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"Cultivate sacred thoughts to love and respect your parents; show them gratitude and give them happiness. There will be no worse sinner than you if you deceive your parents and take to evil path. If you perform such a heinous act, then what is the use of all your education? Even earning your livelihood by begging is better than acquiring this type of education. Therefore, acquire the education which develops virtues in you."



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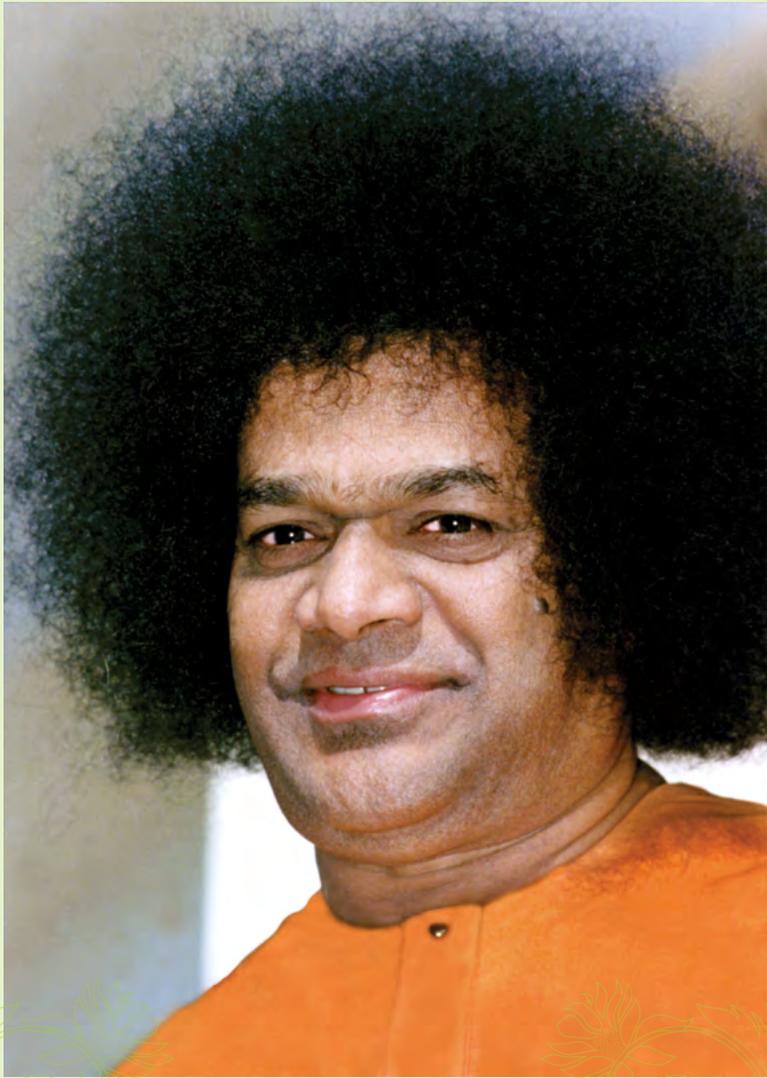
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AN APPEAL TO DEVOTEES OF BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



We wish to express our gratitude and appreciation for all the support that we have received from devotees of Bhagavan throughout the world during the difficult period of the ailment of Baba's physical body and thereafter. The messages of faith in Bhagavan that were received and the experience of His continued presence fortified us in facing the challenges that confronted us.

Bhagavan has always said that He is not the body but the manifestation of the Supreme Consciousness that pervades all creation and beyond. He also impressed upon us that we were also the images of the Divine. His Mission on this earth was mainly to enable humanity to realise its inherent Divinity.

The Supreme Consciousness that Bhagavan personified is eternal. Bhagavan is therefore with us, now and forever. Prasanthi Nilayam is the place which the Divine chose to be His abode and it will continue to be so.

It is therefore obligatory on us to ensure that all programmes and events that used to take place at Prasanthi Nilayam are continued just as before. Starting from Guru Purnima this year, all festivals as per the normal calendar of events will continue. These will also include programmes like the Grama Seva, Dasara, University Convocation, Birthday Celebrations, Sports, etc.

Other events like the Prasanthi Seva, Parthi Yatra, pilgrimage programmes, various conferences and training programmes, Bal Vikas and cultural programmes, etc., will also continue as before.

The daily Darshan schedule has also been set in place and is being faithfully observed.

Bhagavan is with us and will always be with us, not only at Prasanthi Nilayam, but everywhere every moment of our life. We have to live our life under His unbounded love and protection and continued guidance. He has shown us the path and we have to faithfully tread it to ultimately achieve union with Him.

Jai Sai Ram!

- Trustees and Members of the Council of
Management of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust



AMRITA DHARA

BHAGAVAN'S DISCOURSE:
8TH JULY 1996

STUDENTS ARE THE FUTURE SAVIOURS OF A COUNTRY

Iron gets rusted when it keeps lying in dust, but its rust is removed when it comes in contact with fire. In the same way, man is affected by the company which he associates himself with.

(Telugu Poem)

Rain water gets absorbed when it falls on sand. When the same rain water falls on fine clay, it becomes sweet. In the same way, devotion of a person shines according to his deservedness.

(Telugu Poem)

NEVER MAKE FRIENDS WITH THOSE WHO HAVE NO CHARACTER

Students, Embodiments of Love!



UMAN LIFE BY ITSELF IS very sacred. But it becomes good or bad according to the company it is associated with.

When you keep iron in dust, it gets rusted. But the same iron, when it is put in fire, gets rid of its rust, becomes soft and starts shining.

Particles of dust rise up in the sky in the company of wind, but fall down into ditches when they are associated with rain water. The dust particles do not have wings to fly up in the sky, nor have they feet to jump down. Both their rise and fall happen by the effect of the company. Your good or bad depends upon the type of company you join.

*Satsangatwe Nissangatwam,
Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam,
Nirmohatwe Nischalatattwam,
Nischalatattwe Jivanmukti.*

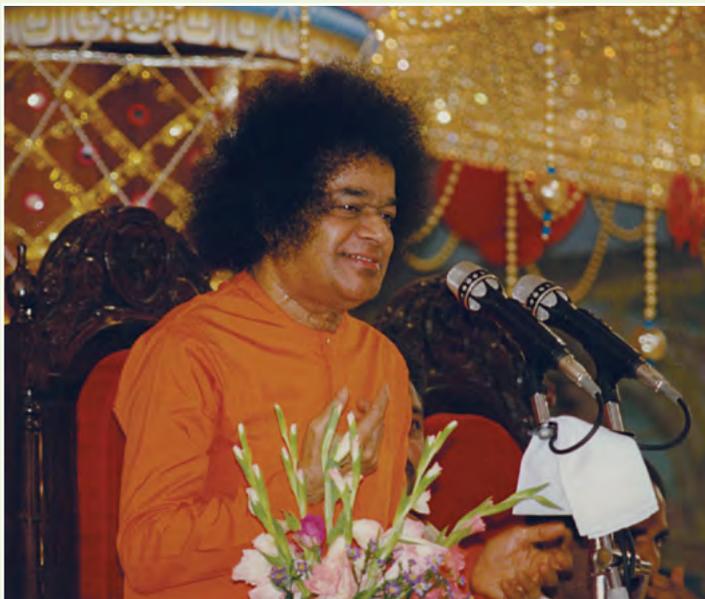
(Sanskrit Sloka)

(Good company leads to detachment; detachment makes one free from delusion; freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind; steadiness of mind confers liberation.)

Good Company Makes a Man Noble and Divine

Good company makes you sacred and divine. On the other hand, bad company gives rise to bad feelings and bad thoughts which prompt you to perform bad deeds. Therefore, it is essential for man to join good company and develop his humanness. Good company can elevate man to the level of divinity whereas bad company can degenerate him to the level of an animal. Animal level is below human level and divinity is above; human level is in between these two. You should make efforts to rise above human level. No effort is needed for your downward fall. To become bad is easy, but it is difficult to attain higher level. Though it may be difficult, yet man should make efforts to





Cultivate Friendship with Persons of Good Character only

Your thoughts are the root cause of everything. Therefore, you should have only noble, sacred, pure and meaningful thoughts. But young people today entertain bad thoughts, bad feelings and perform bad actions and thereby waste their precious young age. When the iron is kept in dust, it acquires rust and loses its strength. When it undergoes the test of fire, it gets rid of the rust and regains its strength. In order to get back its strength, the iron has to get rid of dust. What is this dust? This dust is nothing but the bad feelings of man which arise out of bad company. One acquires all sorts of bad feelings due to bad company. As is the company, so you become. Therefore, it is said, *Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.* There is no harm in taking time to enquire whether the person with whom you want to make friendship is good or bad.

Young age is very important and sacred. In fact, it is the golden age. It should be free from the rust and dust of evil qualities. Students should have good qualities. All that they see, speak, hear and do should be sacred. It is, therefore, necessary that first of all they fill their heart with love for God. Your heart is like a big tank and your senses are like the taps. If you fill your heart with the water of love, the same sweet water will come out of the taps of your senses. As is your heart, so will be your actions. Therefore, when you fill your heart with love, all your actions will be suffused with love.

When you have high status and good position in society, everyone will run after you, saying, hello, hello! But when you lose your position and fall on bad days, everyone will run away from you. This is not true friendship. What is true friendship? A true friend is one who will follow you like a shadow in times of both pleasure and pain, profit and loss. When

reach higher levels. But, unfortunately, man today associates himself with bad company because of which his good feelings are turned into bad feelings and good actions into bad actions, and ultimately his life becomes miserable.



the tank is full of water, thousands of frogs will come into it. But when the tank becomes dry, even a single frog will not be seen there. Similarly, when you have a good position and high rank, everyone will follow you. But you will find none in your times of difficulty. Such friendship is not true friendship. A true friend is one who remains with you in joy and sorrow and in prosperity and adversity. You should make friendship with only such persons with proper discrimination. Don't make friendship with everybody who says hello, hello to you. This is a great mistake. You should know the background, habits, behaviour, discipline and other qualities of the person with whom you want to make friendship. You should also try to know with whom he associates and what type of company he keeps. If you come to know that he is in bad company, you should not even look at his face. Even if he says hello to you, you should move away from him saying goodbye because such company can even endanger your life. But today due to the effect of modern education, students develop friendship with all types of people. It cannot be called true friendship. Such a type of friendship is temporary like passing clouds. You should entertain such friendship only to the extent necessary.

Character is very important for a student. A student without character is like a living corpse. Never make friendship with those who have no character. One who does not have individual character will not have social character also. How can a person without social character have national character? Therefore, first and foremost, man should have individual character. He should develop steady vision and unwavering mind. You should not even look at the face of someone who has a wavering mind like the pendulum

Respect and serve your mother, father, Guru and elders. Any amount of spiritual practices that you undertake cannot be considered as Sadhana in the true sense if you disobey your elders and ignore the words of your parents. Even God will not accept this type of spiritual practices. If you hurt the living beings and worship God, God will not be pleased. First and foremost, have love for all living beings. Only then would you have loved God. Easwara Sarva Bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings). God is immanent in all living beings. You should respect noble people in a befitting manner with heart full of sacred feelings.

of a clock. Such students are very bad boys. You should develop no intimacy with such bad boys. Otherwise, you will also ultimately become a bad boy. Develop friendship with only those who are good. As I have already said, if iron is kept in dust, it loses its strength. Iron is a very hard and strong metal. But when it is put in dust, it loses its strength. When it is put in fire, it becomes bright and soft. All its impurities also get removed. When it becomes pure and soft, it can be changed into any shape by beating it with a hammer. It can be made into a circle or a semicircle or any other shape. All types of instruments can be made from it. Good company is also like fire which makes your heart pure by removing the dust of all impurities. Only when your heart becomes free from all impurities is it possible for you to overcome all your sorrow, grief and misery. So long as your heart is full



of impurities, there can be no transformation in you.

Education should Lead you to the Goal of Life

Everyone should undergo the process which is called Samskar (refinement). What is the meaning of Samskar? Samskar means to get rid of impurities and cultivate good qualities. Many edible food items are produced in their natural form. We eat rice and many types of pulses. However, we do not partake of them in their raw form, in which they are harvested. Take paddy, for example. First, you have to separate the paddy plants from weeds. Then you have to remove the husk to get rice. After getting rice from paddy, you have to put it on fire to cook. Only then it becomes fit for eating. In the same manner, precious metals like gold and silver have to be refined. They cannot be used in the form they are obtained from mines because they are mixed with dust and other impurities. They have to be made pure by putting them in fire and by various other means. Only then can they become pure metals which can be made into many types of ornaments. Therefore, refinement is necessary for everything.

This is a cloth. First, it is in the form of cotton, mixed with seeds. If you want to make cloth out of it, you have to separate seeds from cotton and make yarn out of cotton. For cotton to become cloth, it has to undergo many processes of refinement. Similarly, it is only when man undergoes refinement can he attain purity. Whatever you study today is limited only to bookish knowledge. Refinement is required in respect of your studies also. Howsoever highly educated you may become, your knowledge is useless without refinement.

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

Modern education only makes you fit for argumentation. This is not the purpose of your education. Education is not meant merely to fill your belly. Agriculture is for food, culture is for wisdom. But you entertain wrong thoughts and consider that education is only for eking out a livelihood. Education is of two types, one is for life and the other is for a living. Besides providing the means of a living, education should also lead you to the goal of life.

Leading a purposeless life and ultimately meeting one's end is not the goal of life. You should lead an ideal life and set an ideal for others to follow. Man may die but his ideals always live. Therefore, all of you should become ideal students. Ideals never die; they are immortal. For generations together, high ideals will be followed by others. But people today do not know what ideal life means. They acquire some high degrees and become egoistic, considering themselves to be highly educated. So long as a person is beset with ego, ostentation and jealousy, he will be of no use to society. Society will also not respect him. A foolish man is respected only in his house. The head of a village is respected in his village only. The king is respected in his kingdom. But a cultured man is respected everywhere in the world. Therefore, you should first of all make efforts to imbibe cultural values and protect Indian culture. To whichever country you belong, you should protect the culture of that country. That is the real purpose of education.



Respect and Serve your Parents

You should maintain your relationship with others on an even keel. There is no need for you to hate anyone. But you should use your discretion to choose your friends. It is better not to have any friend at all instead of developing friendship with a foolish person. Cultivate friendship only with good persons. Who is a good person? *Manasyekam Vachasyekam, Karmanyekam Mahatmanam* (Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones).

You should choose a person as your friend who has Trikarana Shuddhi (unity of thought, word and deed). You should not even go near a person who thinks something, speaks something else and acts without any relation to his speech or thinking. *Manasyanyath Vachasyanyath, Karmanyananyath Duratmanam* (Those who lack harmony of thoughts, words and deeds are wicked). A true human being is one who maintains harmony between his thoughts, words and deeds. Try to become such a person. *The proper study of mankind is man.* But today people do not pay attention to this noble principle. They do not try to understand the feelings of others. Here is a small example.



Leading a purposeless life and ultimately meeting one's end is not the goal of life. You should lead an ideal life and set an ideal for others to follow. Man may die but his ideals always live. Therefore, all of you should become ideal students. Ideals never die; they are immortal. For generations together, these ideals will be followed by others. But people today do not know what ideal life means. They acquire some high degrees and become egoistic, considering themselves to be highly educated. So long as a person is beset with ego, ostentation and jealousy, he will be of no use to society. Society will also not respect him.

Suppose, there is a dog in a ditch twenty feet away from you. If you go your way without bothering about the dog, the dog will also not take any notice of you. It will not even get up. But if you go near it with a small stone in your hand, it will immediately run away. A dog is able to know the thoughts of man but man today does not try to know the thoughts and



feelings of his fellow beings. In this way, man has become even inferior to dog. Man has not to become dog, he has to become God. The three letters that make these two words DOG and GOD are the same. The only difference lies in the way we arrange them. If you start from 'D', it becomes DOG, and if you start from 'G', it becomes GOD. This is the discrimination that a Sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) should develop. You undertake many spiritual practices like Japa, Tapa, (chanting, penance), etc. But they are not the real spiritual practices. The real spiritual practice is to know the truth.

*Neither by penance nor by pilgrimage
nor by study of scriptures nor by Japa
can one cross the ocean of life. One can
achieve it only by serving the pious.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

You should serve noble people. Respect and serve your mother, father, Guru and elders. Any amount of spiritual practices that you undertake cannot be considered as Sadhana in the true sense if you disobey your elders and ignore the words of your parents. Even God will not accept this type of spiritual practices. If you hurt the living beings and worship God, God will not be pleased. First and foremost, have love for all living beings. Only then would you have loved God. *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). God is immanent in all living beings. You should respect noble people in a befitting manner with heart full of sacred feelings. All are equal in society. However, you should follow certain principles for your own good. *Na Sreyo Niyamam Vina* (without discipline, there can be no well-being). You should have no relationship with those people who lack character and

good qualities. However, there is no harm in offering your respects to everyone. *Sarva Jiva Namaskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (whomsoever you salute, it reaches God).

Purpose of Education is to Foster Virtues in Students

A student should not develop relationship with all sorts of people. There are students, both boys and girls. Neither boys should develop any connection with girls nor girls should develop any relations with boys. Boys and girls who develop such relationship and go on the wrong path are worse than dogs. Such boys and girls deceive even their parents. They waste their life, and their birth is itself a curse. You should not lead such a useless life. What sort of life you should lead?

*A person, who does not utilise his hands
in the worship of the Lord, who does not
sing His glory till his mouth aches and is
bereft of compassion and truth, is verily a
curse on his mother's womb.*

(Telugu Poem)

Is the birth of such a person meant only to give pain to his mother's womb? What is the purpose of all his studies? The purpose of education is to foster virtues. This is the essence of all education. Books are full of knowledge but what is the use if the head is full of mud? Can you call it learning? No, no. First of all, you have to get rid of impure thoughts from your mind.

*If the head is empty, one can fill it with
something. But if it is already filled with
trivial and mundane matters, where is the
place for anything else? How is it possible
to fill the head with something sacred if it
is not emptied?*

(Telugu Poem)



This tumbler is full of water. How can you pour milk into it? First, you have to make the tumbler empty of water and then pour milk into it. Moreover, if you pour milk into water, you will spoil both. Cultivate sacred thoughts to love and respect your parents; show them gratitude and give them happiness. There will be no worse sinner than you if you deceive your parents and take to evil path. If you perform such a heinous act, then what is the use of all your education? Even earning your livelihood by begging is better than acquiring this type of education. Therefore, acquire the education which develops virtues in you.

A son without character, education without purpose, human race without morality, man without peace are like night without moon. (Telugu Poem)

Your education should make you a paragon of virtues. You should become the ideal leaders of this country. In fact, you are the future saviours of the country. If the youth of the nation go astray, the entire nation is bound to come to grief. If there is a bend in the sapling, there will be a bend in the tree also. The future of a country depends on its students. Students are the very foundation of the mansion of the country. Young age is the foundation of the mansion of life. This is the stage of Brahmacharya Ashram (celibate stage), on which the first floor of Grihastha Ashram (householder stage) is built. The storey of Vanaprastha Ashram (recluse stage) is similarly built on the first floor of Grihastha Ashram. The top floor of Sannyasa Ashram (renunciant stage) is similarly built on the storey of Vanaprastha Ashram. Thus, the mansion of life is a multi-storeyed building. If the foundation of this mansion is not strong, the entire mansion will collapse. Therefore, you should make the foundation strong.

Young age is very important and sacred. In fact, it is the golden age. It should be free from the rust and dust of evil qualities. Students should have good qualities. All that they see, speak, hear and do should be sacred. It is, therefore, necessary that first of all they fill their heart with love for God. Your heart is like a big tank and your senses are like the taps. If you fill your heart with the water of love, the same sweet water will come out of the taps of your senses. As is your heart, so will be your actions. Therefore, when you fill your heart with love, all your actions will be suffused with love.

Do not Waste Precious Human Birth

If you throw a stone in a well, it will give rise to waves. How far will the waves go? They will spread in the entire well and go up to its edges. Similarly, when you drop a stone of a good or a bad thought in the lake of your mind, its effect will spread to your entire body. If it is a bad thought, then your eyes, ears and tongue will see, hear and speak all that is evil. Your hands will also perform evil actions and your feet will take you to undesirable places. The effect of your thoughts will spread to your entire being right from top to toe. Therefore, heart is very important. But students today pay attention only to art but not heart. Heart is inside, art is outside. Art is worldly and heart is divine. Art is related to Pravritti (worldliness) whereas heart is related to Nivritti (spirituality). The principle of Nivritti is most sacred and sublime. This is described in Vedanta as *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (It is attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal,

Continued on page 179...

EASWARAMMA DAY FUNCTION



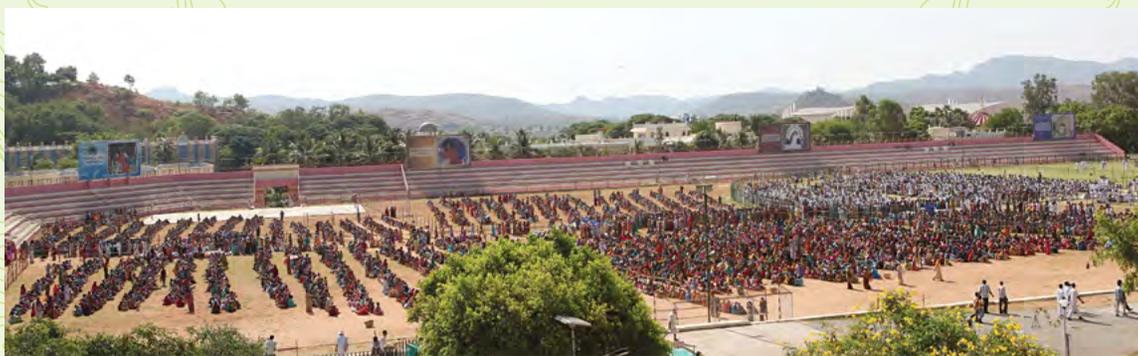
ASWARAMMA DAY WAS celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam in memory of the Divine Mother Easwaramma on 6th May 2011.

In the morning, a function was held at the Samadhi of the Divine Parents, Mother Easwaramma and Pedda Venkama Raju. The Samadhi located at Samadhi Road was beautifully decorated on this occasion. The programme started at 7.50 a.m. with Bhajans. Meanwhile, the family members of Bhagavan made offerings and performed worship at the Samadhi with due ceremony. The morning programme concluded with Arati at 8.30 a.m. after distribution of Prasadam.

After the conclusion of the programme at the Samadhi, Narayana Seva was performed in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium. The programme of Narayana Seva started at 9.30 a.m. with lighting of lamp at Santhi Vedika where beautiful decorations had been made with flowers, and photographs of Mother Easwaramma and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba were installed amidst these decorations. While Mandir Bhajan singers started Bhajans, the Seva Dal members, students of Bhagavan and teachers from

Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning distributed Prasadam consisting of meals and clothes to about 15,000 men and women orderly seated in rows in the sprawling stadium. The Narayana Seva concluded at 10.20 a.m. with Arati.

The evening programme consisting of talks by three elders and devotional music by Malladi Brothers was held in Sai Kulwant Hall. The programme started at 5.00 p.m. with the talk of Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Dwelling on the teachings of Bhagavan, the learned speaker observed that Bhagavan gave highest importance to selfless service. When devotees run to help the suffering fellow beings, God would run after them to grant them liberation, he added. The second speaker was Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus of the Institute. Avatars, he said, do not die; they live forever. Referring to the vast multitudes who came to Prasanthi Nilayam to pay their homage to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the learned speaker remarked that Bhagavan has installed Himself in the hearts of millions of His devotees and will live in



Narayana Seva was performed in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium as part of Easwaramma Day function on 6th May 2011.



their hearts for all times to come. The third speaker was Sri V.S.R. Murthy, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan from Hyderabad. Sri Murthy observed that Bhagavan not only set up hospitals, educational institutions and water projects fulfilling the pious wishes of the Divine Mother Easwamma in a magnanimous way, He also set highest ideals of love for mother, mother tongue and motherland.

These talks were followed by a devotional music concert by Malladi Brothers, Sri Sriram Prasad and Sri Ravi Kumar. Malladi Brothers, who had earlier given many scintillating concerts in Bhagavan's Divine

...Continued from page 177

pure, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). One should have Chittha Shuddhi (mental purity) to attain this. *Chittasya Shuddhaye Karmah* (good deeds give mental purity). All the actions that we perform should contribute to purity of heart.

There was a sage by name Thiruthondar Alwar in Tamil Nadu who prayed, "Oh Lord! I worship You with all the purity of my heart. I have attained this precious human birth with great difficulty. It is not so easy to attain human birth. It can be attained only by the accumulated merits of many past lives. Let not this golden opportunity slip away from my hand". The same feelings were expressed by Mira also. She prayed, "Oh Giridhari! I went deep into the ocean and found this pearl of human life. Please shower Your grace on me so that this precious pearl of human life does not slip away from my hand and fall into the ocean again. If I lose this, my entire life is doomed".

Presence, sang many favourite numbers of Bhagavan. They began their programme with Rama Bhakti Samrajyam (kingdom of Rama's devotion). There was no dry eye in the hall when they poured out their heart in singing "Janula Madhya Tirugade Jagapathi" (The Master of the universe who walks among people). They brought their concert to a close with the famous song "Oh Rama Ne Naamam Yemi Ruchi Ra" (How tasty is Your Divine Name, oh Rama!). After this touching presentation of Malladi Brothers, there was a brief session of Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam. The programme came to a close with Arati at 7.30 p.m.

You are blessed with rare human birth which you have attained as a result of merits of so many past lives. You should make sure that you do not waste this human life by taking to wrong path. Even if man does not attain the level of divinity, he should at least remain at the level of a human being and should not degenerate to the level of an animal. It is very important for students to learn this. Both good and bad are prevalent in the world. You should see to it that you take to good path without bothering about what others are doing. Consider even your small defects as big, and at the same time, do not magnify the small defects of others. First of all, you should get rid of your own defects and cultivate virtues. Only then will humanness blossom in you.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajans, "*Madhura Madhura Murali Ghana Shyama...*" and "*Subrahmanyam Subrahmanyam...*")

– From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam on 8th July 1996.

From our Archives

GOD INCARNATES TO LEAD MAN ON THE GODWARD PATH

DEDICATE YOUR LIFE TO THE SERVICE OF OTHERS



I HAD NO PLAN till now to speak to you. But Kasturi mentioned that those of you who were here for many years had not had the chance of even a Namaskar (reverential salutations) since three months, i.e., from Sivarathri when streams of devotees started coming in. He stated that you were all hungry for Darshan as I was spending hours and hours talking to those devotees who were anxious to leave this place. I put in My appearance at the Bhajan sessions twice a day just for a minute or so to receive Arati and leave. I find, you are all sad at what you misinterpret as neglect. So, I shall administer some tonic to your drooping hearts.

To Attain God's Darshan is the Highest Blessedness

Well. You have the chance to see, experience and be sanctified by the incarnation



Dedicate this life to the service of others, for others are only visible representatives of the Lord who resides in you. I have come in order to repair the ancient highway leading man to God. Become sincere, skilful overseers, engineers and workmen and join Me. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Sastras are the road I refer to. I have come to reveal them and revive them.



of the Lord. This chance you have got as a result of the accumulation of merit in many previous lives. That merit has brought you here, when I have come down on earth. For this chance, Rishis (sages) and Devas (gods) prayed long in the past. Having won this chance, strive to taste the sweetness and achieve the bliss of merging, without wasting even a single moment. The rays that emanate from Me are of three grades: the Sthula (gross), filling this Prasanthi Nilayam; the Sukshma (subtle), pervading the earth; and the Karana (causal), covering the entire universe. People who have the privilege of living in this Nilayam are indeed lucky, for they are nearest to these rays. The Sthula rays make man a Sadhaka; the Sukshma, make him a Mahatma (great soul) and the Karana, convert him into a Paramahansa (realised soul). Do not, therefore, waste your days, entertaining worldly desires and ambitions and planning to achieve them. Success or failure in worldly endeavours should not elate or depress you. When a banquet is in store for you, why run after the droppings from others' tables? Such plans and desires have no finality or fixity. They have no genuine worth.

Command the Mind, Regulate the Conduct

Keep undimmed before you the main goal, the task for which you have come into this school; do not deviate from it, whatever the attraction that tempts you to stray. Command the mind, regulate the conduct, so that the goal is won. Let not the care of the body or the fostering of the family or the demands of pride and pomp overwhelm the call of the Spirit. Siva (Supreme Reality), Jiva (individual) and Prakriti (objective world) are

the three principles that confront you. The world has to be utilised by Jiva to attain Siva, which is the fundamental fact in both. Until you get Atmananda by realising Siva, the world will press on you with its weight, and well-nigh suffocate you. After that, the world will fall off, on its own.

Winning the grace of the Lord is as easy as melting butter; that is why the heart of the Lord is compared to butter. It is as soft as butter, they say. A little warmth is enough to melt it; a little warm affection shown to a suffering companion, a little warmth while pronouncing His Name, turning it over on the tongue, so to say. The Name is the spring of Chaitanya (consciousness) that you get by Namasmarana; it is the life-giving nectar; it is the fountain of Primal Energy. Recite the Name and the Named will be before you; picture the Named and the Name will leap to your lips. The Name and the Form are the reverse and the obverse of the same coin.

Focus the Mind on the Name

There are some who vow to write Rama Nama or some other Name a million times, but very often it is just a matter of the fingers and the pen. The mind of the writer is like the spoon which does not taste the honey which it doles out. The mind should not wander from the Name; it should dwell on the sweetness which the Name connotes; it should ruminate on the beauty of the Form which it recalls, the fragrance which it spreads. The conduct and behaviour of the writer should be such as befits a servant of God. Others should be inspired by them and their faith should get revitalised by their experience of the writer.

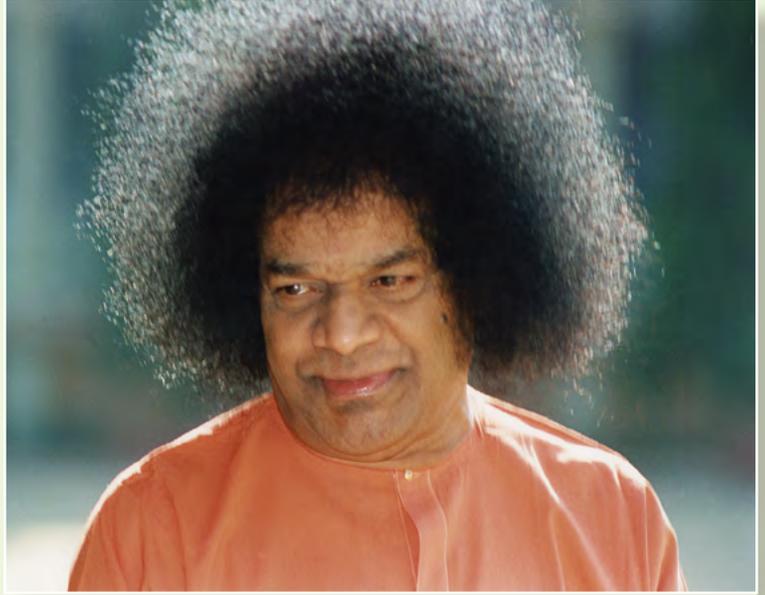
To earn the grace of the Master, there is only one recipe: obey His orders without



murmur. I am telling you My truth, not in self-praise, but to make you understand Me. If I do not tell about Myself, who can? Grace is showered on those who obey instructions and follow orders. But the number of such persons is very small. Even though instructions are light and easy, they are designed to make you go beyond Triputi – the three-fold distinction of the Pilgrim, the Path and the Goal; of Bhagavata, Bhakta and Bhagavan; of Lover, Loved and Love.

Ancient Highway Leading Man to God

You are in Ambareesha Tattwa (principle of devotion) one moment and in Durvasa Tattwa (principle of anger) the next. This is wrong. You should be steady, fixed in your resolve and in your conduct. That is why, outside Prasanthi Nilayam, I serve in My Discourses what you call Vindu (feast), but here, to you, I always administer Mandu (medicine). This is the Kendra (centre), the headquarters of the Astika (theist) army which is to establish Loka Kalyanam (world's welfare). Of course, I insist everywhere on piety and a high moral life; but here I lay down stricter and more rigorous rules. Well, I shall tell you some hard words. You very often condemn the mind as a monkey but take it from Me,



Keep undimmed before you the main goal, the task for which you have come into this school; do not deviate from it, whatever the attraction that tempts you to stray. Command the mind, regulate the conduct, so that the goal is won. Let not the care of the body or the fostering of the family or the demands of pride and pomp overwhelm the call of the Spirit. Siva (Supreme Reality), Jiva (individual) and Prakriti (objective world) are the three principles that confront you. The world has to be utilised by Jiva to attain Siva, which is the fundamental fact in both.

it is far worse. The monkey leaps from one branch to another; but the mind leaps from the heights of the Himalayas to the depths of the sea, from today to tens of years ago. Tame it by the process of Namasmarana. Make it, as Ramadasa did, a Bhadrachala – a stable steady mountain. That is the task I assign to you . Make your heart an Ayodhya by means of Rama Nama; Ayodhya means



a city that can never be captured by force. That is your real nature – Ayodhya and Bhadrachala. Forget this and you are lost. Install Rama in your heart and then no outer force can harm you.

Realise that like the waves of the sea Sukha and Dukha (happiness and sorrow) rise and fall; they are like inhalation and exhalation of breath. If you attain that calm, the ground whereon you stand becomes Kasi (sacred land), every work of yours gets transmuted into the highest form of Siva Puja (worship of Siva). Roam about in the region of your own mind and understand its moods and mysteries; do not dream of wandering in foreign lands before you become masters of your own kingdom. Know yourself; that lesson once learnt, you can know others much sooner and much more truly.

Dedicate this life to the service of others, for others are only visible representatives of the Lord who resides in you. I have come in order to repair the ancient highway leading man to God. Become sincere, skilful overseers, engineers and workmen and join Me. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Sastras are the road I refer to. I have come to reveal them and revive them.

Lotus of your Heart Blossoms by Divine Rays

The rules I have prescribed for those who come to the Nilayam may appear strict and even severe; but it is all for your good. Inner purity first and outer purity later – that is the natural order. You feel full satisfaction when you take a bath first and then wear washed clothes. I have to be strict, because if I excuse one error, the tendency is to commit another. A plant will grow well only when the ground all around the stem is

You have the chance to see, experience and be sanctified by the incarnation of the Lord. This chance you have got as a result of the accumulation of merit in many previous lives. That merit has brought you here, when I have come down on earth. For this chance, Rishis (sages) and Devas (gods) prayed long in the past. Having won this chance, strive to taste the sweetness and achieve the bliss of merging, without wasting even a single moment. The rays that emanate from Me are of three grades: the Sthula (gross), filling this Prasanthi Nilayam; the Sukshma (subtle), pervading the earth; and the Karana (causal), covering the entire universe.

raked up and exposed to the sun and rain. I want you to drop old deep-rooted habits of purposeless talk, vanity, envy and scandal-mongering. You are not to live like earnest Sadhakas just to please Me; it is a duty you owe to yourselves and so, you must adhere to those rules wherever you are; not merely within the confines of the Nilayam. Of course, Prasanthi Nilayam, you will have noticed, has no wall or fence around it; for it is not limited by any boundaries; it spreads and spreads until it envelops the universe.

Generally, I speak all that is sweet, but on this matter of discipline, I will not grant any concessions. I do not care whether you come or having come, go. I will insist on strict obedience. I shall not reduce the rigour to suit your level, for that will only ruin you; I pay attention to your ultimate good. Live peacefully, happily, contentedly, taking each



day as a gift from the Lord. Do not rush and scramble, fret and fume. Be vigilant and do not allow greed or anger to creep in.

Attend all the sessions in the hall – the Pranava Japa (recitation of Om), the Bhajan, the Discourses. Do not take shelter behind excuses. If you are ill, Bhajan will help in the cure, or, let Me tell you, it is far better to die during Bhajan with the Lord's Name on the lips. Sadhakas are led along wrong paths; the respect due to pious people is dwindling because they are not kept rigorously on the hard path. Concessions have spoiled them. Hereafter, I will not excuse the slightest deviation. You have been here for years and so I have to treat you as grown-ups, not as children. It is on account of the Prema I have towards you that I rebuke you when you take a false step. My Anugraha Kiranas (rays of grace) will make the lotus of your heart blossom.

Wherever you are, you are Near Me

In a hospital, the doctors care for the disease, not for the size of the bank deposits the patients have. Disease is the important thing. So, too, everyone suffering from Bhava Roga (disease of birth and death) and, the dual buffets of good and bad, has a right for the care and consideration of the doctor. The doctor prescribes the medicine and the regimen; both are supplementary. When you get a relapse of doubt and distress, take the medicine a greater number of times and in larger doses. Join Satsanga (the company of the godly). Just as tame elephants surround the wild tusker and immobilise it as a preliminary to taming it, the spiritually minded will bring the doubter round.

The heart of the Lord is compared to butter. It is as soft as butter, they say. A little warmth is enough to melt it; a little warm affection shown to a suffering companion, a little warmth while pronouncing His Name, turning it over on the tongue, so to say. The Name is the spring of Chaitanya (consciousness) that you get by Namasmarana; it is the life-giving nectar; it is the fountain of Primal Energy. Recite the Name and the Named will be before you; picture the Named and the Name will leap to your lips. The Name and the Form are the reverse and the obverse of the same coin.



The current flows always along the wire. You have only to take a connection and switch on. If the connection is loose, then the flow of the current will be disturbed and might even stop. It is you who connect and disconnect. You switch on and off and you get day and night. Study the Gita; you know, Gita draws a line which you should not cross. I do not ask for your vows; why should I force you to make them and cause you to break them? If you do so, your life becomes a torn cloth, stitched loose; it may tear again at the slightest pull.

Let Me tell you one thing in the end: Howsoever you are, you are Mine. I will not give you up. Wherever you are, you are near Me; you cannot go beyond My reach.

– **From Bhagavan's Discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam on 28th April 1962.**



DEVOTIONAL FERVOUR AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

ARADHANA MAHOTSAVA



SPECIAL PUJA CALLED
Aradhana Mahotsava was
conducted in
Sai Kulwant

Hall on the morning of 4th May 2011, the 11th day of Bhagavan leaving His mortal body. The Puja performed by Bhagavan's nephew Sri R.J. Ratnakar began at 6.30 a.m. amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras by Vedic priests. After the performance of initial rituals, the priests formed two groups. While one group of priests kept reciting Vedic Mantras, the other group helped Sri Ratnakar in the performance of rituals. Fire was lit at 7.30 a.m. in an improvised Yajna Kunda in which Sri Ratnakar offered oblations while the priests chanted relevant Mantras. After the conclusion of the rituals and the performance of the Yajna, Tirtha Puja (worship of water from sacred rivers) was performed. This sacred water contained in a Kalasha (sacred vessel) was first sprinkled by the priests on Sri Ratnakar and his family and thereafter it was sprinkled on the devotees gathered in the hall. At the conclusion of this special Puja at 9.30 a.m., Bhajans began which continued up to 10.00 a.m. when Arati was performed, marking the conclusion of this sacred worship.

The evening programme started with Veda chanting at 4.30 p.m., after which four eminent speakers addressed the gathering in Sai Kulwant Hall. The first speaker was Sri



A special Puja was performed in Sai Kulwant Hall on 4th May 2011.

Anil Kumar, a faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Sri Anil Kumar dwelt upon the life and teachings of Bhagavan and narrated in chaste Telugu a few incidents from His life which highlighted various aspects of His Divine Mission of protecting, uplifting and redeeming mankind. Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus of the Institute was the next speaker. Referring to a Discourse of Bhagavan in which Bhagavan elucidated the real meaning of the word Guru, Sri Sahni observed that Bhagavan was the Sadguru who gave to the world the movements like Bal Vikas and ideal system of education, and whose teachings attracted millions of people



to Prasanthi Nilayam from all over the world. The third speaker was Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Director, Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation. God, Dr. Reddy said, is formless and is beyond time, space and causation, but He assumes human form to bestow on mankind the bliss of experiencing His Divine Love. Bhagavan, he observed, assumed a beautiful form for this purpose and showered bountiful love on all. He exhorted one and all to follow the example and teachings of Bhagavan and share love with their fellow beings. The last speaker of the programme was Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. The entire life of Bhagavan, Sri Srinivasan observed, was a saga of selfless love for all mankind. He reminded all those whom Bhagavan had chosen out of millions of people as instruments of His Divine Mission that it was their sacred duty to contemplate on Bhagavan's teachings and carry forward His Mission. The distinguished speaker assured the devotees that all the programmes and activities started by Bhagavan for the service and welfare of mankind would be continued. As regards the question raised by some people about the selection of a Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Sri Srinivasan announced that Bhagavan would remain its Chairman forever as there was none who could take His place. Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust would always remain an ideal trust and maintain complete transparency in all matters, he added. After these talks, there was a brief session of Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam. The programme came to a close with Arati at 7.30 p.m.

BUDDHA PURNIMA FUNCTION

The holy festival of Buddha Purnima was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great

piety and solemnity. The main theme of this year's function was "Nirvana – the End of Suffering". Nearly 500 devotees came from 11 overseas countries, viz., Afghanistan, Bhutan, Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam to celebrate it in the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam and participated in the proceedings held on 17th and 18th May 2011 in the Conference Hall near the shopping complex.

The programme consisted of Bhajans and chanting of sacred Buddhist Mantras and Rudram. Besides, there were illuminating talks by a galaxy of speakers. Two speakers addressed the delegates on the morning of 17th May 2011, the auspicious day of Buddha Purnima. The first speaker was Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation who spoke on the topic "The Way Forward". Dwelling on the teachings of Bhagavan, the distinguished speaker observed that the world today needed Bhagavan's teachings like "Love All, Serve All" and exhorted the devotees to develop selfless love for all and change the loveless society into a loving one. He called upon the delegates and office bearers of the Sai Organisations to carry on the good work in all the institutions like schools, colleges, hospitals, etc., as before and make their life the message of Bhagavan. The second speaker of the session was Sri Anil Kumar who spoke on the main theme of the celebrations, viz., "Nirvana – the End of Suffering". Sri Anil Kumar observed that man had no real suffering and no bondage as he

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Interview

DO NOT EVER FORGET GOD

Sri Sunil Manohar Gavaskar, an accomplished and world famous Indian cricketer, talks to Dr. G. Venkataraman about his personal experiences with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in an interview for Radio Sai Global Harmony.



AI RAM. WELCOME TO THE studios of Radio Sai Global Harmony. It is a great moment for me because never in my life I ever dreamt that I would be interviewing a great personality like you. Normally, I ask people when they first came to Swami. But I want to ask you this question first: In your career, you would have been interviewed a million times and you would have interviewed a million times too. But, did you ever dream that you would be coming here to Radio Sai Studios and be interviewed? How does this experience feel like to you?

It is something beyond description. First of all, coming to Prasanthi Nilayam to find peace which

eludes you is itself a great experience. Outside, to be honest, when you go back to your place from Prasanthi Nilayam, there is the hustle bustle, the hurly burly of everyday life, which does not give you peace and you are always under some kind of pressure. But when you come here, these trips bring

you a great deal of peace. I feel that peace over here. Irrespective of the number of interviews one might have done, there is some nervousness every time you do one more. But that nervousness is simply not there now when I am here, because I really feel very close to Swami around here.

That is very nice. There is some sort of magic in the air that grips you and eliminates all your anxiety and worries; you

S In cricket, for example, there is that phrase 'it is not cricket' which is so important. It is being used even in everyday life as well which actually tells you what the game of cricket used to be in olden days. It is possible to come back to that. We are not too far away. We have gone a bit away from that but I think it is possible to get to that. We should remember that at the end of it all, whatever we achieve in sport, whether it is an indoor sport or an outdoor sport, it is only our strength of belief in our own ability and that ability, that self-confidence and that ability to think ourself out of the situations that arise in sport or in life is an ability that is God given. So, do not ever forget God and do not ever give up.



feel pretty relaxed which means you should be coming here more often.

Yes. I would dearly love to do that. I hope Swami also organises that as He is perfectly capable of doing so.

That brings me to the standard opening question for all the celebrities. How did you happen to come to Swami? When you first came, you were out there playing in the middle; now, of course, you are going behind the players, watching them play and guiding them. So, in the midst of all that bustle and stress, how did you happen to come to Swami?

Well, it all started with my mother getting a vision of Swami.

Oh, I see. When did that happen?

This was in 1970. One day when she was cooking in our house in Dadar, Mumbai, suddenly she got a vision of Swami. She saw Him in person. She got all excited about it, stopped all the cooking and went down the road to a newspaper vendor. Describing the deity seen by her in her vision, she asked the vendor if he had any picture of that type. The newspaper vendor had a lot of pictures of gods and goddesses but none of Swami. After seeing all the pictures, she could not find the picture she wanted. So, the newspaper vendor pointed her out to another vendor down the road. She went there, but there also she could not find the picture of the vision she had seen. So, she came back to this first newspaper vendor again, who also supplied newspaper to us regularly.

She told him to look again. Then, the vendor said, "I just showed you about ten minutes ago and it is not there. How can it be there now"? On her persistence, he saw again. Lo and behold, she found Swami's

photo down below in exactly the same way with His hand raised as was her vision. The newspaper vendor gave the picture to her. When my mother asked the price, he said, "Look, I do not know how this picture has come here because I have not ordered it. So, I will not charge you a penny, it is yours". Then, that picture was kept in my bedroom. After it was kept there, my cricketing fortunes soared. Till then, I was just an okay Ranji Trophy player. But after this, there was a constant upward thrust in my cricketing career. So, along with my mother and father, I started getting mentally and spiritually involved with Swami thenceforward.

Your story is absolutely amazing. I do not know whether you are aware of Sinclair of America. He had an almost similar experience. It has been recorded by him personally. Swami came to him two or three times in his prayer room in Connecticut. He did not know at that time who Swami was. So, he went to the biggest book shop in New York which sold spiritual books. He said to the vendor, "I want a book on somebody who looks like this". That vendor smiled and came back with a book and a packet of Vibhuti too. It turned out that the vendor was a devotee of Swami. Imagine this was in New York. Then, he found out where Puttaparthi was and he came. When he saw Swami, he recognised Him as someone who looked exactly the same as he saw in his house in Connecticut.

Amazing. Absolutely amazing!

Of course, He has got His own ways of bringing people close to Him. The next question is, what impact do you think Swami has made on you? This is very important for our young people and all of us too.

The impact is definitely there. He has guided me throughout my cricketing career.



In what way?

There have been decisions that were hard to take regarding certain aspects of the game, such as the captaincy of the Indian team. It is such a prestigious post. I was getting a little frustrated by it, because it was affecting my personal game. At that stage, there was a calming voice that said to me, "Accept what you get". It was an inner voice. It was when I was saying my morning prayers. I have had a standard prayer since I was in school. There have been virtually the same things that I would say. I was brought up to study in a Jesuit school. So, there is a prayer to God which I have been saying for years now.

And you do not miss it even when you are travelling?

No, I do not miss it. In fact, even today, the first thing that I do as soon as I wake up is to touch the feet of Swami in the photograph which is by my bedside.

Fantastic. So, literally as Swami says, you start the day with God. This is the most important thing. He is always there every single day and moment; you begin the day with God. What a wonderful thing it is! Now you say, Swami has guided you in all your decision making and major turning points and so on.

All of us go through rough patches in our cricketing careers when nothing seems to be going right. But that is there for everybody. It is at this time that a sense of frustration builds up, and this is where Swami's guiding hand had come. The tendency at such a time is to throw in the towel, to quit and to say, "I do not want to play any more".

I do remember in my living memory of earlier years of great discipline, decorum, dignity on the sports field and I would say

also a display of character. We have heard of Frank Chester, the great umpire – and how people accepted the umpire's verdict without question and how there were shows of sportsmanship and so on. Cricket was a game that was associated with character. Somehow, we seem to have moved rapidly away from it. Why on earth did this happen?

I think, to a great extent, it is due to commercialisation of the game that has caused some of the players, not all, to lose sight of the game. This game has had some great traditions. Cricket is, as you very rightly said, a tremendous character builder. For example, as a batsman you cannot score a century unless there is somebody at the other end to bat with you, somebody at the other end who might actually take a few overs of some very good bowling from a very good bowler whom you might not want to face or you are uncomfortable playing against. So, your partner might score only 25 runs but in that he has helped you to overcome those difficult overs and helped you make a century. Similarly, a bowler cannot be successful if the fielders are not taking catches, stopping runs, putting pressure on the batsman. So, cricket teaches you a lot of team spirit.

Cricket also teaches you to live in society with all its inequalities. There is no equality in society; there are some who are more fortunate than others. It reflects in many ways in the skill level of the player. There could be somebody who is tremendously skilled but he cannot get a century or he cannot get five wickets unless there is a slightly lesser skilled player who is helping him. Sometimes, the greater skilled player has to look after the lesser skilled player. That is what society teaches us too. More fortunate people should look after less fortunate people. So, in a way,



I feel, cricket is a reflection of society at large.

I also suppose the character brings out an element of courage. Wouldn't you agree?

Yes, you know there are times when things are not going well for you and for your team. In situations like that, you must understand how you cope up with it, how you fight back, how you bide your time till the hard period is gone, then capitalise on it, go on to either score runs or take wickets as the case may be. That way, it is a great character builder.

While talking about character, I would like to mention at this point Vijay Merchant. You must have met him, of course. Would you like to tell us something about this great man? Because he is one of the legends as far as Indian team is concerned in character and discipline. I salute him.

Oh yes! Absolutely. According to those who have seen Indian cricket from 1932, he was India's most technically accomplished batsman.

I have seen him a few times and there is no doubt about that.

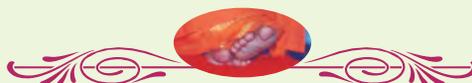
Yes. The closest to him after that has been Sachin Tendulkar as far

as the technical perfection is concerned. That is what the connoisseurs and those who watched the game for long would say. But the late Vijay Merchant used to say that his second innings in life was much better than the first innings. The first innings was being a cricketer and the second innings was being in service to community. He was head of the National Association of Blind. He was a great philanthropist and did a plenty of charity work. He cherished that innings, that part of his life, much more than the earlier part, which was his cricketing part. As a cricketer, he was a great inspiration because I grew up hearing stories about Vijay Merchant, Vijay Hazare, Polly Umrigar, Vijay Manjrekar. These were inspirational figures to all of us. Particularly Vijay Merchant and Vijay

Hazare, because they used to score not just hundreds but double hundreds and triple hundreds, much in the manner of Sir Don Bradman.

That prompts me to ask another interesting question. There are always people who inspire. But it looks like that the nature of the people who inspire has changed. In those days, they were great not only in terms of professional ability; they had

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great character and discipline. I mean, anybody whom you admired had those things in them.

But today, there are certain manifestations of behaviour on the field that make you ache for the old days and say that these things did not happen. You know things like beating the umpire or psychologically damaging the coolness of the opposite player. You know, if you want to get that person out, you bowl better but it is not right to damage his morale with your undesirable behaviour.

Correct. You know, I had to deliver a lecture recently at Lord's in London about the Spirit of Cricket. I did emphasise on this point.

I am very glad, you did that. It reminds me of the observation you made at the conclusion of the Unity Cup Cricket Match at Prasanthi Nilayam. You said, "In every game, there are winners and losers but what matters is how the game is played". I won't forget that. That is really very important. How did the Unity Cup Match start?

I think, Swami in one of His interactions said that He wanted to spread the message of brotherhood and unity amongst all through sports. Because cricket is such a big game in our country and, in fact, in our part of the world, He wanted to have a cricket match. Once Swami gave the go ahead for the match, then the preparations started right from making sure that the ground was ready because it was supposed to be in tip top condition.

There was no cricket ground.

No. There was no ground. Everything had to be done from scratch, virtually. Swami was more keen to see that the pitch was good because He did not want to have any injuries.

If the quality of the pitch is not good, then the quality of the game is not going to be good. Prasanna was put in charge of making sure that the pitch and the outfield was good and I was given the responsibility of making sure that the players were invited. Swami was very keen to have players from all over the world, particularly Pakistan. When I approached Pakistan players in order to make sure that there was no last minute confusion because of the fact that they believed in Islam, I just explained to them that this was the place where people of all religions were welcome; there was no particular religion which was given extra emphasis. They were happy to come. We had four Pakistan players and two former Pakistan players – Zaheer Abbas and Haneef Mohammed, who is known as the original little master.

So, it was my responsibility to make sure we had a proper playing eleven. Arjuna Ranatunga is also a devotee of Swami. He comes often and was also a big help. Kalicharan was also there. Sachin Tendulkar was the captain of the Indian team. He was very keen and eager to come down and play this game. So, that is how the match materialised.

We have a photo of Swami talking intimately to Sachin.

Sachin was really under pressure for his captaincy. There was a lot of talk of his play getting affected because of his captaincy. So, Sachin wanted to actually ask Swami what he should do, whether he should continue his captaincy or not.

Just as you had problems with your captaincy.

Yes. He kept asking me, "Can I just meet Swami for two minutes"? I said, "I will certainly



try and tell Swami about your request”. Later, he went out to field. Then, after every two deliveries, he kept looking for some sort of signal from me to see if I had any message for him and a chance to organise his meeting with Swami. When I had the opportunity to speak to Swami, I said, “Swami, Sachin wants to come up and speak with You”. Swami said, “wait...wait”. He too realised that the Indian captain suddenly could not leave the field and come out and talk. During drinks, Sachin came and sat next to Swami, a substitute went up on the field. It seems Swami said to him, “Don’t worry, in whatever you do, I am with you”. Everybody over there remembers Swami patting him on the back and encouraging him. We all know the fantastic season Sachin had after that.

I was the Vice Chancellor at that time. I was interacting with Zaheer Abbas during lunch hour and Zaheer was seemingly impressed with our students who were taking care of the guests. So, he was asking a lot of questions about Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and our students and how we train them. I was very proud to listen to that. In fact, I could not see the game. I was running around all the time. I found,

I was not alone. There were a thousand students who could not see the game. They were all doing wonderful service; they were absolutely marvellous.

Before we sign off, I would like to recall what you mentioned at the time when Swami awarded the cup to Sachin Tendulkar. You said, if I remember correctly, “Sachin has exceeded his performance by his weightlifting performance”. You know that cup was so heavy. I was also impressed with Clive Lloyd’s speech. He said, “Talent is a gift of God, and we must offer it back to God”.

So, my request to you, sir, is that you please do advise our young listeners about the value of sports as builder of character, especially about reaching God through sports as Clive Lloyd said. Tell our young listeners something about what you would

like them to do, how to follow Swami and through the medium of sports develop their personality and character. Over to you, sir.

Yes. In sports, you want to be a winner all the time. But sports also teach you to lose and if they do not teach you how to lose, how to accept defeat then you are the greatest loser. I think, you learn to win with grace and accept defeat with humility, with a desire to improve

S *Cricket also teaches you to live in society with all its inequalities. There is no equality in society; there are some who are more fortunate than others. It reflects in many ways in the skill level of the player. There could be somebody who is tremendously skilled but he cannot get a century or he cannot get five wickets unless there is a slightly lesser skilled player who is helping him. Sometimes, the greater skilled player has to look after the lesser skilled player. That is what society teaches us too. More fortunate people should look after less fortunate people. So, in a way, I feel, cricket is a reflection of society at large.*



and make yourself a winner the next time you are playing. But most importantly, if you play the sport as it is meant to be played, then whether you win or lose it does not really matter because you know in your heart of hearts that you have given off your best. It is not a question of an individual's ego but it is a question of trying to do the best that one has inherited in as much as talent and skill go. It teaches you, frankly, what is right and what is wrong.

In cricket, for example, there is that phrase 'it is not cricket' which is so important. It is being used in everyday life as well which actually tells you what the game of cricket used to be in olden days. It is possible to come back to that. We are not too far away. We have gone a bit away from that but I think it is possible to get to that. We should remember that at the end of it all, whatever we achieve in sport, whether it is an indoor sport or an outdoor sport, it is only our strength of belief in our own ability and that ability, that self-confidence and that ability to think ourself out

...Continued from page 186

was born liberated. Bondage and suffering were of man's own making, he said. The moment he realised this truth, he would be free from all bondages and sufferings, the distinguished speaker remarked. With the talk of Sri Anil Kumar the morning session on 17th May came to a close.

On the morning of 18th May 2011 also, two speakers addressed the delegates. The first speaker was Sri Venkatesh, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan residing at Prasanthi Nilayam who spoke on the topic "The

of the situations that arise in sport or in life is an ability that is God given. So, do not ever forget God and do not ever give up.

Thank you. I won't say goodbye because I look forward to having you here again, again and again. It was so nice to talk to you. I am sure you must be having tonnes of stories and incidents to share. But one point. Next time when you come, you bring Sachin Tendulkar along with you.

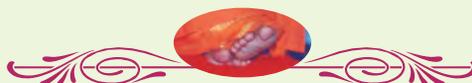
Yes. Indeed. The Indian team's schedule, unfortunately, is so tight that there is hardly any time for them, but it will be my endeavour to bring Sachin and as many of the Indian team members for Swami's Darshan. I know, Rahul Dravid also went to seek Swami's blessings in Bengaluru just before he got married. There are any number of Indian cricketers who are Sai devotees and Swami is there to guide them and to look after them.

It has been a pleasure having you with us. Thank you and Sai Ram.

Sai Ram.

– Courtesy: **Radio Sai Global Harmony**

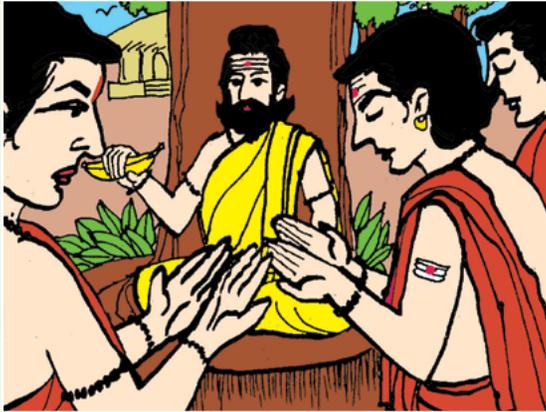
Avatar's Mission". Sri Venkatesh quoted the poems and sayings of Bhagavan to emphasise upon the delegates to share their love with all as expansion of love was life and contraction of love was death. The last talk of the programme was given by Sri Arvind, a student of Bhagavan working in Radio Sai Global Harmony. Speaking on the topic of his talk, "Sai and Me", Sri Arvind narrated a number of his experiences with Bhagavan which highlighted Bhagavan's glory and Divinity.



Eternal Witness



ONCE A SAGE GAVE A BANANA each to all his disciples and said to them, "Come back and report to me after eating this banana when nobody is seeing you". After receiving



Giving a banana to each of his disciples, the sage asked them to eat it without being seen by anyone.

the banana from their Guru, the disciples went to different directions. One disciple ate the banana after closing the door of his room. Another disciple went to a garden away from the village and ate the banana. One of them went to a hilly area bereft of all habitations, and ate the fruit. A disciple by name Kanakadasa however came back in due course without eating the fruit, and



Returning the banana to the Guru, Kanakadasa told him that he could not eat it because God is present everywhere and sees everything.

returned it to the Guru. The Guru asked him, "Kanakadasa! Why have you not eaten the fruit"? With due humility, Kanakadasa said to his Guru, "Swami! The fruit has to be eaten without being seen by anyone. Isn't it so? It is not possible to eat without being seen by God. Hence, I have not eaten the fruit given by you".

This test was administered by the sage to his disciples to know how much they had grasped the principle of divinity. We should perform our actions with the realisation of the truth that God is the eternal witness of all our actions.

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– Convener

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

JAPAN



ON 11TH MARCH 2011, THE northeast coast of Honshu, Japan's largest island, was subjected to the Tohoku Kanto Earthquake, which registered 9.0 on the Richter scale, with its epicentre 373 kilometres northeast of Tokyo and 129 kilometres east of Sendai. Approximately 30 minutes later, a tsunami swept the inland, flooding 500 square kilometres of land. This caused a monumental disaster with great loss of life and property. Several nuclear reactors sustained damage and emitted



Sathya Sai Organisation of Japan promptly provided relief material to the people affected by earthquake and tsunami.

abnormal radiation levels as technicians worked to prevent a total nuclear meltdown. The official death toll was estimated at 11,000 with more than 17,000 people missing and over 1,90,000 people in temporary shelters, experiencing very low temperatures at night.

The Sathya Sai Organisation of Japan responded immediately and distributed

much-needed supplies including medicines, clothing, towels, sheets and food.

Twenty physicians from the Sathya Sai Organisation responded to an urgent request directed to the Sathya Sai Organisation of Japan from the Miyagi Prefecture Police Headquarters and from the Miyagi Chapter of the All-Japan Medical Doctors and Dentist Foundation to facilitate pre-cremation medical processing of the mounting numbers of corpses retrieved from the disaster zone.

Three Prefectures were hardest hit by the earthquake and tsunami: Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima. Of the 2.3 million people who reside in the Miyagi Prefecture, one million reside in the capital city alone. Sendai is one of four cities in the Miyagi Prefecture where the Sathya Sai volunteers began to administer aid shortly after the earthquake.

Sathya Sai volunteers delivered seven truckloads carrying 40 tonnes of lifeline goods and food supplies directly to survivors. The Japan Coast Guard offered its entire ship *Miura* and a special helicopter to the Sathya Sai Organisation to transport supplies to the most severely affected areas in the Miyagi and Iwate Prefectures.

Shortly after the earthquake, the Sathya Sai Organisation of Japan received frantic phone calls from foreign nationals attempting to leave Sendai. On 15th March, Sathya Sai volunteers in Tokyo arranged free transportation in response to their distressed pleas. Sathya Sai volunteers provided the Sendai evacuees with meals and bedding at



the Sai Mandir in Yokohama and facilitated their return to their countries of origin. The evacuee group from Sendai included pregnant women, children and infants. Sathya Sai volunteers delivered relief supplies, including food, socks, undergarments, diapers and baby wipes to over 2,000 people at four evacuation centres in Sendai itself.

Natori's eastern border is the Pacific Ocean, and the city sustained catastrophic damage. On 20th March, 13 Sathya Sai volunteers humbly offered relief supplies to 1,300 evacuees housed at the Natori municipal gymnasium and at the Natori city office. Around 12,000 meals were served to evacuees, including several hundred elementary and secondary school students. Sai volunteers also distributed 12,000 face masks. A cultural programme was offered, describing 1,300-year history of benevolent cultural exchange between India and Japan. The Coordinator of the Sathya Sai Organisation of Japan conveyed Bhagavan's message of love.

The Sathya Sai Organisation of Japan expresses their heartfelt gratitude to Bhagavan for His Divine grace, blessings and guidance during the relief operations.

VENEZUELA

On 27th November 2010, a medical camp was organised by Sathya Sai volunteers, who served about 150 needy children in village Los Cañizos, located in the north-central region of Venezuela. Medicines were given to more than 45 children diagnosed with various illnesses. In addition, 150 children were treated for parasitic infestations. Sathya Sai youth conducted human values



About 150 needy children of a village were provided treatment and medicines in a medical camp organised by Sathya Sai volunteers of Venezuela.

programmes for the children, and 85 bags of food containing eight essential food items were distributed to every home in the village. Clothing, shoes and a full meal were provided to 150 needy individuals.

On 5th November 2010, the Sathya Sai Organisation of Venezuela conducted cataract surgeries at a prestigious clinic, courtesy the Directive Board of the Ocular Microsurgery Institute of Caracas. The Institute facility was equipped with the latest technology, and highly qualified doctors performed surgery for 35 needy people, who received the most advanced rigid intraocular lenses. A congenital cataract was removed in an 8-month-old baby girl. Nine ocular surgeons from the institute under the direction of Dr. Carlos Marval from the Sathya Sai Organisation offered their services. All pre-operative consultations, intraocular lenses, medication, medical logistics and food for the patients were provided by the Sathya Sai Organisation. Over past 10 years, about 500 cataract surgeries have been performed.



INDONESIA

On 25th October 2010, approximately 150 kilometres off the western coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, the Mentawai Islands experienced an earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale. The earthquake triggered a tsunami three metres high, reaching 400 metres inland. The three sub-districts of Sikakap, Pagai Utara and Pagai Selatan were affected by the tsunami, which left about 450 people dead and 95 missing. The most severely damaged areas of Pagai Utara and Pagai Selatan were accessible only by a 12-hour ferry ride that operated once a week. On 27th October, Sathya Sai volunteers gathered preliminary information about the affected



With the help of Indonesian Navy, the Sathya Sai Council of Indonesia despatched volunteers and relief material to the areas affected by earthquake in Indonesia.

areas and their needs. With assistance from the Indonesian Navy, the Sathya Sai Council of Indonesia despatched volunteers by helicopter and land transport to the damaged area. On 4th November, a team of Sathya Sai volunteers along with a doctor and nurse proceeded to the Mentawai Islands with food items, life jackets, one tonne of medicines and other necessities. On 8th November,

after an hour-long boat ride through turbulent waters, Sathya Sai volunteers reached the village of Muntai Barubar. Medical services were provided in temporary shelters to the evacuees, which included children and mothers afflicted with various diseases such as diarrhoea, skin rashes and respiratory ailments. Some of the remaining medicines were distributed to needy villagers and the rest handed over to the local nurse.

KAZAKHSTAN

On 23rd and 24th October 2010, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Kazakhstan held its 12th annual medical camp in the village of Anar. Over 45 volunteers including eight medical doctors from seven cities of Kazakhstan provided loving medical services to more than 245 people. Medical consultations were provided in general medicine, cardiology, geriatrics, gynaecology, neurology, psychology, paediatrics and physical therapy. Patients were given free prescriptions as needed and preventive healthcare sessions were conducted during the camp. Volunteers painted walls, changed some of the flooring and installed lights, sinks and toilet bowls at the school where the camp took place. They also offered classes on friendship and honesty, with a focus on human values, for the students of the school. Along with students, the teachers and school director attended the concluding seminar, "Character: Main Treasure". For the school's younger children, volunteers presented a brilliant puppet-theatre performance, describing the five human values. A concert filled with Kazakh and foreign classical music, folk songs and exquisite choreography was organised for the residents of the village.



NETHERLANDS

During this very cold winter, Sathya Sai volunteers distributed warm clothing, caps and gifts to 1,200 asylum seekers (refugees) in Utrecht and Rotterdam on 31st December 2010 and 5th January 2011. The small presents brought cheer to the refugees. In cooperation, the guards, the refugees and Sathya Sai volunteers exchanged New Year wishes, showing brotherhood between people of different nationalities and faiths and creating a blessed atmosphere of love.

U. S. A.

Sri Sathya Sai Centre of Tampa Bay conducted a Podiatry Treatment Camp at the Pinellas County Health Department on 23rd October 2010. The camp was organised in collaboration with the St. Petersburg Free Clinic, the Pinellas County Health Department and the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless. Eleven podiatrists, five physicians, nine nurses and 34 volunteers participated in the camp, where over 200 homeless and uninsured people from the community were served with love and compassion. The Sathya Sai volunteers first washed the feet of all patients. Then, volunteer podiatrists and nurses trimmed each patient's toenails. Treatment was provided for various ailments including corns, calluses and foot ulcers. Patients were also provided with foot care and given nutritional counselling. Continental breakfast and lunch were served to all patients. At the end of the camp, patients were given new pairs of socks and shoes. Patients left the camp with smiles on their faces, and all the volunteers felt peace and joy in their hearts.

On 30th October 2010, a health fair was organised at the Nations Ford Elementary School in Charlotte, North Carolina. The school staff actively participated in the set-up



In a health fair organised in a school in Charlotte, North Carolina, 70 Sai volunteers provided medical services to over 225 people.

of the fair and advertised the event to several neighbouring schools. About 70 volunteers including medical professionals lovingly provided medical services to over 225 people. The services offered included taking detailed histories, vision and dental check-ups, and the giving of physical examinations including sports physicals. The main thrust of the health fair was to provide primary care medical services, as a majority of the population did not have access to primary care. Breakfast and lunch were served to the attendees. Free backpacks with water bottles, socks and school supplies were also distributed. Special treats were provided for young children.

A free medical camp was organised in Anderson, South Carolina on 16th October 2010. About 110 volunteers including 30 medical professionals participated in this

camp, providing service to the homeless and needy. Healthcare screenings included complete blood count and blood sugar testing, dental and vision screening, HIV screening, psychological exams, flu shots, gynaecological screening, cholesterol testing and dietary counselling. Educational information on nutrition, smoking cessation and anger management was provided.

CANADA

The Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society collects and distributes food to approximately 25,000 people weekly through 15 food depots and over 100 community agencies located in and around Vancouver. On 5th December 2010, 20 Sathya Sai youth assisted the Food Bank at the annual Roger's Santa Claus Parade, which attracts about 3,00,000 people and is the largest Christmas parade in Western Canada. Sathya Sai youth collected food items and loaded them into a truck as the parade went on. In a letter from the director of the Food Bank, it was noted that the volunteerism and presence of the Sai Baba Community Centre of British Columbia has been invaluable through the past 10 years.

From 1st October to 15th December 2010, about 25 Sathya Sai youth from Vancouver organised a clothing drive, after collecting clothes throughout the year with support from the Sai Community Centre of Vancouver. The collected clothes were then sorted and packed into 35 large bags. These bags were donated to the Salvation Army, the largest non-governmental direct provider of social services in the country. Through the food bank and the clothing distribution projects, Sathya Sai youth in Vancouver

are performing much needed service to the people in the downtrodden Vancouver Eastside community.

GREECE

Sathya Sai volunteers distribute food and provide medical service on a regular basis in Perama, a suburb of Athens. On 2nd October 2010, 15 Sathya Sai devotees and volunteers repaired a leaky roof and insulated the house of a destitute woman with three children. Even though there was heavy rain in Athens, with Bhagavan's grace, only a few drops fell in the suburb of Perama during the nine hours it took to renovate the house. The volunteers also distributed 32 bags of food items and clothing for children, and a paediatrician visited 12 families in their homes and gave vaccinations to the children. In addition, canned milk, clothes and school supplies were given to the children. On the same day, another group of Sathya Sai volunteers served the needy at an orphanage in Thessaloniki, a hospice in Skaramanga and at a home for the physically challenged in Kallithea.

– Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

BHARAT

Andhra Pradesh: Ongole Samithi (Prakasam district) conducted an eye camp on 10th February 2011 for 125 children in a local school, wherein tests were conducted and medicines were distributed.

An integrated medical camp was conducted in Ambajipeta, East Godavari district wherein 1,100 patients were treated and given medicines. In this camp, 75 eye patients were provided eye glasses. As part of self-employment for women, 30 poor



women in Ravulapalem village were given training in tailoring.

Gujarat: An impressive function was held to inaugurate Prem Jyoti Centre containing a



Prem Jyoti Centre containing a prayer hall, a Stupa, a meditation hall and a medical centre was inaugurated on 12th April 2011.

prayer hall, a Stupa, a meditation hall and a medical centre at Vadodara on the auspicious day of Sri Rama Navami, 12th April 2011.

On Sunday, 13th March 2011, Sai Youth of Vadodara Samithi organised “Sri Sathya Sai Sathya Narayana Katha” in the SSSVIP village Rajupura in Vadodara district. Devotees from nearby two SSSVIP villages, namely, Krishnapura and Nizampura also attended the function. About 400 devotees were present. Community lunch was also arranged for all devotees of three villages. In Rajapura village, 20 streetlights were installed under “Streetlight Project”. Under National Narayana Seva Project, Amruta Kalasams were distributed to 26 needy families of Rajupura village.

A Youth Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat on “Spirituality for Youth” was inaugurated by lighting of lamps by dignitaries. Sri Tribhovan Sachdeva,

keynote speaker, Member, National Council of Sri Sathya Sai Schools in India, gave an enthralling speech on Swami’s message and well as encouraged the youth to involve themselves in each and every activity undertaken by Sri Sathya Seva Organisation with holistic approach. More than 1,100 youth and devotees participated in the function.

Haryana and Chandigarh: Panchkula District of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Haryana and Chandigarh organised Sanathana Sarathi golden jubilee photo exhibition “Journey with Sai” from 8th to 10th April 2011. The venue of the exhibition



Sanathana Sarathi golden jubilee photo exhibition “Journey with Sai” was organised near Mansa Devi Temple from 8th to 10th April 2011.

was suitably chosen on the way to Mansa Devi Temple, which is visited by thousands of devotees during Navratras (nine days worship). The devotees who came to visit the temple also had the opportunity to see the exhibition. The exhibition was held for three days and came to an end with Arati on the evening of 10th April 2011.

Jammu and Kashmir: At the request of the Superintendent of Police, Jammu and Jail Superintendent of Central Jail, Jammu, a Bhajan was conducted in the jail premises by





Prisoners of Central Jail, Jammu participated in the Bhajan organised in the jail premises by the Sai Organisation of Jammu and Kashmir on 13th February 2011.

the Sai Organisation of Jammu and Kashmir on 13th February 2011 for the benefit of prisoners lodged in the jail. Clothes and stationery items were also distributed to the needy prisoners after the Bhajan. As the prisoners were very happy to take part in the Bhajan, the Jail Superintendent and S.P. requested the Sai Organisation to conduct such Bhajans in jail premises from time to time.

Orissa: Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini Workshop was held at Bhubaneswar on 1st April 2011 and was attended by 525 participants, comprising teachers, organisation members, alumni of SSSIHL and youth from various walks of life. The programme was held in the MKCG Auditorium of Utkal University. The proceedings began with lighting of the lamp by the State President, Sri P. Jaganath Prasad Rao. After Veda chanting, the State President gave the welcome address, encouraging the members to participate and make the project a resounding success in Orissa. Thereafter, the members of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini team, Sri Ashutosh Verma,



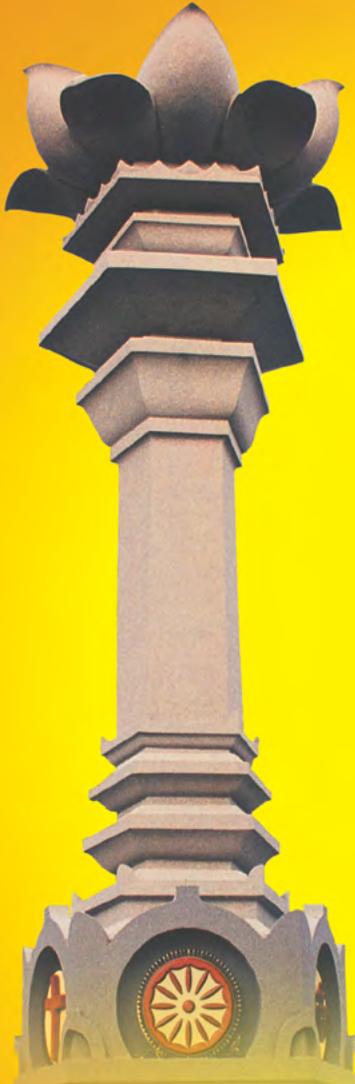
Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini Workshop was held at Bhubaneswar on 1st April 2011 and was attended by about 525 participants.

Dr. Sarath Kumar, Smt. Kausalya (Principal, Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar), Dr. Santosh Mohanty (Global Head of Components and Engineering, TCS) , Sri Rameswar Prusty and Sri Prasanth Sai gave illuminating talks on the importance of the project.

Sikkim: A district-level awareness programme on Sri Sathya Sai Educare and Parenting was organised for one day on 7th April 2011 at Zilla Panchayat Bhawan, Geyzing. District Collector, Sri Santa Kumar Pradhan was the Chief Guest of the function. The programme started with lighting of sacred lamp by the Chief Guest followed by Veda chanting and inaugural address of the State President, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, Sikkim. Thereafter guest speakers gave talks on “Creator and Creation”, “Educare – Five Human Values”, “Role of Mind” and “Word Effect and Intuition” which were followed by Bhakti Sangeet (devotional music) by Sai Youth. State Coordinator, Parenting also addressed the gathering on the importance of parenting in today’s situation. After this, the Chief Guest gave his address. The daylong programme ended with Arati.



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God's Actions are His Leelas

God's actions can be described as Leelas. No one can determine the nature of such Leelas. It is also not possible to understand them. Only after the event has taken place can one realise its significance. Because such Leelas are generally covered by Maya (delusion), man is not able to recognise the Divinity that is responsible for them. Because of this Maya alone, man again is not able to recognise the divine connection between man and man. All attachment arises because of Maya.

- Baba

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