

# SIVA CONSCIOUSNESS IS ALL-PERVADING

*The Lord of Kailasa has manifested his Divine form with the crescent moon adorning his head, the cool water of the Ganga flowing between the matted locks, with his radiant eye in the middle of the forehead and the purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a blackberry. He wears serpent bracelets and a snake belt, his entire body is smeared with Vibhuti, his forehead is adorned with a Kumkum dot, his ruddy lips glow with the juice of the betel, diamond-studded gold earrings dangle from his ears and his whole swarthy body glows with divine effulgence.*


(Telugu Poem)

*Embodiments of Love!*


**N**O ONE SEEMS TO HAVE MADE AN effort to know the inner meaning and significance of Sivarathri. In fact, the

Thus, Sivarathri means auspicious night. This auspiciousness is present everywhere. Then the question arises, "Who is Siva?" Siva is the divine consciousness which pervades all living beings. This Sivatra (divine





***Worship God in any form you like.  
There can be no objection to that.  
But the underlying unity between the  
different names and forms should  
never be forgotten. It is a  
misconception to think that Rama  
may be angry if you worship Krishna  
and vice versa. Such differences are  
there in the devotees, but not in  
Rama and Krishna. It is man who  
harbours differences and negative  
feelings, not God.***



meaning is contained in the word Sivarathri itself. "Siva" means auspicious and "rathri" means night.



consciousness) permeates not only human beings, but birds, beasts and animals as well. In fact, every moment in our life can be considered as Sivarathri.

We need not wait for Sivarathri on a particular day in a year.

## **Divinity is Indescribable and Immeasurable**

*Embodiments of Love!*

Siva consciousness is all-pervading. It is unbounded and unlimited. *Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, Divinity permeates the entire universe). If we analyse carefully, it will be obvious that all that we witness around is Siva consciousness, and nothing else. Siva does not mean a particular form with matted hair, donning a tiger skin. Wherever we look and whichever form we come across, it is resplendent with Siva consciousness, whether it is the form of a child, an elderly person, a woman or a man. How can you describe this all-pervading Siva consciousness or limit it to a particular time and place? Some children perform a particular dance to portray Siva Tandava (cosmic dance of Siva) symbolically. But, how can one describe the transcendental Siva principle which words fail to describe and the mind cannot comprehend? Siva is described as Mukkanti (the Lord with three eyes). All of us have only two eyes. But Siva has a third eye as well. We are aware of only the past and the present. We cannot visualise the future. Siva, who can visualise the future with his third eye, is therefore referred to as Mukkanti.

People attribute different forms to God and describe Him in many different ways.

Each one describes Him according to his imagination, ascribing a particular name and form to Him. But no



***People today are creating differences among human beings by attributing different names and forms to nameless, formless and attributeless God. This is a serious mistake.***

***Divinity is being divided by devotees. Devotees who divide God are evil-minded. God is one. Never create divisions in the name of God. When we do not realise the oneness of God, we engage ourselves in futile arguments and counter arguments. Whether it is Rama, Krishna, Siva or Vishnu, all these are only different names ascribed by devotees to God. But God is one.***



description can fully reveal Divinity. Nameless, formless God is omnipresent and all-pervading. He is Avangmanasagochara (neither words can describe nor the mind can comprehend Him) and Aprameya (immeasurable). Who can describe such Divinity? Divinity signifies only one thing, that is, consciousness. This consciousness assumes the form that it enters – it may be the form of a dog, a crow, a crane or a human being. Easwaratwa (Divinity), therefore, connotes consciousness. This consciousness is present in all human beings, nay, even in insects, birds, beasts and animals. One of its names is Sivata (Siva consciousness).

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

Some people limit Sivata to the form of Siva but it is not correct. Sivata is present in the entire

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

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

Siva does not care to tend his hair. He keeps his hair in its natural state as matted locks. He keeps his body also in a natural state without any refinements whatsoever. His ash-smeared body

appears in different colours to different people. Who can describe the colour and effulgence of Siva's body? Once there started an argument between Lakshmi and Parvati about the physical appearance of Siva and Vishnu. Lakshmi asked Parvati, "Parvati! What made you choose Siva as your husband who always keeps his body smeared with ash?" Parvati then asked Lakshmi, "Amma! The colour of your husband's body is blue. Why don't you change it?" When they were arguing thus, Saraswati entered the scene. She is the embodiment of equanimity. She said to both of them, "There may be some differences in their physical appearance. But I do not find any real difference between them. The same divine consciousness permeates both these forms of Siva and Vishnu. I realise it. Since you are not realising it, you are entering into argumentation. Hence, forget all outward differences."

Saraswati symbolises the transcendental principle which is beyond all the three Gunas (attributes). As mentioned in the Puranas (ancient texts), it is this principle practised by Saraswati which imparts peace and serenity to the world. Differences lie in the minds of people but God is beyond all differences. It is they who ascribe different names, forms and attributes to attributeless, formless God. As are the feelings, so is the form. As is the form, so are the attributes. Based on our imagination, we picturise God in different forms. But it is a mistake to be carried away by our imagination.

People describe God as Rudra as well as Santhaswarupa (embodiment of peace). But God is always



Santhaswarupa only. He is always pleasant and smiling. To consider such an embodiment of peace in a different form is only the imagination of the devotees. All differences are the result of man's imagination.

### Realise the Oneness of God

Man should go beyond these differences and understand the oneness of God. Understanding of unity is divine. Man forgets the Divine because he is deluded by the deep wine of worldliness. God is one and He is present wherever you see, be it a city or a village, sky or forest, mountain top or deep sea. You can realise God by cultivating love for God. It is only love that binds God. It is this divine love that will help you to understand oneness of God. God is one without a second. *Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam Trigunarahitam* (God is one without a

second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness to all functions of the intellect, beyond one's imagination, beyond

the three Gunas of Sattwa, Rajas and Thamas). Love for God makes us realise our unity with divinity. When we have fusion with God, there will be no scope for confusion. Artists like Ravi Varma have portrayed God in different forms, giving expression to their imaginative skills. Whatever be the different forms of portrayal by poets and artists, God



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is only one. Evil company, bad conduct and wrong food habits are responsible

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# SHOWERS OF BLISS ON SIVARATHRI

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

On 8th March 2005, every inch of space in Sai Kulwant Hall and its surrounding areas was filled since early morning with devotees eagerly waiting for the Divine Darshan of their Beloved Bhagavan on this auspicious day. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.15 a.m. amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by the Institute students. As soon as Bhagavan entered the Hall, a wave of



*Divine Darshan on the holy day of Sivarathri.*

bliss ran through the entire congregation. A group of students of the Institute welcomed Bhagavan with blowing of conch and playing of Panchavadyam music. After showering His blessings on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan came to the dais and blessed three speakers to address the gathering before His Divine Discourse.

Describing Bhagavan as the incarnation of the combined form of Siva and Parvati, the first speaker, Sri Anil Kumar, a faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, narrated how Bhagavan graciously granted him the experience of His Ardhanareeswara (androgynous) form in Kodaikanal when he witnessed the mark

of anklet on His left foot. On enquiry, Bhagavan reminded him that He was the incarnation of Siva and Parvati. The second speaker was Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member of Prasanthi Council. Dr. Reddy explained the teachings of Bhagavan contained in His famous saying: Follow the Master, Face the Devil, Fight to the End, Finish the Game. He concluded that man should win the game of life by realising his divinity. The last speaker was Sri G.K. Raman,

Chairman, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Tamil Nadu. Sri Raman observed that self-realisation was possible only by following the path of honesty, integrity and purity in life, and by total surrender to God.

After these speeches, Bhagavan gave His first Sivarathri Discourse (full text given elsewhere). After the Divine



## SHOWERS OF BLISS ON SIVARATHRI

Discourse of Bhagavan, the Institute students recited Stotras in praise of Siva which included Lingashtakam, Bilvashtakam, etc. The morning programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.45 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees in the end.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 3.30 p.m. amidst Vedic chants, Panchavadyam music and blowing of conch by the Institute students. Before the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, two speakers addressed the gathering. Sri S.V. Giri, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, was the first speaker. Sri Giri observed that the festival of Sivarathri signified control of mind which was the key to man's liberation. The second speaker was Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. At the outset, Sri Gokak narrated certain personal incidents and expressed deep gratitude to Bhagavan for His protection and blessings. Bhagavan, he said, is the embodiment of all forms and gods, and all the people of the world professing different religions are His children since according to Bhagavan, there is only one religion, the religion of humanity.

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

alternately thereafter. Before leaving for His abode in Poornachandra, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees and students to sing Bhajans with feelings and devotion.

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

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

In His unbounded love for devotees, Bhagavan gave another Discourse on the afternoon of 9th March 2005. Before Bhagavan's Divine Discourse, two speakers addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Sri Ajit Popat, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan from the U.K. Dwelling on the significance of Bhakti (devotion), Sri Popat said that we should make our Bhakti so intense that it becomes our great Shakti



(spiritual power). The next speaker was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Quoting from Bhagavan's recent Sivarathri Discourse, Dr. Venkataraman said that Siva signified divine consciousness which pervaded every atom of the universe as also every cell of human body.

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for the delusion which makes us see diversity in unity. Once we get rid of them, we will see unity and divinity everywhere. God is present here, there and everywhere. It is foolishness to search for Him. His is the form which knows no limits and boundaries. Vinayaka appears as only one, wherever you see. He has no attributes whatsoever. He is beyond all Gunas (attributes). He is Ganapati. He has no leader above him. That is why he is called Vinayaka. Since he has no leader above him, even Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara worship him.

### *Embodiments of Love!*

People today are creating differences among human beings by attributing different names and forms to nameless, formless and attributeless God. This is a serious mistake. Divinity is being divided by devotees. Devotees who divide God are evil-minded. God is one. Never create divisions in the name of God. When we do not realise the oneness of God, we engage ourselves in futile arguments and counter arguments. Whether it is Rama, Krishna, Siva or Vishnu, all these are only different names ascribed by devotees to God. But God is one. We ascribe these names to

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

God only for our own satisfaction. Divinity, however, has no difference at all. The noblest path is to realise the oneness of God and worship Him. Do not be confused by the different pictures of God painted by painters and artists. Worship God in any form you like. There can be no objection to that. But the underlying unity between the different names and forms should never be forgotten. It is a misconception to think that Rama may be angry if you worship Krishna and vice versa. Such differences are there in the devotees, but not in Rama and Krishna. It is man who harbours differences and negative feelings, not God. God is always positive. There is no chance for negativity to enter Him.

### *Dear Students!*

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

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





# YOU ARE THE CHILDREN OF IMMORTALITY

*Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat. Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance. The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling of love towards one's mother. Character is valued far higher than the very life itself. People have forgotten the basic principles of this great culture and are imitating Western culture. Alas! The Bharatiyas are not aware of the greatness of their cultural heritage just as a mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength.*

(Telugu Poem)

## *Embodiments of Love!*

**N**O ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO FULLY realise the uniqueness, greatness and sanctity of this holy land of Bharat. The culture of Bharat is one of the holiest and noblest cultures of the world. It encompasses equally all human endeavours, from the smallest to the biggest. Unfortunately, the Bharatiyas have forgotten this great culture and are practising alien culture.

## **Glory of Bharatiya Culture**

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

This is the country in which truth is held high, but this principle has been forgotten. Though modern students pursue higher education and acquire degrees, they are losing sight of truth

and righteousness. Instead of fostering such a sacred and noble culture and leading their



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



lives in accordance with the principles laid down in it, people are wasting





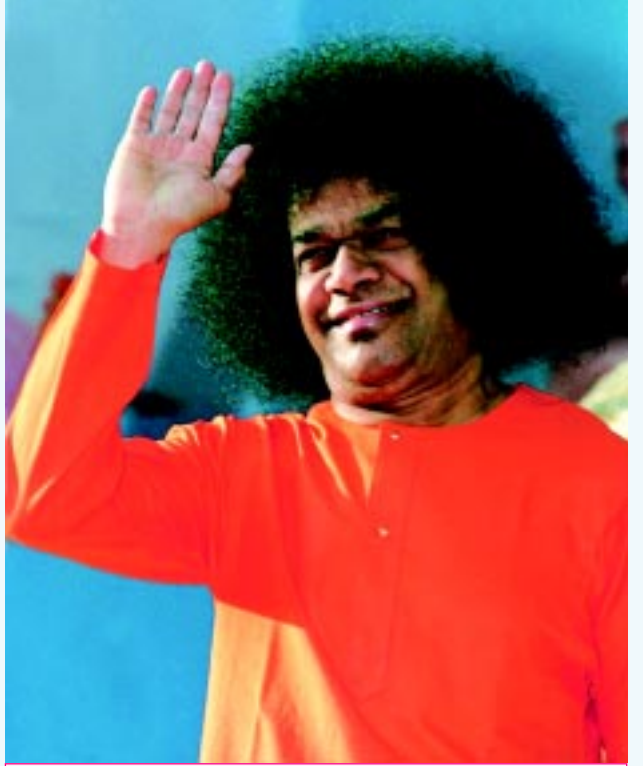
their time in vain pursuits. It is only the practice of the great human values of Sathya (truth), Dharma (righteousness), Santhi (peace) and Prema (love) that made Bharat the great spiritual leader of the entire world. Sathya and Dharma are essential for Santhi (peace). Even more essential than anything else today is Thyaga (sacrifice). Thyaga does not mean giving up all worldly possessions. Real Thyaga (sacrifice) lies in putting these human values into practice in our day-to-day life. It is our misfortune that we have forgotten these great principles of Sathya and Dharma. We should never lose sight of these divine principles in our life. It is only when we foster these human values, we are entitled to be called Bharatiyas in the real sense. Losing sight of even one of these values will not entitle us to this great appellation. Our life must be a continuous journey from Sathya (truth) to Prema (love) in the order of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. These values must enter the core of our heart and permeate every cell of our body.

*The creation emerges from truth and merges into truth,*

*Is there a place in the cosmos where truth does not exist?*

*Visualise this pure and unsullied truth.*  
(Telugu Poem)

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



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duties and domestic chores. Swami knows quite well how much suffering the parents undergo in bringing up their children. The students today aspire





merely to acquire high education and big degrees. They should rather aspire to grasp the essence of truth and righteousness.

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

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

Markandeya is another example of the life of virtue. He was born out of a boon granted by Easwara to his parents. Easwara asked his parents



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


whether they wanted a virtuous son with a short life-span or a son not so virtuous but who would live long. The parents opted for a virtuous son. Accordingly, Markandeya was born but he was granted a life-span of sixteen years. Nevertheless, the parents were joyous as they had been blessed with a virtuous son. Years rolled by and Markandeya entered his sixteenth year. Remembering the words of Easwara, his parents became grief-stricken. On enquiry by Markandeya, they revealed that his death was very near. Markandeya did not want to waste any more time. He went to the temple of Easwara and started chanting the sacred Panchakshari Mantra, *Om Namah Sivaya*, with all sincerity and devotion. He lost himself in the contemplation of Easwara. As he had not returned home, his parents went to the temple and sat at the entrance. They were shedding tears thinking of

the impending end of Markandeya's life. Immensely pleased with the sincere devotion of Markandeya, Siva appeared there and

You must strive to earn the grace of God right from your childhood. When you start praying thus from an early age, you will surely earn His grace and protection.



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

*Embodiments of Love!*

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

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saved him from the noose of Yama (God of death), and granted him the boon of long life to the joy of his parents.

It is only God who can save the life of a human being. Some doctors claim that they can give good medicines or perform surgery to save the life of a person. They make several promises but fail to fulfil them. Except God, none else can save or prolong the life of a person (*loud applause*). With God's grace, one can achieve anything in this world. Dear students!

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

Parents sometimes have a difference of opinion between them about naming their children. But the real name of man is Amrutaputra (son of



immortality). Every human being is Amrutaputra. The Upanishads also declare him to be so. The Upanishads reveal the true identity of a human being by addressing him as *Srunvantu Viswe Amrutasya Putrah* (Oh, the children of immortality! Listen).

*Dear Devotees and Students!*

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

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

*Embodiments of Love!*

In fact, you are all Amrutaputras. But you cannot understand the full import of this appellation unless you read the ancient sacred texts which contain the true meaning of such terms. You should strive to live up to that great name. The names given to children by elders in our country have a lot of significance

and meaning. They are not given just casually or for fun. Study of ancient scriptures is necessary to understand the underlying meaning and sanctity of these names. But, unfortunately, we attach little importance to the study of the scriptures. We are not trying to understand the eternal principles of Sathya and Dharma, and are ruining our lives by taking to wrong path. We are simply repeating the words Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema without making any effort to understand them and put them into practice in our life.

*Dear Students – Boys and Girls!*

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

*Embodiments of Love!*

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

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

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







*Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning*

## ACHIEVING GREAT HEIGHTS

### A Joyous Ceremony

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

Bhagavan was offered a traditional welcome with Poorna Kumbham amidst chanting of Vedic hymns when He came to the Institute at 8.00 a.m. At the outset, Sri S.V. Giri welcomed Bhagavan and introduced the incoming Vice Chancellor Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak, an IAS of Maharashtra cadre and the son of the first Vice Chancellor of the Institute, Dr. Vinayak Krishna Gokak. Sri Giri emphasised the unique spiritual ambience of the Institute and said that the goals of the Institute were social manifestations of Bhagavan’s Divine Mission. He expressed gratitude to the Revered Chancellor for His grace

throughout his tenure as Vice Chancellor of the Institute. Thereafter, Sri Sanjay



*The Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri S.V. Giri and Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak in the Institute Auditorium.*

Mahalingam, a Ph.D. student in the Faculty of Management, highlighted



the achievements of the Institute during the tenure of Sri S.V. Giri. Sri Giri blended pristine values with modernity and the Institute acquired total connectivity with state-of-the-art infrastructure and video-conferencing among the Campuses, said Sri Mahalingam. He added that many new courses were started during Sri Giri's tenure and the Bio Sciences Department received the 'Special Assistance Project' from the UGC.

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

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

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

As many as 20 students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning passed the GATE (Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering) 2005 with high

ranks, while one of them secured the first rank in this all-India examination.

To celebrate this landmark achievement of the Institute students, a felicitation function was held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 11th March 2005. The Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, graced the occasion by His Divine Presence. Congratulating the students on their glorious success, the Vice Chancellor of the Institute, Sri Anil Vinayak Gokak said that the extraordinary performance of the Institute



*Bhagavan blessing a GATE ranker with a shawl during the felicitation ceremony.*

students had brought glory to the Institute.

This, he said, was the result of the integral system of education of the Institute and the grace of Bhagavan





who had blessed them to appear in this examination.

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

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

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

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

### A Unique Poets Meet

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

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

Bhagavan also gave them the coveted opportunity of group photos with Him.





*Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust building, the idyllic venue of the Conference.*

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

**T**HE First National Conference of Editors and Publishers of all regional editions of “Sanathana Sarathi” was held on 7th March 2005 in the premises of Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam. More than 50 delegates associated with regional languages editions, namely, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Nepalese, Assamese, Sindhi and Oriya participated in this Conference. The main objective of the Conference was to have uniform high standard of publication of all editions of

“Sanathana Sarathi”. The deliberations of the Conference were conducted in three sessions.

### **Proceedings**

The first session started at 10.00 a.m. with chanting of Vedic Mantras by the staff members of Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust. Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations inaugurated the Conference and delivered the inaugural address. It was significant, Sri

Srinivasan observed, that the First Conference of “Sanathana Sarathi” editors and publishers was being held





in the 80th year of the Advent of the Avatar Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He pointed out that nobody in human history had done so much for humanity as Bhagavan. The role of the editors of "Sanathana Sarathi" was to create awareness about this and also about the Divine Mission of Bhagavan to redeem mankind, said the learned speaker.

After this inaugural address of Sri Srinivasan, four speakers addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Sri K.S. Rajan, Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust. Sri Rajan traced the history of "Sanathana Sarathi" since its inception in 1958 and observed that "Sanathana Sarathi" was a sacred magazine and the devotees considered its arrival as a blessing from Bhagavan. It was therefore necessary, he said, that Bhagavan's message should form the main part of the magazine. The next speaker, Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, said that "Sanathana Sarathi" gave to its readers the experience of Bhagavan's Divine love which they were hungering for and which could relieve them of the tyranny of flesh and slavery of the mind. He emphasised that the quality of "Sanathana Sarathi" should be compatible with the importance of the message it conveyed. The next speaker, Sri Anil Kumar, a faculty member of the Institute, gave a detailed outline of the tasks which all the editions of "Sanathana Sarathi" should undertake to enhance the quality, variety and richness of their contents. The last speaker of this session, Sri G.L. Anand, Editor, "Sanathana Sarathi" (English),

observed that "Sanathana Sarathi" was one of the most widely read magazines as its subscribers were spread over 118 countries of the world, and it was being brought out in 12 Indian and 10 foreign languages, besides English. He outlined the factors which could help in the improvement of the quality of the contents as well as physical get-up of all editions of "Sanathana Sarathi".

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

*Continued on page 117 ...*



# PROTECT THE HONOUR AND DIGNITY OF WOMEN

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

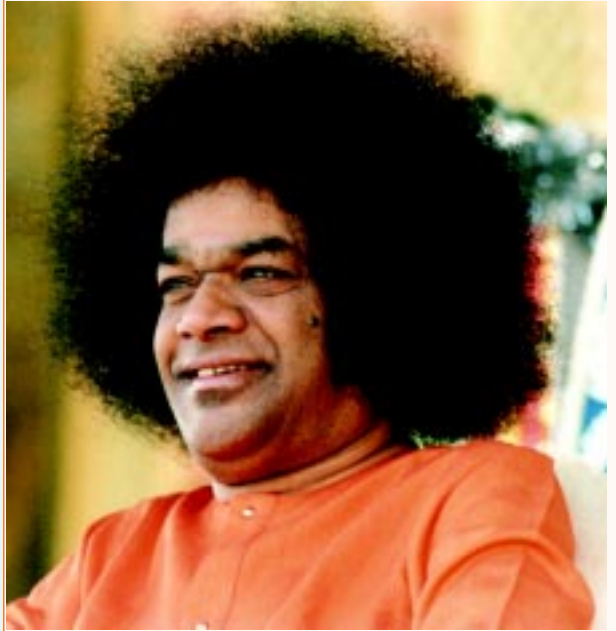
**(Sanskrit Sloka)**

*Embodiments of Love!*

**O**NE MAY UNDERTAKE PENANCE for a long time, one may master all the scriptures, one may visit any number of places of pilgrimage, one may undertake acts of benevolence and charity,

of this knowledge of scriptures, was there any transformation in him? No. Instead of developing Daivatwa (divine qualities), he developed Danavatwa (demonic qualities). The ten heads of Ravana symbolise four Vedas and six Sastras. Rama severed Ravana's ten heads since he did not put into

*Consider women as embodiments of truth. Even if some minor faults are noticed in them, do not give importance to them. Respect and revere them. Do not use even a single word that would hurt them. If they really wish, they can achieve any great task. You should be prepared to lay down even your life for the sake of protecting and helping women. At least from today, all of you should come forward to protect the honour and dignity of women in the world.*



but one cannot cross the ocean of worldliness without serving the noble souls.

**Learning without Practice is Useless**

You may be knowing that Ravana was a great scholar. He mastered the four Vedas and six Sastras. In spite

practice the knowledge he had acquired. Mere learning of sacred texts and chanting of Vedas will not bring about any transformation. By cutting the heads of


Ravana, Rama propagated this truth in the world. Ravana did not have ten heads in a literal sense. In fact, four




Vedas and six Sastras represented his ten heads. The message that Rama conveyed was that mere acquisition of knowledge is of little value. All that God teaches is for the benefit and welfare of humanity. It is enough if one puts into practice at least one of the teachings of the Vedas. All your knowledge is useless if you do not put it into practice. Ravana learnt this lesson when he was on deathbed. Only then did he realise his mistake and repented for it. By sincere repentance he attained purity and sacredness.

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

Only God exists. The world is but an illusion. This sacred teaching of the Vedas should be publicised and should be imparted to everyone. You find many Sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) chanting and teaching the Vedas. It would be fruitless if one does not practise what one preaches. It is like a gramophone record which plays the song but does not experience its melody. So, one should recognise, understand and practise the sacred teachings of the Vedas. Lord Krishna practised what He preached. His teachings are meant to be put into practice. You read in the Mahabharata about many great scholars and persons of great eminence who acquired the knowledge of the Vedas, but they failed to put this God-given knowledge into practice. God has no preferences or dislikes



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



whatsoever. He observes no differences. All are equal for Him. But He watches how much a person puts His teachings into practice. Many people undertake penance, study the scriptures, visit places of pilgrimage and do Japa (repetition of God's Name), but what is the use? Many ask Me for a Japamala (rosary). Is it to adorn your neck for publicity or is it for spiritual experience? One hand is enough if one wants to practise this Sadhana. (At this point, Swami demonstrated with His hand as to how one should do Japa.) The five fingers of the hand can be used as the rosary of one hundred and eight beads. You can thus chant the Name 'Rama Rama' one hundred and eight times. This Sadhana requires neither a Japamala nor a fixed place. It can be done while walking or even while lying down till you go to sleep. When there are such easy and sacred paths, why





should one go for strenuous Sadhanas foregoing sleep?

### Unparalleled Idealism of Draupadi

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

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

When Arjuna was about to kill Aswatthama, Draupadi fell at his feet and reasoned with him thus: "Arjuna! Will my sons be revived by killing Aswatthama? His mother too would experience the same kind of sorrow that I am undergoing at the loss of my sons. Having studied the Vedas and Sastras, how

***When you protect Sathya and Dharma, God will, in turn, protect not only you and your country, but the whole world. Consider truth as your life-breath and righteousness your armour. If you have these two, you will have everything. You don't need to fight with anybody in the world. The world has not done any harm to you. There is nothing great in attacking those who have done no harm to you.***

is it that you are not able to maintain your tranquillity?"

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

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

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

He clenched his fist and proceeded towards Aswatthama to kill him. In that uncontrollable rage, he argued with Draupadi, "Are you mad? Why are you trying to save this man who





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

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

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

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

(Telugu Poem)

It is possible that women may also succumb to anger and indulge in sinful deeds, now and then. Such women should be pardoned and encouraged to make amends; they should not be denounced and condemned. The quality of patience and perseverance in women is great. In fact, it is the quality of equanimity in times of difficulty that was characteristic of Draupadi, which saved the Pandavas. There are several such women in present times also. The bad qualities of anger, passion, jealousy, envy and pride are more prominent in men. Women are able to control such evil qualities from overtaking them. In view of this, is it not our duty to encourage and honour such women who preserve and promote peace and harmony? On the



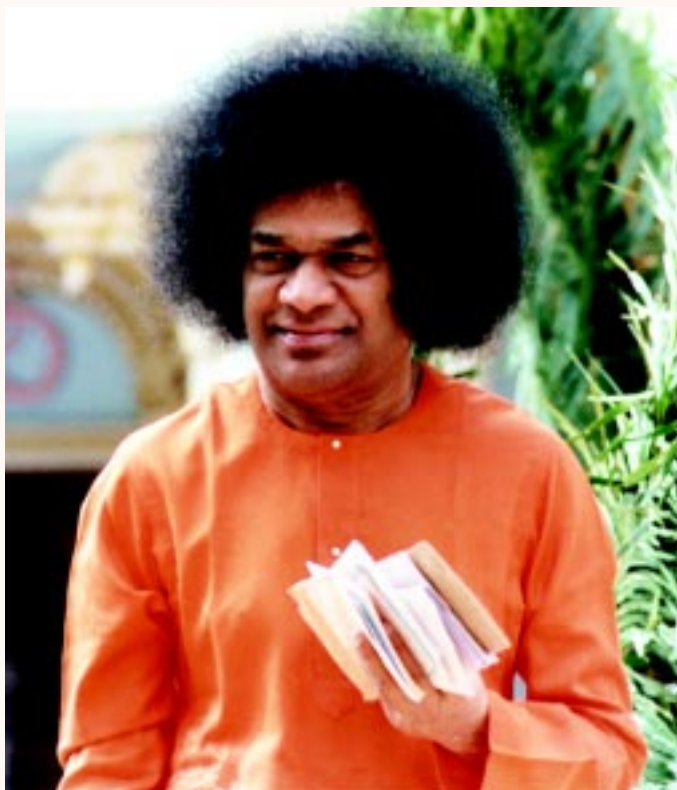
contrary, women are belittled and slighted. No, no, this should not happen. Such women with noble qualities deserve to be encouraged and respected.

A few days ago, you witnessed a function in this Hall, where the glory of womanhood was highlighted. A playlet was put up in this Hall by Chethana, in which the greatness of Sita as the ideal woman, was presented. Sita and Draupadi were great Pathivratas (women of chastity). Such efforts to highlight the greatness of women need to be encouraged.

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

The spirit of peace and forgiveness demonstrated by Draupadi should be propagated and violence should be condemned. The lesson of peace and non-violence is very essential for Bharat. Sathya and Dharma (truth and righteousness) are the main characteristics of Indian culture. If these two are protected, the country can be protected. If you want to protect your country, you need not join the army and fight a battle. If you protect truth and righteousness, they will in turn protect the country.

It is not great to kill the enemies in a war. First and foremost, protect truth and righteousness. The country will automatically be protected. Indian



***Only God exists. The world is but an illusion. This sacred teaching of the Vedas should be publicised and should be imparted to everyone. You find many Sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) chanting and teaching the Vedas. It would be fruitless if one does not practise what one preaches. It is like a gramophone record which plays the song but does not experience its melody. So, one should recognise, understand and practise the sacred teachings of the Vedas.***



culture exhorts Sathyam Vada (speak truth) and Dharmam Chara (practise righteousness). When you do this with perseverance, you will become brave,



courageous and powerful. When you protect Sathya and Dharma, God will, in turn, protect not only you and your country, but the whole world. Consider truth as your life-breath and righteousness your armour. If you have these two, you will have everything. You don't need to fight with anybody in the world. The world has not done any harm to you. There is nothing great in attacking those who have done no harm to you.

*Dear Students!*

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

*Sathya Dharmamu Santhi Premalatho  
Nee Nitya Jivana Yatra Saginchu.*

(Oh man! Carry on your life's journey with the help of truth, righteousness, peace, and love). You must hold on to these principles, come what may. Never give up these in any situation. God will surely protect you. History is replete with examples wherein people held steadfastly to the principles of Sathya and Dharma, and were constantly protected by God. One such example is that of the Pandavas. They faced insurmountable difficulties. But they were always saved because they followed Sathya and Dharma and their chaste wife Draupadi always held fast to these principles. It was this adherence to Sathya and

Dharma that made Draupadi one of the greatest among women. She symbolised Sathya and Dharma. If you hold on to these two principles, they will remain with you till the end. You may argue, "Where are Sathya and Dharma in the present-day world? Whom are they protecting?" This is a totally wrong argument. In fact, Sathya and Dharma are present in women even today. They will never give them up. If you protect Sathya and Dharma, they will, in turn, stand before you and protect you. They are the manifestation of divinity. Unfortunately, today instead of Sathyam Vada (speak truth) and Dharmam Chara (practise righteousness), people are following the distorted version Sathyam Vadha (kill truth) and Dharmam Chera (imprison righteousness). This is utter perversion. You should lead your lives based on Sathya and Dharma and consider them as more important than your very life.

Several women come to Me with a heavy heart and tell Me "Swami! My husband has died. This has caused me deep sorrow." Then I would respond saying, "Very happy." They feel very unhappy with My attitude and question Me, "What is this, Swami? Are You happy on hearing the news of my husband's death?" What am I to say? I am always happy. I do not know what sorrow is. I always discharge My duty.

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





## Protection of Women is the Responsibility of Men

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

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

Women set ideals to society. They are the epitome of idealism. Never cause them distress.

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

### *Embodiments of Love!*

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

### *Embodiments of Love!*

You must follow Sathya (truth) even in small matters. King Janaka, a great renunciant king, used to propagate



truth and righteousness to his subjects by his own example. His daughter Sita also led a pious life based on truth and righteousness. Instead of reading cheap novels, you should study the life story of such ideal women. You should study the ancient history of Bharat, which is so sacred. The character and morality of women in Bharat are worthy of great respect. You will become worthy of being called men only when you undertake to protect such great women. Will you become men by merely sporting a moustache or growing a beard? Moustache and beard are not the real signs of masculinity. You must protect women and uphold the dignity of the family. Only then can you be called brave, courageous and valorous.

#### *Embodiments of Love!*

Consider women as embodiments of truth. Even if some minor faults are noticed in them, do not give importance to them. Respect and revere them. Do not use even a single word that would hurt them. If they really wish, they can achieve any great task. You should be prepared to lay down even

your life for the sake of protecting and helping women. At least from today, all of you should come forward to protect the honour and dignity of women in the world. Women also should consider their husband as God and adhere to Sati Dharma (duty of a chaste wife). As regards men, they are duty bound to protect women. Similarly, it is the duty of a woman to take care of the family. Her duty is to foster and maintain the entire family as a unit. If women are protected, they in turn will protect the entire world. Love and respect them. Never belittle them and never treat them as mere playthings. I hope, all of you men will, at least in future, undertake to protect the dignity and honour of women and thereby protect your own dignity and honour. I conclude My Discourse blessing you all.

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

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

... *Continued from page 109*

Books and Publications Trust offered a vote of thanks to all the participants and the staff of the Book Trust who made this Conference a grand success. The proceedings of the Conference concluded with Arati.

#### **Recommendations**

The Conference recommended that all efforts should be made to bring all editions of “Sanathana Sarathi” to the highest level of perfection from all

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



# CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

## Excellent Tribal Dances

Devotees from far and near have been offering their homage to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by organising a variety of programmes as part of His 80th Birthday celebrations. In a unique programme held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on



*Tribals of Nilgiri Hills express their love for Bhagavan by their tribal dance.*

3rd March 2005, the tribals of Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu expressed their love and reverence for Bhagavan by performing tribal dances depicting their rich cultural heritage. These dancers represented three tribal communities, namely, the Todas, the Kotas and the Badgas.

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

Next to present their dances were the village elders of the Kota community, with the accompaniment of music from their traditional tribal musical instruments called kob, kolu, pur and thabak. Joyous sounds of their songs and graceful movement of their feet to the rhythm of simple music lent beauty and charm to their dance.

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

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

## Holy Holi Festival 2005

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

The programme in the morning began at 8.00 a.m. after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall. Starting with a dance and song of invocation to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the programme comprised as many as







*The Holi festival celebrated in Brij during the time of Lord Krishna was brought alive in Sai Kulwant Hall by the Bal Vikas students of Bihar and Jharkhand.*

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

### **Pavitra Holi – A Drama**

This excellent drama was enacted by the Sai Youth of Bihar and Jharkhand on the afternoon of 26th



March 2005 in Sai Kulwant Hall to highlight the inner meaning, glory and importance of the holy festival of Holi.

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

These sacred lessons of Holi were depicted through this excellent drama. Bhagavan graced the occasion by His



*A scene from the drama –“Pavitra Holi”.*

Divine Presence and blessed the cast at the end of the play. After this play, Bhajans were also led by the devotees of Bihar and Jharkhand. The programme came to a close at 5.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

# 80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: THE WORK HAS BEGUN

## 1. Medical Camps

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

**Sri Lanka:** On 10th February 2005, a 10-member team of Sai devotees departed for one of the most devastated areas of tsunami-hit Sri Lanka. The team comprised individuals from Canada, U.S.A. and Argentina. With coordination and help from the Sathya Sai Organisation of Sri Lanka, the team went to Aliyavalai in the northeast coast of Sri Lanka. This village was one of the worst-hit areas in the aftermath of the

disaster. Assisted by three translators from the Vavuniya Sathya Sai Centre, the team organised relief work. A camp clinic was set up and 450 patients were seen with a range of conditions including skin lesions, wounds and respiratory tract infections. A well baby clinic was also conducted where over 150 children ages 0-3 were seen. Grief counselling was another crucial area addressed by the Sai team. The counsellors established heart-to-heart communication and trust with individuals and families. They were an exemplary conduit of Bhagavan's love that poured forth unceasingly and left an indelible mark on the lives of those who gave and those who received. Adopting the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values approach, efforts were made to instil in the



*Sai Organisation of Sri Lanka distributing meals and school materials to students.*

children a sense of confidence, pride and responsibility. On the last day, a ceremony was held at the seashore





to pray for the departed souls and for the welfare of those who were affected. For many of the children, this was the first time they had returned to the beach after the disaster, signalling a new beginning – without fear and full of hope. Cooking pots were distributed to every family within the camp. At the school, over 250 packets of meals were given to the children on a daily basis. Door-to-door Grama Seva was also performed and people were visibly grateful for Swami's Love. All children at the school received books, school bags and a number of age appropriate toys. Special monitor books were given to the older children. For extra-curricular activities, sports equipment was provided to the school including cricket gear and soccer balls. Medical supplies and medications were supplied to the hospital. There were eleven nurses in the clinic who had much difficulty coming to work. As the roads were destroyed, it would take them hours to walk to the clinic. So each nurse was given a new bicycle to help them commute. As one member of the team wrote, "In the end, the measure of impact is not in the numbers. It is in the ineffable love and smile on the faces of our new friends and the spiritual change in each of us."

## 2. Community Service Programmes

**U.S.A.:** On 23rd December 2004 and 20th January 2005, devotees from the Arcadia and Glendale Sai Centres in Southern California distributed 500 blankets to the homeless. After the weekly Bhajans on Thursday night, the group set out to downtown Los Angeles to deliver these blankets to the needy who were sleeping on the sidewalks, under

shop-awnings and in vacant plots, inside tiny shelters made out of cardboard boxes and on the hard concrete sidewalk. As the devotees lovingly covered their shivering



*Sai devotees distributing blankets to the needy people in Los Angeles.*

brethren with blankets, the grateful look and beaming smiles on their faces was yet another reminder from Bhagavan of His benign omnipresence.

**El Salvador:** For over 8 years, devotees at Sai Centre in Sensuntepeque have been conducting a study circle within the federal prison in their town. About 60 inmates attend this weekly meeting. The change in the participating prisoners has been so notable that the Prison Director was inspired to take the Sathya Sai human values diploma course offered by the Sathya Sai Institute of Human Values, despite this requiring him to travel four hours every Friday and Saturday for three months. He is now able to evaluate the progress of prisoners who attend Sai study circle and give recommendations to the judges for shorter sentences. With the help of Sai devotees, light meditation is being introduced for all the prisoners. Bhagavan's miracles serve as constant reminders of His





ever-present grace. One of the inmates was afflicted with severe diabetes and was unable to walk; nor could he consume any refreshments offered by the devotees. In a dream, Swami told him that he could take the refreshments. At the next meeting, he took some cookies and fruit punch, and today he is walking without pain.

### 3. Public Meetings

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

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

Sai EHV into an asylum for the mentally ill – using Sai Educare as both philosophy and method in the daily activities of the asylum – with astonishing and life-transforming results. Another speaker illustrated how he and his team were implementing Sai education techniques in the running of a prestigious music and dance festival in the city of Granada, Spain.

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

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

The Regional President outlined how ‘Unity, Purity and Divinity’ would be implemented in the Region during the upcoming year. Guest speaker



Dr. John Goldthwaite spoke of his experiences of 'Purifying the Heart'. He shared valuable insights to knowing the true Self. Following his inspiring words, he led the audience through a series of exercises that stressed the need for inner reflection. He also emphasised that spiritual seekers should not judge others. The afternoon session closed with devotional singing and collection of food for distribution to the needy.

– Prasanthi Council

## B H A R A T

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

West Godavari district conducted Sri Sathya Sai Koti Namarchana at Narsapur on 13th February 2005 in

which 1000 couples took part. This district conducted free Upanayanam for 45 boys on 17th February 2005 in Gargapuram village, opened a newly-built Bhajan Mandiram in Perupalem village on 19th February 2005, and took part in the Bhumi Puja for Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Project at Polavaram on 11th February 2005. This district conducted a mega medical camp in Tekur, a remote tribal village, treating 1500 patients of different ailments and distributed medicines worth one lakh rupees.

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

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

To beat the severe cold wave in the State, a Vastra Seva (distribution of clothes) was conducted at





Chandigarh, Ambala, Gurgaon and Rewari, distributing 436 new woollen blankets, 213 sweaters, 200 woollen shawls, 123 Saris and 21 school uniforms benefiting 1200 needy people.

**Tamil Nadu:** The Anniversary of Sundaram, the abode of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Chennai, was celebrated on 19th and 20th January 2005. Significantly, this is its silver jubilee year as this grand edifice was inaugurated by Bhagavan on 19th January 1981. The programme began at 5.00 a.m. on 19th January



*The Divine abode in Chennai.*

2005 with Nagar Sankirtan, in which hundreds of devotees took part. Other programmes included Abhishekam of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba, Sahasranama Archana, Narayana Seva and distribution of uniforms and school material to tsunami affected children. In the evening, there were programmes of vocal music, instrumental music, Veda chanting and Bhajans. In the end, an audio and visual presentation was made on tsunami relief work done by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. The programmes on

20th January 2005 included band music by Bal Vikas children from Chennai Metro, devotional music and Bhajans by ladies devotees followed by Veda-parayanam. The programme concluded with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed in the end.

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

Justice Shivaraj Patil of Supreme Court of India delivered the keynote address wherein he explained to the august gathering of 600 eminent judges, advocates and devotees that a man from an ordinary background could reach great heights in his career if he had the strength of the

prayer of poor people who were helped by him sometimes by following Bhagavan’s axiom of “Love All, Serve All”. Justice A.P. Mishra, retired judge of Supreme Court of India and Chairman of Human Rights Commission and Sri V.B. Upadhyaya, former Advocate General, U.P., laid great emphasis on practising human values in legal profession. They observed that such programmes were the need of the hour. A cultural programme based on human values was presented by the Bal Vikas children on this occasion.

