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*"The holy festival of Sankranti
signifies change. It implies
transformation of the heart. It is
experiencing bliss arising out of the
realisation of the changeless, eternal
principle. Divinity is the only
principle that is changeless."*

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PURE AND LOVING HEART IS THE SOURCE OF BLISS

The sun appears serene and peaceful. The days have become shorter. The sweet festival of Sankranti has come filling our homes with the newly harvested grain.

(Telugu Poem)

THE BHARATIYAS CONSIDER Sankranti as one of the most important festivals. In fact, man should consider every day of his life a festival. It is a sign of ignorance to consider some days as festival days and others as ordinary ones. Many people celebrate the festival of Sankranti without actually knowing its significance.

Sankranti Brings Joy to all

It is customary to worship cows and bulls on this day. Richly

caparisoned bulls are decorated with a variety of ornaments and taken round the streets. They are called Gangireddhulu (sacred bulls). The person who takes round the decorated bull is called Gangireddudasu. He wears a special dress on this occasion. He performs a symbolic marriage of the bull and the cow to the delight of all. The very sight of Gangireddudasu fascinates children.

The elder brother lovingly calls the younger brother to go along with him to see the sacred bull and its master.



“Oh my dear brother, here comes the Gangireddudasu. Come, let us go and see him. He wears a silver medallion and a waist belt. He carries a decorated staff and wears special marks on his forehead. He brings with him richly caparisoned sacred cow and bull and performs their marriage. Let us see the marriage ceremony and offer our gifts.” (Telugu Song)

Gangireddudasu calls the cow and the bull as Sita and Rama, respectively. They are trained in such a way that they respond to his questions according to the movement of his hand. He asks the cow, “Oh Sita! Do you like Rama?” As per the training given, the cow shakes its head in disapproval. Then he asks the bull, “Oh Rama! Do you like Sita?” The bull also answers in the negative. In this manner, both of them disagree initially but later on agree for the marriage. Then the Gangireddudasu performs their symbolic marriage. People offer gifts to the Gangireddudasu on this occasion. In this way, the festival of Sankranti bestows immense joy on all including animals and birds. It is a very important festival for farmers also. This is the time when they bring home the newly harvested crop and enjoy the fruits of their hard labour. Thus, right from the farmer to the king, this festival brings joy to all.

Names may vary, but this festival is celebrated by one and all irrespective of religion and nationality. Some name it Sankranti, and others consider it an auspicious time and give other names to it. Not only the Bharatiyas, even the people of other countries celebrate this festival, but with different names.



God does not cause suffering to any living being in His creation. All sorrows and difficulties are of your own making. God is the protector of all living beings. He provides peace and happiness to one and all. Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu (May all the people of the world be happy!). This is the Will of God. How then can God cause sorrow to a human being? Unable to understand this truth, you blame God for your suffering.



This is the season when cool winds blow and the farmer brings home the harvested crop. He spends his time in a relaxed manner free from all worries and anxieties. There is a saying in Telugu: One who is free from Chintha (worry) will be able to sleep peacefully even in a Santha (market place). Everyone should make efforts to overcome worries and enjoy everlasting happiness. This is the message of Sankranti. Among all the festivals, the womenfolk accord a special place to this festival. The happiness that one enjoys during this festival is unique. It marks the beginning of the sacred time of Uttarayana (sun’s northward course). It confers bliss on one and all.

Everyone aspires to attain bliss. In fact, that is the very purpose of human life. Life has no meaning if one cannot experience bliss. Bliss is the goal of life.

Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam (God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, He is wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the Mahavakya Tattwamasi, One without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness of all functions of the intellect).

In accordance with the tradition, the newly married sons-in-law visit their in-laws' house to celebrate this festival. Even those who have not visited their in-laws' house for a number of years will be eager to go on Sankranti festival.


*As Sankranti is the festival of festivals,
Oh newly married bridegroom, visit your
in-laws' house,
Come, spend your time in fun and
frolic with your brothers-in-law and
sisters-in-law,
The entire household and the
neighbourhood will welcome you with
love and affection.* (Telugu Song)

The in-laws extend all hospitality to the son-in-law and make him happy. They give him new clothes and serve him delicious food. The entire household is immersed in bliss. But today that spirit of Sankranti celebration is not noticed anywhere. The son-in-law, instead of giving joy to his in-laws, quarrels with them over petty matters.


Peace and Bliss are within you

Man makes efforts to experience happiness. You can find none in this





Everybody wants to be happy. One should be happy even in difficulties. You need not search for happiness outside. It is always with you, in you, around you. You are unable to experience it as you have not understood the true meaning of happiness. You are under the illusion that happiness lies in money, wealth and material comforts. Once you have the taste of true happiness, you will not crave for worldly possessions. True happiness springs forth from the depth of one's heart.



world who does not want to be happy. Happiness is very essential for man. But one must understand that happiness cannot be acquired from outside. It comes from the heart. The heart is the source of bliss. The happiness we enjoy in the external world is only a reaction, reflection and resound of the happiness within. Very few understand this truth. The apparent joy that one experiences is artificial and temporary. Only the happiness that springs from the heart is permanent.

Students!


Conduct yourself in a way that does not cause unhappiness to others. Festivals are meant to experience happiness and share it with others. You cannot really experience happiness when others are unhappy. Happiness cannot be

purchased in a market nor can it be acquired by worldly means. It should manifest from within. It is not the nature of the Bharatiyas to hurt the feelings of others for their own happiness. You should respect others' feelings and act appropriately. You should share your happiness with your fellowmen. You should welcome the arrival of Pushya Masa (a month in Indian calendar) as the harbinger of change and bounty, and celebrate Sankranti in its true spirit by manifesting your inner joy and sharing it with others. The word 'Kranti' means change. It signifies a change from misery to happiness, from restlessness to peace and from pain to pleasure. Sankranti bestows joy on everyone equally. That is why everyone eagerly awaits the arrival of Sankranti with enthusiasm. Even birds and animals are happy with the arrival of Sankranti. When the farmer brings home the harvested grain, birds partake of them and express their joy by chirping merrily. The neighbours congratulate the farmer on the rich harvest obtained by him as a result of his hard labour.


Students!

It is most essential that you understand the significance of every festival and celebrate it in its true spirit. As we do not go deep into their significance, we are unable to enjoy true happiness. True happiness lies in sacrifice and renunciation. Body is the combination of five elements and mind is merely a bundle of thoughts. One should neither be attached to the body nor follow the vagaries of the mind. Drive away the evil qualities of Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya (desire, anger, greed, infatuation,





You must have observed that small children are always happy and cheerful. They do not have any inhibitions. When somebody smiles at them, they will also smile innocently and make everybody happy. Their happiness is not ordinary happiness that comes and goes. It is that which is inherent in all human beings as their natural quality. It does not come from outside. It is something that comes from within.



pride and jealousy) and manifest your inner peace and bliss. But man today is destroying peace and bliss instead of developing them. He loses his peace even in trivial matters. Neither Asanthi (restlessness) nor Prasanthi (supreme peace) are acquired from outside. People say, "I want peace." Where is peace? Is it present outside? If peace were to be found outside, people would have bought it by spending any amount of money. But outside, we find only pieces! The real peace is within.

Whether you boil it hard or dilute it with water, milk remains white. White symbolises purity. In the same manner, your heart should always remain pure, bright and peaceful in spite of all trials and tribulations.

We should subdue sorrow, keep the evil qualities of anger, hatred and jealousy under check and manifest our innate

bliss. What is the cause of anger? You become angry when your desires are not fulfilled. So, man can be happy if he keeps his desires under control.



You are all full of love. In fact, your hearts are overflowing with love. But you prevent your love from flowing in its natural course.

Otherwise, love has no barriers and boundaries at all! Constantly contemplate on God. Then you will experience all-encompassing happiness at all levels – physical, mental and spiritual. Unfortunately, people today are losing their divine quality of happiness due to excessive desires. You can be happy when you get rid of your desires.



Embodiments of Love!

Everybody wants to be happy. One should be happy even in difficulties. You need not search for happiness outside. It is always with you, in you, around



you. You are unable to experience it as you have not understood the true meaning of happiness. You are under the illusion that happiness lies in money, wealth and material comforts. Once you have the taste of true happiness, you will not crave for worldly possessions. True happiness springs forth from the depth of one's heart.

When milk is boiled in a vessel, its level starts rising. But it goes down when you sprinkle a few drops of water on it. It is the association of water which brings its level down. Likewise, man loses his value when he associates himself with bad company. One will always be blissful if one is in good company. You like to spend time with your friends. But you should enquire what type of friends they are and what type of happiness you derive in their company.

Happiness is Union with God

You may or may not be aware; I am always in a state of bliss. I have no worries or difficulties whatsoever. Some people ask, "Swami, do You have any worries?" I do not know what worry is. I have never experienced it. I am always in

bliss (*loud applause*). Always think of bliss. Then you will experience bliss wherever you are. The taste of bliss is sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey. People feel sad

when they are faced with difficulties. Death of their near and dear ones also makes them sad. But I do not feel sad on account of anything whatsoever. Difficulties come and go like passing clouds. Happiness and sorrow follow one another. When you constantly think of bliss, there will be no scope for sorrow.

Embodiments of Love!

There is love in each one of you, but you are directing it towards worldly relationships. You have not tasted true love. Love God wholeheartedly. That is true love. People may come and people may go, but God neither comes nor goes. He is always present. When you are engulfed in sorrow, think of happiness. Then and there, you will experience happiness.

Bliss is very much immanent in every human being. Wherever we are, whatever be the position we occupy, our essential nature is bliss. People ask Me sometimes, "Swami! Did You ever experience sorrow?" I am amused at this question. In fact, why should I experience sorrow? Should I feel sorry about the body? Not necessary. This body is always healthy and active. The human mind is fickle by nature. Body is like a water bubble; mind is like a mad monkey. Don't follow the mind; don't follow the body. After all, why should one feel sorry about the body and mind which are transient? In fact, bliss is our essential nature which is permanent. Lead your life filled with love. Cultivate love. You can experience bliss when you develop love.

Start the day with love;

Fill the day with love;

End the day with love;

That is the way to God.

If you can achieve this, you will not be disturbed by sorrows and difficulties. The heart is the seat of bliss. True bliss flows from a pure and loving heart. Try to experience such bliss. All other forms of happiness are momentary.

Embodiments of Love!

You must have observed that small children are always happy and cheerful. They do not have any inhibitions. When somebody smiles at them, they will also smile innocently and make everybody happy. Their happiness is not ordinary happiness that comes and goes. It is that which is inherent in all human beings as their natural quality. It does not come from outside. It is something that comes from within. It is God's gift to man. Happiness is union with God. You experience real happiness when you unify with God. You cannot experience it when you are separated from Him.

You have to experience such bliss in abundance in the days to come. Let Me remind you once again that neither age nor position nor for that matter anything in this physical environment can bring about such bliss. It is only the pure and loving heart that is the source of bliss. The holy festival of Sankranti signifies change. It implies transformation of the heart. It is experiencing bliss arising out of the realisation of the changeless, eternal principle. Divinity is the only principle that is changeless. God is ever blissful. In fact, He is the embodiment of bliss. For example, this




is a white cloth. It is only when it is dyed, it acquires some colour. Your essential nature is bliss. Sadness is of your own making. If you are experiencing sorrow, it is because you have immersed yourself in sorrow. Wherever you are, you must always be happy and blissful. Many people wish Me, "Swami! Happy Birthday!" Is happiness limited to a particular day for celebrating one's birthday? I am always happy (*loud applause*). Expressions like "Happy Birthday" are mere clichés. In fact, bliss is our true nature. We camouflage our true nature with artificial expressions and consider it real happiness. This is not proper.

Evil Ways of Man Cause Natural Calamities


Embodiments of Love!

You are all full of love. In fact, your hearts are overflowing with love. But you prevent your love from flowing in its natural course. Otherwise, love has no barriers and boundaries at all! Constantly contemplate on God. Then you will experience all-encompassing happiness at all levels – physical, mental and spiritual. Unfortunately, people today are losing their divine quality of happiness due to excessive desires. You can be happy when you get rid of your desires. For example, this is a white cloth. Whiteness is its nature. But it will become dirty when it is exposed to dirt. Similarly, your heart is always pure, bright and blissful. But it gets polluted due to excessive desires. Therefore, cultivate love and keep your heart always pure. Then you will be blissful every moment of your life. But you have forgotten your innate nature of bliss and are always immersed in sorrow





Man makes efforts to experience happiness. You can find none in this world who does not want to be happy. Happiness is very essential for man. But one must understand that happiness cannot be acquired from outside. It comes from the heart. The heart is the source of bliss. The happiness we enjoy in the external world is only a reaction, reflection and resound of the happiness within.



and unhappiness. When someone enquires, "How are you?", say confidently, "I am very happy." It is possible that you may encounter some ups and downs in life. But they should not mar your blissful nature. See how blissful I am! Not only now, I am always in bliss. In fact, you can also experience this bliss when you come to Me. But if you come with evil thoughts and desires, you cannot experience it. These are your weaknesses. Do away with these weaknesses which can bring about your ruin.

Students – Boys and Girls!

Do not become a victim of worry. Suppose you fail in an examination; do not worry about it. Rather, you should understand the reason for your failure; perhaps you did not write the examination well or you were not sufficiently prepared for it. But never get depressed and dejected that you

have failed in the examination. Similarly, you should enquire within yourself the reason for your sorrow. You will realise that your own thoughts are responsible for it. If you give proper direction to your thoughts, you can always be happy. Sorrows and worries are like passing clouds. Never give importance to them. Always be happy and peaceful. Peace and happiness are your innate qualities.

Embodiments of Love!

Today is the holy festival of Sankranti. In fact, this year is more important than the previous years. Last month, the tsunami caused untold misery and suffering to a large number of people. It is only man's evil deeds that are responsible for such a calamity. Therefore, never indulge in wrong actions and evil deeds. It is possible that compared to last year more troubles may occur during this year. However, we should face all problems with courage and fortitude. These are all passing clouds and you need not be perturbed by these occurrences. Be bold and courageous to face them. It is man who is responsible for the calamity caused by the tsunami, and not God. But man thinks that all such calamities are thrust upon him by God. Never! God always provides happiness to man. He has no anger or hatred. His nature is love. The question arises as to why sorrows and difficulties occur in the world. Strictly speaking, happiness will not have any value without sorrow. Man cannot experience happiness without undergoing some difficulty or the other. Both happiness and sorrow are interlinked. One cannot exist without the other.

Pleasure and pain, good and bad co-exist, none can separate them. You cannot find pleasure or pain, good or bad to the exclusion of the other. Pleasure results when difficulties fructify. (Telugu Poem)

God does not cause suffering to any living being in His creation. All sorrows and difficulties are of your own making. God is the protector of all living beings. He provides peace and happiness to one and all. *Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the people of the world be happy!). This is the Will of God. How then can God cause sorrow to a human being? Unable to understand this truth, you blame God for your suffering. When you develop correct understanding, you will realise that everything is for your good only. Then you will be immersed in bliss day and night. Treasure this bliss in your heart and share it with one and all. Then you will be all the more blissful.

Transform your Heart and Attain Bliss

Embodiments of Love!

This Sankranti is Prema Sankranti and Ananda Sankranti. It is a magnificent one. Hence, welcome it wholeheartedly and experience bliss (*loud applause*). God is the embodiment of bliss. Do not extol God with appellations like Karunanidhi (treasure of compassion) and Premaswarupa (embodiment of love). It is enough if you pray to Him earnestly for the share of His bliss. God is always blissful. Do not pray to God for any other thing. Just pray, "Oh! God! Share Your bliss with me. Make me blissful!" Never deride God as "Nirdaya" (one without compassion). He is most compassionate. Whatever



God does is for our own good. Even the sorrows and difficulties we experience are for our own good. They are preludes to happiness and bliss. If you cultivate such positive outlook, you will always be blissful. Share your happiness with all. Contrary to this, man today is keeping happiness to himself and distributing sorrow to others. This is not what we should do. Overcome your sorrow and manifest inner joy – this is the spiritual Sadhana one has to undertake. What is true spiritual practice? True spiritual practice is to rise above our sorrows and difficulties. When you constantly think that you are endowed with peace and bliss, no difficulties will bother you.

Embodiments of Love!

Today is Sankranti. Sankranti signifies change. Let this Sankranti bring about a transformation in your heart so that you may always lead a happy, prosperous and glorious life. Think of all those good things that have happened in your life. Then you will be happy and blissful. Bliss is, in fact, your very nature. Real humanness lies in

rising from Manavatva (humanness) to Daivatva (divinity).

Students!

The dramas that you have enacted and music concerts you have presented here are all very good. Everything is good. Where does bad lie? If you analyse properly, you will find that it lies in your mind. Bliss is the real food of man. One should always be hungry to partake of that food of bliss. Try to remain in a state of bliss at all times. You should be blissful even at the time of your examinations. Various events come and go. But you should have determination to remain blissful. Let your faith in God be firm and unshakeable. It is only God's love that is eternal. If you attain God's love, happiness will automatically come to you.

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

– **From Bhagavan's Sankranti Sandesh in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 14th January 2005.**

Bhakti is the state of mind, in which one has no separate existence apart from God. The Bhakta's very breath is God. Like the fish, which can live only in water, man can live only in God, in peace and happiness. In other media, he has only fear, frantic struggle and failure.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum: A Musical Ballet

This beautiful musical ballet was presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 6th January 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Based on the enchanting theme of Bal Leela (childhood divine play) of Lord Krishna, this was a superb presentation from all accounts, be it music, choreography, acting, direction, lyrics. Particularly, the students who enacted the roles of Yashoda and Krishna beautifully portrayed the purest and tenderest feelings of love between the mother and the child. Obviously pleased with the performance of the children, Bhagavan Baba blessed the children at the conclusion of the play and gave them the precious opportunity of group photo with Him. Bhagavan also materialised a gold chain for the student who played the role of child Krishna. The programme which started after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan at 3.15 p.m. came to a close at 4.00 p.m. with a beautiful group song describing the divine play and glory of Kali Yuga Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all the devotees.

Sai Sankranti: A Musical Ballet

On the eve of the holy festival of Sankranti, Bal Vikas students of Andhra Pradesh (Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Guntur and Krishna districts) presented an

excellent musical ballet entitled "Sai Sankranti" in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 12th January 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Baba. In this well-planned and well-directed dance drama, religious, social and spiritual significance of Sankranti and the traditional values associated with this festival of plenty, peace and joy were brought forth through meticulously selected songs and dances



Bal Vikas students of Andhra Pradesh giving a portrayal of the various aspects of Sankranti festival.

enchantingly enacted by the children. The dance drama which began with invocation to Lord Ganesh at 3.30 p.m. came to a happy conclusion at 4.20 p.m. with a very befitting group dance and song in praise of the sacred land of Bharat and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who is imparting priceless teachings to children through the great spiritual movement of Bal Vikas.

Annamacharya: A Drama

The students of Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented a very beautiful and inspiring drama entitled





A scene from the drama "Annamacharya" presented in Sai Kulwant Hall. A beautiful replica of Venkateswara temple is in the background.

"Annamacharya" in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on the afternoon of 13th January 2005. Based on the lofty theme of Bhakti, the drama excellently portrayed the life story of Annamacharya, popularly known as Annamayya, whose devotion and yearning for Lord Venkateswara was so intense that the Lord Himself manifested before him to listen to his sweet Kirtans. The drama which superbly pictured the power of Bhakti of this great Kirtanacharya presented some of his choicest Kirtans to the delight of devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall. Superb acting of the students, powerful dialogues, sweet songs, appropriate costumes and exquisitely beautiful sets made this drama one of the most perfect presentations ever made in Sai Kulwant Hall. The drama which began after the Divine Darshan of Bhagavan at 3.45 p.m. came to a close at 5.00 p.m. with a beautiful group song. Bhagavan sat through the entire

presentation and blessed the students at the end of the drama. He also gave them the coveted opportunity of group photo with Him. The programme concluded with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

Sai Bhagavatam: A Drama

The students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam presented an excellent drama entitled "Sai Bhagavatam" on 14th January 2005 in Poornachandra Auditorium. The drama unfolded the saga of Kali Yuga Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, depicted His Divine glory and expounded His main teachings in a very impressive manner. Beginning with the prayer of Mother Earth to the Lord to re-establish Dharma in the world, all the main



The drama "Sai Bhagavatam" was presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School in Poornachandra Auditorium.

events of the Shirdi Sai Avatar and Sathya Sai Avatar were beautifully presented by the students through



appropriate dialogues, excellent acting and beautiful songs and dances. Effective use of video clippings to illustrate the various events added beauty and charm to the entire presentation. The drama which began at 5.45 p.m. after the arrival of Bhagavan Baba in the Poornachandra Auditorium came to a close at 7.00 p.m. with offer of Mangalarati to Bhagavan. Bhagavan witnessed the entire drama and showered His blessings on the students at the end of the drama.

People of Anantapur District Express their Gratitude to Bhagavan

Thousands of people from Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh came to Prasanthi Nilayam on 28th January 2005 to express their gratitude to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for promoting all-round development of this drought-prone district of Andhra Pradesh by setting up educational institutions and hospitals and by starting social welfare projects like Sri Sathya Sai Water Project, Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanoddharana Pathakam and Grama Seva for the uplift of the masses.

On this occasion, the Sai Organisation of this district organised a function in Sai Kulwant Hall on the morning of 28th January 2005 to distribute wet grinders and sewing machines to 80 needy persons, both ladies and gents, to enable them to earn their livelihood through self-employment. The function was a part of 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan. Bhagavan graced the occasion by His Divine Presence and distributed these items to the beneficiaries. They came one by one in an orderly manner as their

names were announced, offered their Pranams to Bhagavan and received His tokens of love with humility and gratitude. This simple and solemn function came to a close at 8.40 a.m. This was followed by Bhajans which were also led by the devotees of Anantapur district. The morning programme concluded at 9.15 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

Anantha Varadayee Sri Sathya Sai: A Dance Drama

In the afternoon, the Bal Vikas children of Anantapur district presented a dance drama entitled "Anantha Varadayee Sri Sathya Sai" in Sai Kulwant Hall. The drama showed how Bhagavan immensely helped



A scene from the dance drama "Anantha Varadayee Sri Sathya Sai".

the people of this district by setting up a number of educational institutions where best quality education was provided without any charge. Similarly, super speciality and other hospitals set up by Bhagavan provided free medicare. But the greatest boon of Bhagavan to this district was Sri Sathya

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ANNUAL SPORTS

AND CULTURAL MEET-11th January 2005



Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2005 of SSSIHL

AN OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE



The Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2005 of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was held in the Hill View Stadium, Prasanthi Nilayam on 11th January 2005 in the Divine Presence of the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Spread over two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the evening, the sports and cultural events displayed the courage, skill and spirit of adventure of the students of the three campuses of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan and Anantapur as also the students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music and Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanodharana Pathakam school, Prasanthi Nilayam. This year's sports and cultural meet had a special significance as it was the first big event of 80th Birthday celebrations of the Institute's Revered Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba. True to the spirit of the occasion, the students and staff of the Institute put their heart and soul into all the events of the Sports and Cultural Meet to make it one of the most outstanding performances ever made in the Hill View Stadium.

Even before dawn, the Stadium was filled to its capacity with spectators who thronged the venue of the Sports Meet since early morning to witness this grand annual event of the Institute. Vedic chants which started at 7.00 a.m. filled the entire milieu with sacred vibrations. Meanwhile, the students who were to take part in

various events took their slots in the ground, giving the entire area the look of a colourful flowerbed.

Inauguration and March Past

The Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was welcomed by the band of Anantapur Campus when He majestically entered the Stadium in a sparkling white robe at 7.35 a.m. He was led to the Santhi Vedika in a grand procession comprising Sai Geeta (Bhagavan's beloved elephant), motorbike riders squad, brass band of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, slow marching squad of captains of various teams and the squad of horse riders of Brindavan Campus. Prasanthi Nilayam Campus band innovatively played popular Bhajans to the beat of this slow march. On reaching Santhi Vedika, Bhagavan was offered a hearty welcome by the Vice Chancellor and the senior staff members of the Institute.

Bhagavan inaugurated the Sports and Cultural Meet at 7.50 a.m. by lighting the sacred lamp amidst a thunderous applause of the spectators and students. Soon after the inauguration, March Past began, headed by Primary School students in their colourful shining dresses. Marching in perfect coordination and harmony, they looked like hundreds of multicoloured roses blossoming with joy and happiness in the divine garden of their Beloved Bhagavan. Then followed the marching squads of Institute's Anantapur Campus, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music, Brindavan



Campus and Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. A special squad of athletes of the Institute formed the rear of the March Past. All these contingents marched in perfect order to the tunes of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus band and offered respectful salutes to their Revered Chancellor.

Spectacular Show of Courage and Confidence by Anantapur Campus Students

The sports events began after the ceremonies of flag hoisting, administration of the pledge to the participants, lighting of the sports urn at the hilltop by the mascot Garuda and release of peace doves and



Anantapur Campus students precariously balancing themselves on a bike and making a butterfly formation.

balloons. First to display their events were the students of Anantapur Campus of the Institute. Their presentation was titled “Dharma Margame Sai Margamu” (the path of Dharma is the path of Sai). They had a fine mix of several items: martial arts, sword fighting, fencing and

cultural items. They concluded with stunts on motorbikes. The stunts on bikes included criss-crosses, ramp jumps, human ramp jump, daring jumps through fire and several formations on the bikes. The highlight of the show was the bike jump over a human ramp of 16 girls lying next to each other! It was a spectacular display of courage, adventure and skill. Swami’s first campus proved beyond doubt, and not for the first time, that Mother Easwamma’s dream of women’s education had yielded spectacular results.

After this came the children from Deenajanodharana Pathakam on a motorised pageant which was parked right opposite the dais. Their presentation portrayed the teachings of Bhagavan through a series of magic tricks, and the accompanying song and commentary.

Display of Grit and Grandeur by Brindavan Campus Students

Meanwhile, a microlight aircraft flew across the light blue sky with a long banner trailing behind, bearing the writing: “Happy 80th Birthday”. With this, the Brindavan Campus made its lofty entry. The Brindavan Campus presentation was titled “A Journey from I to we.... And we to He”. It was a display of beauty and symmetry taken to great heights by the spirit of adventure nurtured on the bedrock of faith and surrender. Celestial rhythms was a breathtaking display of grit and grandeur on a metal grid suspended at an awesome height of 80 feet. Students dressed in bright contrast colours formed several attractive patterns high

above: the most striking of them was a beautiful pattern of SAI and 80, hailing the 80th year of the Advent of Avatar,



Bhagavan Baba. Another breathtakingly adventurous event was reverse bungee jump presented by the Brindavan Campus students in the afternoon. In this event, a student is tied to the end of a rope at ground level and then flung up high in the sky at great speed with the help of a crane. The students who performed this event must be having nerves of steel!

Delightful Dances by Primary School Students

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to the Stadium at 2.50 p.m. The programme began with the presentation of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam. The theme was: *Ekoham Bahusyam* (I am one; I became many). They started their



The Stadium witnessed a riot of colours when the Primary School students presented their beautiful dances.

presentation with a Siva Tandava dance. The events that followed were a grand mix of bright colours, dances, gymnastics and beautiful formations. Suddenly different colours would spring up from nowhere and various objects would emerge from their hidden places, making the dances so thrilling and exciting - giving delight to one and all! They filled the milieu

with patriotic fervour by their last presentation entitled "Vande Mataram". Dancing to the tune of a Telugu song, they made a beautiful formation of the map of India.

Grand Presentation by Prasanthi Nilayam Students

The presentation of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus began with a beautiful Siva Parvati dance on a 6-feet stage, in front of the massive 22-feet golden Nataraja. The next event by the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus students was carabining, which comprised sliding on ropes suspended from the stadium hill and held tight on the ground. While sliding down from a height of 80 feet, the students performed various stunts at tremendous

speed, e.g., yoga postures, cycling, carton crash, tent pegging, etc. All through this adventurous display, the spectators held their breath in awe, and marvelled at the courage of the students. The next event was a delightful display of gymnastics and skill. The students used the trampoline to perform various somersaults. The highlight of this programme was a sequence where the students tried to dunk basketballs into a loop after performing a

complex trampoline jump / somersault. Simple yet so catchy! All were gripped with attention and sat at the edge of their seats waiting for the gymnasts to score a basket!

This was followed by stunts on German wheels by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam. Six pairs of boys took turns to perform various stunts on top of





Prasanthi Nilayam Campus students displayed their spirit of adventure in the carabining events.

these wheels. Precariously manoeuvring themselves on the wheels, they left the spectators in awe and wonder! Another event by the school students was the martial art of stick fighting. It was a synchronous set of moves which was followed by a mock fight. The school students also presented gymnastics and a rhythmic dance making beautiful wave formations.

Gun Drill was another great attraction of the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. It was an army drill performed for the first time in India by non-army personnel. The drill focused on perfect synchronisation as the students performed various movements with their guns. As they made their movements one after the other in rapid succession, a lovely wave effect was produced which was very well appreciated.

Another breathtakingly beautiful event of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus students was U-ramp stunts on roller blades and skateboards. The U-ramp measuring 24 feet by 10 feet was designed and fabricated by the maintenance crew

in record time! The highlights of this programme were a 16-foot drop into the ramp, a front somersault and a stupendous leap over a Maruti van off a ramp. The jump was fantastic and drew applause from Bhagavan Himself!

The Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2005 came to a close at 5.10 p.m. with this grand display of magnificent sports and cultural events. As the closing ceremony song was played, everybody was filled with a sense of joy and fulfilment at the high level of performance of almost all the events.

The Annual Sports and Cultural Meet of the Institute is always a great learning experience. The inspiration and guidance provided by the Revered Chancellor of the Institute builds an enormous amount of self-confidence in the participants, on the



Prasanthi Nilayam Higher Secondary School students performing gymnastics.

basis of which they can achieve higher goals of self-sacrifice and self-realisation in life.

Sankranti and Prize Distribution

The prize distribution function of Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2005 of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher



Learning was held on the sacred day of Sankranti on 14th January 2005 in the Divine Presence of the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Baba.

On the morning of 14th January 2005, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall in a grand procession comprising the Anantapur



Bhagavan delivering His Sankranti Message in Sai Kulwant Hall.

Campus band, flag bearers squad of captains of sports teams and the brass band of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. After showering the bliss of His Divine Darshan on the huge gathering of devotees and students in Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan came to the beautifully decorated dais and inaugurated the programme by lighting the sacred lamp. The programme started with chanting of Vedic Mantras by a group of Institute students. After the sacred Vedic chants, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Principal, Brindavan Campus

of the Institute addressed the gathering and expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for His Divine Presence and loving benedictions which inspired all the participants throughout the preparation and presentation of sports and cultural events.

After this, the Vice Chancellor of the Institute, Sri S.V. Giri shared his thoughts with the audience. Sri Giri observed that this year's valedictory function of Sports and Cultural Meet assumed added significance as it was the first mega function in the first month of 80th Birthday celebrations of the Revered Chancellor of the Institute, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Mentioning some of the exquisitely beautiful and most adventurous events of the recently held Sports and Cultural Meet, Sri Giri felt that these events showed the highest concentration of mind of the participants which they achieved under the direct guidance of Bhagavan. This, he said, was the message of Sankranti which signified transformation of the mind.

Two student speakers were blessed by Bhagavan to speak on this occasion. The first speaker was Kumari Tina Thomas, a 1st year student of M.A. (English literature) of Anantapur Campus of the Institute. Narrating her experiences of Sports and Cultural Meet, Kumari Tina Thomas observed that students could fearlessly perform mind-boggling daring events because they felt that Bhagavan Baba was always protecting them. The second student speaker, Sri Arvind Balasubramanya of II M.Sc. (chemistry) remarked that all the students of the Institute



were fired with only one thought while undertaking any activity, that is, to please their Beloved Swami. Sri Arvind felt that man's only objective of life was to love God and live for Him. At the end of his speech, Sri Arvind received special blessings of Bhagavan who materialised a gold chain with a locket for him.

After this, prize distribution function was held. A large number of prizes were blessed by Bhagavan for distribution to the winners of the various sports and cultural events. Big

trophies were awarded to Institute's three institutions at Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan and Anantapur as also to Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music and Sri Sathya Sai Deenajanodharana Pathakam school. After prize distribution, Bhagavan gave His Divine Discourse, the full text of which has been given elsewhere in this issue. In the end, Prasadam was distributed to all. The function came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 10.20 a.m.

... Continued from page 42

Sai Water Supply Project which had quenched the thirst of the people and the land of this area. Aided by appropriate commentary, sweet songs, charming dances of the children and extraordinarily beautiful backdrops of the scenes, the dance drama realistically depicted all the educational, medical and social welfare projects undertaken by Bhagavan to better the lot of the masses of this district. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the children and posed for photographs with them. He also materialised a gold ring with a diamond for one of the organisers of this programme. A beautiful musical offering of devotional songs was thereafter made by the ladies devotees of this district. The programme came to a happy conclusion with Arati to Bhagavan at 4.55 p.m.

Thyagaraja Aradhana Festival at Prasanthi Nilayam

In a function held in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 30th

January 2005 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the students and staff of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music paid homage to Thyagaraja, the saint composer of Carnatic music, by singing his Pancharatna Kritis and other famous compositions. The programme began soon after Bhagavan occupied His chair on the dais which was adorned with a beautiful painting of Thyagaraja and the idol of his chosen deity, Lord Rama. This magnificently enthralling programme of sacred music was verily a feast for the soul. The audience were overwhelmed and applauded time and again in appreciation of beautiful rendering of divine compositions of this great composer and musician. The programme which began at 7.25 a.m. kept the audience spellbound for nearly one and a half hours and came to a close at 9.00 a.m. This was followed by Bhajans. In the end, Arati was offered to Bhagavan and Prasadam was distributed to all.



CONSIDER YOUR PARENTS AS YOUR PRESIDING DEITIES

*The moon illumines the world at night,
And the sun during the day.
Righteousness illumines the three worlds,
And a noble son illumines his entire clan.*

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

VINAYAKA IS A VIRTUOUS SON. He is the repository of Jnana (knowledge), Vijnana (wisdom), Sujnana (discrimination) and Prajnana (constant integrated awareness). Every individual has a Guru. But Vinayaka has no Guru. He is the Guru of Gurus and the leader of leaders. He is befittingly called Vinayaka since he has no Nayaka (leader) above him.

Make Vinayaka as your Role Model

When a Puja (ritualistic worship) is undertaken, it is customary to first worship Vinayaka to invoke his blessings for its successful completion. When a literary or musical work is undertaken, blessings of Vinayaka are first prayed for. When you thus pray to Vinayaka and seek his blessings, all your tasks will meet with success. Vinayaka has the head and trunk of an elephant. The elephant is associated with the qualities of intelligence and discrimination. It always exercises discrimination before proceeding on its path. Similarly, Vinayaka makes use of discrimination in all the endeavours undertaken by him. Ganapati means master of Buddhi and Vijnana (intellect and wisdom), the letters 'ga' and 'na' in his name denoting these qualities,

respectively. People today forget the underlying meaning in the name Ganapati



Vinayaka is the embodiment of love. He always showers love only. When he was acting as a scribe to write the Mahabharata dictated by Sage Vyasa, he displayed the same quality of love. Vyasa selected him to undertake the duty of a scribe since he was the embodiment of love. Throughout the period of writing the Mahabharata, Vinayaka displayed this quality of pure love. That is why you do not find even a single mistake in the Mahabharata. Since he is flawless, his writing is also flawless.



and engage themselves in mere rituals. You may not perform any rituals but never give up worshipping Vinayaka. Especially, it is the foremost duty of the students to follow Vinayaka, considering him as their ideal. None can excel Vinayaka in virtues; he is



unparalleled and one without a second. When you make Vinayaka your ideal and pursue your studies, you will be able to master all branches of knowledge. Vinayaka has a big belly, which connotes his enormous Jnana (wisdom). That wisdom is his power. We should worship Vinayaka who is the master of vast powers. No one can comprehend the true nature of Lord Vinayaka fully.

Vinayaka is the leader of one and all. He is the divine father and mother to everybody in accordance with the prayer *Twameva Mathascha Pitha Twameva, Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva, Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva* (you alone are the father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth). None can equal Vinayaka in terms of wisdom and prowess in this world. People are unable to recognise the true nature of such a divine leader. They are prepared to accept ordinary mortals as leaders. But they forget Vinayaka who has matchless qualities of leadership.

Today is Vinayaka Chaturthi. It is celebrated as the birthday of Vinayaka. But



In order to drive home the point that children should strive to please and satisfy their parents, Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati arranged the competition of going round the world for Vinayaka and Subrahmanya. If you want to obtain the grace of God, it is enough if you obey the command of your parents lovingly. There is no god greater than parents. They are your presiding deities. They have struggled hard in several ways to bring you up. They made a lot of sacrifice, so that you may achieve progress in life.

how can you identify a particular day as the birthday of one who has created the entire universe? In fact, he has no birth at all. All forms of knowledge



have originated from Vinayaka. All the Vedas, Itihasas and Puranas are the result of the Sankalpa (Will) of Vinayaka.

God has no Trace of Anger in Him

Embodiments of Love!

Vinayaka is the embodiment of love. He does not know what anger is. Where there is love, bad qualities like anger, passion, conceit, etc., cannot gain entry. You might have seen the face of Vinayaka. Does his face ever reflect anger? No. It always bears a smile. Here is a small example. On the way to Kodaikanal, there is a Kshetra (place of pilgrimage). The presiding deity of this Kshetra is Vinayaka. Though Vinayaka is worshipped in such Kshetras, he is present everywhere at all periods of time. In order to visualise God, people attribute a particular place as the birthplace of God and consider it as a Kshetra. But no single place can be ascribed as the birthplace of God. How can any place be attributed to God when He pervades everything in the universe? God will manifest at the place where people give up their bad qualities and sincerely pray to Him with devotion. He is Gunatheetha (beyond attributes). He is *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathanam Niketanam, Nitya, Shuddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (God is attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness).

God may appear to be angry at times. But that is not real anger. In order to put the devotees on the right path, He pretends to be angry. If He does not pretend so, there is no chance for the



Since ancient times, sages in India have been observing strict regulations with regard to diet. They always made it a point to eat Sattwic food. Rajasic food generates anger while Thamasic food will make you feel sleepy even while you are eating. Therefore, both Rajasic and Thamasic types of food must be avoided. Only Sattwic food must be taken. Excess of chillies, salt and sour items must be avoided in food. Before you eat food, never forget to offer your prayer.



devotees to reform themselves. His show of anger is just a drama. God has no trace of anger in Him. When you commit mistakes or tread the wrong path, you are afraid that God will be angry with you. But God only pretends to be angry on such occasions so that you become aware of your own faults and deficiencies. For example, when Swami keeps Himself away from you, you feel very sad and think that Swami is not talking to you because He is angry with you. In fact, Swami does not know what anger is (*loud applause*). He is the embodiment of love. He is full of love. However, on some rare occasions when He speaks harshly, it might be misconstrued that He is angry. This is quite natural even in our day-to-day life.

When you call somebody, "Son! Please come here," it sounds that you

are calling him with love. But if the same words are uttered with a raised voice (in an angry tone), it looks as though you are angry. Therefore, all these are variations in expression and nothing else. The same was the case with Sage Durvasa, whose expressions revealed anger. But, in fact, Sage Durvasa had no anger at all though people consider Durvasa as the other name of anger!

During the Mahabharata war, Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya, took a terrible vow to annihilate all the Pandavas. Having come to know of this, Draupadi prayed to Krishna to save the Pandavas. The Leelas of the Lord are not only wonderful but also mysterious. God enacts dramas and even changes the scenes in His play for the welfare and safety of His devotees. In this instance, the Lord saved the Pandavas with a delicate touch that He alone is capable of. He went to Sage Durvasa who was immensely delighted to receive Him. The sage asked, "Lord, what brings You to my humble Ashram?" Krishna smiled and said, "I have a small job for you." The sage was happy and said, "I am at Your service. You just have to command." Krishna then said, "Good! Tonight you have to save the Pandavas." Durvasa was puzzled and asked, "Lord, it is You who protect everything in this creation. Who am I to do that job?" Krishna replied, "That is a different matter. But for this job, you will be My instrument. I extend protection in many different ways. On this occasion, you have to do something specific as per My instructions." Durvasa wanted to know what it was and Krishna continued, "Dig a pit, ask the

Pandavas to hide themselves in it, cover it with planks, grass and mud, and then take your seat on the platform so prepared. The enemies of the Pandavas may come and ask you about their whereabouts. They may say, "You know the past, present and future. Please tell us where the Pandavas are hiding." Durvasa intervened and said, "Lord, I cannot tell a lie." Krishna countered, "Did I ask you to utter falsehood? I am Myself the embodiment of truth, and I will always ask you to speak only the truth. However, you are at liberty to change your tone suitably to achieve the desired result. I am sure you understand." The sage nodded and smiled.

Some time later, when the Pandavas were hiding in the pit, Aswatthama came there, exactly as Krishna had foretold. Durvasa was sitting with his eyes closed. Bowing to the sage, Aswatthama enquired in a most humble manner about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. Durvasa slowly opened his eyes, which were red like a flame. Angrily he roared, "Yes, the Pandavas are here, right below me." Aswatthama was frightened because the sage was well known for his bad temper and his propensity to curse those who made him angry. Promptly, he fled from the scene and the Pandavas were duly saved.

Since time immemorial, the sages and saints, Yogis and Jnanis have been providing Rakshana (protection) and Sikshana (teaching) to people by various means. Sage Durvasa did so by changing his tone. Ignorant people identify him as one of anger in spite of knowing that he was a great Tapasvin (one who performs penance). But people who are able





God has no trace of anger in Him. When you commit mistakes or tread the wrong path, you are afraid that God will be angry with you. But God only pretends to be angry on such occasions so that you become aware of your own faults and deficiencies. For example, when Swami keeps Himself away from you, you feel very sad and think that Swami is not talking to you because He is angry with you. In fact, Swami does not know what anger is. He is the embodiment of love. He is full of love.



to understand the real intention behind his apparent anger realise the truth. God has no trace of anger in Him. One with anger cannot be God. God changes His tone only to give protection to His devotees. No sage, no Tapasvin will have anger either.



Always Obey the Command of your Parents

Once Mother Parvati and Easwara asked Vinayaka and his younger brother Subrahmanya to go round the world. They told them that whoever came first in this race would be given a Phala (fruit) as reward. The place where this episode took place is called Palani in the State of Tamil Nadu. That is how this place got its name. The younger brother Subrahmanya immediately mounted his vehicle peacock to fly round the world. But Vinayaka did not move and stayed where he was. Easwara then enquired, "My dear son! Why have you not started on your journey round the world?" Vinayaka smiled and replied "Oh Father! I need not go anywhere. Everything is present here. The fruit of all my journey round the world is right in front of me." So saying, Vinayaka made a

Pradakshina (circumambulation) round His father and mother (Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati) and sat down calmly. He claimed victory in the race. Meanwhile, Subrahmanya came there after completing his journey round the world. He was very much tired and

reported to his father about his successful completion of the task. Lord Easwara then declared Vinayaka as the winner in the race and gave the reward to him. The underlying meaning of this story is that the parents are greater than the whole world. It is enough if one does their Pradakshina in reverence. That would be tantamount to the Punya (merit) acquired by visiting all the holy places in the world. Without the parents, there can be no children at all! If children are to be virtuous, it is the parents who have to take care of their upbringing. They are responsible for the success of their children in all endeavours.

It is a common practice for students to visit temples during examinations and pray for success. They offer coconuts in temples with the pocket money given by their parents. These are all external practices, which have little to do with sincere devotion. If you really wish to achieve success in all your endeavours, it is enough if you please your parents and obtain their blessings. If they are satisfied, you are sure to succeed. In order to drive home the point that children should strive to please and satisfy their parents, Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati arranged the competition of going round the world for Vinayaka and Subrahmanya. If you want to obtain the grace of God, it is enough if you obey the command of your parents lovingly. There is no god greater than parents. They are your presiding deities. They have struggled hard in several ways to bring you up. They made a lot of sacrifice, so that you may achieve progress in life. No parent would ever be inconsiderate towards the needs of

his children. At times, they may appear to be angry and may even punish you but that is only outward show. In their heart of hearts, they have abundant love for you. Even if they pretend to be angry, it is for your own good. The stream of infinite love ever flows in their hearts. You are nourished by their limitless love. Here is a small example. When a child does some mischief, its mother beats him. But, how? The beating merely produces sound but does not cause any pain to the child. Her anger is born out of love only. On certain occasions, your parents may show anger but it is only temporary. It is never permanent. You may think that your parents are angry with you. But that is your own misunderstanding; you may not be able to recognise their love, which is lying hidden. Even if they show anger and say "chee" (an expression in Telugu to indicate one's displeasure), it is only out of love. Students should, therefore, try to understand the real nature of their parents.

In fact, one's anger is one's own enemy, and happiness, heaven. One should always be happy. A person with anger and irritable temperament can never achieve anything. Vinayaka is one who always obeyed his parents' command. That is why it is said that there is no leader above him. Students sometimes ask for money from their parents to go to cinema. When parents refuse, they think that the parents are angry. These are trivial issues. The parents, especially the mother, will be even ready to sacrifice her life in order to save her children in times of danger. Unfortunately, today there are sons who even go to the court of law against their mothers. It is, therefore, essential that they change their




attitude towards their parents and realise that they are verily embodiments of love. Any number of diversions or silly thoughts may arise in children, but the parents' love towards their children remains unwavering. There are several sons in the world who are angry with their parents. The son may go to the court of law because of some differences with his mother. On being asked by the judge, he tells his mother's name as so and so. He utters the words, "My mother". Similarly, the mother tells her son's name as so and so. She says, "My son". Such is the intimate relationship that exists between the mother and son. The differences between parents and their children are of temporary nature; they are not permanent. In fact, an unbreakable bond of love exists between parents and children.

Vinayaka is the embodiment of love. He always showers love on all. When he was acting as a scribe to write the Mahabharata dictated by Sage Vyasa, he displayed the same quality of love. Vyasa selected him to undertake the duty of a scribe since he was the embodiment of love. Throughout the period of writing the Mahabharata, Vinayaka displayed this quality of pure love. That is why you do not find even a single mistake in the Mahabharata. Since he is flawless, his writing is also flawless. You do not find the bad qualities of anger, jealousy, envy or pride in Vinayaka.

Dear students! From today onwards, give up whatever little anger you have towards your parents and cultivate pure love towards them. Only then can you call yourself the devotees of Vinayaka. Love begets love. Receive love from





It is a common practice for students to visit temples during examinations and pray for success. They offer coconuts in temples with the pocket money given by their parents. These are all external practices, which have little to do with sincere devotion. If you really wish to achieve success in all your endeavours, it is enough if you please your parents and obtain their blessings. If they are satisfied, you are sure to succeed.



your parents in abundance and prosper in life.

Eat only Sattvic Food

Today is the festival of Vinayaka Chaturthi. It is a very important festival. When someone visits your house on a festival day, the entire household is happy. One is sure to feel happy and mentally relaxed. However, there are some stone-hearted persons, who cultivate ill-feelings towards others. Such ill-feelings are the result of food. As is the food, so is the head. The feelings of the heart reflect the thought in the head (mind). Therefore, we must take the right food. You should never take such food that would kindle the flames of anger and envy in you. Since ancient times, sages in India have been observing strict regulations with regard to diet. They always made it a point to eat Sattvic

food. Rajasic food generates anger while Tamasic food will make you feel sleepy even while you are eating. Therefore, both Rajasic and Tamasic types of food must be avoided. Only Sattvic food must be taken. Excess of chillies, salt and sour items must be avoided in food. Before you eat food, never forget to offer your prayer:

*Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir
Brahmagno Brahma hutam
Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam
Brahma Karma Samadhina.*

(Brahman is the ladle as well as the oblation. He is the sacrificial fire as also the sacrificer. And finally, Brahman is the goal of one who is engaged in the act of sacrifice.)

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

*Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva
Praninam Dehamasrita
Pranapana Samayukta
Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.*

(I am present in all beings in the form of digestive fire. United with the Prana and Apana, it is I who consume the four kinds of food.)

While taking food, you must always ensure that you eat only that food which you can easily digest. Never consume food which is hard to digest. Just as you feel light and happy before sitting down for eating food, so also you should feel comfortable and light when you get up after eating it. Some people sit for food with light stomach and get up after overloading it. This is not the proper way of eating. Always eat light food. This is one of the many qualities of Vinayaka. If you cultivate the qualities of Vinayaka, you can become like him without, of course, his trunk!

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

- From Bhagavan's Ganesh Chaturthi Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 18th September 2004.

An Announcement about Sivarathri

This is to inform all the devotees that Sivarathri will be celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on Tuesday, 8th March 2005. In this connection, here is an important announcement. Devotees often have given expression to their feeling that they are disturbed and pained and are unable to bear the sight of Bhagavan's physical body undergoing a lot of strain at the time of Lingodbhava. They always yearn to see the ever smiling and enchanting form of Swami. And, they were often praying to Swami not to perform Lingodbhava. Bhagavan, out of His infinite compassion and love for devotees, has acceded to their prayers and has said that Lingodbhava will not take place on this Sivarathri day.

RESCUE, RELIEF AND REHABILITATION OF TSUNAMI VICTIMS BY SAI ORGANISATIONS

THE TSUNAMI that hit South Asia and South East Asia on 26th December 2004 was a tragedy of unprecedented magnitude, and though it struck in the span of hours, its effects will be felt for years to come. Many Sai workers in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and other areas, undaunted by the horror and havoc of the disastrous circumstances, undertook all manner of relief work. They saved many precious lives and provided the physical necessities of life for those who were left with nothing. They are uplifting the forlorn who have lost everything. They have started the long, arduous process of helping restore functional societies in these stricken areas.

Sri Lanka

The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Sri Lanka swung into action immediately after the tsunami struck the island. A Disaster Management Committee headed by the Central Coordinator, M. Wanniyasekaram and comprising several senior officials of the Organisation was set up to spearhead the relief and reconstruction activities.

Between 26th December 2004 and 4th January 2005, Sai volunteers from Western, Eastern, Northern and North Central zones were tirelessly engaged in a range of activities that included the following: (a) Procurement of rice, vegetables, dry rations, (b) cooking meals for the refugees, (c) collection of clothes and medicines, (d) packaging, transporting and

distributing food, medicines and clothing to the refugees.

In Western zone, nearly 300 Sai volunteers served approximately 10,000 people in the worst affected areas of Modera suburb, Galle town, Moratuwa town and Hikkaduwa town. In Eastern zone, 200 volunteers helped around 3500 people in Kalmunai (south of Trincomalee) and Akkaraipattu (south of Batticaloa). In the North of Sri Lanka, the coastal regions were severely damaged by the killer waves. 300 volunteers from North and North Central zones served about 6000 people. They also provided medical services in the refugee camps for over five days. Totally, 818



Sai Youth engaged in relief work in Sri Lanka.

volunteers served 19,500 people during the relief operations from 26th December 2004 to 4th January 2005.

Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council and Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Member of the Prasanthi Council and



Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee, visited Sri Lanka on 8th January 2005 to assess the ground situation and to discuss how the International Sri Sathya Sai Organisation could assist Sri Lanka in this hour of need. They, accompanied by the Sri Lankan Central Coordinator, met the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Sri Mahinda Rajapakse and briefed him about the relief efforts of the Sai Organisation to serve those in distress. The Prime Minister acknowledged the services provided by the Sai Organisation and proposed a rehabilitation project comprising housing, sanitation, clothing and schools. After the meeting with the Prime Minister, Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Reddy met senior officials of the Sri Lankan Sai Organisation at the Sai Mandir in Colombo and discussed the immediate action plan for relief work.

The Sai Organisation of Sri Lanka, following the Swami's command "Good work should never be postponed", immediately authorised the procurement of 500 fabricated housing units to provide homes for the refugees in North and North Central zones. In addition to the housing, the Sai Organisation is also providing all basic necessities to the refugees who will settle in the 500 housing units. For this purpose, a container load of utensils, a container load of mineral water and 2000 cartons of chlorine tablets for purification of drinking water are being imported from Chennai, India.

Sri A. Pulendran, Chairman of the Central Council, Sri Lanka, made a presentation on the extent of damage caused by the tsunami and what needed to be done immediately.



Relief materials for distribution in affected areas in Sri Lanka.

Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Reddy, accompanied by the Sri Lankan Central Coordinator, visited the affected areas in and around Colombo to see the damages caused by the tsunami. They assured the Sai Organisation of Sri Lanka of all help by way of sending medical experts, medical equipment and medicines to the affected areas.

Dr. Upadhyay, Member of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee, visited the affected areas to make a field assessment of the medical needs, and will be returning soon with a medical team from the United Kingdom. A task force of physicians and volunteers, headed by Dr. Brahma Sharma, President of the USA Sai Medical Committee, has visited the affected areas. Following their recommendations two relief teams of Sai workers from Canada and USA are going to Sri Lanka on 29th January 2005 and 10th February 2005.

Indonesia

In Indonesia, the deadly tsunami swamped the northern and western coastal areas of Sumatra, and the smaller outlying islands off Sumatra



on 26th December 2004. The trauma faced by the victims and the trail of destruction left by the tsunami is devastating. Nearly all the casualties and damage took place within the province of Aceh. As the largest city to receive the full fury of the tsunami, Banda Aceh is struggling to wake from a nightmare.

Members of the Sai Organisation sprang into action by formulating immediate relief and rehabilitation plans for the tsunami victims in the devastated regions of Aceh on 27th December 2004. Two task forces were formed. One was based at Medan, the closest city to Aceh, and the other in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. Dr K.H. Yeoh of Singapore was appointed as the Medical Coordinator for the Aceh task force. On 30th December 2004, the first task force, was deployed from Medan Centre. They distributed emergency relief supplies such as food, water, medicines, clothes, blankets and other basic necessities. They visited Lhoksuemawe, one of the severely hit regions, and did an initial assessment for upcoming reconstruction projects. On 31st December 2004, the second team from Jakarta swiftly arranged bulk of medical supplies that were urgently required by the only two hospitals in operation in Aceh. Due to the large influx of injured victims, medical supplies were quickly depleting and replenishing was hampered due to obliterated roads and damaged transport system. However, with unshaken faith in Bhagavan's bountiful compassion, the task force set out to undertake the difficult task of supplying the hospital with medicines on the day of its urgent requirement.



Sai Organisation supplied much needed relief materials to the tsunami affected areas of Indonesia.

Bhagavan Baba's Divine grace was witnessed in all preparations. Much needed antibiotic medicines were quickly procured, and air tickets were arranged, all in a matter of few hours.

On the 1st day of the New Year 2005, a team of seven Sai devotees flew to Banda Aceh and personally hand carried life saving medical supplies for thousands of the injured victims. The Crisis Centre in the capital city of Aceh informed that there were only two operational hospitals in the region with a capacity of housing 300 patients in total. They admitted that the hospitals were beset with the increasing rate of casualties, and lacked essential medicines and staff of doctors and nurses, many of whom lost their lives in the tsunami. On 3rd January 2005, Medan task force made their second trip bringing staple food and water. This time the team went further into North Aceh regency and surveyed four towns and surrounding villages. The result of the survey concluded that the most important aid required in the region, after



medication and food was water. Thus the team, assisted by professionals, set about making necessary arrangements for the



Water purification unit installed by the Medan task force in North Aceh.

installation of water purification units. On 5th January 2005, Jakarta task force with Dr. Yeoh and Dr. Victor Seah of Singapore along with Dr. Arul Jyoti of Malaysia made their second trip to Banda Aceh. They carried with them fresh supplies of broad based antibiotics, anti-depressants and urgent medicines as advised by the Ministry of Health in Jakarta.

On 9th January 2005, in Muara Baru village of North Aceh regency, one water purification unit was installed by the Medan task force. Eight more are soon to be installed. During the two days that the task force was there in the area, doctors and Sai devotees from Medan also organised a two-day medical relief camp serving 1487 refugees in six villages of North Aceh regency. On 13th January 2005, Jakarta task force managed to hand over another batch of antibiotics and much needed vaccines to the hospitals in Banda Aceh with the help of Singapore Air Force stationed in Medan.

Action plans are also being formulated to provide further relief aid to other inaccessible areas in the Western Coast of Aceh.

Thailand

During the week of 29th December 2004 to 7th January 2005, members of the Sathya Sai Organisation of Thailand and the Institute of Sathya Sai Education went to Phuket to offer assistance to the victims of the disaster. They distributed food, water, clothes, medicines, blankets and other needed materials to the needy people. Four teams, serving four different units at the site of the disaster, provided food for the victims, relief workers, civic officials and medical personnel, and rendered financial assistance to the affected families. They helped coordinate the identification of bodies by family members and served as translators for patients in the hospitals. Sai Organisation is also helping to revive and rebuild small businesses affected by this disaster like helping stall owners, vegetable and grocery vendors, barbers and fishermen.

India

Tamil Nadu: With immense grace and love, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba extended urgent relief to the tsunami affected families in Nagapattinam district. A comprehensive package which included items such as stove, provisions, milk powder, etc., was designed with a lot of care, so that every item was beneficial to the recipient and the entire family. All the material was nicely packed in boxes. The beneficiaries in six of the most badly affected villages were identified by the district revenue administration and 5,000 boxes of relief materials were distributed to





Relief materials sent by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba being distributed to the tsunami affected people in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.

them. The Panchayat President concerned was also present at every place. The police and STF personnel extended their full cooperation. The relief work was started on 4th January 2005 and was carried on till 11th January 2005. Besides the items in the package, plastic pots to fetch water and buckets were also given. The distribution was carried out in a very orderly manner, and the beneficiaries received the relief materials with gratitude.

Kerala: On hearing the dreadful news of tsunami havoc, the Seva Dal group



Distribution of drinking water to tsunami affected people in Kerala.

with Mahila Vibhag and leaders of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation rushed to the affected areas in

different districts, viz., Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha and Ernakulam for rescue and relief work. The inhabitants of the affected areas were brought to schools, where the State Government opened relief camps. The inmates of the camp were badly in need of food, clothing and medical care. By the grace of our Lord, timely attention could be paid to satisfy all these urgent needs. At all the places, medical teams with sufficient medicines attended to each and every person who was in trouble.

To help in the rehabilitation measures, the Sai Organisation of Kerala has undertaken to build two schools and two Anganwadis. Besides, 16 destitute children and 50 old persons have been adopted by the Sai Organisation of Kerala.

Andhra Pradesh: Many villages in the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh in the districts of Krishna, Nellore, Prakasam, East Godavari and West Godavari became the victims of the tsunami which ravaged these places on 26th December 2004. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Andhra Pradesh rushed to the aid of the affected people and

distributed food materials, clothes, utensils and items of daily use in all the tsunami affected areas.





Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2005