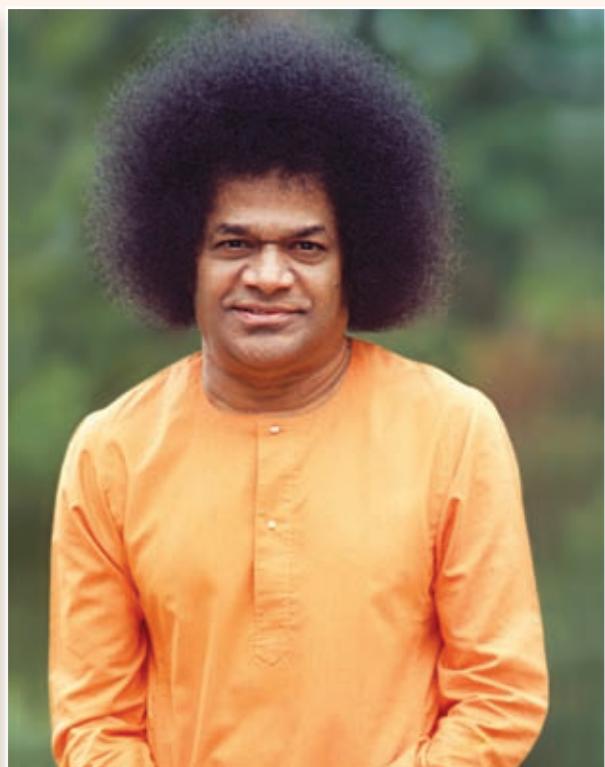
Mind has both animality and humanness. You should try to understand what is meant by animality and humanness. When the mind

is overpowered by the six inner enemies of man, viz., Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya (desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy), man forgets his humanness, takes to the path of animality and degenerates to the level of an animal. On the other hand, when the mind follows the path of humanness and makes proper use of Mathi (mind), Gathi (destiny), Stithi (position) and Sampatti (wealth) given by God, man can rise to the level of divinity and do great good to his country and society at large. Mind is the root cause of good and bad. The nobility that is there in the mind cannot be found anywhere else. Similarly, the wickedness that is found in the mind cannot be found anywhere else. Mind is as much good as it is wicked.

Mind by nature is absolutely pure. It is only due to the influence of bad company that it becomes wicked. Take, for example, a newspaper. If you wrap jasmine flowers in it, it will acquire the fragrance of jasmine flowers. Similarly, if you wrap Pakodas (an Indian savoury) in it, it will emit the smell of Pakodas. The newspaper on its own does not have any type of smell. Whatever item is wrapped in it, it

extremely wicked. In fact, it becomes demonic. There is nothing good or bad in the mind itself. It is only due to good or bad influences that it becomes good or bad. If you want your mind to be good, you should associate yourself with good company. At times, good appears to be bad and bad appears to be good. It becomes difficult to decide what is good and what is bad. Good habits, good speech, good conduct and

First of all, man should become good. Then, the whole world will become good. Therefore, first and foremost, man should conduct himself in a manner worthy of a human being and should lead a life befitting his status as a human being. This itself will transform the human into divine. But, on the other hand, if man becomes animal, how can he do any good to the world? This is impossible. Hence, the first thing for man to do is to lead a life worthy of a human being; he should not degenerate to the level of an animal nor should he become a demon.



will acquire the smell of that item. Similarly, if the mind follows noble path and you associate the mind with everything good, the mind will also become good. What is the noble path? How noble would the mind become when it is associated with sacred feelings, good thoughts, noble behaviour, good company, spiritual activities, moral values and righteous actions! On the other hand, when it is associated with wicked qualities, wicked thoughts, evil company and bad behaviour, it becomes

good behaviour will ultimately make us good. Therefore, good habits are very essential for every human being. You should get rid of all your evil qualities and develop good qualities.

Shirdi Sai Baba's Love for Nana

One day, Shirdi Sai Baba started laughing loudly all of a sudden. Nobody could understand the reason. In those days, some people considered him a mendicant, others considered him a fakir and a few others

considered him even a madcap. He appeared as fakir to those who considered him a fakir and as madcap to those who thought him to be so. While laughing like this, Baba said, "Oh Kulkarni, come here." Kulkarni was one of those persons who lived with Baba. When Kulkarni asked Baba what his command was, Baba took out two coins from his pocket and gave them to him, saying, "Go and bring Nanasaheb Chandorkar with you." Nana was a Tahsildar. In those days, Tahsildar was considered a very high officer. It was Tahsildar who decided all revenue matters. Apart from holding such a high post, Nana was also well-versed in Sanskrit. Besides being a high officer and a great scholar, he had a very impressive personality also. Because of all these, he was very proud.

When Kulkarni went there, Nana asked him, "What brings you here?" Kulkarni said, "Baba is calling you." Enraged at this, Nana said to him, "Fie on you! Don't you have sense? I am a Tahsildar and a great scholar. If any fakir calls me, shall I go to him? Do you want me to go to a fakir? Go away from here." When Kulkarni informed Baba about the refusal of Nana, Baba asked him to go again and bring him. In fact, Baba started shouting like a mad man, "I want to see Nana, I want to see Nana." Kulkarni was perplexed and thought, "What is this! Nana is insulting me also. How come Baba has so much love for such a proud person that he is asking me again and again to bring him?" Kulkarni went to Nana again, caught hold of his feet while shedding tears and pleaded with him, "Baba wants to see you and you have to come." At last, Nana relented and said to Kulkarni, "I will come for your sake and not for Baba. I have nothing to do with him and there is no need for me to see him." Kulkarni

I have told the example of lock and key many times to the children. When you turn the key towards right side, the lock opens. When you turn it to the left side, it closes. Both the lock and the key are the same. But the difference lies only in the turning. Heart is the lock and mind is the key. When you turn your mind towards God, you develop detachment. When you turn it towards the world, you develop attachment. When you see the world with worldly feelings, you see only the world or Prakriti. On the other hand, if you see the world with divine feelings, you see it as the manifestation of God.



pleaded again, "Please accept my prayer and do come."

Nana came to Shirdi and asked Baba, "Why have you called me here? Do I have anything to do with you? I am a high officer and you are just a fakir. I have nothing to do with you and you have nothing to do with me." Baba came near him and said, "Sit down. So much excitement and pride is not good. I don't lose anything because of your pride. Only you will be the loser. Be calm, I will tell you something." When Nana sat down, Baba said to him, "In this birth, we have no relationship with each other. But in previous births, there was an intimate relationship between us. On account of this relationship, I wanted to see you." At this, Nana was all the more enraged, "What is this? When we have nothing to do with each other in the present, why do you talk about our past relationship? Nobody knows what has happened in the past. I don't have faith in such matters."

Baba got up and placed his hands on Nana's eyes. When Nana opened his eyes, he could see his past life. However, Nana was not convinced and said to Baba, "I am able to see only my past. Should I not be able to see your past also?" Then Baba touched his own eyes first and thereafter touched Nana's eyes. After this, Nana could clearly see who he was and who Baba was in the past. Immediately, he prostrated before Baba and said, "Baba! Out of my ignorance, I have behaved foolishly. We mortals act as if we know everything when, in fact, we know nothing. On the other hand, you act as if you do not know anything though you know everything." This is the difference between God and man. Man behaves as if he has all the knowledge without knowing anything, whereas God has all the knowledge but behaves as if He knows nothing. God appears to be knowing nothing and doing nothing but He does everything and attracts everybody. This is the difference between Deva and Jiva (God and man). In order to understand this truth, one should develop steady mind, sacred feelings and unwavering vision. Do not give room to doubts under any circumstances. Do not be bogged down and depressed by doubts. At the same time, do not be elated when you receive God's grace. Maintain equanimity in both the situations. You can attain this state only when you have total faith in God.

Man can Experience God when He Comes in Human Form

God comes down on earth in human form. It is not possible for man to come close to Him when He assumes any form other than that of a human being. Purandaradasa said, "People offer sugar candy, do Pradakshina (circumambulation) and offer their salutations



Man is deluded when he sees God in human form. He thinks, "How can God be like this in human form? He is moving and talking like an ordinary human being. How can God do like this? He is supposed to be of transcendental nature." If you cannot understand God when He comes in human form, how can you understand the transcendental divine principle? That is impossible. Either you should rise to the level of God or God should come down to your level. Only then can there be intimate relationship between the two.



to the stone idol of a snake. But when they see a snake, they throw stones at it and try to harm it." God incarnates on earth in human form to provide opportunity to man to redeem his life through Sameepya, Sarupya and Sayujya (proximity, identity and merger). Man can come close to God only when He is in human form. Man has the intelligence to understand another man and not God. Due to this limitation of his intelligence, man can experience God only when He comes down in human form. Man's intelligence is below senses, whereas the divine principle is beyond senses. Therefore, God has to come in human form to establish intimate relationship with man, to be closer to him, to talk to him and ultimately to grant him the direct experience of divinity. For example, if God comes down in the form of Vishnu with conch, discus, mace and lotus in His hands, man will not be able to establish close relationship with Him. Such a form is not natural for human beings. Therefore, it is necessary that God

comes in human form so that man can have intimate relationship with Him in a natural way. That is why God descends on earth in human form to develop divinity in man.

God's descent does not mean that He comes down from some place high above. It just means assuming human form. Just because He comes down to human level, there is absolutely no deficiency in His Divinity. When the child is lying on the ground, the mother bends down to pick it up in her arms. Her status as mother does not become lower by thus bending down. In the same way, God's glory does not suffer any decline when He descends from divine level to human level for the protection and redemption of His devotees. But man is deluded when he sees God in human form. He thinks, "How can God be like this in human form? He is moving and talking like an ordinary human being. How can God do like this? He is supposed to be of transcendental nature." If you cannot understand God when He comes in human form, how can you understand the transcendental divine principle? That is impossible. Either you should rise to the level of God or God should come down to your level. Only then can there be intimate relationship between the two. Just because an Avatar behaves like an ordinary human being, you should not underestimate His Divinity. All humans are divine. Their names and forms vary but the Atmic principle is one and the same in all. First of all, you should try to understand this truth.

There can be no Tree without a Seed

Your present birth carries the sum total of all the Samskaras (inherent tendencies) of your previous births. You will not believe what your names and forms were in your previous births. What is the reason? Since you identify yourself

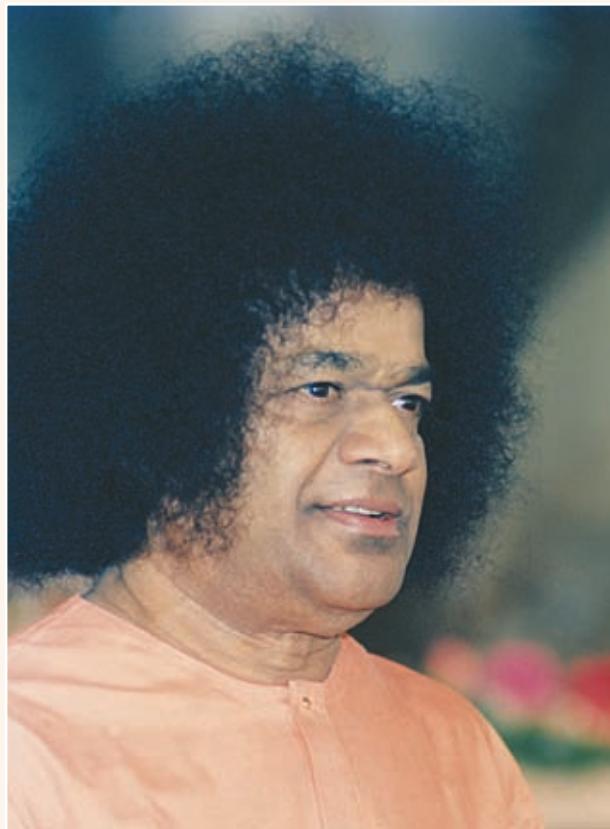
with your present name and form, you have totally forgotten your previous births. Even if you are made aware of your previous births, you will still find it difficult to believe. Here is a small example. You know both Telugu and English. When you speak in Telugu, you do not use English words. Simply because you are not using English words in your speech, it does not mean that you do not know English. Now Anil Kumar is translating My Telugu Discourse into English. In order to translate into English, he should know Telugu. Of course, he knows Telugu. But while translating, he is using only English words. In the same way, even if you know your past life, you forget it because you concentrate on your present life. When you are shown your past life, you will remember it.

However, one need not worry about one's past. Past is past. Future is not sure. Don't brood over the future. Present is very important. This is not ordinary present but omnipresent. First of all, you have to understand how present becomes omnipresent? Your present holds your past results and your future results depend upon your present. You will get the belch of the same thing which you have eaten in the morning. What you eat now, you get the belch of it later. Past and future are like trees while present is the seed. There can be no tree without seed. The seed of present has come from the tree of past and the tree of future will come from the seed of present. It is with reference to this that Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavadgita, *Beejam Maam Sarva Bhutanam* (I am the seed of all living beings). God has no birth but all names and forms are His. Yesterday I told you in My Discourse, when the Chapatis brought by Lakshmi Bai Shinde were eaten by a dog, Baba said it was he who ate them. God does not observe any difference between high and low. The same

divinity is present in all names and forms. This signifies the oneness of the entire creation.

Purity of Heart is Essential to Realise God

Mind is the root cause of everything good and bad. That is why it has been said, *Manah Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandhamokshayo* (mind is the cause of bondage and liberation of



man). I have told the example of lock and key many times to the children. When you turn the key towards right side, the lock opens. When you turn it to the left side, it closes. Both the lock and the key are the same. But the difference lies only in the turning. Heart is the lock and mind is the key. When you turn your mind towards God, you develop detachment. When you turn it towards the world, you develop attachment.

When you see the world with worldly feelings, you see only the world or Prakriti. On the other hand, if you see the world with divine feelings, you see it as the manifestation of God.

Mind is one but it assumes different forms. What is the reason? Depending on the types of Sankalpas (thought currents), its form undergoes change. Whatever form

Man's intelligence is below senses, whereas the divine principle is beyond senses. Therefore, God has to come in human form to establish intimate relationship with man, to be closer to him, to talk to him and ultimately to grant him the direct experience of divinity. For example, if God comes down in the form of Vishnu with conch, discus, mace and lotus in His hands, man will not be able to establish close relationship with Him. Such a form is not natural for human beings. Therefore, it is necessary that God comes in human form so that man can have intimate relationship with Him in a natural way. That is why God descends on earth in human form to develop divinity in man.

it assumes, mind has to act in accordance with it. Its action cannot be at variance with its form. For example, there was a great actor by name Nagayya. Once he enacted the role of Thyagayya. After assuming the role of Thyagayya, he should act like Thyagayya. On the other hand, if he acts like Nagayya after assuming the role of Thyagayya, people are likely to pelt stones at him. He may be Nagayya

behind the stage, but once he is on the stage, he has to be Thyagayya. Similarly, you may be different from Me from the worldly point of view. Once you transcend your worldliness, you and I are one.

You are seeing God all the time, yet you say, you desire to see God. All that you see is God. All the heads that you see belong to the Cosmic Form of the Divine. Everything in this world is the embodiment of divinity. Every individual is essentially divine. Every entity is divine in nature. In spite of seeing the manifestation of God everywhere and in everything, you say that you want to see God. How narrow-minded and foolish you are! What according to you is the form of God? On seeing what will you believe it to be God? You do not know who is God and how He looks like. Then, how is it that you see something and believe it to be God? This is sheer foolishness. Everything is the manifestation of God. When you develop firm faith in this truth, you will realise that there is no faith greater than this.

When King Parikshit came to know that he was left with only seven days of life sojourn on earth due to the curse of a Rishi, he thought, "Why should I waste this precious time of seven days? Let me spend it in the contemplation of God." He prayed to Sage Suka to narrate to him the story of Bhagavata in seven days. Suka beautifully narrated Gopikas' love for Krishna. There arose a doubt in the mind of Parikshit and he asked Suka, "Swami! Gopikas were illiterate. They had no knowledge of the Vedas, Sastras (scriptures), Itihasas (epics) and Puranas (mythologies), and did not do any spiritual practice. Then, how could they attain the love of God?" Suka replied, "Are all those who know the Vedas, Sastras, Itihasas, Puranas able to see God? The Vedas, Sastras, Itihasas, Puranas only describe various

attributes of God but to realise God, purity of heart is most essential." One may become a learned person by reading sacred texts, but this is not divine knowledge. You cannot attain divine knowledge by merely reading sacred texts. They only bring about a change in your mind. Suppose, a child turns the pages of the Ramayana. A scholar also does the same. The child sees only the pictures given in it while the learned man tries to grasp the essence of the subject matter. The act of turning the pages is the same in both the cases. But the difference lies in the approach. Even after turning the pages, the child remains as ignorant as he was before while the scholar becomes a Jnani and knower of the subject.

Man should Lead Life Worthy of a Human Being

Once when a naughty boy started crying and bothering his mother, she asked him to sit near his father. The father was doing his office work. As the boy sat there, he started playing with his father's office papers. The father saw a world map nearby, cut it into pieces and asked him to join these pieces to make the map again in order to keep the boy busy. But the boy did not understand which country of the world was to be placed where. On seeing again, he found that there was a human figure on the reverse side of the map. This he could understand easily. He identified the hands, head and other parts of the human figure and joined all the pieces together to make the human figure again. He set only the human figure correctly. But in this process, the world map on the reverse of it, which he did not understand, was also set right. How did the world map become correct? It became correct by setting the human form correctly.

Hence, first of all, man should become good. Then, the whole world will become good. Therefore, first and foremost, man should conduct himself in a manner worthy of a human being and should lead a life befitting his status as a human being. This itself will transform the human into divine. But, on the other hand, if man becomes animal, how can he do any good to the world? This is impossible. Hence, the first thing for man to do is to lead a life worthy of a human being; he should not degenerate to the level of an animal nor should he become a demon. If man lives like a human being, it is enough. This is the path that leads to divinity.

It is the mind that is responsible for man to live like a man, to rise to the divine level or to degenerate to the level of an animal. Humanness, animality and divinity do not exist separately. They all are present in man. When you lead your life with love, kindness and compassion, you rise to the level of God. These are the attributes of Sattwa Guna (serene quality). On the other hand, if you become the slave of your senses and submit yourself to their dictates, you become angry and excited from moment to moment. These are the attributes of Rajo Guna (quality of passion). Then you verily become a demon. Under the influence of Thamo Guna (quality of sloth), man sees good as bad and bad as good. Man is the combination of Sattwa Guna, Rajo Guna and Thamo Guna. The world also is the combination of these three attributes. Man should transcend these three attributes. Only then can he experience Brahmananda (divine bliss). Obey the divine command and act according to it. Try to understand what God expects from you. Develop the sacred feeling that though God is present in all, He assumes human form for man's redemption. If you see

What is the noble path? How noble would the mind become when it is associated with sacred feelings, good thoughts, noble behaviour, good company, spiritual activities, moral values and righteous actions! On the other hand, when it is associated with wicked qualities, wicked thoughts, evil company and bad behaviour, it becomes extremely wicked. In fact, it becomes demonic.

only His physical form and think that He is like any other human being, you don't gain anything. The physical form of God may be similar to any other human form. The difference lies in the feelings. God is Bhavapriya and not Bahyapriya (lover of inner feelings, not outward appearances), whereas man is Bahyapriya and not Bhavapriya. You should transcend Bahya (outward appearances) and make efforts to develop Bhava (divine feelings).

Only God has Free Will

These were the doubts that Nana initially had. Later on, Nana developed so much faith in Baba that he would not leave him even for a moment. If Baba wanted to smoke, it was Nana who made Chillim (pipe) ready for him. Nana became a close devotee of Baba. There was such an intimate relationship between Baba and Nana that Baba would not eat food without Nana and Nana would not eat food without Baba. Ordinary people could not understand the mystery of this relationship. Some of them objected why should Baba not eat his food without Nana. Then Baba told them, "It is my

own sweet will. Why are you bothered about it? Who are you to question me? I feel like eating only when Nana is with me." God is the ocean of compassion. He is 100% compassion and 100% love. There is none other who is more loving and compassionate than Him. You should properly understand this divine principle of love. This love is present in all. Therefore, you should love all and hate none. If you hate others, others will also hate you. Everything is reaction, reflection and resound. Nobody can say what was his previous birth like nor can he tell what lies ahead for him in the present birth. For people like Nana, whatever work they undertake will be automatically accomplished. Even if they have no yearning for God, God Himself will draw them towards Him. What is the reason? The deservedness of their past births is the main reason. The seed of their previous births becomes a tree and yields fruit in their present birth. It is not possible for the tree to grow without a seed.

Suppose, you go to a beach one day in the evening. You will find only sand everywhere. If there is a rainfall on the next day, you will see many sprouts coming out of sand on the following day. Yesterday, there were no sprouts but today you find greenery. What is the reason? Yesterday, they were lying in the sand in the form of seeds and today the seeds have germinated and become plants. If there were no seeds yesterday, there would be no plants today. The seeds cannot be seen whereas the plants become visible to us. Similarly, one's past actions are not seen. But the results of all these actions will be visible and one will have to experience them in the present birth. However, you should not worry about your past life. Wait for the divine grace.

When the time comes, it will be bestowed on you. Don't waste time. Time waste is life waste. Every individual has a unique relationship with divinity, about which nobody can say anything. Only God knows about it.

Many modern youth talk about free will. What is the meaning of free will and who has free will? None except God. You say, you have free will to perform a particular task. But the very next moment you will have doubts whether you can accomplish it or not. Then, how can you say you have free will? Never entertain the feeling that you have free will. It is only the Divine that has free will and none else. Even the President of a country is bound by certain rules and regulations. But God has no such restrictions; He can do anything. That is free will. The word 'free will' should not be used with reference to human beings. Only God has free will. This is the real power. Man should lead his life like a true human being and conduct himself like a human being while dealing with his fellowmen. When you are living in the society of human beings, you should not behave like an animal. When you greet others with Namaskar, they will also reply to you in the same manner. With whatever feelings you talk to others, they will also talk to you with the same feelings. Therefore, talk sweetly, behave courteously, act righteously and earn a good name. You should become ideal to others. Make efforts to develop humanness. Then only will you earn the praise of others.

(Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Govinda Krishna Jai...")

**– From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in
Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 23rd
June 1996.**

A MARVELLOUS SHOW OF SKILL, BALANCE AND BRAVERY

THE ANNUAL SPORTS AND Cultural Meet 2010 of Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions was held in the sprawling Hill View Stadium at Prasanthi Nilayam on 11th January 2010. A wide variety of breathtaking presentations showcased the qualities of head and heart like self-confidence, balance, bravery and skill of the students from the campuses of the university and other Sathya Sai educational institutions. Hill View Stadium, the venue of this display par excellence, was aesthetically decorated with colourful flags, banners and photographs of the Revered Chancellor of the university, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Baba. Besides the excellent seating arrangement for the convenience of the huge gathering of viewers, two giant LED screens were installed in the stadium to enable them to have a clear and close view of the events performed by the students.

On the serene and sunny morning of 11th January 2010, Bhagavan arrived at the stadium at 9.30 a.m. As Bhagavan's motorcade entered the stadium on its northern end, the Anantapur Campus brass band offered welcome to Him with joyous and sweet notes of music. Bhagavan was then led to Santhi Vedika in a grand procession led by the brass band of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, slow marching squad carrying colourful flags, horses squad and motorbike squad of the students. On His arrival at Santhi Vedika, Bhagavan was offered reverential welcome by the Vice Chancellor and senior staff members of the university. At

9.45 a.m., Bhagavan lighted the sacred lamp at Santhi Vedika to inaugurate the sports and cultural meet.

Spectacular March Past

As soon as Bhagavan was seated on the magnificently decorated dais, an impressive March Past of the contingents of various Sathya Sai educational institutions began. While the brass band of the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the university provided the marching tunes, brilliantly and colourfully dressed contingents



A contingent of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam offering reverential salute to Bhagavan at Santhi Vedika.

of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Anantapur Campus of the university and Sri Sathya Sai Junior College for Women, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music, Brindavan. Campus of the university and Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the university in that order came marching sprightly and briskly to Santhi Vedika and offered their reverential salute to Bhagavan.

After this most disciplined and brilliant March Past, Bhagavan hoisted the flag of the

university and released bunches of balloons and a few white pigeons. The participants were then administered the oath to take part in the sports events in fair competition for the glory of sports and their Beloved Bhagavan. Thereafter, Bhagavan lighted the sports torch which was carried by a mascot in the shape of a swan to the hill top where it lighted the sports urn.

Daring Feats of Brindavan Campus Students

The sportsevents began with the performance of Brindavan Campus students. Commencing with the portrayal of ten incarnations of God, they celebrated the Advent of Bhagavan Sri



A vibrant Bhangra dance by the students of Brindavan Campus of the University delighted one and all.

Sathya Sai Baba as the Avatar of Kali Yuga with a beautiful dance and followed it up with a vibrant Bhangra dance. Their next item was a rhythmic group dance which they performed with perfect synchronisation. After this, they showed their skill in equestrian events by handling horses which crossed many types of hurdles with consummate ease. But their most breathtakingly stunning event was stunts on motorbikes. The spectators held their breath when motorbike riders criss-crossed each other at blinding speed and when they jumped nearly six metres high in the air. They concluded their display with a wonderful pyramid formation on



Daredevilry of the students of Brindavan Campus was demonstrated in their motorbike stunts.

motorbikes. At the end of their performance, all the students made a beautiful formation in front of Santhi Vedika and offered salutations to Bhagavan.

Display of Balance, Rhythm and Acumen by Prasanthi Nilayam Students

The next performance came from the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus and Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School. Before commencing their sports events, they brought before Santhi Vedika a giant idol of Lord Subramanya which they themselves had prepared. This formed the backdrop of their display. Their events included



The students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School making a colourful formation. The giant idol of Lord Subramanya is seen in the background.

rhythmic dances, acrobatics and gymnastics which showed their acumen, balance, control and synchronisation. They started with a colourful rhythmic dance and made beautiful formations. One of the interesting events of



A spectacular show of skill and acumen was seen in the basketball game played by the students of Prasanthi Nilayam.

their display was a basketball game, in which the students dunked the ball in the basket after getting elevation from a ramp and a trampoline. An innovative item of their display was acrobatics on chairs, with which they made many beautiful formations. Another display of acrobatics was on large rings suspended with a rope from a high stand. Next, they produced fine music by playing on Chinese drums along with balancing a flag with a long pole on chin, on a palm and an arm. As these acts of great balance were displayed, large kites in the shape of various birds rose high up in the sky. Their last item was jeep stunts which included criss-crossing, smashing obstacles and passing through fire ring. After their performance, all the students made a beautiful formation in front of Santhi Vedika and offered their salutations to Bhagavan. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at about 12.00 noon.

The Splendour of Primary School Students' Performance

In the afternoon, Bhagavan was led to Hill View Stadium by motorbike escorts when He came to the stadium at 4.35 p.m. The sports and cultural events began soon after this with the presentation of the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam. The theme of their presentation was the Advent of Bhagavan as Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram for the transformation of man. This was shown on a huge screen which formed the backdrop of their presentation. Their first item was a vibrant dance by girls students which hailed the Advent of Bhagavan. What followed this was a number of beautiful dances both by boys and girls in



The students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam won the hearts of the spectators by their vibrant dances in colourful costumes.

their colourful costumes which enraptured the spectators for nearly one hour. The beautiful formations they made in the performing area were a treat to the eyes and a spectacle worth treasuring in memory. One of their colourful dances was a dance by girls with designs of different colour petals strapped to their back. The dances were interspersed with gymnastic feats on a semi-circular structure and crawling out of rubber tubes like a worm. But perhaps their most spectacular performance was the last item which was a dance by girls with colourful umbrellas. As their magnificent



One of the most charming display of the Primary School students was their dance with colourful umbrellas.

show ended, the children released bunches of balloons in the air which rose high up like the splendour of their performance. After this, they made their final formation before Santhi Vedika and offered their reverential Pranams to Bhagavan.

Dedicated Performance of Anantapur Campus Students

The first item of the students of Anantapur Campus was a dance with red flags with which they made beautiful formations. This was followed by a wonderful display of balance and control on monocycles. They



One of the colourful formations made by the students of Anantapur Campus of the university.

they made wonderful formations. At the end of their display, the students made a beautiful formation with glowing lights in their hands and the Name of Mother Sai on their lips when they sang the song "Sai Maa Praanam..." (Sai is our life-breath). This grand spectacle of adventure, beauty and dedication came to a happy conclusion with this glowing tribute to Bhagavan who profusely blessed the students for their performance made with love and devotion. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at about 6.00 p.m.

MAKARA SANKRANTI CELEBRATIONS



The students of Anantapur Campus of the university displayed amazing dexterity in their monocycle show.

made various formations on monocycles with amazing dexterity to the delight of the spectators. Equally delightful were their stunts on bicycles which they performed with great ease. Their concluding item was a beautiful display with roll like structures with which

The joyous festival of Makara Sankranti was celebrated at Prasantha Nilayam on 14th January 2010. On this auspicious day, Sri Sathya Sai University organised its prize distribution function for the Sports and Cultural Meet 2010 which made the celebrations all the more rewarding. Two excellent dramas were also presented as part of these celebrations on 13th and 14th January 2010. The drama on 13th January 2010 entitled "Bhakta Tukaram" was presented by the students of Brindavan Campus and on 14th January 2010 entitled "Mrityunjaya" by the students of Prasantha Nilayam Campus of the university.

Bhakta Tukaram: A Drama

On 13th January 2010, the brass band of Brindavan Campus of the university led



The drama "Bhakta Tukaram" enacted by the students of Brindavan Campus of the university showcased the nobility of character of this great devotee of Lord Vitthal.

Bhagavan to Sai Kulwant Hall when He came to grant the bliss of His Darshan to devotees in the hall at 5.30 p.m. The drama began at about 6.00 p.m. after Bhagavan was seated on the dais. In this drama, main incidents from the life of Tukaram, an ardent devotee of Lord Vitthal, were presented which highlighted the nobility of Tukaram's character and his deep yearning for the Lord. It also showcased his main teachings contained in his immortal Abhangs (verses) which taught how man could make his life noble and sublime and overcome all trials and tribulations of life by deep love and unflinching faith in God. The opening scene itself, set in the backdrop of a magnificent temple, created an aura of divinity which enveloped the entire proceedings of this well-enacted and well-directed drama on the life of this illustrious devotee of Maharashtra. Interspersed with thrilling dances and well-rendered Abhangs of Tukaram, the drama created a lasting impression on the audience and showed how Lord Vitthal himself came to the rescue of Tukaram when he was subjected to injustice by evil doers. Fabulous sets, excellent make-up, colourful costumes and perfect choreography added to the value of the drama. At the conclusion of the drama,

Bhagavan blessed the cast, rewarded them with a photo session and distributed clothes to them. The drama came to a close at 7.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan after distribution of Prasadam.

Makara Sankranti and Prize Distribution Functions

On 14th January 2010, the auspicious day of Makara Sankranti, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 4.45 p.m. in a grand procession led by the flag bearers squad of students and brass band of Prasantha Nilayam Campus of the university. The hall on this occasion was beautifully decorated and a large number of trophies and prizes were displayed on the dais for awarding to the winners of various events in the Sports and Cultural Meet 2010 of the university. The function began after Bhagavan inaugurated it by lighting the sacred lamp on the dais at 5.00 p.m.

At the outset, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the university offered Sankranti greetings to all and welcomed them to the prize distribution function of the university. Referring to Makara Sankranti as an important festival in Indian calendar, Sri Sahni observed that Sankranti signified not only the change in the direction of the sun towards north but change of man's mind towards God. The next speaker was Prof. Vishwanath Pandit, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai University. Referring to the sports and cultural events of 11th January 2010, Prof. Pandit observed that these events not only showed the remarkable qualities of courage, confidence and skill of the students but also their love and dedication for their Revered Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who has made sports and cultural events as part and parcel of the curriculum of the university. In conclusion, Prof. Pandit

expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for His continued guidance in the sports events and the large number of costly prizes which were being awarded to students. Prof. Pandit also announced amidst a thunderous applause of the gathering that Bhagavan was immensely pleased with the performance of Primary School students. After the conclusion of Prof.



The students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School receiving trophy from Bhagavan.

Pandit's speech, Bhagavan awarded trophies to the students of all educational institutions which participated in the sports and cultural events and blessed a large number of gold and silver medals as well as prizes for distribution to the students. Bhagavan also distributed prizes to Primary School students with His Divine Hands. In their brief speeches that followed prize distribution, three faculty members of the university, viz., Dr. Pallav Baruah, Dr. Siva Shankar Sai and Dr. T. Ravikumar expressed deep gratitude to Bhagavan for giving bountiful prizes to students and for His valuable guidance during the course of the preparations for sports and cultural events. This grand function concluded with a drama enacted by

the students of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the university.

Mrityunjaya: A Drama

The drama began at 7.05 p.m. with a beautiful dance by the students in worship of Lord Siva. As the name of the drama "Mrityunjaya" (victory over death) suggested, the theme of the drama was man's yearning for immortality. The drama first portrayed relevant incidents from the life of Ravana who worshipped Lord Siva to attain immortality with the selfish motive of ruling over earth and heaven. Thereafter, the drama depicted the story of Markandeya who worshipped Lord Siva with total dedication without any desire for fruits. Lord Siva granted the boon of immortality to both. However, Ravana lost it because of his ego and Markandeya got it without asking for it. The drama, in this way, taught the valuable lesson that total devotion and surrender to the Lord was the only way to



A scene from the drama "Mrityunjaya" enacted by the students of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the university on 14th January 2010.

immortality. Excellent dances of the students, thrilling music and powerful dialogues made the drama an impressive presentation. At the conclusion of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the students and posed for group photos with them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.15 p.m.



MIRACLE OF LOVE

PROF. NARENDER'S MESSAGE to me proved to be that I was to speak in Sathya Sai Baba's college on Friday afternoon. Eight hundred students and later one hundred teachers listened to my lecture. As I stood next to Sathya Sai Baba, I could see His aura reach beyond the platform. It surrounded all the people in the room. Soon His love – and that's the only word I can use for the warm, buoyant, totally-immersing emotion we experienced that evening – reached each and every person in that room, and they began to sing and chant devotional songs dedicated to Him.

The word "Avatar" is often used when referring to Sathya Sai Baba, meaning one who has Christ-like powers or God-like powers; one who may even be God Himself. Now, I am a devout Catholic. Yet I would be a fool if I did not recognise the powers Sai Baba has.

Amidst the singing and chanting, the Avatar turned to me and said, "Because you are a man of such great love..." and He showed me the empty palm of His hand. He circled His hand in the air three times and produced a ring with

nine precious gems of the world embedded in gold. He said, "It will fit only the first finger of the right hand."

And, indeed, that is the only finger it fits. I have had this ring appraised by jewellers around the world, and they agree the ring is worth between \$950 and \$1100. It's magnificent! It's



"Perhaps of all the miracles I witnessed in my ten days in India, no miracle is as great as the miracle of one man giving so much love to so many people", said Dr. Frank G. Baronowski of Arizona (U.S.A.), describing his experiences with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

a beautiful ring! But it holds special meaning to me because this great man, this Avatar, graced me with His words: "Because you are a man of great love..."

The next day, I was once again honoured by Sathya Sai Baba as I was granted a private audience with Him. I was anxious to discuss

not only reincarnation with Him, but also my grandson. The boy was born with a heart defect. At the age of one year, he weighed slightly less than seven pounds. Numerous operations left him with little hope for a normal life – IF he survived at all.

But before I could mention this to Sathya Sai Baba, He told me that there would be an operation on the day I arrived home (in Arizona) and that the baby would be well. I said, "You must be wrong. The baby is not old enough to have this operation. The physicians said, the minimum age for the operation would be two or even two and a half years." Sathya Sai Baba just smiled, and said, "No, it will be on the day you arrive home."

He was right. On the day I arrived in Arizona, the baby was operated on. The doctor who performed the surgery gave my grandson little hope of survival. When my daughter

introduced the doctor to me, I discovered he was from India. I told him I had just returned from there, and mentioned some of the places I'd been to. When I mentioned Whitefield, he interrupted me and asked, "That's Sathya Sai Baba's country, isn't it?"

I said yes, and showed him the ring I had been blessed with. The doctor looked at me with his eyes glowing, and said, "The child will live," as if what was needed was the mention of Sathya Sai Baba's name.

The child did survive.

Perhaps of all the miracles I witnessed in my ten days in India, no miracle is as great as the miracle of one man giving so much love to so many people. His own words say it best, "Love. Continue to love and all will be well."

*—Excerpted from "The Aura of Love" by
Dr. Frank G. Baronowski,
published in Golden Age, 1979.*

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Three Steps to Divinity



NCE THERE LIVED A COWHERD in a village. Though he was illiterate, he was a great devotee of God. He took the cattle out for grazing early in the morning and brought them back in the evening. At night, he used to attend a devotional congregation where a Pauranik (expounder of mythological texts) of the village used to narrate mythological stories and teach the path



The cowherd listened to the description of Lord Vishnu with great devotion so that the form of the Lord got imprinted on his heart.

of devotion to the villagers. One day, while giving the description of Lord Vishnu, he told the listeners that Vishnu is dark-complexioned, he rides on white Garuda (eagle), bears a white sacred mark on his forehead, accepts Naivedyam (food offerings) of his devotees, fulfils their desires and grants Darshan to those who have firm faith. The cowherd listened to all this with great devotion so that the form of Lord Vishnu as described by the learned man got imprinted on his heart. He also heard from

the learned man that Lord Vishnu listens to the prayers of his devotees and can be pleased by singing his glories. After hearing all this, there developed a deep yearning in the cowherd, and he made a firm determination to have the direct vision of the Lord, come what may.

The cowherd used to carry with him everyday his lunch in a cloth packet from his house when he went out for grazing the cattle. Since the day he made the firm resolve to have Lord's Darshan, the cowherd offered buttermilk rice to Lord Narayana as Naivedyam, and started singing this prayer daily:

“Oh dark-complexioned Lord!
Come riding on white Garuda,
And drink this buttermilk.”

Leaving the cattle for grazing in a field, he used to sit in the shade of a tree and sing this song. He used to become so engrossed in his singing that he even forgot to eat his own food which he brought from his house. After some days, he decided that he would not eat the food which God did not accept and returned totally hungry without any food or drink.

Ten-eleven days passed like this, with the result that the cowherd became very thin and weak. But he did not stop contemplating on the Lord. He felt miserable, thinking that perhaps his song was not good enough to please the Lord or his way of singing was not up to the mark. He shook with exhaustion while taking the cattle out to the forest for grazing. In spite of suffering from pangs of hunger, he did not want to eat anything till the Lord ate the

Naivedyam offered by him and kept singing the song daily to please the Lord:

“Oh dark-complexioned Lord!
Come riding on white Garuda
And drink this buttermilk.”

One day when the cowherd was singing this song, Lord Vishnu, moved with compassion by his constant contemplation and unblemished devotion, manifested before him in the form of an old Brahmin. On seeing him, there did not develop in the cowherd the feeling that he was Lord Vishnu. He therefore asked him, “Sir, who are you and where have you come from?” The old Brahmin replied, “I am Lord Narayana and I have come in answer to your prayer.” But the cowherd did not find any resemblance of the old Brahmin with the form of Lord Vishnu which the Pauranik had described to him since he was neither dark complexioned nor rode on white eagle. Every Sadhaka (spiritual seeker) wishes to see the Lord in the form which is described to him. The cowherd therefore sang this song:

“You do not have the form
That has been described to me
Nor is your form beautiful like that of the
Lord.”

The cowherd then said to the old Brahmin, “Please come here tomorrow at 7 o’clock in the morning.” Lord Narayana replied that he would come. The cowherd thought it proper to call on the Pauranik and understand from him whether the old Brahmin was indeed Lord Vishnu or not. He at once went to his house, narrated all that had happened and prayed to him, “Swami! Please come to the bank of the river tomorrow at 7 o’clock in the morning.” Making fun of the cowherd, the Pauranik said, “I have not yet caught the madness that has seized you. Get lost, I will not come.” When

the poor cowherd pleaded hard before the Pauranik with great humility, the Pauranik agreed to go to the river bank at 7 o’clock in the morning, finding no other way to get rid of him. Soon this news spread in the entire village. Who was that Brahmin and what was this story all about? Out of curiosity, all the villagers reached the river bank before even the break of dawn.

As the much-awaited moment approached, everybody eagerly looked for the appearance of the old Brahmin. Ultimately, the old Brahmin appeared. The cowherd said spiritedly to all. “Look! It was he who came yesterday. He is the same Brahmin.” But except the cowherd,



Lord Vishnu did come in the form of an old Brahmin but he was visible only to the cowherd.

the Brahmin was not visible to anyone of the villagers who had come there. None could understand anything. Everybody thought that it was all a hoax played by this madcap. They made fun of him and even started beating him out of anger. Enraged by the beating of the villagers, the cowherd gave a hard slap on the cheek of the Brahmin and shouted loudly, “Have you come to put me into this pitiable condition? When you are visible to me, why don’t you reveal yourself to all?” At once, Lord

Vishnu in his most loving form with a charming smile on his face, adorned with glittering jewels, wearing yellow attire and riding on Garuda manifested there. Jumping with joy, the cowherd burst into a joyous song:

"Oh dark-complexioned Lord riding on the white eagle!

Oh my Beloved Father!

Out of your compassion, you have come!"

Singing this song, he offered his salutations to the Lord. In the meantime, a celestial chariot descended from heaven. At the command of the Lord, the cowherd ascended the chariot and flew away. All those present there were wonderstruck to see this grand spectacle.

God always listens to the devotees' prayers made with deep devotion and total faith, and grants their wishes. He perceives the deep yearning hidden behind their prayers. He does not take notice of external show of devotion.

The spiritual practitioner first of all learns about the form and attributes of God by reading



The cowherd burst into a joyous song when Lord Vishnu manifested before him in his most loving form.

sacred texts or by hearing from his Guru. This is called Jnatum, meaning knowing. By reflecting and contemplating on the form or attributes over a period of time, he can have the direct vision of God and can attain satisfaction. This is called Drashtum, meaning seeing. But full satisfaction is derived only by total merger with God. This is called Praveshtum, meaning merger.

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— Baba



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