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"Worship of Vinayaka should not be limited to Vinayaka Chaturthi day only. You should worship him at all places and at all times, whether it is Chaturthi, Ashtami, Navami (fourth, eighth, ninth day of new moon) or any other day. Sarvada Sarva Kaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintanam (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God)."

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



VINAYAKA PRINCIPLE IS ALL-PERVASIVE

Bharat is the motherland of many noble souls who earned great name and fame in all the continents of the world. This is the land of valorous people who vanquished foreign rulers and attained independence. This is the land which excelled in music, literature and other fine arts.

(Telugu Poem)

VINAYAKA PERMEATES THE LIFE PRINCIPLE OF MAN

THE FESTIVAL OF GANESH Chaturthi was celebrated the other day. Our students also had a celebration which was full of beauty, splendour and bliss.

All Can Experience Vinayaka Principle

Embodiments of Love – Students!

First of all, you should know who Vinayaka is. Vinayaka is the leader of the universe; there is no leader above him. He is the leader of all and master of all. It will be your misfortune if you forget such a leader and master. He eats only simple food, which is cooked without oil. The food he eats is called Kudumulu which is prepared by grinding various types of food grains, making the mixture soft by mixing it with water and cooking it in steam. He eats only such simple food. This preparation is also called Undrallu. Those who eat such food will not suffer from even a minor illness at any point of time. Vinayaka has two consorts, Buddhi and Siddhi. Being in the constant company of Vinayaka, they have acquired all types of knowledge from him. They also eat simple food like Vinayaka.

Vinayaka is omnipresent. He teaches through silence and conducts himself in



I was very happy to see the enthusiasm of our students yesterday when they brought decorated idols of Vinayaka here. It was heartening to see that our students understood the real significance of Vinayaka Chaturthi and celebrated it in its true spirit. It is not possible to experience the divine principle without understanding the spirit behind these celebrations. Therefore, try to know the inner significance of celebrating festivals. When you understand that Vinayaka is the omnipresent divine principle, then you will be celebrating this festival in its true spirit. In fact, all festivals should be celebrated with the proper understanding of their significance.





The primordial sound 'Om' has no form. It has no beginning, no end. How can there be an end of something which has no beginning? Inhalation and exhalation are the two related processes. Similar are happiness and sorrow, merit and sin. God is beyond all these. One who is born will also die. But God has neither birth nor death. You should never forget this divine principle which signifies the unity of the entire creation. If you ask who is God, the answer to this question is that God is the principle of oneness in the entire diversity of the creation.

an exemplary manner. Some people think that Vinayaka is worshipped only in Bharat. But the Vinayaka principle is all-pervasive and is worshipped by all. People may follow different paths, but all can experience



the Vinayaka principle. This Vinayaka principle is present in everyone in the form of breath. It will be sheer foolishness if you limit your worship of Vinayaka to idols made of clay and metals. In fact, Vinayaka is your master, who is in you, with you and around you. By constant contemplation on Vinayaka, all your sins will be destroyed.

Yesterday, our students brought the idols of Vinayaka in decorated chariots and took them out for immersion in a procession. What is the significance of immersion of idols in water? When the idol of Vinayaka is immersed in water, it loses its form. Then Vinayaka principle becomes all-pervasive. If you put sugar in water, it will mix with water, permeating its every molecule. Likewise, the merger of the idol of Vinayaka with water signifies his all-pervasiveness. Vinayaka is the divine parent of all and loves all his children. He considers them as his only property. Emulating his example, all parents should consider their children as their property. Similarly, the children should also have utmost regard for their parents. Never forget your mother, never forget your father. Vinayaka is the bestower of Buddhi and Siddhi (intellect and spiritual attainments). If your Buddhi is good, everything will become good for you. Therefore, when you commence your studies or start any new

work, you first offer worship to Vinayaka only. Even before eating your food, you should pray to Vinayaka. All Bharatiyas pray to Vinayaka before undertaking any new venture. When they construct temples, they usually install the idol of Vinayaka in the front. It is a tradition of the Bharatiyas that whenever they have to start some work, they do it only after offering worship to Vinayaka. When a singer wants to present a concert, he first offers prayer to Vinayaka. Our students also dedicate their first Bhajan to Vinayaka when they start their Bhajan programme. Vinayaka is the master of your life. There is no leader other than him.

Vinayaka is the Master of the Universe

Worship of Vinayaka should not be limited to Vinayaka Chaturthi day only. You should worship him at all places and at all times, whether it is Chaturthi, Ashtami, Navami (fourth, eighth, ninth day of new moon) or any other day. *Sarvada Sarva Kaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintanam* (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God). However, there is a special significance of worshipping Vinayaka on Vinayaka Chaturthi day. As it will be difficult for people to perform this elaborate ritualistic worship regularly on all days, certain number of days have been fixed for the special worship of Vinayaka like three days, five days or ten days. Moreover, it is difficult for people to prepare the Naivedyam (food offerings) to Vinayaka on all days, although the food of Vinayaka is very simple and easy to prepare. His food is cooked only in steam without putting directly on fire. Such food keeps us healthy and free from diseases. Though Vinayaka has a big belly, it does not mean that he eats much. He takes only limited food. When people sing songs in praise of Vinayaka, they describe him as Bojja

Ganapati (one with big belly). But he does not eat all that is offered to him. He sanctifies those offerings and confers his blessings. He is ever on the move to bless his devotees. God is like that only. Vinayaka is the leader of all beings. He is the controller and sustainer of the entire creation. If Vinayaka does not sustain and control the creation, there will be total destruction. It is only Vinayaka who protects the creation from Vinasha (destruction). He is present everywhere. Whether you are aware of it or not, he is always with you, in you, around you, above you and below you.

Man cannot live without air. It is his life principle. Vinayaka permeates the life principle of man. People celebrate Vinayaka Chaturthi with great joy and prepare a number of delicious dishes. But Ganesh is not interested in eating all the delicious items offered to him. He is happy to live on air. Here, air symbolises Prana (life principle). There can be no life without the life principle. You can yourself see that you breathe in and breathe out. You cannot live without breathing. When you take the breath in, you experience the sound 'So' and when you breathe out, you experience the sound 'Hum'. In this way, one's breathing signifies "Sohum" (That I am). In the science of Pranayama, the inhalation of breath is called Puraka, exhalation is called Rechaka and retention of breath is called Kumbhaka. When the duration of inhalation, exhalation and retention becomes equal, only then can you attain the state of Dhyana. Rechaka, Puraka and Kumbhaka are the three main aspects in the practice of Pranayama which can be learnt only by the grace of Vinayaka. All these processes of inhalation, exhalation and retention are directed by the Will of God. But people do not understand the secret behind this and celebrate Vinayaka Chaturthi in a ritualistic way.



Vinayaka is the Bestower of Intellect and Spiritual Attainments

Vinayaka is called Siddhi Vinayaka because he bestows Buddhi and Siddhi. Both of these are very essential for man. Vinayaka has the head of an elephant which has a great significance. Since elephant is considered very auspicious, all big temples keep their own elephants for ceremonial processions. The elephant is the biggest out of all the animals. The footprints of all animals like a lion or a tiger will be erased when an elephant walks over their path. When an elephant passes through a thick forest, it creates a path even for cars, buses and chariots to pass through. Likewise, Vinayaka makes the path for all to follow. When people were going from Ayodhya to Mithila for Rama's wedding, the procession was headed by elephants.

*The grand procession was led by elephants,
horses and chariots,*

*King Dasaratha was accompanied by his
ministers and vassal kings,*

*It appeared as though the entire Ayodhya
moved en masse towards Mithila,*

*It was a wonderful and blissful sight to
behold.* (Telugu Poem)

The elephant is so powerful that when it trumpets, all the barking dogs will be silenced. Without understanding the real significance of the elephant head of Vinayaka, we make an idol with a trunk and take it out in a procession. Not only Vinayaka, but all gods transcend physical forms. There can be no birth and death for the one who transcends physical form. God has no form. If you ask God, "Who are You?", He will reply, "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman). Who is Brahman? He signifies inhalation and exhalation which have no form. Nobody



Some people think that Vinayaka is worshipped only in Bharat. But the Vinayaka principle is all-pervasive and is worshipped by all. People may follow different paths, but all can experience the Vinayaka principle. This Vinayaka principle is present in everyone in the form of breath. It will be sheer foolishness if you limit your worship of Vinayaka to idols made of clay and metals. In fact, Vinayaka is your master, who is in you, with you and around you.



can question who begot Brahman? Where is He? Likewise, the primordial sound 'Om' has no form. It has no beginning, no end. How can there be an end of something which has no beginning? Inhalation and exhalation are the two related processes. Similar are happiness and sorrow, merit and sin. God is beyond all these. One who is born will also die. But God has neither birth nor death. You should never forget this divine principle which signifies the unity of the entire creation. If you ask who is God, the answer to this question is that God is the principle of oneness in the entire diversity of the creation. Therefore, students! It is your delusion to limit God to the idols of Rama, Krishna and Vinayaka and worship them. Did you see Krishna anywhere? Where is He? You have seen the picture of Krishna made by artists like Ravi Varma and created His idol accordingly. Did Ravi Varma see Krishna

Continued on page 300 ...



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

GANESH CHATURTHI FESTIVAL

GREAT DEVOTIONAL FERVOUR and piety marked the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam which reverberated with singing the glories of Lord Ganesh on 23rd August 2009, the day of Ganesh Chaturthi. Both the early morning Nagar Sankirtan and morning Bhajans in Sai Kulwant Hall were dedicated to Lord Ganesh.

In the afternoon Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 5.05 p.m. During the course of His Darshan round, Bhagavan blessed a large

number of Ganesh idols brought by students and Ashram staff for worship. Bhagavan also blessed the Mandir Ganesh idol placed for worship in the Bhajan Hall. After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, the students of Sri Sathya Sai University presented an excellent programme of devotional music. Starting at 5.35 p.m. with Ganeshashtakam (eight hymns in praise of Lord Ganesh), the students enthralled the audience with Stotras (praise songs), devotional songs and classical pieces, singing the glories of Lord Ganesh in a variety of ways. This most elevating programme came to a close at 6.30 p.m., after which Prasadam



Aesthetically designed vehicles of various sizes and shapes with Ganesh idols were lined up in Sai Kulwant Hall on 25th August 2009, which presented a grand spectacle.



was distributed and Arati was offered to Bhagavan.

The ceremony to mark the immersion of the idols of Lord Ganesh worshipped by the Ashram staff and students in their respective premises was held in Sai Kulwant Hall on 25th August 2009. All the Ganesh idols mounted on aesthetically designed vehicles of various shapes and sizes were lined up in the hall for Bhagavan's blessings on the scheduled day. Veda chanting students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School and Sri Sathya Sai University welcomed Bhagavan with Poornakumbham and formed part of the procession when Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 5.00 p.m.

Bhagavan keenly observed all the attractively designed vehicles with Ganesh idols as He came to the hall and blessed the staff and students who had brought the idols for immersion. Prepared ingeniously by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Sri Sathya Sai University and staff of various Ashram departments, these vehicles numbering 22 lined up the entire route of Bhagavan and presented an enchanting spectacle. Among the most attractively designed vehicles, mention may be made of a grand temple, an illuminated aeroplane, a golden throne, a tall horse, a bullock cart, an oriental Chinese Pagoda, a huge lotus and chariots of various shapes and designs. After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, the students of Sri Sathya Sai University and Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School presented a dance item each, expressing their love and devotion for Lord Ganesh. After this, the staff and students brought the vehicles one by one before Bhagavan, received His blessings and

took the idols out for immersion. As all the vehicles moved out of the hall, the university students started Bhajans which were followed in chorus by the students and devotees, surcharging the entire milieu with sacred vibrations. As the Bhajans continued for nearly one hour, the students and staff came back to the hall after performing the immersion ceremony of the Ganesh idols, bringing this auspicious celebration to a happy conclusion. Meanwhile, Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to all. The programme came to a close at 6.55 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan.

RAMAYANA STORY IN BURRA KATHA

The story of Ramayana was narrated in the folk art form of Burra Katha in Sai Kulwant Hall on 24th August 2009 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The programme began at 5.05 p.m. with prayer to Lord Ganesh as per the tradition of this art form. This was followed by garlanding of the three narrators dressed in the traditional style. Right from the birth of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna, the story of Rama's life till His return to Ayodhya after killing Ravana was then presented in a most lively manner through pithy dialogues and expressive acting of the narrators intermixed with melodious songs set to folk music. The spirited presentation of Rama's story, showcasing the lofty ideals He exemplified in His life were effectively brought home by the three narrators which had a spellbinding effect on the listeners. The presentation concluded at 6.05 p.m. with the song "Anandame Sai Bhajana, Brahmanandame Sai Bhajana", befittingly dedicated to Sai Rama, the Avatar of Kali Yuga. At the end of the presentation, Bhagavan showered His blessings



on the narrators and instrumentalists who provided musical support to them. Bhagavan also gave them the coveted opportunity of group photo with Him. After a brief session of Bhajans, the programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.25 p.m.

YOUTH CAMP OF ORISSA

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Orissa organised a youth camp at Prasanthi Nilayam from 26th to 28th August 2009, in which more than 700 youth, both boys and girls, from various parts of Orissa took part. The youth participated in Seva and spiritual activities at Prasanthi Nilayam and attended a series of talks on various topics related to Seva and



The drama "Kingdom of God, Here and Now" depicted a dream come true story of Seva activities of the youth of Orissa. It was presented in Sai Kulwant Hall on 27th August 2009.

spirituality by eminent speakers. On 27th August 2009, a group of these youth presented a drama entitled "Kingdom of God, Here and Now" in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. The drama depicted the real story of a group of youth from village Ambadala of Rayagada district of Orissa who enacted a drama about a home for destitute children on 81st Birthday of Bhagavan. Subsequently, Bhagavan appeared in the dream of one of these youth and asked whether they were just acting or were going to make it a reality. This prompted the youth to convert the acting

in the drama into a reality with the result that a home for destitute children appropriately named "Sai Karunalayam" was set up by the grace of Bhagavan who arranged land, finances and other resources for the project in many inexplicable ways. Excellent direction and superb acting of the cast unfolded the entire story of this dream come true incident as it actually happened, so that when the climax was reached, no eye was left dry in the audience. Moving songs, excellent choreography, appropriate music and thrilling dances of the children added value to this well-presented drama. Particular mention is to be made about two songs of the drama which stood out not only for their appropriate wording and musical quality but for their outstanding presentation also. They were: "Aadmi Ko Aadmi Kya Deta Hai, Allah Deta Hai" (what does man give to man? It is Allah who gives to all), "Baba Hain Apne Commander" (Baba is our commander). The drama which began at 5.50 p.m. after Bhagavan's Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall came to a close at 6.35 p.m. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation, blessed the cast at the end of the drama and posed for group photos with them. This was followed by Bhajans led by one of the children of "Sai Karunalayam" and devotional songs by the youth (girls) of Orissa. After the distribution of Prasadam, the programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.55 p.m.

THIRUPPAVAI MAHOTSAVA AND ANDAL KALYANAM

A three-day programme was held from 9th to 11th September 2009 at Prasanthi Nilayam to celebrate Thiruppavai Mahotsava which comprised Parayana (recitation) of 30 Pasurams (verses), ten on each of the three days, of the immortal work

“Thiruppavai” composed by Tamil saint Andal, talks by erudite speakers on these verses and worship of idols amidst Vedic chants and collective Nama Sankirtan (recitation of God’s Names). The celebrations culminated in Andal Kalyanam (ritualistic marriage of Andal with Sri Rangamannar) on 11th September 2009. The venue of the celebrations was Sai Kulwant Hall which was beautifully decorated for this occasion with buntings, banners and flowers. Large portraits of 12 Alwar saints of Tamil Nadu were installed on the periphery of the hall, while glittering idols of Sri Rangamannar (Lord Krishna) in the centre and Andal and Garudalwar on either side adorned the dais amidst elaborate decoration of flowers.

Worship of Idols, Recitation of God’s Names and Talks on Thiruppavai

The festivities began on the morning of 9th September 2009 at 7.00 a.m. with rituals like Swasti Vachanam, Pratishtapana and Puja (initial chants, ritualistic installation of idols and worship), which were conducted on the dais by seven priests. Thereafter, Parayana (recitation) of first ten Pasurams of “Thiruppavai” was done by the priests with great devotional fervour. This was followed by collective chanting of Vishnu Sahasranama (1008 Names of Lord Vishnu) by all devotees in the hall with offering of Akshatas (sanctified rice). The morning programme concluded with Bhajans and Arati at 9.40 a.m. In the afternoon, the Puja of the idols was started by the priests at 4.00 p.m. along with sacred chants amidst Veda chanting by the students of Sri Sathya Sai University. This was followed by a talk on “Thiruppavai” by the distinguished scholar Sri N. Srikanta Rao. Dwelling on the significance of this work of unparalleled devotion to Lord Krishna, the erudite speaker observed that Andal, the only woman saint among the

12 famous Alwar saints of Tamil Nadu, had shown in her work the path of liberation to man through one-pointed devotion to the Lord. Narrating the story of Andal’s life, Sri Rao told that Andal was deeply immersed in the love of Krishna like the Gopikas of Brindavan and, in fact, conducted herself like one of them with the result that she earned the grace of the Lord. God sees the inner purity of the devotee and not the outward show of elaborate ritualistic worship, said Sri Rao describing how the Lord wanted only the garland first worn by Andal. Sri Rao concluded his talk by stating that spiritual teachings of Andal were meant to give peace, prosperity and happiness to the whole world. This was followed by Bhajans. The first day’s programme came to a close at 6.15 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

The second day’s celebrations started at 7.30 a.m. on 10th September 2009 with Puja and Parayana of 11 to 20 Pasurams of “Thiruppavai”, followed by collective chanting of Sri Sathya Sai Sahasranama (1008 Names of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba), in which all the devotees present in Sai Kulwant Hall also participated, offering sanctified rice to Bhagavan with each chant. In the afternoon, Puja of the idols began at 4.00 p.m. with elaborate rituals amidst Vedic chants by the priests and students. After the performance of this daily Puja, Dr. M. Srinivas Rao, an erudite Telugu scholar, addressed the gathering and explained the inner meaning of the verses of “Thiruppavai”. The learned speaker said that Andal emphasised the importance of chanting of God’s Name and exhorted the devotees in these verses to use their senses, mind and the body to realise God; they should use their tongue only for chanting the Name of the Lord, their eyes to see the form of God and

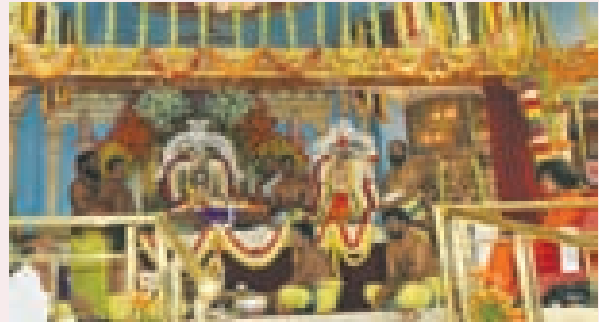


their ears to hear His glory. One should not cause grief to anyone and should vanquish one's ego, said the distinguished speaker quoting the verses of "Thiruppavai". The second day's programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.55 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam in the entire hall.

Andal Kalyanam

On the morning of 11th September 2009, Puja of the idols was started by the priests at 7.30 a.m. This was followed by collective chanting of Lalita Sahasranama (1008 Names of Supreme Divine Mother), in which the devotees also participated. Bhajans led by the students began at 9.00 a.m. as usual. Meanwhile, the priests performed the Abhishekam (ceremonial bath) of the idols with items like milk, honey, curd, vermilion and sandalwood paste along with Vedic chants. After Abhishekam, the idols were decorated with Tulsi (basil) garlands. Arati was offered to the idols after every Abhishekam. The morning programme concluded with Bhajans and Arati at 11.20 a.m.

The grand function of Andal Kalyanam was performed on the afternoon of 11th September 2009, the concluding day of this delightful celebration. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 4.15 p.m. and blessed the gathering of devotees in the hall with His blissful Darshan. The festivities of Andal Kalyanam began after Bhagavan was seated on the dais. First, the idols of Andal and Sri Rangamannar were brought by priests to the dais from the central area of the hall in separate palanquins amidst Veda chanting and Nadaswaram music. As the priests conducted the preliminary rituals, Puja and Abhishekam of the idols, Bhagavan watched the ceremonies from the performing area of the hall. The priests then brought to Bhagavan the various items for



The grand function of Andal Kalyanam was held on 11th September 2009, depicting the ceremonial marriage of Andal with Sri Rangamannar.

offering at the idols and Bhagavan graciously blessed them. In the end, garlands blessed by Bhagavan were exchanged between the idols of Andal and Sri Rangamannar. At 5.15 p.m., Bhagavan blessed the Mangal Sutra which the priests offered to Andal amidst Vedic chants, loud notes of Mangalavadyam and shower of rose petals on idols, marking the performance of the sacred marriage of Andal with her Lord. The magnificently decorated idols were then placed together and silk clothes blessed by Bhagavan were offered at them.

All through this ceremony, Nadaswaram and Veda chanting continued, sanctifying the entire milieu with sacredness and bliss. The festive mood was heightened further with offering of a bouquet of devotional songs by a group of students called "Students of Sri Sathya Sai Universe". Starting with the song "Andal Kalyana Vaibhogame, Rangamannar Kalyana Vaibhogame", they concluded their excellent presentation with a Tamil song "Amma Enral Anbu" dedicated to Mother Sai. Sumptuous Prasadam of Bobattu (sweet chapati), Laddu, tamarind rice and sweet rice was then distributed to the huge gathering in the entire hall. With the offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 6.20 p.m., the three-day grand celebrations came to a happy conclusion.



PILGRIMAGE OF WARANGAL DISTRICT DEVOTEES

More than 4,000 devotees from Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh came to Prasanthi Nilayam from 18th to 20th September 2009, and experienced the bliss of Bhagavan's love and blessings. On 20th September 2009, Bal Vikas children and youth of this district presented a musical dance drama



A scene from the musical dance drama "Janani" presented by the Bal Vikas children and youth of Warangal district on 20th September 2009.

"Janani" (mother) in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. Based on the teachings of Bhagavan, the drama extolled the sacredness of the land of Bharat which gave birth to women of noble virtues who set great ideals of motherhood. Paying rich tributes to the Divine Mother Easwamma and mothers of other Avatars, the drama portrayed through small skits how Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is giving the love of a thousand mothers to destitute children in particular and devotees in general. Well-rendered sweet songs, excellent dances of children and thrilling music made the drama a lively and delightful presentation. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation, blessed the cast at the conclusion of the drama, posed for group photos with them and distributed clothes to them. He

also materialised a gold ring for one of the organisers. The drama which began at 6.15 p.m. after Bhagavan's Darshan and Bhajan by students in Sai Kulwant Hall came to a close at 7.00 p.m. After distribution of Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan, the programme concluded at 7.30 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

HOLY FESTIVALS OF NAVARATRI AND ID UL FITR

Grand festivities began at Prasanthi Nilayam on 19th September 2009 with the onset of Navaratri, nine days of worship of the Divine Mother in the forms of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Kalasha Puja began in the Bhajan Mandir on the same day after Bhagavan blessed the sacred Kalasha. Grama Seva, a programme of reaching out to the masses in villages by the students and staff of Sri Sathya Sai University, also began on the morning of 19th September 2009. The students and staff set out on the Divine Mission of distributing Bhagavan's Prasadam and clothes to villagers in nearly 50 vehicles after receiving Bhagavan's blessings.

Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna was started in Poornachandra Auditorium on the morning of 22nd September 2009 in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya



Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna began in Poornachandra Auditorium on 22nd September 2009.



Sai Baba. The first meeting of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha was held in the evening in Sai Kulwant Hall, wherein three distinguished speakers addressed the gathering. (Full report of Grama Seva, Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna and proceedings of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha will be published in the next issue of "Sanathana Sarathi.")

The holy festival of Id Ul Fitr was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st September 2009. The programme started at 5.45 p.m. with a speech of Sri Ajit Popat of London, U.K. Sri Popat dwelt on the significance of fasting during Ramzan and Navaratri and observed that fasting at physical level was not enough; the mind should also be trained to perform the fast to attain purity. Sri Popat narrated an incident of the recent Grama Seva when on receiving Bhagavan's Prasadam after performing his Id Namaz in the local mosque, a devout Muslim stated that his prayer had been answered by the merciful Allah. After the speech of Sri Popat,

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before painting His picture? No. He imagined the form of Krishna by reading the description given in the sacred texts and made the picture. There is no one who has seen God. However, the physical form in which God incarnates has a great significance. God does not assume physical form without any reason. Therefore, you should never forget His physical form. God assumes the physical form to strengthen the moral fabric of the world.

I was very happy to see the enthusiasm of our students yesterday when they brought decorated idols of Vinayaka here. It was heartening to see that our students understood the real significance of Vinayaka Chaturthi

a student of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School spoke on the importance of prayer and fasting during the month of Ramzan and stated that it was a great good fortune of all to celebrate



Id Ul Fitr was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 21st September 2009. A student of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School speaking on the importance of prayer and fasting on this occasion.

the festival of Id in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. These speeches were followed by an elevating programme of devotional music by the students of Sri Sathya Sai University. The programme came to a close at 6.30 p.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

and celebrated it in its true spirit. It is not possible to experience the divine principle without understanding the spirit behind these celebrations. Therefore, try to know the inner significance of celebrating festivals. When you understand that Vinayaka is the omnipresent divine principle, then you will be celebrating this festival in its true spirit. In fact, all festivals should be celebrated with the proper understanding of their significance.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "Vinayaka Vinayaka ...")

– From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 26th August 2009.



AMASS THE WEALTH OF LOVE

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)

DEVELOP GOOD CHARACTER AND LOVE ALL

Embodiments of Love!

THE INDWELLER HAS NO BONDAGE. Atma and Brahman are the other names of the indweller. People worship God in many forms and develop faith in these forms. But God has no form. God is one but He is called by different names like Allah, Jesus, Rama, Krishna, etc. These names are the result of man's delusion; God has no particular name. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names).

Even One Bad Habit will Ruin you

You see pictures of many forms of God and develop faith in those forms. Nobody has actually seen God. In whatever form you have faith, God will manifest before you in that form. God is one, not two. Everybody calls himself, 'I', 'I'. Crossing of this 'I' signifies giving up ego. That is Divinity. It means that Divinity has no specific name and form. Since ancient times, people have been worshipping God, contemplating on Him, singing His glory and yearning for Him.

People have many types of desires in this world. Some of them desire to excel in

games, some in singing, some in speaking, etc. But Dharmaraja had only one desire. He was very fond of gambling. The Kauravas were aware of this weakness of Dharmaraja. Sakuni, the maternal uncle of the Kauravas,



Only one thing is permanent, that is the principle of the Atma. That is love, love, love, love! This is your true and permanent property. Love All, Serve All. Other than the property of love, one does not need any other property.

You should do service with the feeling, "Service is my God, service is my life." Never do service for the sake of money. What is money? It comes today and goes tomorrow. Money is not permanent; it is temporary. Therefore, do not become elated when you get money and do not become depressed when you lose it. Morality is permanent, not money.





Today many companies have shut down their business. What is the reason? If one company indulges in bad practices, other companies will also follow it. Bad practices spread very quickly, while there are few takers for good practices. Have patience and perseverance to do all that is good. Don't follow anything bad in haste. Haste makes waste. Waste makes worry. So, don't be in a hurry. Worry leads to many problems. Ultimately, what is the cause of worry? Your hurry is the main cause of worry. Therefore, you should give up hurry. Then you will have no worry.

instigated them to invite Dharmaraja for a game of dice. Dharmaraja agreed to play the game of dice with the Kauravas. Dharmaraja and his brothers were on one side while Duryodhana, Dussasana and other Kauravas were on the other. The dice used in this game were manipulated by Sakuni so that Dharmaraja went on losing each time the game was played. Dharmaraja lost his kingdom. He also lost himself, his brothers and Draupadi.



Then Draupadi was dragged to the Kaurava court. She questioned all those who were present in the court, "Was it not that Dharmaraja first lost himself and thereafter betted on me? When he became the slave of the Kauravas himself, what right had he to bet on me? Not only that, I am the wife of five husbands. Did he obtain the consent of other four before betting on me? If all my five husbands had betted on me, then definitely I would have become the slave of the Kauravas." She appealed to all of them to decide what was Dharma (righteous action). But nobody opened his mouth because none had any answer to these questions.

The Merit of Saving Life is True Wealth

There is another incident from the Mahabharata which demonstrates what Dharma actually means. Dronacharya in his youth lived in the kingdom of Drupada with his wife and son Aswatthama. As he needed milk for his son, he once went to Drupada and requested him to give him a gift of cow. As Drupada refused to grant his request, Dronacharya became angry and left his kingdom with his wife and son. Since there were no means of transport like cars, buses and trains those days, they walked all the way and reached the outskirts of Hastinapura.

As he was going towards Hastinapura, he saw the Pandava and Kaurava children

who were surrounding a well. Dronacharya asked them, "My dear children, what is the matter? Why are you standing around the well in this manner? What has happened?" The children replied, "Swami, we were playing with a ball which has fallen into the well." "Do not worry at all. I will bring your ball out." Saying this, Dronacharya took out an arrow and shot at the ball. The arrow pierced the ball. Then he shot another arrow which got into the first arrow. In this manner, he shot consecutively one arrow after the other, made a rope of the arrows and brought the ball out. Seeing this wonderful feat of Dronacharya, they all fell at his feet. They thought, they had at last found someone who was a great expert in archery. They conveyed this news to Bhishma who appointed Dronacharya as the teacher of the Kauravas and Pandavas.

Among the Kauravas and Pandavas, Arjuna particularly learnt the art of archery fast and became an expert in a short time, winning the love and affection of his Guru Dronacharya. People were all praise for his intelligence and skill. Dronacharya's name and reputation also spread far and wide due to this. As Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya, could not match the skill and intelligence of Arjuna in archery, he became jealous of the Pandavas. During the Mahabharata war, one night he committed the heinous act of killing the Upapandavas (Pandava children) mercilessly under the cover of darkness. Arjuna dragged him before Draupadi in order to punish him. Instead of cursing the evil doer, she fell at the feet of Aswatthama and said:

It is at the feet of your father Dronacharya that my husbands have 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?
(Telugu Poem)

When Draupadi was praying like this, Bhima could not bear to see this. Here was Aswatthama who had to be dealt with severely for his dastardly act, and Draupadi was trying to reason with this evil monster! 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. This assassin Aswatthama is not a Brahmin. Do not release him but kill him. If you do not do that, I myself will hammer his head with my powerful fist, for you to see!

(Telugu Poem)

Consumed with fury, Arjuna was about to attack Aswatthama. Draupadi raised her hand and asked him not to kill him. She said:

Oh Phalguna! It is not righteous to kill a person who is afraid or has lost courage, who is asleep or intoxicated, who seeks refuge or is a female. You should not kill Aswatthama, for he is your preceptor's son

(Telugu Poem)

Draupadi addressed Arjuna as Phalguna (a name of Arjuna) meaning, one of great virtues, and said, "You are endowed with many noble qualities. Therefore, you should desist from killing Aswatthama."

One should adhere to the path of truth and at the same time should not cause harm to anyone. *Sathyam Bruyath, Priyam Bruyath, Na Bruyath Sathyamapriyam* (speak truth, speak pleasantly and do not speak unpalatable truth). In this way, Draupadi showed the



right path to Arjuna. The Bhagavata and the Mahabharata tell the stories of many such women of great virtues who demonstrated high ideals. It was only on the advice of Draupadi that Arjuna spared the life of Aswatthama. This advice not only saved the life of Aswatthama but pacified Arjuna also. She reasoned with Arjuna, "What is the use of worrying about the past? Do not brood over what has already happened. Anyway, our children cannot become alive. Let us not put someone else to the same agony which we have suffered." It was because of the persuasion of Draupadi that Arjuna gave up his anger. He agreed to her pleadings, and as a token punishment to Aswatthama shaved off his head, took his crown jewel and set him free.

This is how Draupadi reacted to the situation; she did not have the slightest hatred against Aswatthama who mercilessly massacred all the five Pandava children. Arjuna thus spared the life of Aswatthama. What is more precious than life? Such precious life should be saved at all costs. The merit of saving life is our true wealth. There are many such teachings in the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata. Women are endowed with many great virtues. They are noble and broad-minded. It is due to such virtuous women that the country has been able to make great progress since ancient times. One should follow ethics in each and every aspect of one's life. This is the teaching of our sacred texts like the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata.

Ethics and Morality are the Foundation of Bharatiya Culture

The Mahabharata, the Bhagavata and the Upanishads explain the principle of divinity in a very comprehensive manner. But, unfortunately, the Bharatiyas today have



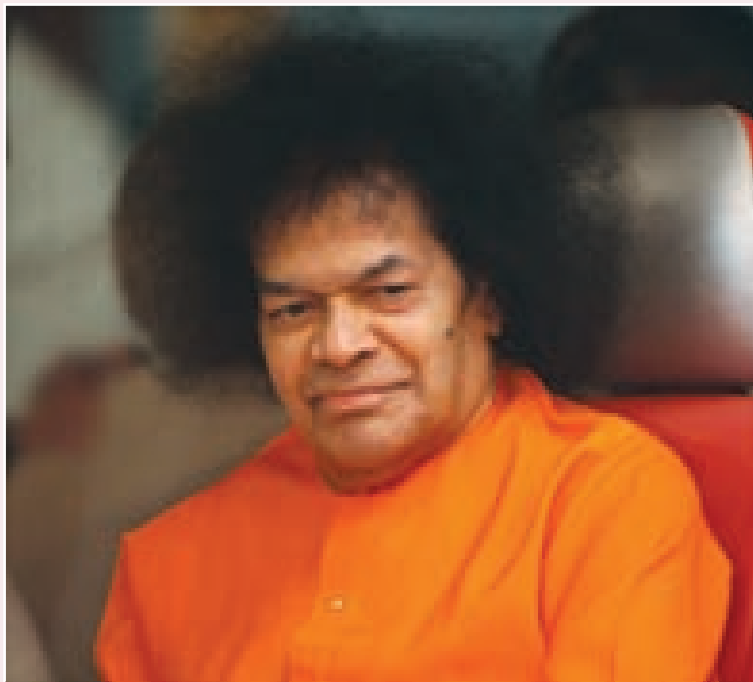
First and foremost, develop love for God. When you have love for God, you will desist from committing sin, thinking, "What will happen to me if I commit this sin?" It is only when you have love for God and fear of sin that you will become a man of sterling character. When you have high character, you will be loved by society; nobody will hate you. Therefore, develop good character and love all.



forgotten this. In this sacred land of Bharat, forbearance is considered as real beauty. What is beauty? It does not refer to physical beauty but to the qualities like forbearance. It is a sign of weakness of the Bharatiyas that they imitate the people of the west. This is not what they should do. Instead they should protect the sacredness of the Bharatiya culture. Those who protect this sacred culture are the true Bharatiyas. One bereft of morality does not deserve to be called a human being. *Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows.* Therefore, you should protect morality and uphold character. This is the true quality of a Bharatiya.

Without knowing its great strength, the elephant implicitly obeys the command of an ordinary mahout who works on a paltry salary. It sits when it is asked to sit and stands when it is commanded to do so. The mahout trains the elephant so that he can keep it under his control. In fact, the elephant is so powerful that with the mere swish of its tail, it can throw the mahout away. Because it is not aware





Whatever you deposit in the bank, you can draw it back. Do not feel proud that you are helping the bank by depositing your money in it. The deposit will not go to anybody else; it will come back to you only. You are bound to be benefited if not today, certainly at a later date. Therefore, remember that whatever you do, you do it for yourself only. Whatever you do in your life, you do it for your own sake, not for the sake of others. Anything good you think or do in your life will benefit you only.

of its strength, it obeys the command of the mahout. Similarly, though the Bharatiyas are endowed with great strength and have mastered the Vedas, the Sastras (scriptures), the Puranas (mythologies), the Itihasas (epics) and the Upanishads, they are following the western culture. This is their great misfortune. They imitate the western



manners and even dress. One should know the principles of one's culture and act according to one's conscience. The Bharatiyas are powerful enough to vanquish their enemies in the battlefield. But, unfortunately, they have totally forgotten their own strength. It is not due to their ignorance but rather due to their innocence. Since they are imitating the western culture, their own strength is gradually declining. Therefore, you should give up imitation.

Misuse of Money and Power is Dangerous

You should observe certain limits in every field of your life. Even a wild beast like a lion attacks another animal only when it is hungry. It does not unnecessarily kill other animals. When an animal like lion observes restraint, man should also conduct himself with restraint. Limit is very essential. Excessive ego, anger and desires will lead man to perversion. You should divert your mind to the right direction so that you yourself do not suffer and do not cause suffering to others. You should follow the path which gives happiness to others. Just because you are endowed with great strength, you should not use it in an arbitrary manner. You should use it in a proper way. Many children behave in an unrestrained way in the name of freedom.

They should have freedom, but it should

be within certain limits. Then only will their freedom become meaningful. Misuse of money and knowledge will lead to great danger.

You may have come to know from newspapers that America has wasted a lot of money in her wars against other countries like Iraq. Ultimately, what has America gained? Today her economy is in crisis. This applies to every individual and every country. God is all-powerful. But He does not use His power in an arbitrary way. He puts it to limited use and uses it only when it is necessary. Similarly, you should not use your power in an unrestrained and arbitrary manner.

Do not waste your thoughts. Too many thoughts make the mind unsteady. (Bhagavan showing His handkerchief) What is this? This is a cloth. This is not a cloth, this is a bundle of threads. This is not even a bundle of threads but it is cotton. Without cotton, there can be no threads and without threads there can be no cloth. The mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. You should not waste money and material. You should have that much food served to you which you can eat. Have everything as much as you require. If you have more, use it to help others. Never hurt anybody. *Help Ever, Hurt Never*. This is what you have to learn.

Dear Students!

Never harm anybody. Never cause pain to anybody. At the same time, do not put yourself also to any suffering. He is a blessed one who neither causes pain to anyone else nor to himself. This is the true learning that you should acquire. This is not the type of learning that you can acquire from books. You think, you can learn everything from textbooks. Do not merely go by your textbooks. Instead put your mind to test. Sometimes, you follow the vagaries of your mind. Sometimes,



Love is everywhere. God is everywhere. Love everybody more and more. Then love in you will also multiply and your name and fame will spread far and wide in the world. If you commit even one evil act, you would set a bad example to others. On the other hand, if you do only good acts, all will praise you. Therefore, Be Good, Do Good, See Good. This is the way to God.



you act like a hypocrite. This is not good. Before undertaking any task, enquire within, "Is it good or bad?" If you feel something is bad, don't touch it. If you feel something is good, then it will be good not only for you and your family but for others also.

Be Good, Do Good, See Good

The speakers in this conference have expressed their views on the subject "Ethics and the World of Finance." They have talked about the do's and don'ts for the banks. These do's and don'ts do not merely apply to the working of the banks but to ourselves also. Whatever good or bad you do, it will come back to you. Whatever you deposit in the bank, you can draw it back. Do not feel proud that you are helping the bank by depositing your money in it. The deposit will not go to anybody else; it will come back to you only. You are bound to be benefited if not today, certainly at a later date. Therefore, remember that whatever you do in your life, you do it for your own sake, not for the sake of others. Anything good you think or do in your life will benefit you only.

Cultivate these three principles - *Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti*

(love for God, fear of sin and morality in society). You will earn a good name when you promote morality in society. Then everybody will follow you, saying, "He is a very good person." First and foremost, develop love for God. When you have love for God, you will desist from committing sin, thinking, "What will happen to me if I commit this sin?" It is only when you have love for God and fear of sin that you will become a man of sterling character. When you have high character, you will be loved by society; nobody will hate you. Therefore, develop good character and love all. Love is everywhere. God is everywhere. Love everybody more and more. Then love in you will also multiply and your name and fame will spread far and wide in the world. If you commit even one evil act, you would set a bad example to others. On the other hand, if you do only good acts, all will praise you. Therefore, *Be Good, Do Good, See Good. This is the way to God.* But all this you cannot learn from books. This is not textual information. It comes from the purity of the heart. Therefore, you should develop sacredness. But sacredness today has become extinct from the heart of man. There is no sacredness, but only secrets! This is not good. If you have the bad habit of smoking, your friend will also come to you saying, "Hello, hello, you are a good boy; give one to me also." You will become the type of person as are your friends. *Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.* When you yourself are bad, then you will always have bad company. On the other hand, if you are good, your company will also be good.

Today many companies have shut down their business. What is the reason? If one company indulges in bad practices, other companies will also follow it. Bad practices spread very quickly, while there are few

takers for good practices. Have patience and perseverance to do all that is good. Don't follow anything bad in haste. *Haste makes waste. Waste makes worry. So, don't be in a hurry.* Worry leads to many problems. Ultimately, what is the cause of worry? Your hurry is the main cause of worry. Therefore, you should give up hurry. Then you will have no worry.

Morality is Permanent, not Money

Dear Students!

You are all very young. All of you should undertake only good tasks. Do good deeds and set a good ideal. It is only society that protects us. Therefore, service to society is very necessary. Before serving other members of society, you should first serve your mother, father, preceptor and God. Your mother is your God; your father is your God; your preceptor is your God. Your mother is very very very important, even more important than your preceptor and God. Therefore, make your mother happy. When your mother is happy, your entire life will become happy. If you make your mother unhappy, you will suffer all your life. Consider your mother's happiness as your happiness. If only you make your mother happy, all your life will become blissful. It is your mother who has given you birth, brought you up and protected you in every way. Sometimes, she may become angry with you, chide you and even beat you. You should not take it to heart, thinking, "My mother has scolded me and beaten me." Her anger is only temporary and not long lasting.

You should recognise that anger, ego, jealousy and lust – all these are temporary. They come and go. They are not permanent. In fact, all our thoughts are temporary; they

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CONFERENCE ON "ETHICS AND THE WORLD OF FINANCE"

A TWO-DAY CONFERENCE ON "Ethics and the World of Finance" was organised by Sri Sathya Sai University at Prasanthi Nilayam on 28th and 29th August 2009. Besides the Governor of Reserve Bank of India, Dr. Duvvuri Subba Rao and former Governor, Dr. Y. Venugopal Reddy, about 25 chiefs from the world of finance participated in the conference, representing regulatory institutions, commercial banks, insurance companies and investment agencies. These included Reserve Bank of India, SEBI, ICICI Bank, SBI, Kotak Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Andhra Bank, Canara Bank, ING Vysya Bank, Deutsch Bank, Royal Bank of Scotland, JP Morgan, Barclays, AR Birla Financial Services, IRDA, ICICI Prudential, Allahabad Bank, IFFCO Tokyo General Insurance and Birla Sun Life. The students and staff of Sri Sathya Sai University played an important role in the conference.

Inaugural Session

The conference was inaugurated by the Revered Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai University, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by lighting the sacred lamp at 10.00 a.m. on 28th August 2009 in the university auditorium. In his welcome address, Prof. Vishwanath Pandit, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai University, expressed gratitude to Bhagavan but for whose Divine Will such an event would not have

been possible. Highlighting the relevance of the conference to the current financial situation in the world, Prof. Pandit emphasised the need for value-based education so that educational institutions give to society men and women of impeccable character with high moral values as was being practised by Sri Sathya Sai University. In his Keynote Address, the RBI Governor, Dr. Duvvuri Subba Rao thanked



Revered Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai University, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the dais of the university auditorium after inaugurating the conference on "Ethics and the World of Finance" on 29th August 2009. Seated with Him on the dais are (from left to right): Prof. Vishwanath Pandit, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai University, Dr. Y. Venugopal Reddy, former Governor of RBI, Dr. Duvvuri Subba Rao, Governor of RBI and Smt. Subba Rao.

Bhagavan for the opportunity to participate in this important conference which was very relevant in the situation prevailing in the world of finance today. Dr. Rao referred to the ethical dimensions of Reserve Bank of India and observed that ethics in the finance sector could be brought by fostering a value system



in society at large since the finance sector was a reflection of society.

The next speaker, Dr. Y. Venugopal Reddy, former Governor of Reserve Bank of India, dwelt on the relationship of values, morality, ethics and the market and the government, and questioned some of the undesirable practices being followed by the financial sector. He concluded his speech by saying that there was enough in the world to meet the needs of everybody but not enough to satisfy the greed of even a single person. The last speaker of the morning session was Sri S.V. Giri, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai University. Sri Giri highlighted the importance of human values for the welfare of the individual, society and the world and explained how values were being inculcated through activities like Grama Seva in the students of Sri Sathya Sai University.

Plenary Session

An impressive plenary session of the conference was held in the afternoon in Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of the Revered Chancellor of the university, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The proceedings of the conference started at 5.20 p.m. when Bhagavan came to the dais after blessing the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall with His Divine Darshan. At the outset, Sri Naren Ramji, Registrar, Sri Sathya Sai University presented a summary of the proceedings of the inaugural session held in the morning in the university auditorium. Sri Ramji stated that this conference had a very special significance not only because all major sectors of the world of finance were taking part in it on a subject of immense importance, but also because Bhagavan Himself had convened it. Sri Ramji then called out the names of the delegates who came one by one, offered

their salutations to Bhagavan and occupied their seat on the dais.

The first speaker of the session was Sri K.V. Kamath, former Chairman of ICICI Bank. Sri Kamath referred to the recent financial crisis of the world and observed that lack of ethics and morality were mainly responsible for it. Complimenting Sri Sathya Sai University for its value-based system of education, Sri Kamath remarked that there was no better place than this to hold a conference on this important subject. Sri Kamath stressed the need for building a robust financial system and added that India had been able to withstand this great challenge because Indian society was based on the sound foundations of spirituality and values which Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been teaching to His students, devotees and the world at large. The next speaker was Sri Gunit Chaddha, CEO-India, Deutsch Bank. Stating that the opportunity to speak in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan was the most humbling experience of his life, Sri Chaddha expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for it. Observing that excessive greed and erosion of values were the main causes for the present financial crisis, the distinguished speaker said that the value system being practised by more than 6,000 alumni of Sri Sathya Sai University was greatly needed in the financial sector to make it strong and healthy.

The third speaker, Sri K.R. Ramamoorthy, Chairman, ING Vysya Bank said that he owed his second life to Bhagavan as he narrated how he was saved by Bhagavan in the terrorist attack on the Taj Heritage, Mumbai on 26th November 2009. Talking about the subject of values in the finance sector, the distinguished speaker observed that competence and integrity were the two main qualities a banker should possess. Commenting on the





The Plenary Session of the conference was held in Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 28th August 2009, in which many eminent speakers expressed their views on the present state of the world of finance and remedial measures required for setting up a robust financial system in the world.

present state of affairs in India, Sri Ramamoorthy observed that everyone looked for individual gains rather than building a strong institution, and added that one could not find a better institution than a Sai institution and a better leader than Bhagavan who led by example. The next speaker, Sri V.S. Das, Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India felt that one could get great lessons by attending such conferences, wherein practical demonstration of hospitality, system supported management and organisational ability, all were there to see and imbibe. The distinguished speaker said that the Reserve Bank of India was committed to provide a sound financial system to the country and added that it had prescribed a set of comprehensive regulations that would ensure financial stability and avert any financial crisis.

Sri Jagdish Capoor, Chairman, HDFC Bank, who followed next, observed that financial affairs were in no way separate from moral values. The eminent speaker

added that there could not be a better place to hold a conference like this than Sri Sathya Sai University where each student was imbued with discipline and high moral values as taught by Bhagavan. The last speaker of the session was Dr. G. Venkataraman, former Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai University who explained in detail various service projects of Bhagavan related to supply of water to masses, free quality education and free state-of-the-art hospitals. The distinguished speaker concluded his talk by stating that all the problems of the world could be solved by following the path of Sathya, Dharma and Prema which Bhagavan was showing to the world by His example.

Panel Discussions and Conclusions

The conference dealt with four main subjects in its panel discussions. These were: (1) Quintessence of Ethics (2) Behaviour and Structure of Financial Institutions, (3) Role of Government and Regulatory Authorities, and (4) Role of Education. The conference deliberated in detail on the genesis and

the consequences of the present economic crisis and how it had engulfed the entire world causing unemployment, business failures, accentuated inequality and numerous other problems at micro and macro levels. One message which came up most prominently was that at the root of the problem was the prevalence of excessive desires and greed on the part of investors, indulgent behaviour of investment bankers as well as carelessness of regulatory authorities and in many cases misguided adventurist mentality. The fact that high rates of return carried with it equally large risk was ignored under a psychosis of greed and selfishness. One central point to be kept in mind was that in so far as financial institutions were dealing with money belonging to others, they must look upon themselves as trustees.

The conference spent considerable time on the basic role of human values and ethical norms relevant to the financial world and how these were bound to be beneficial to individual human beings and society as a whole. It was clear that excessive faith in the market process was misplaced. The need for everyone to be concerned not only with his self-interest but also with well-being of the entire society was indeed necessary to ensure that market outcomes were materially beneficial and led to overall social happiness. The importance of basic human values for all this could hardly be exaggerated. It came out clearly that prosperous and happy new world could not be built on promotion of consumerism as was being done at present. The importance of ceiling on desires as taught by Bhagavan Baba was essential for real happiness of all.

Towards the end of the conference, it turned to the basic problem how ethical and moral values could be inculcated and promoted through proper education. This must start

from childhood where parents had to shoulder a major responsibility. It was necessary that they themselves set examples of right moral conduct for children to follow. It was unanimously agreed that Sri Sathya Sai model of education with its central focus on character building, spirit of service, adoption of love as a basic heartthrob in all contexts was the ideal system. The fact that it promoted capabilities without losing sight of the objective of creating ideal citizens for tomorrow was enough to remove any misgivings. The conference deliberated on how government policy, private initiatives and a coherent and committed involvement of society itself must be put in place to create a better world of tomorrow. It was agreed that love for God would lead to fear of sin which would in turn ensure morality in society.

Besides the speakers who expressed their views in the inaugural and plenary sessions of the conference, the top-level experts in the field of finance who took part in these deliberations were: Kalpana Morparia, CEO, JP Morgan-India; A. Giridhar, Executive Director, IRDA; R. Sridharan, MD, SBI; R.S. Reddy, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Andhra Bank; Uday Kotak, Executive Vice President and CEO, Kotak Mahindra Bank; Usha Narayanan, Executive Director, SEBI; Meera Sanyal, CEO, RBS / ABN Amro Bank; Ravi Duvvuru, Group Head, Compliance, Kotak Mahindra Bank; Amitabh Chaturvedi, MD, Dhanalakshmi Bank; K.R. Kamath, CMD, Allahabad Bank; V. Vaidyanathan, MD and CEO, ICICI Prudential; Aditya Puri, MD, HDFC Bank; Sreeram Iyer, CEO, Standard Chartered Bank; Ajay Srinivasan, Chief Executive, AV Birla Finance Services; S. Narayanan, MD and CEO, IFFCO Tokyo General Insurance, A. Balasubramanian, CEO, Birla Sun Life AMC.



Valedictory Session

The Valedictory Session of the conference was held in Sai Kulwant Hall in the evening on 29th August 2009. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 5.00 p.m. and showered His blessings on all the participants. The participants took part in Bhajans, which were started by the students of Sri Sathya Sai University. After Bhajans, Bhagavan blessed the august gathering with a nectarine Discourse which provided a grand finale to this high-profile conference. Illustrating His points with stories from the Mahabharata, Bhagavan exhorted one and all to safeguard morality and earn the wealth of divine love instead of

amassing worldly riches. Bhagavan gave three principles for man to follow which were not only necessary for him to redeem his life but were also beneficial for establishing morality in society. These principles were: Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti (love for God, fear of sin and morality in society). (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue.) The programme came to a close with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 6.45 p.m. Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was then distributed to the entire assembly of delegates and devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall in the end. With this, the deliberations of the conference came to a happy conclusion.

... Continued from page 307

come and go. Only one thing is permanent, that is the principle of the Atma. That is love, love, love, love! This is your true and permanent property. *Love All, Serve All*. Other than the property of love, one does not need any property. You should do service with the feeling, "Service is my God, service is my life." Never do service for the sake of money. What is money? It comes today and goes tomorrow. Money is not permanent; it is temporary. Therefore, do not become elated when you get money and do not become depressed when you lose it. Morality is permanent, not money.

Students! Today is a very happy day. You should pray that such a happy day may come again and again. Cherish the memory of this day in your heart. You may go anywhere, God is always with you.

God is your sole refuge wherever you may be,

*In a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village,
on the top of a mountain or in the middle of
deep sea.* (Telugu Poem)

God is in you, with you, around you. He will never forsake you. He will protect you wherever you are. Have such firm faith in your heart. God is not someone who is with you one day and leaves you the next day. He will never leave you.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajans, "*Hari Bhajan Bina ...*" and "*Subrahmanyam, Subrahmanyam ...*")

You are all good students. You should always remain good.

– From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 29th August 2009 on the occasion of the conference on "Ethics and the World of Finance."



ONAM CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

MANY CULTURAL AND MUSIC programmes were organised at Prasanthi Nilayam by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Kerala on the auspicious occasion of Onam. More than 6,000 devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam from all parts of Kerala to celebrate this sacred festival of Kerala in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The first programme which formed part of these celebrations was a drama entitled “Sankara Digvijayam” enacted by the Bal Vikas children of Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala on 31st August 2009. The drama portrayed the entire life story of this great luminary through songs, dances, dialogues and commentary with a judicious mix of Sanskrit verses composed by Sankara, which not only mirrored his life and teachings but also showcased the philosophy of Advaita propounded by this celebrated scholar of the Vedas and Upanishads. The drama was not only meticulously scripted but also perfectly

directed and enacted. It commenced at 4.40 p.m. after Bhagavan’s Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall and came to a close at 5.40 p.m. At the end of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the children and distributed clothes to them. He also materialised a gold chain for the boy who enacted the role of Sankara. This was followed by Bhajans. Meanwhile, Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to all. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 5.55 p.m.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Kerala organised two programmes on 1st September 2009 as part of Onam celebrations. First, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth, Srisailam presented a drama entitled “Bhakta Tukaram”, highlighting Tukaram’s deep devotion and firm faith which earned him the unbounded grace of Lord Vitthal, who gave him total protection and saved him in all critical situations in life. Embellished with immortal Abhangs (devotional compositions) of Tukaram, the drama gave the message that renunciation



The drama “Sankara Digvijayam” presented by the Bal Vikas children of Kerala on 31st August 2009 showcased the life and philosophy of Adi Sankara.



The students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth, Srisailam presented the drama “Bhakta Tukaram” on 1st September 2009 to portray the life and teachings of Tukaram, the celebrated saint of Maharashtra.



and Namasmarana could make man dear to God as exemplified by the life of Tukaram. The drama which started at 5.00 p.m. concluded at 5.35 p.m. This was followed by a devotional music concert by renowned playback singer K.S. Chitra. Commencing her presentation with a prayer in Sanskrit to Lord Ganesh, the singer enraptured the audience with devotional songs which included some famous Mira Bhajans. She concluded her programme with the Bhajan “Chittachora Yashoda Ke Baal” which the audience followed in chorus. At the end of her presentation, Bhagavan showered His blessings on her, gave her the coveted opportunity of photo with Him, presented a Sari to her and materialised a gold chain for her child. Bhagavan also distributed clothes to the artistes who provided instrumental support to her. This was followed by a brief session of Bhajans led by the students. Meanwhile, Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to all. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.45 p.m.

A grand function was held in Sai Kulwant Hall on 2nd September 2009 to celebrate the holy festival of Onam. Sai Kulwant Hall bore a festive look with Kerala-style decorations which included festoons made of tender coconut leaves, ornamental umbrellas, plantain leaves, fresh flowers along with “Happy Onam” banners hung on all sides of the hall. Special decorations were done on the dais where a Kerala-style sanctum sanctorum was set up with Deepastambham (pillar of lamps). A floral design was arranged in front of the dais along with auspicious offerings.

Bhagavan was offered a grand welcome when He came to Sai Kulwant Hall on the Onam morning on 2nd September 2009 at 9.30 a.m. While girls students standing



On the auspicious day of Onam on 2nd September 2009, special decorations were made on the dais where a Kerala-style sanctum sanctorum was set up with Deepastambham (pillar of lamps).

on both sides of the passage of Bhagavan offered welcome to Him with lighted lamps in their hands, Panchavadyam and Nadaswaram musicians along with a girls band offered welcome to Him with sweet musical notes. Bhajans which started at 9.00 a.m. continued while Bhagavan showered the bliss of His Darshan on the yearning devotees on this auspicious morning. After coming to the dais, Bhagavan keenly observed the beautiful decorations made there. At the conclusion of Bhajans at 10.10 a.m., Arati was offered to Bhagavan which marked the conclusion of the morning programme.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 4.20 p.m. amidst Vedic chants and Panchavadyam musical notes, and blessed the huge gathering of devotees with His Divine Discourse. Before the Discourse of Bhagavan, Sri Jayakumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala

addressed the gathering. The distinguished speaker observed that there was no better way of celebrating Onam than to come to the divine abode of Bhagavan and bask in the ambience of His love and grace. On the day of Onam, people of Kerala made floral decorations in their courtyards for 10 days to welcome King Bali, said Sri Jayakumar and added that it symbolised decorating the altar of our heart to enshrine Bhagavan in it. In His Discourse which followed this speech, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to observe Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti to redeem their life. Everybody should make efforts to acquire the wealth of morality, said Bhagavan and added that without morality, one could not be called a human being in the real sense of the term. Bhagavan praised the people of Kerala for the purity of their heart and observed that it was due to the purity of its people that Kerala abounded in plenty, peace and bliss.

After Bhagavan's Discourse, the students of Sri Sai Vidya Vihar, Aluva, Kerala presented a drama entitled "Bhakta Nandanar", portraying the main incidents from the life of this great devotee of Siva to show how his deep devotion and unflinching faith earned him the unbounded grace of the Lord. The first incident depicted how the idol of Nandi (Siva's bull) in front of the temple of Thirupangur moved aside to enable Nandanar and his friends to have the Darshan of the Lord in the sanctum sanctorum as he was not permitted to enter the temple because he belonged to a low caste. Another incident



The students of Sri Sai Vidya Vihar, Aluva presented the drama "Bhakta Nandanar" on 2nd September 2009, portraying the main incidents from the life of this great devotee of Siva.

showed how Nandanar was unharmed by fire and emerged from it in the attire of a Brahmin as the priests of Chidambaram temple prescribed fire test for his purification before he could enter the temple. Fabulous sets and props and superb directional skill made it possible to depict these incidents realistically. Excellent acting of the cast, well rendered songs of Nandanar and thrilling music added to the value of the drama. The drama which began at 5.30 p.m. came to a close at 6.25 p.m. Bhagavan sat through the entire presentation, blessed the cast at the end of the drama, distributed clothes to them and posed for group photos with them. He also materialised a gold chain for the student who enacted the role of Nandanar. With this excellent presentation, Onam celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion. Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was then distributed to all. The programme came to a close with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 6.40 p.m.

To pick up a degree, say B.A. or M.A., how much does one struggle? For earning a livelihood you struggle so much. What efforts are you making to see God? Nothing at all! You feel God should be easily accessible. There shouldn't be any need to take a step, spend a penny, move the body; yet the supreme goal should drop into your lap!

– Baba



Effulgence of Divine Glory

FLOWERS OF FAITH

FAITH IS THE ONLY way which leads to knowledge. I quote here the unflinching faith of some that left an indelible impression on me and helped me in realising the divine grace.

Construction of the central dome on the terrace of the Mandir was in progress. Baba assigned the job of supervision of the work to me and Patel which included opening the door leading to the terrace in the morning for the workmen and closing it at the end of the day. One evening, four welding workers on the job said, "It is already dusk. We will go and come back tomorrow morning to resume our work and complete it by evening." We nodded our assent and were about to let them out when Baba made a surprise visit.

He instructed us to see that the work was completed in the night and left. The workmen who had heard Baba, calmly returned to their work, collecting their tools. I asked them, "You said, you would be able to finish the job only tomorrow evening. You should have told the same to Baba. He is always kind and would have gladly permitted you to leave." The main man in the group said, "If Swami Himself comes and says, it is to be completed in the night, it will be completed by His grace." Somehow, we were incredulous about the man's philosophical statement. We found them slow at work. Half



Prasanthi Mandir after the construction of domes on it.

way in the job if they went out for their food, we would not know when they would return, recommence and complete the work. We did not know how long we had to stay there in the biting cold.

At eight in the evening, Patel and myself calmly went down by turns to canteen to have our meal without disturbing the workers who were on the job relentlessly and with determination.

It was quarter to nine when we heard footsteps on the stairs and the door opened. Baba entered accompanied by three students carrying banana leaves, tumblers, water jugs and two carriers of food. Baba straightaway walked to the workmen and asked, "Will the

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Offering to Krishna

ONCE THERE LIVED A DEVOTEE of Lord Krishna in a village. After getting up early in the morning, she used to cover the floor of her temple of Krishna with cow dung paste. Thereafter, she decorated



As the devotee of Krishna threw a ball of cow dung out of her house, saying, "offering to Krishna", it got instantly stuck on the face of the idol of Krishna in the village temple.

the temple, lighted a lamp in it and threw the rest of the cow dung out of her house, saying, "Offering to Krishna."

There was a temple of Krishna in this village. After giving ceremonial bath to the idol of Krishna early in the morning, the priest of this temple used to put a flower garland around its neck and offer Arati to it. At that time, a ball of cow dung would come from somewhere and would get stuck on the face of the idol. It happened everyday. The priest was very much distressed; he could not find out wherefrom that ball of cow dung came.

After some time, he reported the matter to the elders of the village. All the village elders came and saw that right at the time when Arati was being offered to the idol, a ball of cow dung came from somewhere and got stuck on the face of the idol. In order to find out who was doing it, they posted guards in the streets all around the temple. One of the guards saw that a woman came out of her house and threw a ball of cow dung, saying, "Offering to Krishna." He told the village elders that a woman threw out a ball of cow dung from her house. They all came to know that the cow dung ball would get stuck on the face of the idol in the temple at the same time when the woman threw it out of her house.

The village elders came to the house of the woman and scolded her, saying, "You are throwing a ball of cow dung on the face of the



"Will I throw cow dung on the face of my dear Krishna? I would rather give up my life than do such a mean act", said the woman, weeping bitterly.



idol of Krishna daily. It is not good.” The village elders did not try to find out how the ball of cow dung thrown out of a house could get stuck on the face of the idol in the temple. They lacked discrimination and prudence. Their only concern was the cow dung ball which defiled the idol. The village elders ordered the imprisonment of the woman, her husband, her mother-in-law and father-in-law. The woman wept bitterly and said, “Will I throw cow dung on the face of my dear Krishna? Isn’t it a great sacrilege? I would rather give up my life than do such a mean act.” The village elders ordered the woman not to throw the ball of cow dung in the street from next day onwards. Her husband, her mother-in-law and father-in-law then pressurised her to obey this order.

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work be completed in another one hour?” With folded hands all the four lined up and then their leader said, “Yes, Swami.” Baba, patted him and said, “This is true devotion. I am happy. You have been continuously working for five hours. Wash your hands and have your food. There are jugs full of water and towels.” They did not bother about their food. They were overwhelmed by Baba’s kind words and prostrated before Him one after the other. This was the real feast of their lifetime. They never had such an opportunity to see Baba so closely, touch His feet and hear Him speak to them.

When the students started laying six banana leaves, Baba said without looking at us, “Those two had their food, serve to only these four.” Baba was there for more than ten minutes talking to them and enquiring their welfare. He Himself served them sweets

From next day onwards, the doors of the temple got firmly shut. The villagers tried their best but the doors would not open. Then the village elders realised the power, devotion and devoutness of this devotee. They all came to her and prayed, “Mother! Forgive our mistake.” Instantly, the doors of the temple opened.

Except God, nobody can know about His devotees. God does not consider what material is offered to Him. He does not see whether it is good or bad. He sees only the purity of the mind and feeling of love in the heart of His devotees. God is the embodiment of sacredness and in His view everything is sacred. Nothing is bad in the creation of God; it appears bad to us only due to our defective perception.

and persuaded them to eat well. After they had their fill and went out for washing their hands, the students removed the leaves and cleaned the place. Before leaving, Baba gave each one of them one apple.

When they were prostrating and touching Baba’s feet, I noticed that the hem of His robe was stained, because one of the worker’s hands were dirty. While Baba was leaving, I said aloud, “Swami! Your robe has been stained”, just to attract His attention. Baba without turning to look at us said, “I know. They are not stains. They are flowers of faith”, and walked away.

It was too late for us to realise that Baba knew more about our hunger than we. The workmen held their heads high and we hung ours in shame.

–B.V. Ramana Rao
“Love is My Form”

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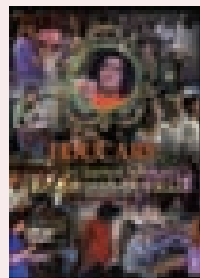
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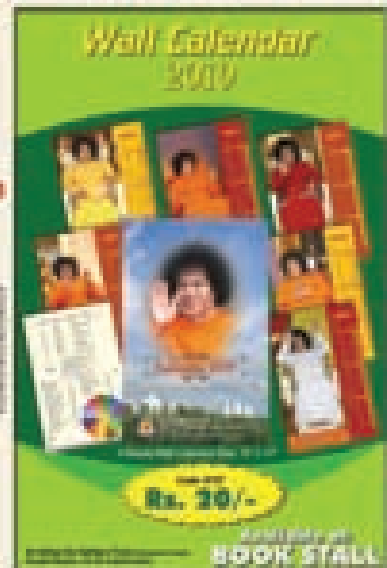
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