

A Special Talk Given by Prof. Anil Kumar

Address to Seattle Youth

May 2, 2009

TRUE YOUTHFULNESS

Sai Ram to everyone!

(Sai Ram!)

How are you doing?

(We are doing well!)

With Bhagavan's grace, it has been possible for me to be here this pleasant evening. In fact, this has been a long awaited visit. Perhaps Bhagavan decided that I should be visiting here at this time, because the whole plan is the Divine thought of the universal mind. I was told that I would be meeting young adults here. I see quite a good number here!

In fact, I can say that some of us are also young adults. *(Laughter)* It may be rather funny or surprising to call some of us as "young adults". But the point is this—"youth" normally refers to people who fall within a certain age group, but we are youthful, that is the difference. "Youth" refers to certain patterns or limitations of a specific age group. But anyone can be youthful, irrespective of age. We are all youthful, irrespective of age—that is the point.

YOUTHFULNESS OF THE EPIC CHARACTERS

Why do I say that? It is not to defend or qualify myself so that I fall within your group's radar. Just imagine the age-old characters from Indian mythology or epics. The biggest battle was fought in the times of *Mahabharatha*. It was called Kurukshetra, and that battle was between five Pandavas and the Kauravas. I am not going into the details of that story, because it is not necessary.

Who was the chief of the army staff on the side of Kauravas? It was Bhishmacharya, who was one hundred twelve years young! *(Laughter)* Who was the captain on the side of Pandavas? Krishna. He was seventy-eight and Arjuna was around seventy-six or seventy-five! If they could fight a war, much above the prescribed age limit for such activities, how could they ultimately win?

Another question is this: We have seen pictures of Rama and Krishna. No one photographed them. It was the imagination of the painter, as per the descriptions in our mythology. Have you seen any painting of Krishna in His old age? Do you mean to say that Krishna continued to be

young forever and ever? Is that possible? Having taken a body, growth is natural. The end is inevitable—it applies to all *Avatars*.

Certainly Rama must have aged. Krishna must have also aged. But have you seen a picture of Krishna or Rama in their advanced age? No. What does it mean? It only means that youth does not have anything to do with age.

It is youthfulness that matters. What do I mean by youthfulness? It means the spirit of youth, not the actual age. Krishna continued to be youthful, Rama continued to be youthful. Bhishmacharya was at the forefront of youth!

YOUTHFUL RESIDENTS OF PRASHANTI NILAYAM

Therefore, we all belong to this group called the youth! I have yet to see an old man. In Prashanti Nilayam, some people ask, “Sir, an old man stays here. Do you know where?”

“I have not met any old people. (*Laughter*) In which island do they live? I do not know.”

The person looks at me rather surprised, and asks, “There are no old people here?”

“Yes, there are old people.”

Then the person asks me, “Why do you say that?”

It is not a joke, because we find university professors aged seventy and seventy-five working twice as hard as the youngsters! We find hospital doctors, more than sixty-five and seventy years of age, who work with the same energy and enthusiasm of the youth. This only indicates that it is the spirit, the enthusiasm, and the energy that decides youthfulness, and not the mere age of a person.

We also see some people who cannot sit upright for some time. We find some youngsters with long faces, as if they had consumed a bottle of castor oil. (*Laughter*) We also see some youngsters getting tired, and complaining of backache and joint pains! What nonsense!

BHAGAWAN EMBODIES YOUTHFULNESS

Can anyone compete with Bhagavan, even in a wheelchair? Look at His face. It is full of youthfulness. As we look at Bhagavan, we don't feel that He is aging, do we? Why? Because He is full of vibrant energy and that energy is present within every one of us. But the energy that we have within us is spent for selfish purposes. That energy is dissipated, diluted, and is not focused. However, in the case of the *Avatar*, the energy is focused towards the emancipation of humanity. It is focused towards the glory and service of mankind, for the upliftment of the human race. That's the reason why He continues to be young and energetic.

You and I can't continue to be energetic throughout our lives because we spend our energy for our glorification, for our upliftment, and for our own prospects. Therefore, 'Hari Om!' (*Laughter*) It comes to an end!

Bhagavan has no personal agenda. He also declared publicly that He has no bank account. Do you know that? He has no bank account, nothing. He also said publicly that he takes only one or two spoons of food. So He's not living for food or for any position.

Someone was telling me yesterday, "Sir, I do not have a position in the organization."

I said, "Baba himself has no position." (*Laughter*)

Baba himself has no position. Therefore, it is not a question of position. Bhagavan has no property or position, but still continues to be happy. Why? He is in all of us. Your happiness is His happiness. Your pleasure is His pleasure. Your blissful state of life is the blissful state of His blissful state of being. That is the secret to being happy. That is the secret to being youthful.

BE HAPPY WHEN OTHERS ARE HAPPY

Look at any *mahatma* or any great man. An *Avatar* is an *Avatar*. If you think of other great people, the ideal people are very energetic. How? They find happiness when others are happy, whereas some are happy when others are unhappy. "If you are unhappy, I am happy." That is our life. (*Laughter*)

No, He does not have that kind of happiness. He is happy when you are happy. In spite of some discomfort, in spite of the bodily or physical suffering that we think He is undergoing, He spreads joy. He has not discontinued any of His programs or activities, or discourses, or giving advice, or directing the *mandir* people or Trust people. He has not cancelled *darshans*. He has not enjoyed a single holiday. We see Him in a wheelchair and we think that there is some difficulty for Him to get up or stretch His hand. These are the things that we see.

But in spirit, these things have not affected Him. Just watch his face—it is fresh like a sunrise, as fresh as the sunrise. Then, what is the wheelchair all about? That's nothing, because He is not the body, and He is using the wheelchair to demonstrate to all of us that He is not the body. He rises above the body. Unmindful of His suffering, unmindful of His own setbacks, whatever you may call it. That is the secret of Bhagavan's happiness.

YOUTH MEANS EXPANSION OF LOVE

The secret of Bhagavan's happiness, that we should emulate and copy, is to work for others, in order to make them happy. In their happiness you find your happiness. You cannot be happy all by yourself. Impossible! You can be happy only when everyone else is happy.

Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu

Let All Beings in All Worlds Be Happy

It is not said, "Let me be *sukhino bhavantu*, or at least my family, or at least those that live in my street." It is not so. Expansion of love is life. Contraction of love is death. Youth means expansion of love.

Elderly people, because of their physical problems or psychological inhibitions, whatever they may be, may not be as receptive as you. Young people are receptive. Young people are sensitive. Young people can take up any challenge because of the age factor. Of course, that kind of intense activity at that age is possible because their energy permits them. They have a bright future ahead of them.

Therefore, let all youngsters make Bhagavan Baba their leader. Who is our leader? Bhagavan Baba Himself. How does He lead? How is He? Just copy Him. How does He lead? What does He say?

EVERYTHING YOU DO IS SWAMI'S WORK

Recently, around six hundred former students of Sathya Sai University, alumni from the Brindavan campus and also the Prashanti Nilayam campus, assembled in Prashanti Nilayam and Bhagavan addressed them. He allowed them to ask questions, and I was translating.

One boy got up. I say he was a boy, but he might be an MS or PhD student. They are boys, after all they were all students. I love it that they also behave as boys in front of me, though married with children. Yet they love to be treated young, and I love to consider them young. If you want to brand yourself, then stay locked in a room. No, I am not prepared for that!
(Laughter)

One boy asked this question, "Bhagavan, we stay far away from you in America. We live in a competitive world. We have no time to spare. From dawn to dusk we are so busy. Our life is full of stress and tension, how do I find the time to serve? What shall I do?" That question would be applicable to everyone here.

In fact, I have been spending time here since March first. Though I visited this place on other trips a couple of times, this year as good luck would have it, I have had three full months to spend time. I never had this long a vacation until this trip. This is my forty-fifth year as a professor, but I have never had this long a vacation. Perhaps Bhagavan has given grace marks to a teacher Himself!

What shall we do in such a competitive society? What can I do with my stressed and tensed mind? As I see people's lives here, they don't have much help around the house to make life easy, no servant maids and no peons. One has to do the dishwashing oneself! People run like race horses, work like a bull. I see that. The lifestyle is not as easy as people in India imagine it to be. Hire and fire, I see all that.

With this situation in mind, the student asked this question, "Swami, what shall we do? In the name of service activities, can I neglect my office? I have no time."

Merciful Bhagavan gave this answer. I want all of you to listen and just ponder over it. Reflect upon it. He said, "Bangaroo! There is such thing as a separate service. There is nothing called "your service" and "Swami's service." Whatever you do is Swami's service. Your office work is not your office work, it is Swami's work. Your responsibilities and your obligations towards your family are not your personal work, they are Swami's work. If you consider everything you do as Swami's work, then there is no question of not being able to spare the time. There is no question of not being available. Everything is Swami's work. There is no personal agenda."

Swakariya refers to personal work. But "*Swami kariya*" refers to Swami's work. These are not different. Consider everything as "*Swami kariya*."

YOU AND I ARE ONE

Then someone asked (the boys are very intelligent), “Swami, when I work for my living, how can that be Swami’s service? I am working for my living, for my maintenance, for my family. How can that be Swami’s service?”

Bhagavan said, “You and I are one. Why do you think in terms of your family, or my family, or their families? No, no, you and I are one. Therefore, whatever you do for yourself is service done unto Me.”

That is the level of Bhagavan. No *guru* would ever say that. No *guru* would ever say that. It is only Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the compassionate God who has a total understanding of our life here and our life there.

But He will not give the same answer to the Indian youth. His answer was given to American youth. What answer would He give to the Indian youth? If they ask, “Swami, how can we do service? We have no time,” Bhagavan will immediately say, “You have time for TV, you have time to socialize, you have time to play cards, you have time to roam about. Why do you say that you have no time? You have all the time,” He would say.

Bhagavan’s interpretations and teachings are applicable to a specific situation. We cannot generalize them to all situations, all individuals, or to a particular country. That way we should not misunderstand His teachings. Some other people also said, “Swami, what shall I do now? Would you tell us what the Sai Youth should do?”

Bhagavan is really a matchless Master. Why? He expresses in a single sentence all that could be said in volumes. Some of us may try to explain something for hours on end, leaving you confused! When some others speak, we forget what they spoke about, and decide never to attend another talk. (*Laughter*)

Bhagavan is not like that. When the question “What shall we do?” was asked. Do you know what He said? He said, “Do what I said. Don’t worry. Do what I said all these years.” That’s all. Therefore, to act according to Bhagavan’s teachings is the real road to success.

SWAMI’S VISION

This being quite an informal gathering where we are meeting one to one in proximity, I invite questions from you. I’d really appreciate questions from you. Do not have any kind of reservations. Sometimes we hide some questions with the feeling that it may not be acceptable to other people present, that it might not get approval from the others here. Forget about such reservations and inhibitions. This is just an informal session. I have no reservations.

You can ask any question under the sun because this is an opportunity where we do not have large public gatherings. We do not have people here who are exposed to Swami for the first time, and so there is no fear of misinterpretation. This is just a family gathering with people who have known Bhagavan sufficiently well in advance, but are faced with certain problems and have certain issues that have to be resolved.

Therefore, kindly feel free to put forth some questions. I would be very happy to answer them. This trip is quite different from my earlier trips. In my earlier trips, I used to go and give some talks and return. This time I am not doing that.

Please look at the website www.saiwisdom.com. You will know what I have been doing with the Divine grace of Bhagavan Baba. I am not doing it, it is the grace of Baba. Why? We are family, so I am telling you that Bhagavan's mission is advancing. Bhagavan's vision is far ahead of your imagination, apprehension, and understanding. We are only recreating—following.

Would you believe it if I tell you that Swami speaks on the theory of relativity? Would you believe it if I tell you that Swami speaks on quantum mechanics, computers, and laser science? Would you believe it if I tell you that Swami taught classes for the MBA boys? He taught them for one full semester. Do you believe it? When Swami is showing us the latest, we want to be archaic. When He is proceeding, we are retreating.

YOUTH WORKSHOPS IN ANDRA PRADESH

I have noticed this. Instead of feeling bad, I thought of doing something. It may be dark all over, but I thought, "Let me light a simple candle."

With that desire, I successfully started organising youth workshops in Andhra Pradesh for those who had not met Bhagavan, those who had not experienced Bhagavan. They came in large numbers, I can give you the addresses of those who can verify it. The smallest number attending was one thousand people—do you understand that?—non-devotees, college boys, undergraduate students, post-graduate students, professional college students. I saw to it that the workshops were addressed by professors who were not devotees. With Bhagavan's grace, I was there as a moderator.

On what topics did I want the professors to speak? Unfortunately we are going backwards, forgetting what the youth need today. If I speak on *yoga asanas* to you, how does it help you, my dear, young man? Let me know. If I speak on *yoga asanas*, you will say, "I don't want that yoga. Please let me relax. It is a weekend. I cannot sacrifice my weekend for this purpose. I have enough tension in the office, don't add even more." (*Laughter*)

SPIRITUALITY SHOULD BRING RELIEF, NOT STRESS

Spirituality is not an additional burden. Spirituality is not scholarship. Spirituality should give you relief. Religion should help you relax. Relaxation is religion. Relief is religion. Bliss is religion. Torture is not religion. Punishment is not religion. Seriousness is not religion. Laughter, smiles, music, and dance are religion! But we have made religion full of tension, adding to our blood pressure and sugar levels.

Who can help us? We never saw Krishna being serious. He loved in such a way that He started singing on the battlefield. He sang the *Bhagavad Gita*. *Gita* means song, a song on the battlefield! Can you imagine it? Just before an examination can you start singing? Let me see, unless you are mad, you don't do that. (*Laughter*) But He did it. That is Divinity. On a moonlit night, a full moon, Krishna sang and danced the *rasa leela*. *Rasa leela*—what a beautiful thing it is! He never felt funny, or anything like that.

That kind of a joyful state is religion. That sort of a blissful state is religion. Be there war or moonlight, we can sing in both places. Therefore, my friends, we should consider religion that way.

I addressed some topics for the students: how to be successful in life; what is personality development; how to be free from stress, tension, worry and anxiety; how to transform our failures into success; how to establish harmony at home. These were the topics I selected.

What a response from the youth, I tell you! I selected these topics because the students needed that. They wanted it. In the present day and society, it is important to find answers to these questions. If I ask you to memorize the *slokas* of the *Bhagavad Gita*, you might ask, “Why? That’s not necessary. I have tape recorders and computer disks, so why should I take the trouble of memorizing it?”

Religion should help you immediately. It should solve your present problem. That is religion.

“Take medicines now. You will get cured in 2010.”

“No, it is not necessary. I want an immediate cure.”

SAI MESSAGE FOR YOUTH

Therefore my friends, Bhagavan Baba’s message is so vast that we can collect all the talks related to the youth in particular. He has given a number of discourses, and I’ll give you a list of them. All the *Summer Showers* volumes contain literature meant for the youth. All the talks He has given on convocation days—thirty convocations—are meant for you. Some of the talks given at the hostel and some in the interview room are also published. His talks to MBA students are also available.

But we are not accessing that literature because we want to cry. We want to be serious. We think that we are religious, but it is betrayal. It is self-betrayal, defeat, hypocrisy, if the religion does not make you cheerful. Religion should make you joyful. As one returns from the *bhajan* centre, he should go on humming the same tune. He should not feel a great relief while waiting for *aarti*. (Laughter)

Therefore, what are the problems of the youth? What do they need? These are the topics that I chose. I organized youth seminars and workshops at three places in Andhra Pradesh. All three turned out to be very, very successful. When I sent copies of the invitations, just as a matter of information, to my children here in the US, they said, “When you come here, why don’t you do the same thing here?”

I was waiting for that opportunity, and I jumped at it. Just I said this, in forty-eight hours the people in Milwaukee organized it—in a matter of just forty-eight hours! —youth services, youth camps, and youth workshops are being organized. Seattle seems to be the culmination of these programmes—the culmination, the zenith, the climax.

Therefore, I consider this visit fulfilling and useful, not merely speaking and leaving the place. How does it help the organization? How does it help the youth? How to build the spirit of the people?

THE SAI ORGANIZATION FOCUS

People like me who have spent about thirty years in the organization wish that the organization should grow. We wish that you should have the awareness of Bhagavan’s message, experience Him, and carry this experience to everyone’s doorsteps. We wish that this movement should

spread, because the Sathya Sai Baba movement is very, very powerful. No organization can equal it in manpower, in resources, in its dimensions, in its international composition, and in its literature. No one can ever equal Bhagavan's contribution to human society.

We should also rise to that level. We cannot trail behind. Youngsters today are far different from what we were. The situations which prevailed then are different now. A child can play with computers today. Little children go on pressing everything on the keyboard. Someone told me how to email. I tried and I typed ten sentences. I don't know what key my finger pressed and the whole paragraph I had typed vanished immediately! (*Laughter*) I said, "What is this?"

Once Swami asked me, "Dear Anil Kumar, do you know computers?"

"Swami, I tried, Swami. Today I struggled hard to type ten sentences with one finger. But at one point, all ten sentences disappeared." (*Laughter*)

"Hey, tch, tch. What is this? Our tenth class boys can do it. Go to primary school, and any child will teach you." (*Laughter*)

"Yes, Swami. It is time that I should be taught. I really understand."

"Little boys do it."

"Yes, Swami!" I said. (*Laughter*)

These days are different, we should understand that. We should tune our teaching, our methods, and our techniques in accordance with modern society and modern youth. With Bhagavan's grace, we have been proceeding successfully on that front and this gives me a great sense of satisfaction. I'd really love and appreciate any questions you have to ask.

SPREADING THE TEACHING OF EDUCARE

Question: Swami emphasizes Educare, and that is a value-based system. What can we, as youth or individuals, do to promote, not necessarily Swami's name but His teachings, into our educational system, into our schools. What can we, as individuals, do to make sure that children get exposed to the right values? Expecting everyone to show up at a Sai Centre might not or might work. I am not against Swami's mission, but this is just a question that came to my mind and I've been thinking about it for a while. What can we do?

The immediate answer that strikes my mind is that charity begins at home. First, think: are my brothers prepared to receive Educare? Are my family members ready to receive Educare? First think at the family level, then at the level of relationships, friendships, and acquaintances. Then think at the community level.

Number two: If you are a teacher, you have a wider scope to implement Educare. If you are a professor, you have a wider scope to implement it. But most of the youth are not teachers. They are professionals and experts. What the youth can do is supply material to teachers who are in charge of Educare. You can supply material, because you people have access to YouTube, or Google, or something, don't you? (*Laughter*) You can get the entire world's literature there!

Anything about anyone comes up there. *(Laughter)* So please help your teachers and those who would be in charge of Educare, by asking, “Sir! What can we do? What material do you want?”

The second step is, because of your influence, your position, and the influence that you wield in community, you can approach some of the heads of the institutions. Tell them that Educare is a new program. We have our people. You can do that, just try! We can contact the heads of educational institutions. Try to convince them. Try to implement it, as we have suitable experts in the field. We can do that. Where there is a will, there is a way.

EDUCARE MESSAGE IN A CHRISTIAN CONTEXT

But our approach should be in a different direction. Let’s say you go to a Christian college. If you say, “I want to introduce Educare. What Sathya Sai Baba has said is...” If you start speaking like that, they will give instructions to the guard at the gate not to allow you in the next day. *(Laughter)* No, when you want to speak to such an institution, become familiar with the Holy Bible. Try to teach Educare in terms of the Holy Bible, such that even the Christians begin to wonder, “Hey, what is it that this man is speaking about?”

I tell this to you out of my practical experience. I am the product of a Christian college. I studied there for four years, and worked there for twenty six years. Nobody objected to me. They all knew that I am Baba’s devotee. Nobody said anything in front of me. Why? I’ll tell you the secret behind it, don’t tell anyone. *(Laughter)* It’s a trade secret. First, I collected all of Swami’s Christmas discourses. Second, I collected Peter Phipps’ works. He is another author who wrote three books on Christ and Baba. Then I collected another book by a Catholic priest, and I got a copy of the Holy Bible.

I started studying all these books, and slowly started interpreting them. My colleagues at the college started asking, “Where have you read these things? You are a Hindu. How do you know these things?”

To begin with, it is enough if they know that we know. Start speaking about it. Give them something new—a new interpretation. Then they begin to wonder, “How do you know these things? How do you know these things? We Christians do not know these interpretations. How do you know?”

Slowly tell them, “Sathya Sai Baba.”

“Oh, did Baba say that?”

“Yes, why not?”

Then, slowly they will ask you, “Can you give me a book?”

“Please wait two more months. Listen to me.” *(Laughter)*

Slowly, like this, we should get in line with them. We should not go against the current. There is a technique for doing it—going along with the evangelistic movement, if not baptism.

This is a good question indeed. I appreciate that.

RAISING A GRASS BLADE TO THE OCCASION

Question: Can you describe the moment when Swami asked you officially to become His translator?

It happened in the year 1988. I was serving as the State President of the Sathya Sai Organisation of Andhra Pradesh. A World Council meeting was convened by Swami in the *mandir*. Many state Presidents were there, and suddenly Swami wanted to give a discourse and suggestions.

“Hmm, Anil Kumar! You get up. Let me see how you translate.” (*Laughter*)

That was the first appointment, or disappointment, or official, or unofficial, or personal, or super call, whatever you want to call it. That was the first induction into the field of translation. Somehow by His grace, I have had a safe landing, if not crash landing! (*Laughter*)

At the end, He said, “You are very fast, Anil Kumar.”

“Oh! Swami, is that so? It’s my first time, Swami.”

“Oh, you are very fast,” He said. “Second, you are very emotional.”

“Swami, I am emotional by temperament. I will try to mellow down slowly. You should bless me, Swami.”

That’s how it started in 1988. In 1989, Swami appointed me as the Principal of Swami’s university campus located in Whitefield, Bangalore. From that time onwards, I have been translating regularly from 1989. It’s been a long inning, a long period indeed.

It was purely by His grace that I have been able to translate. I can frankly tell you, because I don’t feel any reservations nor am I ashamed of my background, my education in the Telugu medium was up to the tenth class. Would you believe it? I hail from a suburban town, not Delhi or Bombay. (*Laughter*)

Today, international audiences listen to my translations. How has this been possible? It is entirely due to Baba’s Grace, due to the power of Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba. If He decides, He can make a grass blade rise to the occasion, so that even a gigantic tree cannot compete with the grass blade! Therefore, my journey and my beginning as a translator is because of His will.

THE BEAUTY OF LANGUAGE AND DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSLATION

Since you asked this question, I’d like to add a little of my experience as a bait to the mind, because you also seem to be a little inquisitive about my failures at times.

At times Bhagavan puts me in an inconvenient position. Simple example—Bhagavan’s Telugu is full of pristine purity. It is classic Telugu. He once said in Telegu: “In the ocean, you find some mountains here and there. You see islands, mountains, and boulders near the shore. The boulders near the shore of the ocean are stiff, they are not shaken. The waves and winds may rush toward those boulders, but those stones will remain steady, unruffled and unaffected. Similarly, your faith should be like that of a boulder, like that of a heavy body, like an island that is not shaken by the wind or the wave.”

This is what He meant, and He spoke this in classic Telugu, then told me, “Come on, translate!”

In those moments, what I do is just say, “Swami! Please leave me alone.” (*Laughter*)

Why? If you attempt to translate such a passage, the beauty of the language is gone. Every language has its own beauty. Every language, be it Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, French, German, or Japanese, has its own beauty. The English language also has its own beauty, when it is spoken in the way it should be spoken. We should not regionalize it. I cannot say ‘terribull,’ instead of ‘terrible’. (*Laughter*) I cannot say, ‘horribull,’ instead of ‘horrible’. There is no bull there! Why should I talk about a bull?! (*Laughter*)

So the beauty of the language lies in its expression, diction, erudition, and pronunciation in particular. Every language has its own nascent, fresh, inborn beauty. By translating that, I will be unnecessarily killing its beauty. If Telugu people are tolerating me, it is because of their devotion to Bhagavan, or else they will not tolerate my translations.

Suddenly, Swami will start singing (*Anil Kumar sings in Telugu*) and tell me, “Come on, translate! You have to sing now.” (*Laughter*)

I say, “Swami, Hari Om!”

There are certain *Sanskrit* words like *chit*. When I translate it as ‘conscience’, Swami says, “No, no, no! It is consciousness.” When I say “consciousness,” He says, “No, no, no! Constant integrated awareness.” So what is *chit* now, conscience, or consciousness, or constant integrated awareness? He wants the exact word that he prefers—the word that would suit what he meant, the word that would perfectly convey what he means. He does not want a literal translation.

I too have had certain moments during the translation when I have been literally shaken. But I love it. In spite of that, I love it. Instead of being corrected by a street fellow, it’s better to be corrected by God Himself! It is a matter of honour also.

Suddenly one day, Swami kept speaking in Telugu without giving me a chance to translate. What could I do in such a situation? Somehow, my mind recorded some points that He had said and I was about to translate. I asked Him, “Swami, shall I say it in English?”

“Come on, do it.”

I did it, and somehow I had a safe landing. So far it’s been a nice journey, no problem!

In Bangalore is one place called Indira Nagar, with a *mandir* by the name of Sai Darshan. Swami took me there to translate His talk. I was standing near Him, when He started speaking in Kannada. (*Laughter*) What could I do? Then I sat down.

He said, “No, no, no! Stand.” He went on speaking in Kannada and I was standing. It was wonderful entertainment for everyone. (*Laughter*) Here was a fellow with no job to do, except simply standing there! (*Laughter*)

TAMIL NEW YEAR IN KODAI

I remember another incident in my journey as a translator—an incident you might like to hear. It was in Kodaikanal. I have followed Swami to Kodaikanal six times. That day was Tamil New Year's Day. I love to dress up. I love to dress well, because forty students watch you, so you cannot be attired in rags and torn clothes. On seeing you in rags, people will start praying that it should be a holiday. *(Laughter)* Instead, people should love to see you, and you should be acceptable. As a teacher, one should know how to dress and address, or else you are not a teacher. That's what I really believe in. So I wore a new suit to Kodaikanal and accompanied Swami.

Swami asked me, "Why is it that you are in a new suit today, why?"

"Swami, Tamil New Year is here."

"Today may be Tamil New Year's day, but you're from Andhra. So why wear a new suit?"

"Swami! Let me also celebrate along with my brothers from Tamil Nadu."

Swami said, "Oh, oh!"

Then after five minutes He said, "I know. You know that I am going to speak. You also know that you are going to translate and that others are going to see you in your new suit." *(Laughter)*

So everyone laughed. Then Baba said, "No, Anil Kumar! I can speak Tamil fluently, do you know that?"

"Swami, I know."

"I can talk Tamil fluently. No Tamilian can speak like Me."

"Swami, I know that."

"So translation is not necessary. Sit down."

"Okay, Swami!"

He was walking to the centre of the dias, and called out, "Mahadevan, come here!"

Mahadevan was the State President of Tamil Nadu at that time.

Swami: "This professor is wearing a new suit. He will be disappointed if he does not translate. Today we will have two translations. I will speak in Telugu. You translate that into Tamil. Then Anil Kumar will translate it into English. So we will have three speakers. Now, come on!" *(Laughter)*

This was a very funny incident—precious moments that I will always cherish and value. Thank you very much! It was a good question.

PARENTING IS SERVICE TO GOD

Some ladies can address questions to Mrs. Kamaraju also. She is seated over there. She is not simply seated there simply for fun. She too can answer questions at her own level of experience, not that it is superior or inferior. She has her own right to answer some of the questions. If she cannot, she will pass them on to me.

Question: I am glad you brought that point up because actually the next question is for her. Some of us young adults are new parents and we have children who are very young. We would like to learn from you as parents. Would you like to share some experiences in raising children?

Mrs. Kamaraju: One day a lady came to Swami holding a baby in her arms. She looked at Swami and said, “Swami, I want to serve God. Please show me God.” That was the question asked by the lady.

Swami said, “We are able to see God, why can’t you?”

She said, “I am not able to see God.”

Swami laughed at the small child in her arms, and said, “The baby you are holding is God. You serve him. That is the service you can do to society.”

The first service is to bring up children in the correct way. That’s what ladies can do. We can slowly inculcate in our children all the traditional and cultural values we learned from our parents. You are managing very well in the US. I have observed in so many places that the Bal Vikas programmes are strong here, and nicely organized. Compared to India, the Bal Vikas teachers are working hard to teach the children, and they have set high standards also. In Dallas the children showcased all that they had learned in one year during an open house. The standard is very high when compared to India. The children know so many things. In that way, all the parents here are cooperating with the Bal Vikas teachers. The children are very good, and they are learning so many things by attending Bal Vikas.

The situation regarding parenting here differs a lot when compared to India. Children are so independent here, and there are so many rules and regulations that we cannot say anything to them. You have to go by your limitations, I think. You should bring a change or transformation in them through love. You cannot scold them, as is done in India. You should be extra careful in that aspect. Otherwise, everything here is okay. *(Laughter)*

I like it very much here. I stayed here for a long time and I have come so many times. The cultural values and practices are all intact—you are following these more than in India. You are performing all the rituals, the Veda chanting, the *pujas*, and festivals in a traditional and proper way. In India, these are being forgotten slowly, but you are picking it up so fast, when we are forgetting it there. We should appreciate these things.

YOUNG CHILDREN SHOULD FOLLOW PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Question: God says to listen to your conscience and do what it says. If I have to teach my children how to listen to their conscience and do what it says, I am not sure if their conscience is really developed completely. I have two children. One is three and a half years old, and the other is eight. I do not know when a child’s conscience becomes loud

enough for the child to hear it. The conscience has to become loud enough for the child to be able to listen to it. I really don't have any idea of when the conscience of a child actually speaks to the child. So how do I make my child realise it?"

Mrs. Kamaraju: That's what you do in Bal Vikas. The child's hidden talent is brought out. When they are young, they don't know about conscience and all that. The word itself is strange to them. In the beginning they have to follow their mother, and their parents. Slowly, after they mature a bit, they will be able to know about the conscience, super conscience, etc. In the beginning, they cannot follow the conscience. I don't think they know about conscience. Many adults don't know about conscience, so how will children know?

How can we follow the voice of the conscience? What is conscience? Even we have our own doubts about conscience. We don't know whether it is conscience, or God, or *atma*, or the Self! Only after continuous *sadhana* will you know about conscience and super conscience. But in the beginning, you cannot tell them to follow their conscience. In the beginning, they should follow parents and they should follow their teachers. That's what I think.

Anil Kumar: One additional comment—starting from the Bal Vikas level, one practice is compulsory. I am sure that it has been adopted even here. That practice is silent sitting. Silent sitting is taught right from the Bal Vikas level. Silent sitting at the Bal Vikas level slowly develops into meditation at a later stage. That is the benefit of silent sitting—observation of silence is the beginning to awaken the latent conscience. To be able to follow the conscience, one has to observe silence. That's how it's done in the beginning at the Bal Vikas level, am I clear?

THE IDEAL MOTHER

Question: Similar to your message for the Sai Youth in the US, how Swami said "swakariya" is "Swami kariya," I want to know if Swami has any message for women in the various roles they play. What is the one guideline that He has asked us to keep in mind to ensure harmony at home?

To be honest, the family responsibility is that there should be harmony at home. You refer to women, so I am telling you that while inaugurating the Anantapur College for Women, Swami gave an address. The first point He stressed was that He wanted to bring up ideal mothers. He wanted His college girls to be ideal mothers.

The second point He said was that if one woman is ideal, the whole family will be transformed. When one family is transformed, the whole community is transformed. He said that is why He decided to start colleges for women.

Therefore, one has to be an ideal mother and an ideal wife. One has to be ideal with respect to relations with the entire community, in maintaining its cultural values, the tradition, the legacy, and the rich heritage of the nation to which we belong. This tradition has been going on in our families. Our mothers and grandmothers have been doing it all along. We need to draw inspiration from our parents, and inspiration from our grandparents, that's all. They are the best role models for this, am I clear?

The moderator says that should be the last question. Where is the *dholak* (drum)? Come on, come on, get it. Let's end this session with a good *bhajan*.

Anil Kumar sings the bhajan "Purandhara Ranga Harey Vittala"

Sai Baba Maharaj

Jai!

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