

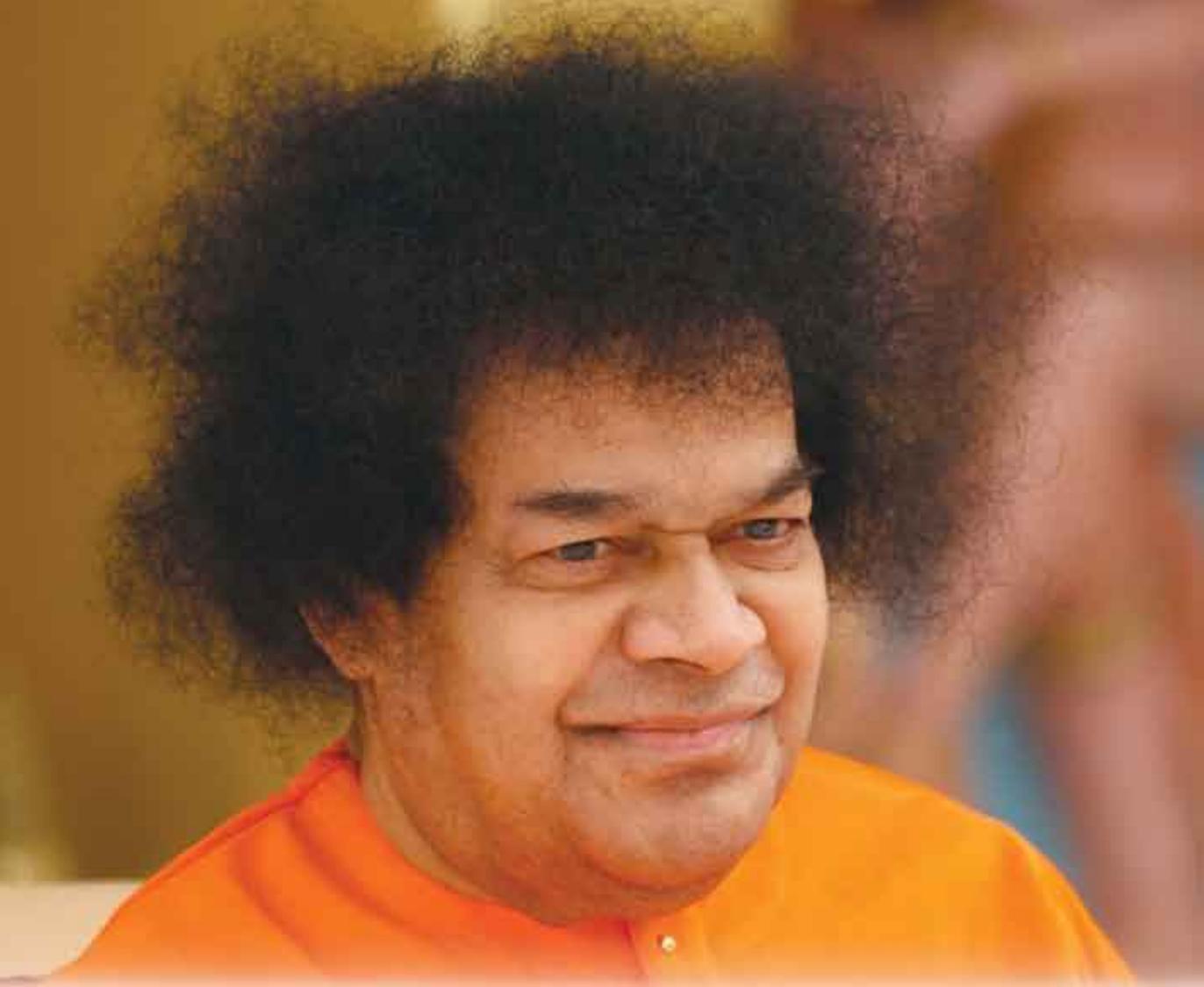


Sanathana Sarathi

Special Issue



NOVEMBER 2006



*Dedicated at the Lotus Feet of
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

*On the Auspicious Occasion of
His 81st Birthday
23rd November 2006*



Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

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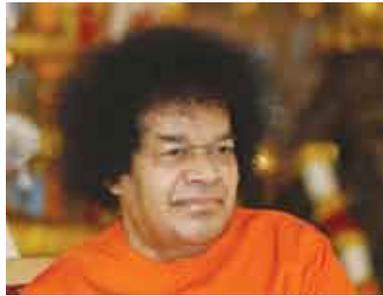
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Editor

G.L. ANAND

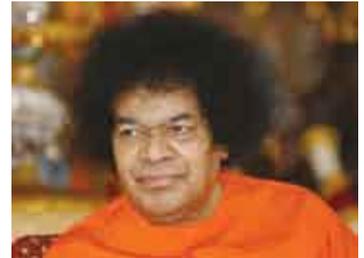
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CONTENTS

- **Editorial** 327
- **Always Remain Conscious
of your Divinity** 330
Dasara Discourse: 1
- **Grand Gujarati New Year
Function** 336
A Report
- **Keep your Mind Always
Focused on God** 338
Ati Rudra Maha Yajna
Divine Discourse: 4
- **Watch and Be Happy** 343
Interview
- **Who is Sai?** 351
From our Archives
- **News from Sai Centres** 355
- **When Should One Start
Contemplating on God?** 363
Chinna Katha

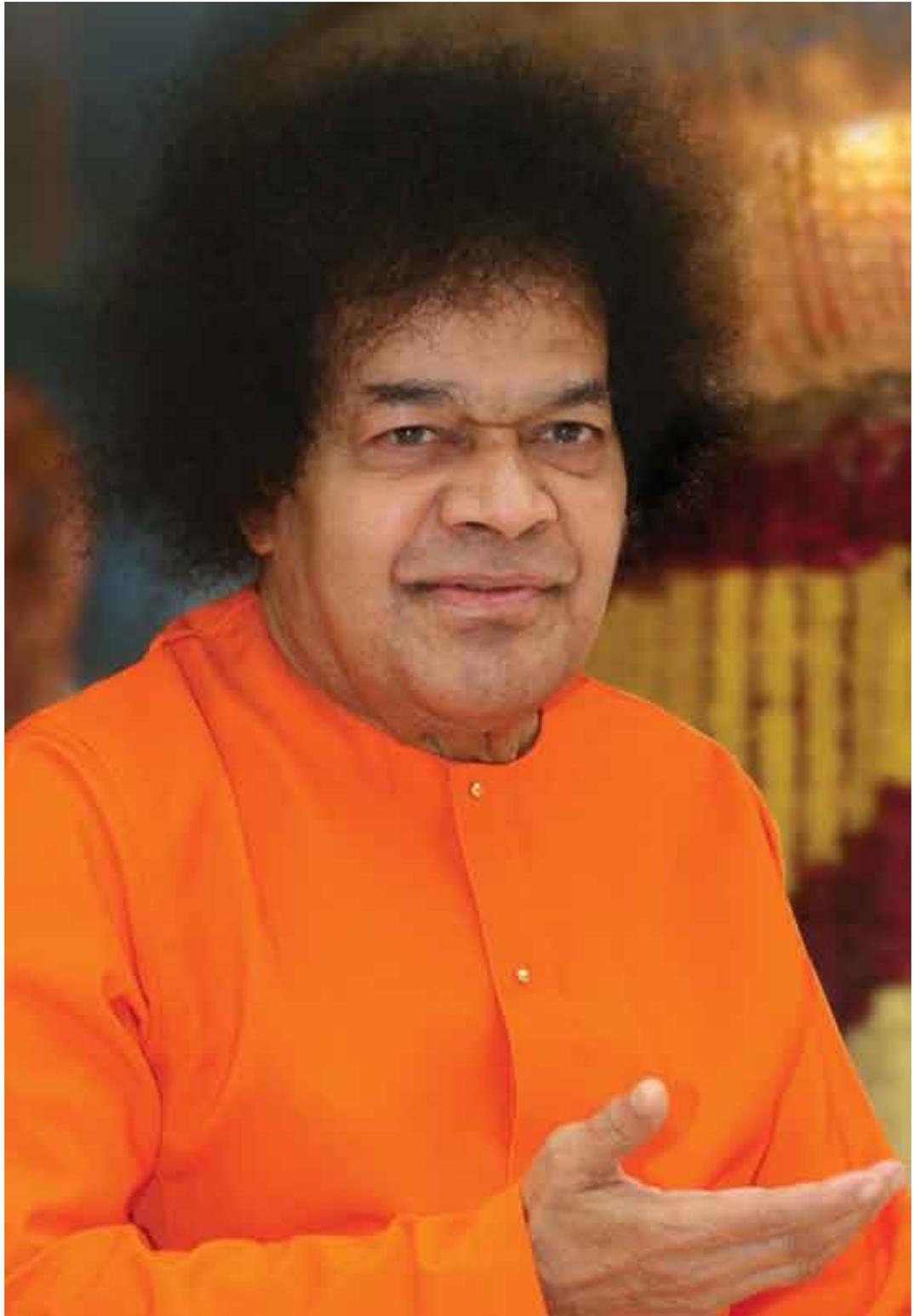
"All religions teach only good things. Therefore, everyone should follow his religion and respect other religions. No religion is bad. It is your bad intellect which sees bad in other religions. So, rectify your intellect. When you have discriminatory intellect, you will see only oneness of all religions."



Forthcoming Festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam



- 11th November** **Global Akhanda Bhajan**
(11th Nov. 6 p.m. to 12th Nov. 6 p.m.)
- 19th November** **Ladies Day**
- 22nd November**..... **25th Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai
Institute of Higher Learning**
- 23rd November**..... **81st Birthday of
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**



Knowledge Finds Consummation in Practice

MAN has ultimately to merge with God. Sooner or later, he has to reach the goal of God-realisation. It is up to him to perform this journey in thousands of births or in one birth. In His first public Discourse given on the day of Vijaya Dasami, the 10th day of Dasara festival, in 1953, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba emphatically declared: "This I will tell you; there is no escaping it; all creatures have to reach God some day or the other, by the long route or the short route."

It is the rarest of rare opportunity for modern man when the Supreme Being Himself has incarnated on earth in the human form of Bhagavan Baba with the specific task of redeeming man's life and making the route of God-realisation as short and easy for him as possible. If we look back at His life and teachings, we will realise that Bhagavan has demonstrated all possible routes to man which can lead him to his goal of life. He has reconstructed the highway of Bhakti (devotion), providing opportunities to all to redeem their life through Namasmarana (recitation of God's Name), Bhajan singing and Veda chanting. He has remade the path of selfless service to mankind by His hospitals, educational institutions, water projects and other humanitarian tasks as models for man to follow. Besides, He has been giving the supreme transcendental knowledge of the Vedas and Upanishads in His Discourses and writings in the easiest possible language to show to man the brilliant path of Jnana (knowledge) to redeem his life.

The Vedas, Bhagavan has been saying, are the breath of God. They contain eternal truths for man's highest spiritual attainment. They are the fountain-source of all knowledge which is universally applicable to all without any distinction of religion, caste, race and nationality. The Supreme Being Himself is the source of this Divine wisdom. Moreover, several generations of sages put this knowledge into practice in their life, attained enlightenment and vouchsafed its veracity. Vedanta (philosophy based on the Vedas) therefore is a practical science. The same Supreme Being who whispered this knowledge to the Rishis of yore has now descended on earth in human

form to give it directly to modern man for granting him liberation and salvation. Veda Poshana (promotion of the Vedas), Bhagavan declared long ago, is one of the main tasks of His Divine Mission on earth. In all His writings compiled now in 16 Vahini books and all His Discourses contained in nearly 40 volumes of Sathya Sai Speaks, Bhagavan has been expounding the supreme wisdom of Vedanta in a language and diction which modern man can understand and put into practice in his life. Mere chanting of Vedic Mantras and reading of sacred texts is not enough. As Bhagavan says, "You may master all the commentaries, and you may be able to argue and discuss with great scholars about these texts; but without attempting to practise what they teach, it is a waste of time."

Bhagavan has been emphasising this truth by questioning modern man, in His inimitable style, in one of His often-quoted Telugu poems: "Will the enveloping darkness be dispelled by the mere news of a lamp? Will the hunger of a hungry man be satiated by simply hearing the names of the delicious dishes? Will the poverty of a poor man be alleviated by hearing the glory of wealth? Will the disease of a sick person go merely by hearing the efficacy of the medicine? Is it possible to remove the thick darkness of ignorance only by reading sacred texts? What is the result of acquiring high education without putting it into practice? It is a big zero."

Knowledge is useful only when it is put into practice. One may know all the routes to God-realisation, but mere knowledge of the path is of little use unless one steps on it. As Bhagavan says, "Of what use is it to listen to Discourses endlessly without putting anything into practice?" Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say: "Some have heard of milk, some have seen it, some have touched it; and some have drunk it and assimilated it. Among these, the last alone have benefited by the milk, for they alone were nourished and strengthened by it." The Vedas contain eternal truths which illumine the path of a spiritual aspirant. They are not meant merely for study, discussion, argumentation or intellectual ornamentation; they are meant to be experienced. They shine best when put to application; then they lovingly help man to achieve the greatest spiritual heights. They not only teach man the principle of the Self, but also show him the practical means of realising it. Knowledge has to be lived. It finds its consummation in practice and experience.

In this age of science and information technology, access to information has become very easy. One can read the world's biggest libraries on one's computer. Its unfortunate consequence is that man today has become information gatherer. He is burdening himself with too much theoretical knowledge. In fact, the entire system of education today is information-oriented. It neither brings about any transformation within man nor caters to the development of human values in him. It merely turns him into a storehouse of information.



As Swami Vivekananda says, the emphasis should be on the assimilation of values and ideas rather than on gathering of information. Stressing the need for practice, he says, “If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library ... If education is identical with information, then libraries are the greatest sages and encyclopaedias are the Rishis (evolved beings).”

Instead of making man humble, kind, compassionate, truthful and broad-minded, education today is nurturing the demonic qualities of greed, selfishness, vanity, ego, and craze for power, position and wealth in man. Bhagavan gives the example of Ravana who had mastered all the four Vedas and six Sastras (six systems of Indian philosophy). In His Divine Message on the occasion of Sri Krishna Janmashtami in 2004, Bhagavan said about Ravana, “In spite of all this knowledge of scriptures, was there any transformation in him? No. Instead of developing Daivatwa (divine qualities), he developed Danavatwa (demonic qualities). The ten heads of Ravana symbolise four Vedas and six Sastras. Rama severed Ravana’s ten heads since he did not put into practice the knowledge he had acquired.” In his craze for acquiring power, position and wealth, man today is losing even his humanness. He wants to acquire the knowledge of everything in the world except himself. As Bhagavan says, man today travels thousands of miles in space, but he does not go even one inch within himself. That is why, he lacks the knowledge of his innate divine principle which is the fountain-source of peace, bliss, love and compassion in him. That is the main cause of man’s restlessness and all the strife, conflict and violence in the world. It is only when man recognises his inner reality can he realise the basic unity of mankind. When man does not know himself, how can he know God and attain the goal of God-realisation?

The Birthday of Bhagavan provides us an opportunity to take a resolve to put at least one or two teachings of Bhagavan, like *Love All, Serve All; Help Ever, Hurt Never* into practice in our life and strive to earn Bhagavan’s grace. May Bhagavan bless us to attain the goal of our life in this very birth!

– Editor



ALWAYS REMAIN CONSCIOUS OF YOUR DIVINITY

All that is seen by the naked eye is not the truth. God is the only reality; all else is mere illusion. Unable to realise this truth, people waste their time in debating over what is truth and what is not.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

YOU CONSIDER EVERYTHING that you see in this objective world as true. But, in reality, nothing is true in this world. Truth is that which is eternal, beyond the three periods of time – past, present and future. That is God.

Understand the Difference between Truth and Illusion

The physical world that you see is subject to change. To consider this scenario, which changes every moment, as real is to subject oneself to self-delusion. Today you are a student, tomorrow you may become an officer; later you will be a retired officer. Then, what is true – a student, an officer or a retired officer? No relationship exists between a man and a woman before their marriage. Once they are married, they become husband and wife. But even this relationship is not permanent; it is absolutely temporary. Thus, all that you see in this objective world and all the relationships between individuals are only temporary, not permanent. But God is not like that. He is always the same in all periods of time – yesterday, today and tomorrow. Not reposing your faith in God who is true and eternal, you are deluded

into thinking that what you see in this objective world is true. Hence, first and foremost try to understand the eternal truth. Once you understand this truth, you will understand everything else. Without understanding this, all that you seem to understand is of little use. Therefore, try to understand the difference between Sathya (truth) and Mithya (illusion). The entire universe is subject to change. It

You should not be proud of your learning. Your learning should make you humble. It should endow you with human qualities. You should attain the state of desirelessness. Then only can you be called a true human being. Too many desires are dangerous. Less desires make the journey of life more comfortable. Therefore, reduce your desires. Give up the desires which are unnecessary. Otherwise, you will waste your time in the pursuit of these desires.



Many people waste their time in reading newspapers. Many newspapers are full of all sorts of nuisance. You will acquire only nuisance by reading them. There are all types of unnecessary things and pictures in newspapers. What sort of pictures are they? What a shame! One does not feel like looking at the newspaper at all! This is not the type of stuff you should read. Instead, spend your time in the contemplation of God.

.....

is transitory, temporary and unreal. Today's mountains may be reduced to mere hillocks tomorrow. Today's rivulets may be changed into mighty rivers the next day. Bharat has been described as the land of lofty mountains, large rivers, huge trees with many branches, which make the country beautiful.

All Worldly Relations are Temporary

People today repose their faith in ephemeral and unreal world and forget God who is the embodiment of truth. That is the root cause of all the sorrows and difficulties faced by man. You say, you are facing difficulties.

From where did these difficulties come? These are the consequence of your actions and thoughts. Everything in this world is subject to change. It appears to be permanent, but it is not so. God is the only changeless principle. We should therefore install God, who is changeless and eternal, in the altar of our heart and offer our love to Him. That is the foremost duty of a human being. Only then can he experience bliss. What is life after all? Does it mean eating, drinking, sleeping and dying ultimately? By doing so, how can human life be called sacred? At the time of his birth, man is pure and sacred. As he grows up, he gradually loses his purity. This is not proper. A human being should always maintain his purity. I have always maintained purity and sacredness all through My life. As the age advances, there might be some changes in the body. But they are all at the physical level.

It is said *Jantunam Nara Janma Durlabham* (Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest). Having attained such a rare birth as a human being,

we have to strive to realise the Atma. One who realises the Atma attains liberation. We should not waste our energy in worldly pursuits. In the pursuit of worldly and material gains, we expose ourselves to Arishadvargas (the six inner enemies of man, viz., desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy). That is the cause of our delusion. Due to delusion, we develop likes and dislikes, love and hatred and experience happiness and sorrow in life. The body that is made up of Panchabhutas (the five elements of earth, water, fire,



air and ether), Pancha Koshas (five sheaths of the soul), Pancha Pranas (five life-breaths) and Panchendriyas (five senses) is ephemeral and transitory like a water bubble. The mind is unsteady like a monkey. Knowing fully well the transitory nature of the body and fickleness of the mind, we lead our life reposing full faith in them, and suffer the dualities of pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow.

The Dehi (indweller) in the Deha (physical body) is eternal. It is referred to as the Atma. We identify the physical body with certain names. For example, the name Anil Kumar is an identification for a particular form. Similarly, the name Sathya Sai Baba represents this physical body. It is not possible to identify the physical bodies without names. A human being lives in the world, donning a physical body that is ephemeral. All that we see in the objective world is the creation of our mind. But the truth is that which we cannot see with our physical eyes. That is the Atma. Hence, when someone enquires, "Who are you?", you should say, "I am the Atma." You should not identify yourself with the physical body. Your physical body bears the name given to it by your parents. Though everybody calls you by this name, yet it is not the name that is important. Both name and form are temporary and unreal. As long as you live in this world, they are relevant. The moment you depart from this world, they lose their relevance.

Once there was a millionaire who was, in fact, rolling in wealth. When his end approached, he was filled with grief. All his relatives surrounded him. At this critical moment of his life, he remembered the truth stated by Adi Sankara: *Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam* (I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death). Realising that all his relatives and friends were, in fact, interested only in his wealth, he wailed, "My dear ones! All that I have

You are all pursuing education and acquiring high academic degrees. There are numerous people with high degrees like M.A., M.B.A. and Ph.D. in this world. But, what service are they rendering to society? They are concerned with furthering their own interests, and are not bothered about helping others. They use their education only for a living. There is nothing great in it. The real worth of education lies in self-sacrifice and selfless service. Renouncing one's desires and fruits of one's actions is real Sadhana.

earned during my life has been given to you. Even the palatial buildings and big mansions that I built have also been handed over to you. My bank deposits have also been given away to you. Yet, you are not worried about me and are thinking of the wealth I am leaving behind."

Spiritual Practice is Necessary to Attain Purity

As long as people live in this world, they keep thinking about property and wealth only. They do not think about what will happen to them after death which can occur anywhere, at any time. You are now sitting here. But you do not know what will happen to you when you get up and take two steps forward. After you depart from this world, who is related to whom? Who are your friends and relatives?

No relationships at all! Hence, do not be unduly attached to the body.



Make the body pure by performing good actions. It gets polluted when people develop many kinds of relationships in the world. This pollution affects the health of the body. For example, in the rainy season, water is sometimes polluted due to excessive rains. Many people who drink polluted water become sick. Today the food we eat, the water we drink and even the air we breathe are all polluted. This pollution is the cause of ill-health and suffering of many people. It is therefore necessary to save the body from pollution and keep it pure and sacred. Total purity however is possible only by undertaking the nine forms of devotion as Sadhana (spiritual practice): *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender). One can undertake the Sadhana of any one of these forms to attain complete purity. Human is not confined merely to Jivatwa (humanness); he embodies Daivatwa (divinity). Every human being, nay, every living being, is an embodiment of divinity verily. Divinity is immanent in birds, beasts and even in insects.

It is unfortunate that man ignores this divine principle which permeates everything. It is therefore necessary for a human being to undertake Sadhana to know the truth of his divinity. Sadhana is not mere physical exercise. It is deep enquiry of truth. What is truth? Is the body true? Are the senses, mind or intellect true? No, none of these. The mind is a mad monkey. The intellect is also not steady. If you follow the fickle mind and unsteady intellect, you cannot reach your destination; you will lose the way. So, do not go by these. The

body is bound to perish one day or the other. Hence, you should strive to forget the body right from now. However, food is necessary for the sustenance of the body. But eat only pure and Sattwic food. Lead your life in this sacred way and constantly remain aware of your divinity by contemplating on Sohum Mantra (Swami here demonstrated how it is constantly manifested with each breath, 'So' with each inhalation and 'Hum' with each exhalation). The same divine principle has been stated in the Mahavakya (profound statement), *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman) in the Vedas. From the time you get up from your bed till you go to sleep, you should constantly remind yourself that you are Brahman and not merely a human being. Always remain conscious of your divinity, remembering at all times: "I am God. I have no bondage; I am pure, unsullied, eternal divine principle." It is God only who protects and sustains you. He is your father, mother and everything in life. Everything that you have is only by God's grace. If you forget God and keep thinking of everything else in this world, you will lose everything in life. If you constantly contemplate on God, all worldly thoughts will leave you. Hence, contemplate on God with love. *Prema Muditha Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram* (chant the Name of Rama with your heart filled with love). *Love is God. God is love.*

Education Should Make you Humble and Desireless

Without love, there is no mother, no father, no brother, no sister, no wife, no husband. Man develops worldly relations for his convenience and happiness. He uses them to serve his selfish ends. Give up selfishness and strive for self-realisation. Enquire, "Who am I?" Are you the body, mind, intellect, mind-stuff



or ego? No, none of these. Recognise your reality, "I am I." Understand this truth through proper enquiry.

Dear Students!

You are all pursuing education and acquiring high academic degrees. There are numerous people with high degrees like M.A., M.B.A. and Ph.D. in this world. But, what service are they rendering to society? They are concerned with furthering their own interests, and are not bothered about helping others. They use their education only for a living. There is nothing great in it. The real worth of education lies in self-sacrifice and selfless service. Renouncing one's desires and fruits of one's actions is real Sadhana. One who practises this is a real yogi, not the one who sits under a tree practising meditation with closed eyes. Never become narrow-minded, be large-hearted. Broaden your heart. Broadening of heart denotes expansion of love. It is not the physical enlargement of heart which requires surgery to remove this abnormality. Practise expansion of love. Only then can you be called a real human being.

You may think that Swami's Discourses are very simple. But, the entire essence of the Vedas and Sastras (sacred texts) is contained in them (*loud applause*). You should not be proud of your learning. Your learning should make you humble. It should endow you with human qualities. You should attain the state of desirelessness. Then only can you be called a true human being. Too many desires are dangerous. Less desires make the journey of life more comfortable.



Everything in this world is subject to change. It appears to be permanent, but it is not so. God is the only changeless principle. We should therefore install God, who is changeless and eternal, in the altar of our heart and offer our love to Him. That is the foremost duty of a human being. Only then can he experience bliss. What is life after all? Does it mean eating, drinking, sleeping and dying ultimately? By doing so, how can human life be called sacred?



Therefore, reduce your desires. Give up the desires which are unnecessary. Otherwise, you will waste your time in the pursuit of these desires. Time is God. Don't waste time. *Time waste is life waste!* Do not waste even one second; utilise it to contemplate on the Sohum Mantra. Then only will your life as a human being be sanctified.

Many people waste their time in reading newspapers. Many newspapers are full of all sorts of nuisance. You will acquire only nuisance by reading them. There are all types of unnecessary things and pictures in newspapers. What sort of pictures are



they? What a shame! One does not feel like looking at the newspaper at all! This is not the type of stuff you should read. Instead, spend your time in the contemplation of God. God is beyond all names and forms. All the same, His name is full of sweetness.

Understand the Purpose of Celebrating Festivals

Dear Students!

What for are all these festivals celebrated? They are celebrated to remind us about God. People of all religions have festivals to celebrate. All religions teach only good things. Therefore, everyone should follow his religion and respect other religions. No religion is bad. It is your bad intellect which sees bad in other religions. So, rectify your intellect. When you have discriminatory intellect, you will see only oneness of all religions.

Do not waste time. Do not make it unsacred. Observe the sacredness of time and thereby experience bliss. Man is essentially the embodiment of bliss. Hence, you should always be happy and blissful. Do not harbour unnecessary desires; you will feel depressed when they are not fulfilled. *Happiness is union with God.* Be always happy with a smiling face. Do not put on a 'castor-oil face' under any circumstances. Remain smiling all the time. The more enthusiastic and energetic you are, the more happy you will be. After all, what is there for you to worry about? Nothing at all. The students who do not prepare well for the examination will, of course, be worried. But if you have prepared well, then why should you worry? You will surely get good marks. Hence, read well, pass the examination with distinction and work for the advancement of the country.

The celebration of the festival of Dasara is meant to encourage and

enthuse you to control Dasendriyas (ten senses – five senses of perception and five senses of action). It also signifies the killing of Mahishasura by the goddess Chamunda. Mahishasura is a demon. What is the inner meaning of this story? A Nara (human being) should have no association whatsoever with Asura (demon). So, man should give up the company of those who have demonic qualities. Always have good company, as advised by Adi Sankara:

*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.)

Be in good company. Your company determines the type of person you are. If you join bad company, you will also become bad. Say goodbye to bad company, and leave the place immediately where you find such a company. Never go near such a place. However, do not hate anybody. Whomever you come across, consider him as the embodiment of divinity and offer salutations to him and enquire, "How are you, brother?" Then the other person will also respond, "How are you, brother?" Be happy and share your happiness with all. A human being is one who develops human values. What are these human values? These are: Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is righteousness. Where

Continued on page 350 ...



GRAND GUJARATI NEW YEAR FUNCTION

GUJARATI NEW YEAR WAS celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 23rd October 2006 with great devotion and enthusiasm in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The venue of the celebrations was Sai Kulwant Hall, which was beautifully decorated for this festive occasion.

On the morning of 23rd October 2006, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 8.15 a.m. amidst chanting of sacred Vedic Mantras by the students and staff of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Bal Vikas students of Gujarat stood on both sides of the passage of Bhagavan with Poornakumbham to offer their reverential welcome to Him. Meanwhile, ladies devotees of Gujarat welcomed Bhagavan by singing a welcome song expressing earnest feelings of devotion of the people of Gujarat for Bhagavan. After arriving at the dais, Bhagavan graciously inaugurated the programme at 8.25 a.m. by lighting the sacred lamp.



Gujarati New Year celebrations had a joyous start at Prasanthi Nilayam with a scintillating Garbha dance by the Bal Vikas students of Gujarat.

Garbha Dance

The first item of the programme was a delightful Garbha dance performed by the Bal Vikas students of Gujarat in their colourful costumes. The first part of the dance was performed in slow motion with children having lighted lamps on their palms. The second part showed vigorous synchronised movements of the children to the tune of fast and sweet music. The children earned the appreciation of one and all by their scintillating performance.

Divyananda – A Drama

Soon after this, Bal Vikas students and Sai Youth of Gujarat presented a very educative and impressive drama entitled “Divyananda” (divine bliss) showing the path of selfless service to modern youth for attaining true happiness in life. The drama realistically presented how Bhagavan’s teachings and humanitarian projects were becoming a source of inspiration for the modern youth to take to the path of selfless service. The drama portrayed the life of one such youth who ultimately joined Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal and found Divyananda when he served a sick person selflessly and lovingly during Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva organised by the Sai Organisation of the area.

Embellished with beautiful devotional songs and sweet music, the drama made a mark as a realistic story of thousands of modern youth who are taking to the path of selfless service to society by the inspiring example provided by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Inspiring Talks

Three very illuminating talks formed an important part of these celebrations. The first

talk was delivered by Sri S.V. Giri, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on the eve of the Gujarati New Year Day on 22nd October 2006. Sri Giri first spoke in English and then switched over to Telugu for the benefit of a large number of Telugu knowing devotees present in the Hall. Greeting the devotees of Gujarat on this auspicious occasion, Sri Giri referred to the festivals and celebrations held at Prasanthi Nilayam and said that Bhagavan's Discourses on these occasions gave the essence of the teachings of the Vedas and provided opportunities to man to assimilate this divine wisdom by putting it into practice in his life. Referring to the chanting of Vedic hymns in perfect intonation and rhythm by four students from overseas countries who were called to the dais by Bhagavan to chant Vedic Mantras in the middle of Sri Giri's talk, the learned speaker remarked that these students not only took part in Veda chanting but participated in all other activities of the Institute also with great enthusiasm and devotion. The second talk was given by Sri Y. Sriranganatha Raju, an M.B.A. student of the Institute, on the afternoon of 23rd October 2006. Speaking on the importance of devotion for God-realisation, Sri Raju observed that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has incarnated to sow the seeds of love and devotion in the heart of man. This, he said, was the rare opportunity for devotees to redeem their life when God Himself was showing to them the path of God-realisation. Another illuminating talk was delivered after this, and the speaker was Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus of the Institute. Referring to Bhagavan as the Supreme Divine Mother of the universe, the learned speaker narrated a few incidents from his life when Bhagavan showered the love of a thousand mothers on him. Bhagavan, he added, has incarnated to teach

man the lessons of love and compassion, by practising which he can redeem his life.

Love in Action is Seva – A Drama

This excellent drama was presented by the Bal Vikas students of Gujarat on the afternoon of 23rd October 2006 which provided a perfect finale to the celebrations of Gujarati New Year.

The drama presented the story of a college youth who took to bad ways due to the effect of bad company, but was put on the path of righteousness and selfless service by the help and good advice of a Sai Youth. Set in the backdrop of Surat floods, the drama highlighted the teachings of Bhagavan Sri



A scene from the drama "Love in Action is Seva" performed by the Bal Vikas students of Gujarat. The drama highlighted the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Sathya Sai Baba and brought forth the value of selfless service to mankind as the surest path of self-realisation. Excellent acting of the children, perfect choreography and beautiful songs related to the theme of the play made the drama an outstanding presentation. Bhagavan blessed the children at the end of the drama and posed for photographs with them. With this excellent drama, Gujarati New Year celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion.



KEEP YOUR MIND ALWAYS FOCUSED ON GOD

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

(Telugu Poem)

THE BODY IS LIKE AN IRON safe which encases the precious jewel of the Atma and values like Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema (truth, righteousness, peace and love). If there are no jewels inside, what is the value of the iron safe? It has value only when there are jewels in it.

Safeguard the Precious Jewels of Values

Sathya is one of the most important and precious jewels. Dharma is another valuable jewel like a diamond. Peace is essential for every human being. Even when a millionaire comes to Swami, he tells, "Swami, I have everything but I have no peace." There can be no happiness in life without peace. Only a person who imbibes the qualities of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema can lead a life of detachment and renunciation. Who is a true renunciant? One who renounces the fruits of his desires and actions can be called a true renunciant. There lies true peace. So long as one has desires, one cannot have true peace.

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace and love,

the value of all your education is zero;

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace and love,

the benefit of all your acts of charity and kindness is zero;

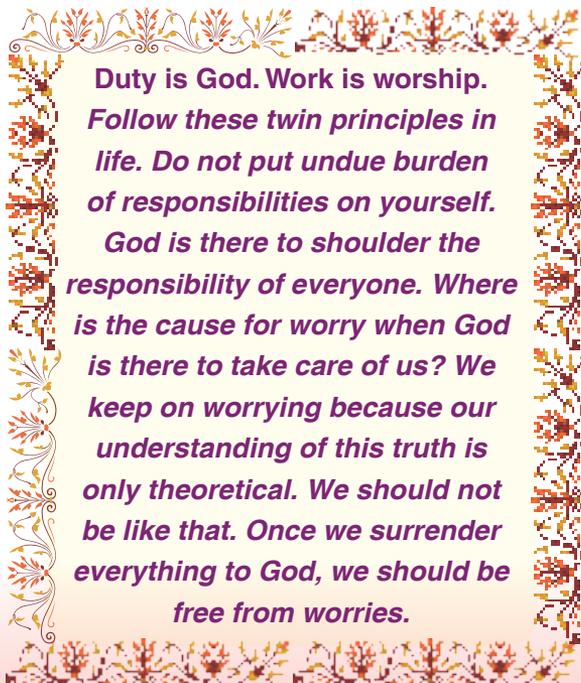
Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace and love,

the utility of all your positions of power is zero;

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace and love

the result of all your good deeds is zero.

(Telugu Poem)



Duty is God. Work is worship.

Follow these twin principles in life. Do not put undue burden of responsibilities on yourself.

God is there to shoulder the responsibility of everyone. Where is the cause for worry when God is there to take care of us? We keep on worrying because our understanding of this truth is only theoretical. We should not be like that. Once we surrender everything to God, we should be free from worries.

The precious jewels of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema are there in every human being. They are the very foundation of man's life. It is the duty of every human being to safeguard them. Without these values, the body is like an empty iron safe which has no value. What is Sathya? Sathya is that which does not change with the passage of time, and is eternal. Everyone knows what Sathya is, yet people try to bypass it. Man resorts to untruth in order to escape from difficulties. *Sathyannasti Paro Dharmah* (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). What is Dharma? Dharma truly is the very foundation of the mansion of life. You may build a multi-storeyed building but without a strong foundation, it will not last long. So, Dharma is the very basis of man's life. Dharma is of two types: Laukik (worldly) and Adhyatmic (spiritual). Laukik Dharma is subject to change, but Adhyatmic Dharma is eternal. When the foundation is weak, the walls of the mansion will collapse in a short time. Dharma is therefore the true path for everyone to follow. Prema is the roof of this mansion and Santhi, the light. Man cannot live in a house without a roof. Nor can he lead his life in darkness. Unfortunately, nowadays Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema seem to have been completely neglected. Today even a wealthy person lacks the spirit of sacrifice. The life of such a person is like a roofless house that will be exposed to sun and



If you ask our students, you will find that all of them have full control over their desires. All these boys are highly qualified. They have postgraduate degrees like M.A., M.B.A., M.Sc. and Ph.D. They have no desire to go to their home even. If they go out, they can earn a very high salary. An M.B.A. boy can earn a salary of one to two lakhs per month. But they do not want to go. "What can money give us? Can it give us happiness?", they ask. They want to work here. They consider work as worship and duty as God.



rain. Therefore, it is necessary for man to have a proper roof. It is love that sustains man's life. Right from the time of birth, a child loves its mother and the mother loves the child. It is difficult to describe in words the depth of love between a mother and her child.

During the war for the liberation of Rangoon, a mother and her son somehow escaped from the area of war and managed to reach Kolkata. They had no shelter or food. The mother would go begging for alms from house to house, give most of it to her son and partake of whatever little was left. When she did not get enough, she would give the



entire quantity of food to her son and would herself go without food. Consequently, she became weak day by day. One day the son, unable to see her suffering, told her, "Mother, from today, you take rest and I will fetch food for both of us." From that day, he would go begging from house to house, give most of it to his mother and partake of whatever little was left. Sometimes, he would lie to his mother that he had already taken his food. Consequently, he too became very weak. The son had no strength to look after his mother nor did the mother have any strength to protect her son.

One day, he stood in front of the house of an officer and begged for alms. The officer was relaxing in an easy chair in the verandah, reading a newspaper. He took pity on the boy, went inside and brought some food on a plantain leaf. He told him to sit and eat it there itself. But the boy said that he would take it home. The officer said, "I don't think you are really hungry, otherwise why should you take it home?" When the officer was uttering these harsh words, the boy felt giddy and fell down. The officer heard him mumble the words, "First to my mother, to my mother..." in a faint voice. Saying so, he breathed his last. When this sad news reached the mother, she was immersed in grief. Unable to bear the grief of the tragic death of her dear son, the mother also breathed her last. Both the mother and her son sacrificed their lives out of love for each other.

This was the depth of love between the mother and the child in those days. Today, due to selfishness, there is a decline in love even between the mother and the child! A life without love is not worth living. Love is life. The mother should love her children and the children should love their mother. In this manner, the mutual love between the mother and her children should grow. Even a monkey

carries its offspring wherever it goes. Love is necessary for life. This precious jewel of love is present in the iron safe of the body. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is non-violence. Contentment is peace.

Too many Desires Ruin Man's Life

Buddha renounced his kingdom, left his wife and son and propagated the principle of non-violence. He set the ideal, *Ahimsa Paramo Dharma* (Ahimsa is the highest Dharma). We should develop Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa which are like the five life-breaths of man. One can be called a human being only if one has these five values. Man should undertake all such activities which foster these five values in him. Yajnas, Yagas (sacrificial rites), Japa (recitation of God's name), Tapa (penance), etc., are meant only to develop these values in man. One who possesses these five values is a man of merit and his life is redeemed. One's life is a waste if he lacks even one of them. First of all, man should lead a life of truth and follow the path of righteousness to achieve progress on the path of spirituality.

Embodiments of Love!

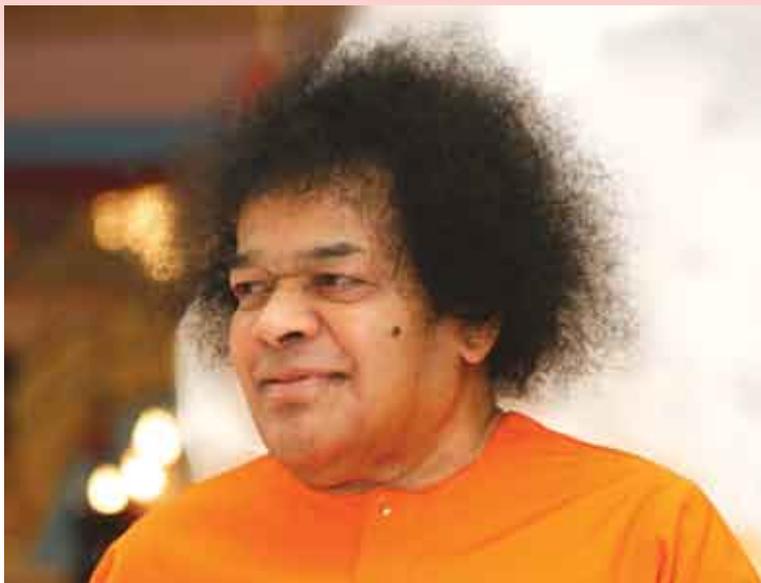
Today wherever we go, we find only craze for money. Even old people who are nearing the end of their life are crazy for money. Man today has too many desires. This is not Kali Yuga but Kalaha Yuga (Age of conflict). Money is the root cause of all this. We give too much importance to the body which is like an iron safe. Instead, we should give more importance to the precious jewels of human values within. Values should be the prime concern of human life. Without values, human life does not serve any purpose. Birds and animals have love in them, but they have no



desires. They are contented when their hunger is satiated. But man is not like that. He wants anything and everything. Even if he owns five buildings, he wants ten more. Why does he require so many houses? Is one house not enough for him to live comfortably? He is deceived by his own limitless desires. Today man has excessive desires. He has to reduce his desires. *Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure.* Here, we are doing a lot of work for others, but we do not desire anything from anybody. I don't own even a single house. Wherever I go, I stay in the houses of devotees. People should reduce their desires in the same manner. Once you control your desires, you can live in peace. But never reduce your love for God. Develop more and more love for God. When you have love for God, you will have everything.

Embodiments of Love!

Today you have listened to the talks given by many elders. All that you have heard, you should put into practice. Install the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema in your heart permanently. If you have peace and love, you can achieve anything in life. If you ask our students, you will find that all of them have full control over their desires. All these boys are highly qualified. They have postgraduate degrees like M.A., M.B.A., M.Sc. and Ph.D. They have no desire to go to their home even. If they go out, they



Death is certain some day or the other. You have the body today, but you may not have it tomorrow. Therefore, earn a good name even at the cost of your life. Consider good name as your very life-breath. Good name will remain even after one departs from this world. Therefore, you should earn a good name in society. There is no point in becoming a great man in life; it is enough if you earn a good name.

.....

can earn a very high salary. An M.B.A. boy can earn a salary of one to two lakhs per month. But they do not want to go. "What can money give us? Can it give us happiness?", they ask. They want to work here. They consider work as worship and duty as God. They are highly duty conscious. The students should have such strong faith. Wherever you see, you find people full of desires. What do they achieve by having too many desires? Ultimately, they ruin their life. So, it is necessary for you to control your desires. With heavy luggage on your head, how far can you walk? Reduce your luggage to make the journey of



your life more comfortable. As a bachelor, how happy and carefree you are! When you get married, you have virtually four legs. When you want to go out, you will be worried that your wife is alone at home. After a year, you will have a son. Now you have six legs instead of four. As the number of legs increases, the journey of life will become more and more slow. Thus, the pace of your life's journey will be slowed down.

Strive to Earn a Good Name

Embodiments of Love!

Treasure love in your heart. Love all. But do not unduly burden yourself with too many responsibilities. This will add to your worries and difficulties. Our teachers know pretty well what these difficulties are. You can lead a happy life only if you reduce your burden. Then there will be less scope for difficulties and suffering. Dakshinamoorthy also gave the message of sacrifice to drive home this truth. Dakshinamoorthy imparted his teachings through silence. He always had a smiling face. The reason was that he had no worries and responsibilities.

Death is certain some day or the other. You have the body today, but you may not have it tomorrow. Therefore, earn a good name even at the cost of your life. Consider good name as your very life-breath. Good name will remain even after one departs from this world. Therefore, you should earn a good name in society. There is no point in becoming a great man in life; it is enough if you earn a good name. A millionaire may be considered great, but he also eats grains and cereals in his food and not gold. So long as you are alive, you have to depend upon food to nourish your body. At the same time, reduce

your body attachment. Share your love with everyone. Do not limit your love to your family only, leading a selfish life. Even a fish is better than a selfish person. A fish moves freely and happily in water and leads a comfortable life. On the other hand, man has burdened himself with too many responsibilities and attachments. Because of this heavy load, he has sunk so low. Therefore, you should reduce your burden and spend more and more time in the contemplation of God. When you develop love for Paramatma (God), you can experience the joy of Prakriti (Nature).

Duty is God. Work is worship. Follow these twin principles in life. Do not put undue burden of responsibilities on yourself. God is there to shoulder the responsibility of everyone (*loud applause*). Where is the cause for worry when God is there to take care of us? We keep on worrying because our understanding of this truth is only theoretical. We should not be like that. Once we surrender everything to God, we should be free from worries. You can experience peace only when you are free from worries. You may perform any number of Yajnas and Yagas and undertake any number of spiritual practices, but all these are useless if the inner meaning is not understood. You may forget anything in this world, but never forget God. Keep your mind always focused on God. This is My message for you today (*loud prolonged applause*).

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the song, "*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe ...*")

– From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 12th August 2006 on the occasion of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna.



WATCH AND BE HAPPY

“When He looks into your eyes, this process begins, when He touches you physically, when He speaks to you, when He takes a letter from you, when He walks close to you, something begins to happen”, says Sri James Sinclair in reply to a question of Dr. G. Venkataraman during a very interesting and revealing interview, describing his experiences of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Divinity.

WE HAVE THE PLEASURE OF having in our studio Sri James Sinclair. He is a devotee who is seen very often but is heard hardly ever. That is because he is by disposition and choice a very silent person. The depth of his silence is the measure of his devotion to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I have deep personal regard for him. I am eager to know how one should be devoted to Bhagavan seriously, in an intense manner, totally and yet be immersed in the activities of the world. Welcome sir, before we get on to what I say deep spirituality, may I begin by requesting you to tell us something about how you came to Bhagavan? Of course, I had some glimpses of it when once I heard your talk in Trayee Brindavan. But I think the world also

needs to know. May be, you can start with Shirdi Sai Baba disappearing into the wall or the experience of Baby Krishna if I have got the sequence right.



When Swami says “watch”, I take it literally. If the word is not contained in the dictionary of the language He is speaking in, He will define that word so that you will understand. So, He gives the instruction, “watch”. That is why many times He gives the gift of a watch. Because it is a living instruction of observation to stand back and simply watch – words, actions, thoughts, character, heart; all aspects of humanity. Then he says, “be happy.” But He defines one word in all that, ‘happy’ – unity with Divinity. Now we look up the meaning in a dictionary and see what the word ‘be’ means; it simply means ‘isness’.



You have some of the stories certainly. Let me start with the first question and slowly work my way. Not that I found Sai, but rather Sai found me. The business of business and the business of life are one and the same. To bring the infinite possibility out of an individual is extremely simple. It is an understanding that (i) an infinite possibility exists within you, and (ii) discovering a way in which that infinite possibility can emerge. Now how Sai found me, it is quite simple. As a Christian young man of 20, I drove down the West Side Drive, New York to go to the offices as a market maker, as a person who



actually created the market and securities for 35 different companies. I used to pray on my rosary beads but felt very cheated that Christ lived 2,000 years ago and here I am feeling lost: I don't know where You are, I don't know who You are, but I know You are. I can't find You. So, You better find me. And, in fact, my prayers were answered.

Which year was that roughly?

In the late 50's. There are many experiences as you have noted, the most dramatic of all was actually seeing Swami in my home in Connecticut. And Swami was in His person. You have to understand, if you have never seen Swami before, and if you are a Westerner without a great deal of knowledge of Eastern philosophy and culture, then it would be a shock when you first saw Swami in your home. After having seen Swami a second time in my meditation room, as I did meditate, and this time Swami allowed me to touch Him, and He was as close as I see you now sitting across the table, I was now on a mission to find who He was, not knowing even His name.

Can I interrupt you, how many years after your West Side Drive prayers was this?

Well, I was in my 50's, that was thirty years later.

And you were praying all these thirty years?

I was, yes. To find God.

And the second time you actually touched Him?

Yes, I did. He made a motion for me to touch His Feet, and I did. Then began the campaign of trying to find out who He was. That campaign led me to a store in New York which at that time was the centre of all texts dealing with spiritual matters and probably with texts dealing with unusual matters. So, I



The purpose of humanity is union with Divinity according to Baba. The message is extraordinarily simple.

Yes, I am very much involved in business, but I firmly believe that success in the business environment is not a product of what you do, but a product of what you are. And the product of what you are is a product of "watch" and "be happy".



asked the attendant of the store by describing how this person looked like. He said, "one moment", walked back and came with a book, "The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist" with a bag of Vibhuti and told me that he was a devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

"The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist" by Samuel Sandweiss?

Correct. That was the beginning and eventually I found my way to India, not really having the courage to come because I had not travelled in this area. I was on business with a partner in London when I became overcome with the desire to go to India. I left my partner and my wife as I was going to return from the trip, waved goodbye and told them that I was on my way to India. And the end result was that I showed up over here in my stylish American dress with all my jewellery on. I wore a winter blue blazer with a pink shirt, polka-dot tie, grey slacks and winter shoes. It was terribly warm, I was carrying an overcoat and dragging a bag behind which was leaking. Somebody said, I should bring some water. So, clearly coming into an Ashram like this, I must have looked like most classic lost soul on earth.



And the year was?

That was 1985. And that was the beginning because what I have learnt here is not anything intellectual but quietude. What I have learnt is not from Swami's Discourses, although there is much to be learnt, but from the glances from His eyes, from simply breathing the same air, being in His proximity and finding out that His Life is, in fact, His Message, knowing without a doubt that the business of life and the business of business, the business of family and the business of time are all the same.

Can I ask you a question? You say that you learnt a lot just by observing. There are millions who are here more often than you are. And, in fact, I live here. We see Him. How come we missed it! You must tell us the trick.

I don't know the trick. All I know is that in most things in the human experience, people can be too close to the object of observation to really observe.

What is it that you observe?

It is not so much what I observe. When He looks into your eyes, this process begins, when He touches you physically, when He speaks to you, when He takes a letter from you, when He walks close to you, something begins to happen.

Can I say that unless the individual is properly prepared, he will miss this experience?

But Swami gives very simple instructions for that preparation.

What is that?

"Watch" and "be happy". In fact, it is so simple that it must be divine because humans make things complex.

That's true.

When Swami says "watch", I take it literally. If the word is not contained in

the dictionary of the language He is speaking in, He will define that word so that you will understand. So, He gives the instruction, "watch". That is why many times He gives the gift of a watch. Because it is a living instruction of observation to stand back and simply watch – words, actions, thoughts, character, heart; all aspects of humanity. Then he says, "be happy." But He defines one word in all that, 'happy' – unity with Divinity. Now we look up the meaning in a dictionary and see what the word 'be' means; it simply means 'isness'. So, if one would simply watch, then something would occur which would result in unity with Divinity.

I want to ask you a practical question. You are a man of business and if I am not mistaken you are actively involved in business. Now business has its ups and downs. It is easy for an individual to be happy, possibly in a worldly sense when there is success. What happens when there is a problem or even failure? How is one to be happy?

Well, failure can be an opportunity because very simply when everything goes along positively, abundantly, we tend to forget what we are trying to build. When you have a problem, don't you cry, don't you hang on to the Feet of the Lord? So, if a person wants to have a more even life, if that is possible, then wouldn't it make a great deal of sense to hang on to His Feet when things are good? Then the purpose of fear, the purpose of lack, the purpose of pain, the purpose of separation becomes less necessary in the human experience which only has one purpose, and the purpose of humanity is union with Divinity according to Baba. The message is extraordinarily simple. Yes, I am very much involved in business, but I firmly believe that success in the business environment is not a product



of what you do, but a product of what you are. And the product of what you are is a product of “watch” and “be happy”. So, I see a great simplicity, and I also firmly believe that every single event in my life is a gift. I don’t have the ability to define for you what that gift means. Some of it hurts terribly, some of it pleases, but every single event in my life to this point, and I find some shocking events, has done nothing to me but has done something for me. So, why should I change? I believe in treating my employees like family. But even a father loving his family has a duty at times to be stern, to make decisions, to make corrections. So, if one were to reward production and punish non-production, wouldn’t he be a good father? The business of business and the business of life are one. Success has nothing to do with how we strategise. Success is like air, it is abundant, you can breath it in. I don’t believe in recessions or depressions unless they are in your mind because if you approach life in the manner of instruction you receive here in absolute simplicity, then I firmly believe that every listener here would reach the highest possible destiny that he can.

Talking of success and failure, I am tempted to ask another question which is very important and pertinent. I would really appreciate your thoughts on the subject because it consists tragedies. Many people have suffered tragedies and I have faced them too. That was before I came to Swami and at that time it looked tragic. Supposing an unforeseen tragic event befalls a devotee, at that time his faith is shaken.

His body is shaken, his faith need not be shaken.

But sometimes people cry, “Why did Swami do this to me? What wrong did I do?” And things like that.



This is a place of pilgrimage for many, for myself. When I come here, I don’t have any questions because who am I to speak to Him? If you have the opportunity of an interview, the opportunity to hand over a letter, the simple opportunity of eye contact or simply seeing Him, just be open. I don’t come here for socialising although there are wonderful people here. I come here because my best friend is here and if I cannot understand anything else about Swami, I do know He is my best friend who has my interest at heart and He knows what my interest is.



It is a wrong understanding.

Okay, now the question is: What would you say to persons of that disposition because there are many out there and they are clamouring for an answer?

I would give them compassion because you cannot teach a person an experience.

No. It is somebody next to the person who can give compassion. But, what about the person himself or herself?

That person has an opportunity that he can either succeed or fail, and the opportunity is to recognise that Divinity knows better than humanity. Divinity never hurts. Those who believe that Swami is hard don’t realise that Swami drives you here when you most need it and carries you through every single event, be it a tragedy or a success, because the greatest tragedy on earth can be success if you become lost in the effect of success.



So, we judge, what a tragedy is. I have not had a tragedy in my life, but I had events which people might consider to be tragic. I know that Divinity knows a lot better than what I know. So, I don't judge events.

Swami puts it very simply, "Everything is good for me." That is what you are saying essentially.

I have experienced what some people may call a tragedy even recently, and let me tell you, it is all good. Now the body will falter because we all carry this human aspect of what we are. Tears will come to the eyes and the body will be shaking, but there is a quiet deep down inside. If you can hold on to it, even the worst of times will become the best of times. It will be an opportunity to grow, an opportunity in strength. In tragedies that I have had, I have lost nothing, but I have gained everything because in the silence of His eyes, His Life is His Message. Inside you grows a silence that becomes a partner, that will in every single event rise to the circumstances as long as you cease stopping it from happening. Watch, don't participate in the thought. Be in the now, don't fool around with the past. We heard that in Swami's Discourse two days ago, "Past is past, future is not our business. Our business is now and in the now, only watch." That is the gift which is here, that is the gift you can live with. Don't try and intellectualise. Don't take it in parts, in little bits and pieces. Feel it, know it, marry it, be it, worship it, but don't try and understand it, because understanding is what blocks and stops acceptance. A gift is being handed to you, don't argue with the gift, don't try and make Swami teach some fact or word, Mantra, prayer or exercise or whatever. Just keep quiet. This is a place of pilgrimage for many, for myself. When I come here, I don't have any questions because

who am I to speak to Him? If you have the opportunity of an interview, the opportunity to hand over a letter, the simple opportunity of eye contact or simply seeing Him, just be open. I don't come here for socialising although there are wonderful people here. I come here because my best friend is here and if I cannot understand anything else about Swami, I do know He is my best friend who has my interest at heart and He knows what my interest is. In gratitude to that, why not simply follow the instructions given? Swami's Discourses and teachings are extraordinarily simple and practical.

You are a businessman and I presume a successful one, and success in business also means a lot of things that come along with success, wealth for example. Now I want to ask a very pertinent question. How does a successful businessman not allow wealth and those paraphernalia to cling to him or how does he stop being attached to them? That seems to be one of the problems; they get attached and want more of the same and it keeps on growing endlessly.

It is because of the madness.

How did you avoid that madness?

The madness is because a person with 200 million US dollars, if he loses one million, you have to take him to the hospital and give him oxygen. It is very simple, give it away. And if you do, you are always vibrant, you are always young because you have to make it again. My wife was recently deceased; she gave to her children their inheritance in her lifetime. That's the trick. I don't have material needs. I do my business because Swami told me to do the business. It is not my business, it is His business. I do have a duty to perform, a task, the results of which are not in



my hands, but the work is. And Swami is kind enough, Divinity is kind enough that I actually like what I do. So, I play a game, but how the game works out is not up to me. But what is up to me is to do the most excellent possible job, to treat everyone with highest possible ethics, to discipline wrong doing and to fight evil wherever I see. Evil is very clear, it is hurting others. So, my way of doing business, I don't believe, buys me anything. But it just pleases me to do it that way. I firmly believe that success is not a product of the strategy and application. But it is the way the people act that will attract to them the greatest support for whatever they are able to accomplish or if not accomplished, the courage to be able to face whatever difficulties develop. Listening to Swami's Discourses has really made me what I am.

When I listen to Swami, I try and stay empty because very few people understand what the word 'listen' means. Listen means mentally shut up. You can't listen if you are thinking about what you are going to say. So, the practice of listening is really something that develops, in a sense, by contemplation, by meditation a bit, by slowing down thoughts, by relaxation of the voice of the mind. But if you can listen a little, then something starts to happen. If you are willing to listen, be open to receive, not to argue, not to try and understand, not to try and be a devotee. Just be open, then something starts to happen. So, I believe Swami starts the process that moves as if it was almost automatic. Business does not interfere with that; business is simply life. If business becomes your divinity, then you are going to become very much like what you see in the world, driven by greed and avarice. But that is stupidity. All I need to do is do whatever my duty is.



There are many experiences as you have noted, the most dramatic of all was actually seeing Swami in my home in Connecticut. And Swami was in His person. You have to understand, if you have never seen Swami before, and if you are a Westerner without a great deal of knowledge of Eastern philosophy and culture, then it would be a shock when you first saw Swami in your home.



You know, unconsciously you have given a wonderful paraphrase of the Bhagavadgita. As you were speaking, all those things which Krishna told Arjuna came alive. That is what essentially He keeps saying: You have been put by Me in this world to play a role and I choose actors according to their capabilities and their previous bank balance and earnings of merit. You just do it for Me without being attached or without letting that cling to you. Do it well without any bad intentions.

Simple, enjoy whatever it is. And understand that most times when tragedy strikes, hold on to the feet of whatever represents to you – Divinity.

You started off by talking about your strong faith in Jesus Christ and you were wondering why you were not there when he was there, and you are 2,000 years too late. Looking back, do you feel whether there is any difficulty in your being a good Christian and yet having perfect faith in Swami?

No, I don't find any difficulty in that at all because if one were to look at the teachings of Jesus Christ and compare them with



the teachings of Swami, it is easy to recognise that there are many religions but they all lead to the same destination. How can there be any contradiction when the message is love. So, I find no problem whatsoever, but if you ask me whether I am a religious man, I tell you that I seek to be totally open, totally silent, able to listen and I don't find that in any ritual or practice. So, ritual and practice is defined as religious. I don't know what the word spiritual means. Then let us say, I am the one with the deepest possible respect for those who practise ritual because that is what got me here.

In fact, Swami says rituals are a stepping stone to a higher realisation. When rituals fall apart, wither away and you are left alone with your consciousness and face to face with God, you become a witness.

But realisation, enlightenment and witness, we as humans fantasise everything. This is not something we do, but something that happens naturally. A lot of silence that develops within an individual, if he does not resist it, opens and may, in fact, be the way. That is what I find here. That is why I make the pilgrimage. If I have the ability to hear Swami's words, then I assure you, definitely I will do nothing else. Swami does not speak in abstruse language although many of us look into the deeper and more complex meanings. He is absolutely simple, absolutely straightforward. All that Swami does is to prevent pain and suffering. Even if they do occur, as they do in everyone's life, understand, even if you have no idea, mentally, intellectually or otherwise. When I say understand, what I mean is accept. What other choice do you have? What can I do to make something undone? I can't. But understand, there is no second chance in life. So, tell the people you love that you love them. Not by words necessarily,

although that is nice; by thoughts and actions, because you may not get a second chance. Treat people equally, and treat all people as if they were your family. If you have a contract, don't look at it as the beginning of a war, but as an agreement of honour. And if that agreement of honour costs you money, pay the money. Don't resort to law, resort to talking it out. Make an agreement with your partner that benefits your partner. The secret of my success is that I made everybody else richer than myself. I had reversals in business with people. But even with the greatest reversals I ever had, I remember the good times I had with that person. I wouldn't do business with him any more. But I would certainly look forward to breaking bread at a meal because I had some very good time with him.

Supposing there is somebody in America, who has not heard about Swami and who is not obviously a devotee, were to ask you, "Tell me who is this Sai Baba whom you go to see very often." What would you say to that person?

If you have an interest in knowing the answer to this question, I am not exactly the right person to ask. Our job is only to welcome those whom Swami calls. But, how can I explain to some other person what Swami is when I don't have the slightest idea. If I was to write a book on everything I know about Swami, it would be 1000 blank pages. Because I can only listen. So, the answer is simple, if you are interested in knowing who and what Swami is, the answer is plain, "Go, taste and see." The only job that we would have, if there is any job, I am not sure if there is, would be to be welcoming and assisting. Swami doesn't need us for anything. In the history of all the Avatars, who ever took such a deep interest in the little lives that we live? Divinity is walking among us, comforting us, guiding us, teaching



us, and finally saying, "There is no difference between you and I except one, I know who I am and you can find out who you are." This is something that is so real, so ethical, so upfront that if you simply won't make a great human miscalculation and simply accept what is standing in front of your eyes, you have everything to gain and absolutely nothing to lose.

Some years ago, Swami was in Bangalore, and He visited a Sai Centre and gave a Discourse. I was present there, fortunate to be present because He revealed a great secret. He said, "God does not need anything because everything is already His. God incarnates so that people start remembering God, otherwise they forget God. I come in order to give opportunities to you to become a better person and redeem your life. That is the only reason."

He comes and gives us everything we need until we get to the point of openness to accept what He has come to give us.

So, I would like to let you say the last word. What is the last thing you would like to say to our listeners before we sign off?

Everything that can be conceptualised lies within the human experience. And therefore less words, more silence; less looking, more

acceptance.

Silence of the mind.

Silence of the mind can start with silence of the mouth.

That's true.

Do what you can do. Simply start by watching your words. Start some work. Start wherever you are and let the rest take care of itself. In business, in life, in what you might call religion, what you might call spirituality, don't waste the whole lot of time seeking to change yourself. I am 63 years old, I have been trying to change myself for the longest period of time. I am exactly the same person. Recognise that something here which is the treasure. Recognise that you don't have to be here to receive it. But it is wonderful to be here. Recognise that this is the place of pilgrimage that you come to and you leave; and when you leave, you are going to leave it better. If you come here loving Jesus Christ, you can leave loving him more. And all religions and all persuasions, that is the gift of Swami. But even more than that, the answer is here. But it is not intellectual. If you are seeking an answer, then I strongly recommend that you come here and seek silence.

Courtesy : Radio Sai Global Harmony

... Continued from page 335

there is righteousness, there is truth. Truth is one, not two. Always speak truth, follow righteousness. Be peaceful, happy and blissful. Then only can you acquire true knowledge. Conduct yourself with love in society.

I always address you as embodiments of love because I am full of love. I have only love. Love is My only property. You should all become heirs to this property. I distribute love

to one and all. I do not hate anyone. I have no selfishness at all. I am totally selfless.

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

– From Bhagavan's Dasara Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 27th September 2006.

WHO IS SAI?

GOD IS INSCRUTABLE. HE cannot be realised in the outer objective world; He is in the very heart of every being. Gemstones have to be sought deep underground; they do not float in mid-air. Seek God in the depths of your self, not in the tantalising, kaleidoscopic Nature. The body is granted to you for this high purpose; but you are now misusing it, like the person who cooked his daily food in the gem-studded gold vase that came into his hands as an heirloom.

Man extols God as omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, but he ignores His Presence in himself! Of course, many venture to describe the attributes of God and proclaim Him to be such and such; but these are their own guesses and the reflections of their own predilections and preferences.

Who can affirm that God is this or that? Who can affirm that God is not of this form or with this attribute? Each one can acquire from the vast expanse of the ocean only as much as can be contained in the vessel

he carries to its shore. From that quantity, they can grasp but little of that immensity.

Each religion defines God within the limits it demarcates and then claims to have grasped Him. Like the seven blind men who spoke of the elephant as a pillar, a fan, a rope or a wall, because they contacted but a part and could not comprehend the entire animal. So, too, religions speak of a part and assert that their vision is full and total.



This Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting as one family the entire mankind through the bond of brotherhood, of affirming and illumining the Atmic reality of each being in order to reveal the Divine which is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests, and of instructing all to recognise the common divine heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal, and rise to Divinity which is his goal.

.....

Each religion forgets that God is all forms and all names, all attributes and all assertions. The religion of humanity is the sum and substance of all these partial faiths; for, there is only one religion and that is the religion of love. The various limbs of the elephant that seemed separate and distinct to the eyeless seekers of its truth were all fostered and activated by one single stream of blood; the various religions and faiths that feel separate and distinct are all fostered by a single stream of love.

The optical sense cannot visualise the truth. It gives only false and barren information. For example, there are many who observe My actions and start declaring that My nature is such and such. They are unable to gauge the sanctity, the majesty and the eternal reality that is Me. The power of Sai is limitless; It manifests for ever. All forms of power are resident in this Sai palm.

Those who profess to have understood Me – the scholars, the Yogis, the Pandits (scholars), the Jnanis (men of wisdom) – all of them are aware only of the least important, the casual, external manifestation of an infinitesimal part of that power, namely, the miracles! They have not desired to contact the source of all power and all wisdom that is available here at Brindavan. They are satisfied when they secure a chance to exhibit their book learning and parade their scholarship in Vedic lore, not realising that the Person from whom the Vedas emanated is in their midst, for their sake.

This has been the case in all ages. People may be very near (physically) to the Avatar, but they live out their lives unaware of their fortune, exaggerating the role of miracles, which are as trivial when compared to My glory and majesty, as a mosquito is in size and strength to the elephant upon which

it squats. Therefore, when you speak about these miracles, I laugh within Myself out of pity that you allow yourself so easily to lose the precious awareness of My reality.

My power is immeasurable; My truth is inexplicable, unfathomable. I am announcing this about Me, for, the need has arisen. But, what I am doing now is only the gift of a 'Visiting Card'! Let Me tell you that such emphatic declarations of truth were made so clearly and so unmistakably only by Krishna. In spite of these declarations, you will notice in the career of the same Krishna that He underwent defeat in His efforts and endeavours on a few occasions, though you must also note that those defeats too were part of the drama which He had planned and which He Himself directed.

When many kings pleaded with Him to avert the war with the Kauravas, He confessed that His Mission to the Kaurava court for ensuring peace had 'failed'! But He had not willed that it should succeed. He had decided that the war would be waged. His Mission was intended to publicise the greed and iniquity of the Kauravas and to condemn them before the whole world.

But I must tell you that during this Sai Avatar, there is no place for even such 'drama' with scenes of failures and defeats! What I Will, must take place; what I plan, must succeed. I am Truth; and Truth has no need to hesitate or fear or bend.

'Willing' is superfluous for Me. For, My grace is ever available to devotees who have steady love and faith. Since I move among them, talking and singing, even intellectuals are unable to grasp My truth, My power, My glory, or My real task as Avatar. I can solve any problem however knotty. I am beyond the reach of the most intensive enquiry and



the most meticulous measurement. Only those who have recognised My love and experienced that love can assert that they have glimpsed My reality, for, the path of love is the royal road that leads mankind to Me.

Do not attempt to know Me through the external eyes. When you go to a temple and stand before the image of God, you pray with closed eyes, don't you? Why? Because you feel that the inner eye of wisdom alone can reveal Him to you. Therefore, do not crave from Me trivial material objects; but crave for Me, and you would be rewarded. Not that you should not receive whatever objects I give as sign of grace out of the fullness of love. I shall tell you why I give these rings, talismans, rosaries, etc. It is to mark the bond between Me and those to whom they are given. When calamity befalls them, the article comes to Me in a flash and returns in a flash taking from Me the remedial grace of protection. That grace is available to all who call on Me in any name or form, not merely to those who wear these gifts. Love is the bond that wins grace.

Consider the meaning of the name, Sai Baba. *Sa* means 'Divine'; *ai* or *ayi* means 'mother' and *Baba* means 'father'. The Name indicates the Divine Mother and Father, just as Sambasiva, which also means the Divine Mother and Father (Sa-amba Siva). Your physical parents might cultivate love with a dose of selfishness; but this Sai "Mother and Father" showers affection or reprimands only for leading you towards victory in the struggle for self-realisation. For, this Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting as one family the entire mankind through the bond of brotherhood, of affirming and illumining the Atmic reality of each being in order to

The optical sense cannot visualise the truth. It gives only false and barren information. For example, there are many who observe My actions and start declaring that My nature is such and such. They are unable to gauge the sanctity, the majesty and the eternal reality that is Me. The power of Sai is limitless; It manifests for ever. All forms of power are resident in this Sai palm.

reveal the Divine which is the basis on which the entire cosmos rests, and of instructing all to recognise the common divine heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal, and rise to Divinity which is his goal.

I am the embodiment of love; love is My instrument. There is no creature without love; the lowest loves itself, at least. And its Self is God. So, there are no atheists, though some might dislike Him or refuse Him, as malarial patients dislike sweets or diabetic patients refuse to have anything to do with sweets! Those who preen themselves as atheists will one day, when their illness is gone, relish God and revere Him.

I had to tell you so much about My Truth, for, I desire that you should contemplate on this and derive joy therefrom, so that you may be inspired to observe the disciplines laid down and progress towards the goal of self-realisation, the realisation of the Sai that shines in your hearts.

**– From Bhagavan's Discourse
19th June 1974**





What I Will, must take place. What I plan, must succeed.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

SIERRA LEONE

S IERRA LEONE WAS THE SEAT of education and administration for British West Africa during the colonial days. In recent times, however, the country lost its importance and direction due to ten years of civil war which witnessed rampant destruction of human lives and infrastructure and the presence of the largest known U.N. Peace Keeping Force. Why was this? The underlying causes were many, but prominent among them was the absence of the practice of human values in the lives of people as taught by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The spread of the noble Sai ideals through the Sathya Sai International Organisation is up to now alien to the people of Sierra Leone. There are no Sai devotees and no Sai Organisation.

A breakthrough was made recently when the Sathya Sai Organisation donated 550 wheelchairs to Alhaji Dr. Mohammed Tejan Kaba, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the benefit of the people who had lost their legs and arms during the conflict. The formal presentation of the wheelchairs to the President was made on 19th September 2006 in the Sate Lodge in the presence of the Attorney General, Ambassadors, the Ministers of Health, Social Welfare, Gender and Child Development and high officials of these ministries.

On behalf of the Sathya Sai International Organisation, the Central Coordinator for Africa thanked the President for accepting the donation which was in recognition of his eminent statesmanship, good



The Sathya Sai Organisation donated 550 wheelchairs to the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the benefit of those people who lost their limbs in the unfortunate civil war which disabled a large number of people and caused huge loss of life.

governance and the needs of his people. The nature and role of the Sathya Sai International Organisation as defined by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba were explained to the esteemed audience and an assurance of the Organisation's willingness to participate in the tasks of the country's reconstruction and nation building was given.

In his reply, the President thanked the Sai Organisation for the much needed donation and welcomed it to Sierra Leone. He suggested that the office of the Central Coordinator for Africa be set up in the country. The presentation was widely reported in the National Television and Radio. A medical camp and distribution of three thousand (3,000) Sai Nets to Yoni Chiefdom are being organised by the U.K. Sai Medical Doctors and the Nairobi Sai Net Directorate later in December 2006.



INDONESIA

About 1,300 people live in the village of Cipanjal, West Java, Indonesia. For the past three years, over 1,100 have lost their jobs as farm workers. This has resulted in widespread hunger and starvation. On 6th August 2006, and then again on 17th August 2006, the Sathya Sai Organisation of Indonesia rose to the occasion in order to alleviate the difficulties faced by the villagers, and promptly distributed large quantities of essential food items. The initial food distribution inspired many Sai devotees to continue the Narayana Seva. On 17th September 2006, about 100 Sai devotees distributed four tonnes of food



Sai devotees distributed four tonnes of food and 1,000 clothing items in West Java, Indonesia to farm workers who faced hardship as they lost their jobs.

and 1,000 clothing items and shawls to 500 families. One of the most inspiring aspects of this Narayana Seva was that it was carried out by Sai devotees who performed a long journey in the early morning hours in seven trucks from Jakarta to Bandung. The people of Cipanjal were grateful to Bhagavan for the timely aid and support with love.

In another part of Indonesia, the Sadhana of providing humanitarian services by Sai devotees continued. Devotees visited Sei



Sai devotees undertook bus and boat journey to reach the village Sei Serahpur in North Sumatra to distribute two tonnes of rice and other food items to 400 families on 4th July 2006.

Serahpur village in North Sumatra on 4th July 2006. It took them a three-hour bus and boat ride each way. They carried with them and distributed over two tonnes of rice, and other essential food items to 400 families. Despite large-scale flooding in lands and mounting odds, the food distribution was conducted from the boat as there was not sufficient land in the small village to organise a food camp.

In addition, two medical camps were conducted on 23rd July 2006 and 10th



Sai devotees organised two medical camps in North Sumatra and distributed one tonne food items to over 400 families in Kuala Langkat.

September 2006. The first was in Martubung, North Sumatra in which 39 Sai volunteers served 332 patients in one day. The second was in Kuala Langkat, also in North Sumatra, in which 295 patients were seen. In both medical camps, patients were given a general health check-up and screening for diabetes, hypertension and dental health. In addition, health education consultations were given for personal hygiene, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and infectious gastroenteritis. In conjunction with the medical camp on 10th September one tonne food items were distributed to over 400 families in Kuala Langkat. As a reminder of the importance of preventive health, a vitamin bottle was given to every child in the village.

U. S. A.

Sathya Sai Centres in the northeast region of the U.S.A. participated in a Regional Seva Day in unity and love on 8th April 2006. Sai Centres of Norwalk, Shelton and Silvermine in Connecticut joined together for cleaning the kitchen, sorting of food and clothes, painting the dorms, corridors, and common hall of the



Sai Centres of Norwalk, Shelton and Silvermine in Connecticut joined together and served delicious lunch for 200 people in Norwalk emergency shelter.

Norwalk emergency shelter with 95 beds and served delicious lunch for 200 people. Sai Centres of Central Connecticut joined forces to host a reading awards ceremony for the children of an inner city school in Hartford. About 80 children from lower income families attended the event. Each child received his or her certificate from the Mayor of the city of Hartford.

The Sai Centre at Essex Junction in Vermont volunteered at the local emergency free food shelf. Seva tasks included organising the food items collected, assisting the recipients in picking the food items of their choice, transportation, repacking and organising the shelves.

Four Boston area Sai Centres joined together in planning and implementing two primary activities in a local shelter and a nursing home. Shelter residents were given



Four Boston area Sai Centres provided personal care items and lunch to residents of a local shelter and a nursing home.

personal care items, and a hot lunch was served to them. The fourth floor of the shelter was refurbished. Posters were prepared with Swami's quotes and displayed on the walls. At the nursing home, the Bal Vikas students and teachers prepared handmade greeting cards for the residents and conducted a

music programme. The Buffalo Sai Centre devotees helped renovate a house. Although inexperienced in building construction, the group of multidisciplinary professionals did a marvellous job of insulating, painting and dry wall installation. The site supervisor was thrilled at the amount of work accomplished by the group in just four hours. He lauded how quickly the Sai volunteers acquired and excelled in the needed skills. Sai volunteers of Wappingers Falls Centre provided general health-related information and health screening to residents in inner-city Poughkeepsie in New York. A total of 46 patients were seen during the day. Devotees at the Ithaca Sai Centre brought some groceries for the cupboard of "Friendship Centre" and made sandwiches for serving the homeless and others in need. Devotees at the Syracuse Sai Centre in New York State visited a local nursing home where there were at least 30 residents with disabilities requiring wheelchairs. Sai children performed a music programme and then distributed flowers, cookies and personalised cards to each of the residents.

The devotees at the Southern Maine Sai Centre interacted with 30 world war veterans in a local nursing home, many of them over 80 years of age. The members spent time by singing Bhajans, songs and sharing Swami's teachings. A devotee played the piano and shared some of the world's best Veteran's songs. The elders enjoyed the programme and the Sai members' visit. They commented that they had never seen a performance and sharing of love like this in several years. They requested that Sai members come back more frequently. Devotees at the Rhode Island Sai Centre prepared hot food for a local homeless shelter. Parents and SSE children went to a nursing home and sang songs to entertain



Sai devotees of Southern Maine Sai Centre spent time with 30 world war veterans in a nursing home, sang Bhajans and shared Bhagavan's teachings with them.

the people living there. Also they passed out "Happy Spring" Cards that the SSE children had made. Such outpouring of love across an entire region in a single country was truly a testimony to the immense inspiration of Bhagavan's Divine Love.

HUNGARY

The historic city of Budapest is the capital of Hungary and is located on the river Danube. On 10th September 2006, the Hungarian Sathya Sai Organisation held a successful EHV programme for adults as well as first SSE programme for children. About 125 adults attended the programme along with children aged 6-12. The adult programme was filled with lectures and workshops during the day and ended with an hour-long devotional singing session. There were several presentations on the five human values. The children were first oriented to their new teacher. The group then spoke about the importance of Sri Sathya Sai Human Values and the role of God in their lives. Playful workshops were conducted to highlight



The Hungarian Sathya Sai Organisation organised a programme of education in human values in Budapest, Hungary in which 125 adults and a large number of children took part.

positive and negative human characteristics. In the afternoon, the children had a spiritual storytelling session, arts and crafts session. All participants were spiritually uplifted by the two programmes.

L A T I N A M E R I C A

A concerted effort to instil SSEHV in the underprivileged children in Latin America has been going on in countries such as Peru, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Brazil and Argentina. This project began in 1995 and, initially, the SSEHV classes had to be held under trees and any available space in school or community buildings. Nestled in the rugged Andes Mountains and washed by the mighty Amazon, Bolivia has been economically disadvantaged by years of internal strife. Poverty-stricken children are often settled in temporary dwellings at the outskirts of large

cities. The local Sathya Sai Centre young adults aged 16-20 years from respective cities have taken up the rewarding task of going to the homes or settlements of these families and spending time talking to their children teaching Sathya Sai Human Values, narrating stories, playing and organising community projects jointly with them. Sai Youth together with local residents have helped clean up some of the communities. The community of Maria Auxiliadora in Cochabamba, Bolivia, for example, consists of impoverished women and children whose families have been ravaged by violence. In this community, five to seven Sai Youth began their service by donating clothes about a year ago. This eventually developed into a full SSEHV project bringing joy, spirituality and human values to about 40 children and their families. Such weekly visits



Sai Youth of Bolivia visit the poverty-stricken settlements outside the city and spend time with children, teaching Sathya Sai Human Values, narrating stories and playing games with them.

have not only created a trusting milieu for the Sai Youth and the other children, but have remarkably improved the relationship of these children with their families. In some places, the Sai Organisation has built community centres where the children can meet, and in some cases the parents have



also been included in classes for self help such as sewing and reading and writing skills.

MIDDLE EAST

From 9th - 20th August 2006, the Sathya Sai Centre of Abu Dhabi had a special devotional programme. The event was attended by the Indian Ambassador to the U.A.E. He later spoke to the 200 daily participants about the transformation that Sri Sathya Sai Baba was bringing about in the world by His example and His message. He also noted the importance of keeping good company and the significance of spiritual pursuits. A medical



The Sai Centre of Abu Dhabi conducted a medical camp in the Indian Embassy premises and administered medications to 127 patients on 25th August 2006.

camp was conducted on 25th August 2006 at the Indian Embassy premises in Abu Dhabi. During this camp, 127 patients were seen for minor ailments and free medications given for 15 days. In addition, health screening was conducted for diabetes and hypertension. Patients were provided with light refreshments and a video of 'His Work' was screened in the embassy lounge.

In the capital city of Muscat, Sai Youth conduct a quarterly prescription

glasses camp where, with the help of an optometrist, they test the vision of patients and fit them with corrective lenses free of charge. In the most recent camp, 36 people were tested and 33 of them were found to have visual impairment requiring glasses. The joyful experience of this camp has inspired the youth to hold such camps on a regular basis.

– Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

BHARAT

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: Another milestone was achieved by the Mahila Vibhag (women's wing) of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Guwahati (Assam) on the occasion of Sakthi Swarupini Day on 19th September 2006 when Mahilas in large numbers from a rural area assembled in the local school premises at village Ulani to observe this day. It was for the first time that such a function was held in a remote place about 45 km away from Guwahati Sai Centre and was joined by the Mahilas of the neighbouring villages. Local school teachers along with the students also showed keen interest when they came to know about the Divine Mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and His teachings. This created an awareness about the responsibility of women in giving shape to society based on human values and spirituality.

To spread the message of love of Bhagavan Baba and to create an awareness of the Divine Mission in respect of the global need for value-based education, Bal Vikas Day was observed by the Guwahati Samithi in a rural busy area along the national highway on 10th September 2006. A rally comprising Bal Vikas students and Gurus with placards displaying Bhagavan's message of love was taken out.

It moved along the local village road and was joined by other school students of



the locality. This was followed by a devotees meet in which local people also took part. In this meet, Bal Vikas students took part in Bhajan, extempore speech, etc.

Coinciding with the celebrations of golden jubilee of Diphu Government Higher Secondary School, Sai Samithi of Diphu organised a tree plantation programme on 25th September 2006. In all, 160 saplings of different varieties were planted in and around the school compound.

Gujarat: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Gandhinagar donated wheelchairs to Gandhinagar railway station on 1st August 2006. It also arranged cold drinking water for passengers.

On Purnima (full moon day) of Bhadrapada (a month in Indian calendar), people from all over India come to Ambaji Temple on foot. On this occasion, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Visnagar organised a free medical camp on the highway for 24 hours, from 1st September to 4th September 2006, wherein 17,600



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Visnagar organised a medical camp for 24 hours on three days, from 1st September to 4th September 2006 for the pilgrims coming on foot to Ambaji Temple.

patients were treated. 10 doctors and 20 Seva Dal members gave their services in rotation.

Kerala: New campus of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Alwaye was inaugurated by Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations on 25th August 2006. He also handed over the keys of two new houses



New Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Alwaye which was inaugurated on 25th August 2006.

constructed by the Sai Organisation of Kerala to two needy families on 26th August 2006. On 27th August 2006, Sri Srinivasan interacted with over two thousand active workers and office bearers of the Kerala State Sai Organisation.

Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal: On receiving an urgent call from All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi for blood required urgently for Dengue patients, Sai Youth of Sri Sathya Sai Samithi, Noida came forward for the good cause. Canvassing was done through TV, pamphlets and by personal contacts and a blood donation camp was organised on 15th October 2006 in which 100 units of blood were donated by ladies and gents. Next day, this event was well covered by the leading newspapers.

A five-hour Yajna was organised through the efforts of Seva Dal and devotees of village

Kasingawa in Kanpur Dehat. Oblations were offered in the sacred fire amidst chanting of hymns of the Vedas. Great enthusiasm was noticed in the villagers who participated in large numbers. The whole area vibrated with Sai's Name.

To celebrate Bhagavan's 81st Birthday, an 81-hour Bhajan session was organised from

12th October 2006 to 15th October 2006, in which a large number of devotees from Allahabad and other parts of Uttar Pradesh participated. A highlight of the event was that a 6-year-old Bal Vikas girl sang 81 Bhajans during the whole programme. The programme was well covered by the media.

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When Should One Start Contemplating on God?

ONCE THERE WAS A HOUSEWIFE who used to chant God's Name using a Japamala (rosary) whenever she found time in between her household duties of the day. She performed all her actions with faith in God. Seeing her engaged in the worship of God, her husband would remark,



"What is this foolishness? How can you fulfil your worldly responsibilities if you keep on chanting God's Name all the time?", the husband reprimanded his devout wife.

"What is this foolishness? How can you fulfil your worldly responsibilities if you keep on chanting God's Name all the time? After becoming free from our worldly responsibilities, we can peacefully contemplate on God in old age." But his wife did not agree with him. She counselled him, "One has the opportunity to undertake spiritual practices while one's body is strong and healthy in young age. One should therefore strive to earn the grace of God right from now onwards. In old

age, when the body becomes decrepit and the mind, unsteady, contemplation of God is not possible. Therefore, engage yourself in prayer and worship of God at least from this day."

One day, finding her husband in a cheerful mood, the wife pleaded with him, "My dear! We can't say how long we are destined to live. We do not know when this water bubble of the body will burst. There is, therefore, no wisdom in postponing the worship of God until your old age. You should chant any name of God like Rama, Krishna, Govinda whenever you get time." But the husband argued, "Oh foolish woman! How can we run the family if we keep contemplating on God? How to fill the belly? Who will give us food? Who will talk to us if we do not have wealth and property? One has to make efforts to acquire all that is necessary for life. If you merely sit and chant God's Name, will God place ready-made food in your hands?"

But these arguments could not silence the wife who had full faith in God. She said, "One who sows the plant, will he not water it? Will God not give us food when He has created us? It is not proper to spend all our time for the sake of food. We should strive to attain the grace of God." At last, these words of wisdom of the wife convinced her husband. But he still persisted in his arguments, "What you say is true. I do not say no to it. But see how many responsibilities do we have? We have to provide education to our children, arrange their marriages and establish them



in life. We should also hand over some property and wealth to them. After doing all this, I will surely engage myself in the worship of God. Don't think that I have no devotion to God. I do have devotion. After fulfilling all my responsibilities and getting retirement from my job, I will spend all my time in the service of God. Do not worry about me in this matter."

After a few days, the husband fell ill all of a sudden. Both the husband and the wife faithfully acted on the advice of the doctor for curing the disease. At that time, the wife said to her husband, "My dear, at least now you should chant the Name of God. There is no greater medicine than this. After taking the medicine of God's Name, consume the medicine prescribed by the doctor. Then the disease will subside and you will get well soon." But the husband had more faith in doctors. So, he pressurised her to call several eminent doctors.

Once a doctor examined the husband and gave a bottle of medicine to his wife with the instructions to give to her husband three ounces of medicine three times a day. The husband also saw the doctor giving the bottle of medicine in the hands of his wife. The wife put the bottle of medicine in a cupboard; she did not give to her husband the required doses of medicine in the morning, noon and evening as prescribed by the doctor. Two days passed like this. When on the third day also she did not give the medicine to him, the husband flew into a rage and shouted at her, "What is your objective? The medicine given by the doctor is to be consumed or to be hidden inside? How will I be cured of my disease?"

Finding an opportune time, the wife said to her husband, "It is not like that. I



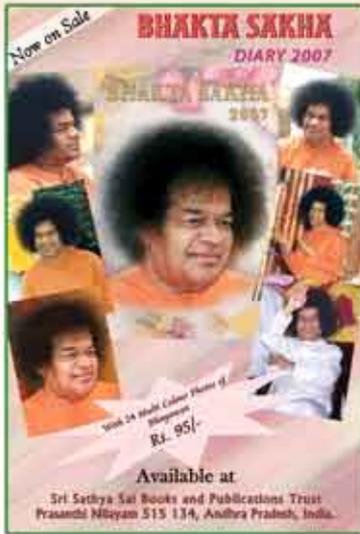
Man is suffering from the deadly disease of worldliness. He should therefore take the medicine of God's Name immediately to cure it.

have kept away this medicine so that you can drink it all at once when you get time. Why now?" The husband replied, "What? How will the disease be cured when one does not take the medicine when one is sick? What purpose will be served by taking it later?" The wife said, "What you say is true. We are afflicted with Bhavaroga (the disease of worldliness) from our very birth. Therefore, we should take the medicine of God's Name for its cure. No purpose will be served if the medicine is taken after the disease has aggravated and the end is near. One should take the medicine when one is afflicted with ailment. In the same way, the medicine of the contemplation of God is necessary for curing the disease of Bhavaroga." This opened the eyes of the husband and he started the contemplation of God from that very moment. By repeating the Name of God with heart full of earnest devotion, very soon the husband became well again and regained his health.

So, do not wait for the old age to contemplate on God. Start the practice early.



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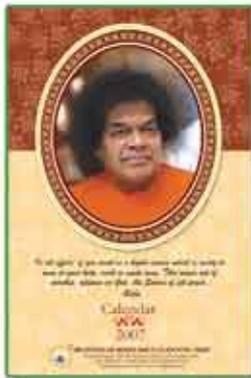


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