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The Sunday Talk Given by Prof. Anil Kumar

“Divine Visit to Pune and Mumbai”

November 8, 2009

Sai Ram to Everybody

BHAGAVAN IS UNIVERSAL

Brothers and sisters all over the world are very eagerly awaiting a report on the Divine trip to Pune and Mumbai, which are located in the state of Maharashtra in India. Bhagavan had been to Pune 38 years ago, and to Mumbai 10 years ago. Prior to that, for many years, Swami visited Mumbai every year and spent a considerable period of time there.

For your information, Mumbai is the centre from where *balvikas* started and has grown world-wide in the course of time. Mumbai is a centre of hectic Sai activities. Mumbai has the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Agriculture and Biotechnology. It also has a beautiful Sai centre building, where the foundation stone was laid by Baba 46 years ago. Perhaps it is one of the oldest such buildings. Therefore, this trip was very exciting and interesting, as Baba went to that region after a long absence.

There was talk all over Prashanthi Nilayam that Baba would be leaving on October 28 with some students and selected guests and might return on November 1. That was the talk. Just a day before He left, it was also widely circulated that He extended His stay by a day and was expected in Prashanthi Nilayam on November 2. Everything happened as per our own speculation: Swami started from here on October 28 and the whole group returned on November 2.

As I was present all days at both the places, Pune and Mumbai, watching the huge crowds there, I would like to begin this report with a quotation from Baba, for which I give a translation:

*“Ye desameqina, Ee namame sumi,
Sathya Sai anuchu nitya patina.”*

*You may go anywhere: all over the world people are familiar with Sai literature.
They know a lot about Him because Sai literature is available in all international languages today.*

*“Ye oora choochina, Ee naname sumi,
Sathya Sai anuchu nitya japamu.”*

*You may go to any town, you may go to any village, county, capital, metropolitan city,
Everywhere you find people repeating His holy name, repeating His matchless name.*

*“Ye nota vinnanu Ee namame sumi,
Sathya Sai anuchu Sathya japamu”*

*People speak of Truth, people speak of Sathya Sai Baba;
Whosoever you come across—everybody speaks about Him.*

*“Ye chota choochina Ee namame sumi,
Sathya Sai anuchu nithya bhajana”*

*Everywhere, world over, you find bhajan centres: people singing His glories—
Bhajans are all over the world.*

“Viswamelladala vyapiyai velayuvadu”

*Baba is universal now, Baba is global now;
He is not local, He is not an Indian.
Bhagavan is universal, and He belongs to everybody.*

“Bhaktha janulaku praapudai baraku vaadu”

*He is the anchor, He is the supporter of all the devotees,
He is the one on whom we all rely and depend.*

“Bhakthi nosagi rakshinchedi saktimayudu”

*If we have no devotion, He will confer devotion on us,
He will help us to cultivate and to grow in devotion.*

“Parthivaasudu mimmela etthukonadu”

*Why do you doubt?
Swami will certainly lift you with His arms.*

He will come to your rescue. Just as the mother who lifts the child to her bosom, Baba also has lifted His devotees--that I have noticed, following Him everywhere. Everywhere people have been singing and speaking about Him, shouting, “Sai Ram, Sai Ram!” This is the proof of what He said 50 years ago.

BOORGULA RAMAKRISHNA RAO'S PROPHETIC POEM

The poem I quoted was written by Baba 50 years ago and today it is more than 100 percent true. I would like to quote another poem written nearly 45 years ago! There was a man named Boorgula Ramakrishna Rao. He was a great scholar in 20 languages--not just one or two. He

was a great poet, a wonderful writer and speaker, and as short as Sathya Sai Baba! He was very short and wore a small Gandhi cap. He followed Baba to Himalayas; you might have read about it in *Sathyam Shivam Sundaram*. He was the Governor of Punjab for some time, and Governor of Kerala later. He was a very great, learned man as well as a great poet. I want to quote one of his poems, so you can see how true it is even today! This poem was written 46 years ago, yet see how very true it is today!

“Vela janammu darshanamu vemaru cheyaga vechi vunduru”

*Thousands and thousands of people wait to have His Divine darshan,
wondering when the Lord will come.
They wait eagerly for the Divine darshan.
Without any trace of negligence, they are eager to have His Divine darshan.*

“Ye velanu, Ye sthalamunaku vellina”

*You may go anywhere, at any time,
You find thousands and thousands of devotees waiting for His Divine darshan.*

“Nee kutilalakabramul lalanaseyu, nee mukhavilasamul”

This Ramakrishna is a great poet; that is why it is written:

“Nee kutilalakabramul lalanaseyu, nee mukhavilasamul”

*You know, Swami has a mop of curly hair, the hair falls on His face.
Some forelocks of curly hair fall on His face, giving a beautiful picture to everybody.
When He adjusts His hair—oh, what a celestial scene it is!
What a beautiful scene it is!*

“Nee kutilalakhabramul lalanaseyu, nee mukhavilasamul”

As forelocks of curly hair fall on His face, people like to watch that face.

“Kalgunu bhagya lalasul”

They are really fortunate, the people who watch Your face, Swami.

“Palunasethurellara”

You take care of everybody.

“Krupamathi”

Out of Grace, out of mercy,

“Darshana sparshanadulan”

You grant Your darshan.

You also bless them with the Divine touch of Your Lotus Feet.

This is the poem written by that man 45 years ago and it is very true even to this day. I was tempted to quote these two poems to show you the fact that what was dreamt or visualised 45 or 50 years ago is bearing fruit today!

BABA LEAVES FOR PUNE

My friends, it was October 28 and by 7 a.m. all devotees started assembling in Prashanthi Nilayam. Why? These days Swami comes after 9:00 a.m. or 9:30 a.m., if He comes. Many times He does not come in the morning. But on that day, everyone was running into Prashanthi Nilayam by 7 a.m. Why?

They knew Baba was leaving for Pune and they wanted to have His *darshan* before He left this place. By 7:30 a.m. the convoy left, and many cars started speeding towards the airport in Prashanthi Nilayam, about six kilometres from the Mandir. At the airport, the air staff were fully alert, dressed in uniform, and they gave us a very nice breakfast. All the luggage was sent to the aircraft--it was a Jet Airways chartered flight which was to fly from Prashanthi Nilayam to Pune, in less than an hour. When all of us were seated in the plane--the boys watching the arrival of Bhagavan, a few guests occupying the front seats--we started peeping through the window of the aircraft, wondering when Swami would come.

Around 8:15 a.m., the Divine Lord came and boarded the flight, sitting in the first seat. The doors were closed, and there was an announcement: "Get ready for takeoff, fasten your belts" etc. "Jet Airways welcomes Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and His guests and students. We welcome you, thank you for choosing and flying Jet Airways." That was the announcement.

After 10 or 15 minutes, the staff, air hostesses and members of the crew slowly started moving towards Swami's chair, one after another. I was wondering why!

JET AIRWAYS CREW MEMBERS WERE BLESSED

Then each member sat next to Swami's chair and had their photo taken with Swami. All the crew, the captain, the air hostesses, one after another had photographs taken with Swami and had His blessings. Everyone had *padanamaskar*. You should have seen their faces! The air staff, the members of the crew started hugging and congratulating each other, because they were flying with God Himself and because they could be on duty on a day when God happened to board their flight to Pune!

BHAGAVAN WAS RECEIVED BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF MAHARASHTRA

When we arrived at Pune, Bhagavan was the first one to get off at the airport, and the other members were to join Him later. When Swami started disembarking, what happened? He was received by top officials: the former Home Minister of India, Shivraj Patil; the Chief Minister of

Maharashtra, Ashok Chawan; the Deputy Chief Minister and the Secretaries of Government of Maharashtra. All VIPs from the entire State of Maharashtra welcomed Bhagavan with their folded hands, presenting floral bouquets and touching His feet. Swami came out of the airport slowly and got into His car.

In the meantime, all members, students and guests came out of the airport. We were all given numbers and allotted different cars. Swami's convoy included around 20 cars, and there were 50 or 60 more cars behind, filled with devotees.

As the cars started moving towards the city of Pune, we saw huge cut-outs and blow-ups of Bhagavan's pictures on either side of the road, some 20 to 50 feet high. Pictures of Swami with a cheerful face blessing everybody, with His quotations, were seen along the main street of Pune--wow! Such is their love and devotion for Swami!

A VILLAGE BY NAME HADSHI

We left the outskirts of Pune and then started moving towards a village named Hadshi. It is said that in Hadshi, a temple and guest house were built and they had been praying to Swami to inaugurate it for the last six to eight years! They were waiting for Swami. It is also said that the Mandir, Swami's residence and guest house are built over an area of 350 acres of land. These were things we heard before we started from Prashanthi Nilayam.

So we were going towards Hadshi. What does Hadshi look like? It is a thick forest full of mountains with tall green trees everywhere. When Nature welcomes its Master, the creation receives the Creator, what a wonderful scene it is! The trees and the mountains were very beautiful, but the road was so narrow that it permitted only a single car to go. All the cars moved in a sequence or serial order up the mountain and down the valley. It was like travelling from Tirupathi to Tirumala; or like travelling to Srisailam, or Darjeeling or Nainital, Massuri or Kodaikanal--with cars winding up the mountains surrounded by beautiful trees. One peculiar thing was that we did not see any people anywhere--the whole area seemed to be a forest, full of mountains and trees, without any human habitation.

SRI SATHYA SAI PANDU RANGA KSHETRA

As the road was rather rough, the cars had to go slowly. It took about two and a half hours to go from Pune to Hadshi. There were welcome arches everywhere as we approached that place of 350 acres called "Sri Sathya Sai Pandu Ranga Kshetra". There were people already waiting there, though we do not where they came from!

*"Vela Janambhu Darshanamu Cheyaga,
Vevaru Seyaka Vechi Vunduru"*

That's what I said in the beginning.

"Vela Janambhu Darshanamu Cheyaga"

Thousands of people will be waiting for Your darshan, wherever You go.

By the time we were close to Hadshi, we found thousands of people. Perhaps all the villages had been emptied, and all the villagers had locked their doors and reached the mountain top to receive the Lord of the Lords--someone they might not have expected to see in their lifetime! Who would expect that Bhagavan would travel that far? Who would expect that? Impossible!

SWAMI RECEIVED BY CHILDREN IN WONDERFUL COSTUMES, WITH BAND

So thousands of people were waiting, and what did we see? We saw well-dressed children holding lamps. Then as we proceeded, there were about 20 people dressed in red costumes with gold borders and blue caps with gold borders and red frills. There was a band with trumpets and drums to receive Bhagavan Baba. Swami blessed them and then proceeded further, where on one side, under the tree, were seated a group of poor people.

SHEHNAI- TRADITIONAL MUSIC

There is a special traditional instrument called *shehnai*, somewhat like our *Nadaswaram*. They were playing Meera *bhajans* on the *shehnai* while receiving Baba. Swami proceeded, blessing everybody. There were thousands of people smiling, jumping and dancing! Wow! They were so happy to see Him! They were bubbling with joy, like a fountain of water. Far ahead was the residence of Bhagavan Baba. The whole wide area was full of green lawn, like a huge green carpet, with a red carpet at the centre.

As Swami proceeded towards His residence, what did we see? We saw four tents on the left-hand side, made of white silk cloth. As the sunlight fell on these white clad tents, they shone like silver. Under these tents were costly sofa sets with cushions—furniture we might see in the residences of some very rich people. We were told these tents were for ministers, governors and VIPs who came to see Bhagavan and to wait for His Divine *darshan*.

As we proceeded further through the green lawns, there was Baba's residence—a magnificent building, like the palace of Jaipur! It was hard to believe! It had three huge domes the size of our Mandir, or the size of the Super Specialty Hospital in Bangalore or Puttaparthi. The roof rested on huge pillars and the whole floor was made of marble. There were steps leading up to the marble floor. From a distance, as sunlight fell on that building, the colour of light red brick—it was shining bright like the Golden Temple of Amritsar.

SWAMI'S RESIDENCE: GRAND APPEARANCE

Downstairs was a very big hall and in front of the big hall, on either side, there were two guest rooms. In this hall, there was a main table with four chairs on either side; one chair was there for Swami, made of silver with beautiful carvings. The table was full of silver. There were more tables and chairs alongside so that students and guests could have their breakfast, lunch, and dinner with Swami. That was the arrangement on the ground floor.

Then, on the other side, there was a lift (elevator) for Swami. Swami went up the lift, to a beautiful balcony upstairs and then to His bedroom. The whole building was so beautiful! The chandeliers and the paintings were indescribable—simply beyond my descriptive powers. Upstairs there was a huge corridor with a sit-out, so that 50 people could sit there and visit Him! So downstairs was the dining hall, and upstairs Swami's bedroom, with a nice corridor and balcony to give *darshan* and a big wide sit-out to accommodate 40 to 50 people.

You might have seen Jaipur or Rajasthani *Jali* work— small holes connected by garland-like silver chains. The exterior of the entire building was covered with Rajasthani Jali work. It gave a gorgeous appearance to the grand, royal palace--Bhagavan's residence!

After Swami went to His bedroom, I went out to the lawns and the tents for VIPs. We could see some of the important people there. We greeted the *shehnai* music players and the band players and told them they had done a very good job.

JADHAV BROTHERS

Suddenly two elders came and introduced themselves: "Mr. Anil Kumar, we are Jadhav brothers. We made this whole thing for Swami. We would like to take you around to show you. Will you please come with us?" I said, "Why not? I am waiting for an opportunity", and then I said, "Where do we stay? That is Swami's house, how about us?"

"Yes! We have come to take you to your guest house," they said. So in front of Swami's building there was a road and behind that, was the guest house. All guests of Bhagavan were accommodated there. On one side there was a storeroom and kitchen, while on the other side there were five apartments and a big hall--all furnished and with attached bathrooms.

On the third side, there was a big hall, well-furnished with a very big TV to see Swami's videos. Also, there were a few bathrooms there. This was for the Jadhav family. So my friends, on one side was the kitchen, while on another side were the guest rooms, and finally there were rooms for the Jadhav family. The fourth side was completely open to the mountain top, five hundred feet above the ground. That vacant side was fitted with glass, and in front of the glass there were round tables and chairs. Seated at the table, we could see the mountains, the tall trees and the clouds.

"Kailashapate Bhagavan, Shankar Sainath Bhagavan, Shankar Kailashapate Bhagavan."

Kailasha is heaven, Kailasha is paradise. So as we watched through the glass, we found a heavenly scene 500 feet above the ground. Among the mountain ranges, cows and trees, there was a beautiful lake that collected natural rain water. This lake supplied drinking water for everyone. Further up we could see a dam, built on a river named Pavana, which means 'sacred'.

As we watched from the top, we saw cars speeding up to *Pandu Ranga Kshetra*. They looked like ants. From that height, even people looked like rice grains! I have never seen such a beautiful sight.

BREAKFAST ARRANGEMENTS

This is where they served breakfast every day for students. Lunch and dinner were with Swami at His residence. There were professional caterers, as in any five star hotel such as Oberoi, Leela Palace in Bangalore or Ashoka: well-dressed expert professional cooks. Tables were laden with apple juice, mango juice, oats, cornflakes, tea, coffee, *vada*, *dosa*, *idly*, *puri* – everything was just waiting to be served.

They made piping hot *dosas* right in front of us--very tasty. That was only the breakfast arrangement. Then there was a swimming pool at the centre of the guest house. I do not know how to swim, therefore I just watched the pool, to my delight. That was the guest house.

When we came out of the guest house, the Jadhav brothers said, "Anil Kumar, let us move down the left side where there is a road." When we crossed that road, I saw a a very big *shamiyana* or tent. Under that *shamiyana* was a huge *chandini*—a huge glass, with colourful well-decorated fabric, like a rainbow. This fabric had folds on either side, so beautifully decorated! Under that there were round tables and sofa sets. This was the dining place for the VIPs. It could accommodate 300 people.

Then they took me to the next *shamiyana*, a huge tent again with beautiful decorations. There were cushioned chairs on one side and a long table on which different food items were kept, buffet style, so anybody could select whatever they wanted. This was also for the VIPs and could seat 300 people. So the VIPs had two places: they could sit at the table and be served with food, or eat buffet style, serving themselves whatever they wanted. All these arrangements on a mountain top, can you believe it!

Then we moved further to a bigger, wider *shamiyana*. It was very big—red in colour with blue background, and a red carpet all over. This huge place was meant for the *sevadal*: about 5,000 people could be served food there! They had used bamboo barricades to make rows for the *sevadal* to enter. There was a very long table at which to serve the 5,000 *sevadal* on all the three days—all meals: breakfast, tea, lunch, and dinner free of charge!

SEPARATE COOKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SWAMI AND HIS GUESTS

There were separate cooking arrangements for Swami and His guests, another cooking arrangement for the VIPs, and yet another separate cooking arrangement for the *sevadal*. Then they took me to another *shamiyana*, about half the size of our Poornachandra Auditorium. Here was a very big space to serve food to 50,000 devotees, with separate cooking arrangement for them. There were about 80 counters, with barricades for rows so the food could be supplied within one or two minutes. The arrangements were simply unbelievable!

Then I saw a man in the corner who seemed to know me. He said, "Anil, Anil! How are you? I am from Russia."

"How did you come?" I asked.

"I came from Pune," he answered. Then he said, "Anil, shall I tell you one thing?"

I said, "Please tell me."

He said, "It is written in the *Holy Bible* that Jesus went to Israel, very close to a mountain, where he gave his sermon, and there he served food to 5,000 people. The Cosmic Christ Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba came to Hadshi on the mountain to give a sermon and to serve food to 50,000 people! How ideal it is!" I was so happy.

So I saw all these kitchens, and every kitchen had *sevadal* and professional experts making food for all these people: western food, northern or southern food—ask anything you like and

you will get it! I spoke to a head cook, who was seven feet tall! I had to look up at him, and I said, "Very nice arrangements, you know."

He said, "Why do you say that, sir? Look there, look there in the front." I looked there, and saw a six foot tall photo of Baba. "He is doing it; I am not doing it," he said with a spirit of devotion and dedication.

TAKING CARE OF THE AGED

Then the Jadhav brothers took me further to two or three tents, specially raised, with 200 capacity each--with cots and beds for old people who could not sleep on the ground.

This I have never seen in all these 35 years of my life with Swami--and I have participated in national and international conferences. Nowhere is this done: separate cots and beds for elderly people who cannot sleep on the ground!

Then they took me to another area with many tents for devotees, each tent could accommodate 500 people. Like this, accommodation was ready for 50,000 people, can you imagine it! Then the most unbelievable thing was: all were supplied with hot water for bathing! Could you believe this? Hot water, it is unbelievable! I told the Jadhav brothers: "This is a record and you will have to break your own record. Nobody can match you!"

I saw people carrying hot water, I saw old people lying on carts, and then the people in the tents started singing *bhajans*. Other people were speaking about their experiences--the whole area was busy.

And then they took me to another guest house.

TOUR OF THE TEMPLE

That guest house was flat with halls with 25 cots and beds and a number of common bathrooms and toilets. That guest house could accommodate 50 to 60 people: security personnel, students and other guests. That was the guest house number two. It was wonderful!

I came back and rested in my room. Then I wanted to see more. The Jadhav brothers said, "Sir, what would you like to see?"

I said, "I want to see other things also."

They said, "Come on sir, we will take you."

They took me to a place where there was a temple with a dome of the same type as our Mandir. Temples in India have similar towers. You will see similar tower architecture at Madurai Meenakshi or Tirupati temples. So the tower was just like any traditional temple, with wide corridors and a big hall inside, where 400 people could be seated. In the centre they showed me the idols.

"Sir, this is the idol of Vittal and this is the idol of Rakhumai, His consort. Baba is going to install these two idols tomorrow. Sir, then there is a basement here."

They took me down to the basement, and showed me the idol of Shirdi Sai and they said, “This idol is going to be installed by Baba. Then in front of the temple, there is a Ganesh idol that is to be installed by Baba tomorrow.” That is what they told me.

I saw the temple and in front of it was another big *shamiana* with chairs for the guests. It had the capacity of about 20,000 people. When Swami goes into the temple, all cannot be accommodated inside, so they can sit in the *shamiana* and wait.

Then they took me further. They said, “Sir, here public meetings are going to be held.” It was an area the size of Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium! The stage was just as big—all temporary structures with *shamiana* (large colourful tent) and a big stage specially made for the purpose, all very well decorated, with barricades in front, just as we have here for our international conferences.

Fifty thousand people were fully packed every day, morning and evening. Fifty thousand people waiting for Bhagavan, to listen to His programme! This is the place called Hadshi. How beautiful it was! Nobody felt like returning from that paradise, the lovely scenery with the beautiful palace of Bhagavan. I truly say it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to go there, and a great blessing to see those premises.

GALA PROGRAMME ON OCTOBER 28

So on October 28 in the evening, Bhagavan came straight to the public place, which was, as I said, something like our Hill View Stadium. Bhagavan sat in His chair in front of 50,000 people and we had a music programme that evening.

The singers included Nithin Mukesh (the son of a famous play-back singer named Mukesh), Kavitha Krishnamurthy (a great devotee), and Swapna Mukherjee, also a devotee of Bhagavan. All three made their presentations: a music programme with a wonderful orchestra. Swami enjoyed the whole programme that evening.

INSTALLATION OF VITTAL AND RAKHUMAI IDOLS IN THE TEMPLE

The next day was the installation of the idols. Swami started moving from His residence, accompanied by the band and the priests chanting the Vedas. Slowly the convoy reached the temple where Swami installed the Ganesha idol. After that He went to the basement to install the idol of Shirdi Sai. Then He came to the *sanctum-sanctorum* of the main hall of the temple (right under the dome) and installed the Vittal and Rakhumai idols. Beautiful pictures were taken with Swami at the centre of Vittal and Rakhumai. We will be getting them very soon. We also have photos of Swami with Ganesha, and Swami with Shirdi Sai--all beautiful pictures. After the installation of the idols, Swami came back to His residence.

Lunch was served at the residence—a royal banquet with 25 items! But that is the Maharashtra area, where they eat bland food; they won't eat anything spicy. So Swami asked me, “Anil Kumar, have they served spicy food for you? Will you have that mango pickle?” They served mango pickle especially for me. Even though this was Maharashtra, all the preparations were South Indian: curry, dal, chutney, plus for Anil Kumar's needs, some spicy pickles were also made.

At the end of the lunch, Swami stopped by my side. “How was the pickle? Did you like it? Would you like to have some more?” Morning and night, lunch and dinner, He stopped and enquired, “How is the food?” That was an excuse to say hello to me, an occasion to say hello. I was very happy about it. After that, Swami went up and we had His *darshan*. So that was the royal banquet every time.

POORNAHUTI BY SWAMI

On the morning of October 30, they performed a *yagna* and at the conclusion of the *yagna*, Swami presided over the *poornahuti*. The *poornahuti* was done in the same way as it is done here in the Poornachandra Auditorium during Dasara. After that *poornahuti*, Swami gave *darshan* to everybody and returned. In the evening, Swami came straight to that public place, fully packed with 50,000 people, so similar to Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium, and full of pomp and show.

Swami sat there on the dais. When He was ready to give a discourse, He called me. “You translate in English as usual.” He called another man, “Dr.Bhagawat you translate in Marathi.” So there were two translators now: Swami spoke in Telugu, I translated into English, and Dr. Bhagawat translated into Marathi. That was fantastic! Everybody enjoyed it.

And before Swami’s discourse, our All India President V.Sreenivasan gave a very fine talk in Hindi, which is the first time I heard him speak in Hindi. He spoke quite eloquently, authoritatively and confidently. His speech was followed by another lecturer from our music college, Nishikantha Sharma, a very famous *tabala* player who hails from a family of musicians; he spoke in Marathi. And then came Swami’s discourse.

BHAGAVAN’S DISCOURSE

In that discourse Swami made some statements I am sure you will be interested to know: He said, “You are not a human being if you have no human values. Unless you have human values, you cannot call yourselves a human being. You are just like a human being in form, but not in reality.”

Secondly, He said, “We often blame others: ‘So-and-so is responsible for my pain’ or ‘So-and-so is responsible for my suffering’. Never blame anybody for your pain, your sorrow, your displeasure, or your suffering. No one is responsible. You are responsible: your thoughts are responsible and your actions are responsible.”

So our actions and our thoughts are responsible for our pleasure and pain; God has nothing to do with that. God neither rewards you nor punishes you; He is beyond rewards, awards, or punishments. They are only of our own making: in life everything happens as per our reactions, reflections and resound. That is what Baba said.

And then Bhagavan said that all of us should know that there is God within us. “There is God in everyone—the same God in everyone. If you hate anybody, it means you are hating God within you, or you are hating yourself. If you criticise anybody, know that you are criticising God within, or you are criticising yourself. So you should have that ‘one-ness’ with all, and you should experience the Divinity within.” This point was highlighted by Bhagavan.

Then Baba said, "In the sacred land of Bharat, there are many, many things to learn and cultivate." He also mentioned: "What is the present state of Karunanidhi, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu? He is in full appreciation of Bhagavan's service activity, and his son Stalin visits Prashanthi Nilayam quite often. They were agnostics, they were non-believers, and yet today they are Baba's believers and followers." This was mentioned by Bhagavan in His discourse.

Finally Baba said, "On the dais are seated chief ministers and members of parliament." Baba said openly, roaring like a lion (who else can do this?): "Politics are spoiling the country; politicians are ruining the country. Politics has no principles, therefore don't join politics. Serve society, work for the progress of society!" That is what He said. I am sure all the deputies on the dais must have shivered in their shoes!

MUSIC PROGRAMME BY CHILDREN: 'LITTLE CHAMPS'

On the evening of October 30, when Swami reached the dais, at least 50,000 people were assembled for a special music programme put on by children under 12 to 14 years--the 'Little Champs'. Every child had three chances to sing in front of Bhagavan. Believe me, these six or eight children are topmost singers, selected from the state of Maharashtra. They were participants in competitions on TV programmes in Maharashtra. The topmost children in the competition presented the music programme, and when the six- or eight-year-olds sang, the whole group started clapping! One girl started dancing also. Swami was watching all this, and He liked the show very much. He presented clothes, many gifts and rewards to the participants and appreciated them.

SWAMI DINED WITH JADHAV FAMILY MEMBERS

When we returned to Swami's residence for dinner, Baba said, "Today, boys, you can go and sit wherever you like because I will dine with the members of the Jadhav family."

Then the Jadhav family members came: parents and brothers with their wives and children. Swami had dinner with them. It was very late, already 9 p.m, and I thought that He would retire. However, after dinner, He gave them a talk in pure Hindi. He made some important statements. Therefore, I have chosen this specially to mention to you.

What did He say? Baba said, "I have been to Bombay, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad--nowhere have I seen so much devotion and such a committed family, such a spirit of sacrifice. I am very happy and I am pleased with you," Baba said.

Then He said, "I want to come here every year and stay for 10 days!"

SWAMI BLESSED JADHAV FAMILY

And the third statement He made, while looking at the elderly Jadhav man. He said, "How were you in the beginning? How are your sons today? What kind of devotion do they have? They have sacrificed all their lot. I tell you: you, your children, your grandchildren, and your great-grandchildren for a few generations to come, will all have Swami's blessings. You will all live in plenty and prosperity, and you will all get a good name. I bless you."

And Baba also said: "In many families, the son is good, but the daughter-in-law is negative; or the son-in-law is good, but the daughter is negative. So we find a kind of disharmony, and families are divided today." But Baba added, "Look at the Jadhav family: what kind of

synchronicity, what kind of harmony, what spirit of unity they have! I am very happy.” That is what He said.

Then looking at their children He said, “You should take care of your parents; you should serve them. You should never make your parents shed tears. If your parents shed tears, you also have to shed tears throughout your life. You should make your parents happy, and you should serve them.” He spoke like that for one and a half hours.

He left around 10:45 in the night, totally tired. How could He speak like that? It is due to His Love for His devotees that He has sacrificed His time and His personal comfort—everything for His devotees.

So that happy, blissful time in Hadshi, near Pune, came to an end.

ON TO MUMBAI

On November 1, we started around 10:30 a.m. after a heavy breakfast. The boys must have had at least eight *dosas* each! A *dosa* is quite thin and papery, with potato curry inside; that is a *masala dosa*. A *dosa* full of holes (like a mosquito net) is called a *rava dosa*. They also served special *idlis* called Kanchipuram *idlis*.

So we had food and then started at 10:30 a.m. As we started moving, we saw all the people tearfully bidding farewell to the Lord of the Universe with feelings of thanks and gratitude. With their hearts dancing, lifted in joy, and with folded hands, they bade farewell to Baba and His convoy. So we left, speeding down the mountain.

Along with us travelled the Jadhav brothers, following us all the way to Prashanthi Nilayam. In fact they were here right from the beginning: they accompanied Swami right from here and they also followed Swami back to Prashanthi Nilayam. That is a sign of the courtesy, etiquette, respect, and adoration they have for Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba!

Then we moved towards Mumbai. Mumbai is a metropolitan city, very crowded, thickly populated, and the traffic is killing. It is the financial centre of Bharat.

SWAMI REACHED DHARMAKSHETRA – CENTRE FOR SAI ACTIVITIES

The entire Indian financial management is there in Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra. As we entered Mumbai, we saw huge cut-outs welcoming Sri Sathya Sai Baba, His convoy, and His devotees and announcing Baba’s *darshan* at Dharmakshetra, Andheri, with contact phone numbers and address. We reached Dharmakshetra around 2:30 in the afternoon.

As I mentioned earlier, Dharmakshetra was built 46 years ago--the first centre for Sai activities. Some people may differ with me, but I dare to say that what the Vatican is to the Catholics, what Belur mutt (ashram) is to the Ramakrishna Mission--Dharmakshetra is equal to those centres for the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation.

There are some very old devotees here, as this is where all Sai activities started. In those days Swami used to stay at Dharmakshetra for 10 days every year; now God blessed it again. It was face-lifted with beautiful colours. You must have seen pictures of this lotus-like building. They have added some more annexes to that building for guests and students.

Mumbai being a major city, every inch is very costly; so they cannot have wide spaces there. Even for a small room, you may have to pay Rs.10,000/- or Rs.20,000/- for rent. It is very expensive as far as accommodation is concerned. Mumbai is actually a group of seven islands, so you cannot increase the space. Therefore, it is very costly.

Dharmakshetra, on the mountain top, very well dressed with a facelift, received Baba with all the bunting, with all the colourful decorations and with all the devotees lined up on either side. Swami was given a very hearty welcome by all the devotees.

Swami arrived at 2:30 p.m. He had His lunch, and He told me, “Here also they have pickles for you, don’t worry.” So we had our lunch and rested. That evening Swami started from Dharmakshetra for Goregoan.

GOREGOAN DARSHAN

Goregoan in Mumbai is an exhibition centre with a very big auditorium, fully air-conditioned. It can accommodate 50,000 people--the biggest auditorium in India—because the richest people in India live in Mumbai. There were 50,000 people and security was tight.

I got in a jam there, but I had a free massage! So I am very happy about it. When people put some pressure from both sides, you won’t feel bad—it is free massage! Instead of paying money to a massage centre, if fellow devotees massage your body, it is quite good. Somehow, we managed to get there and there were 50,000 people waiting inside!

SONU NIGAM MUSIC PROGRAMME

There was a young man about 35 years old, tall and thin with long curly hair and a beautiful beard, fair in complexion, named Sonu Nigam. He was accompanied by a wonderful orchestra, and he started singing.

Most of the songs were from the Hindi film, *Shirdi Sai*. He also sang songs composed by Anup Jalota, the famous singer. When this fellow started singing *Dam, Dam, Dam, Dam Damuru Baje* – 50,000 people were clapping and enjoying the music! Then he stopped and asked, “Swami, shall I sing one more song? Swami, will you permit me to sing one more song?” Swami gave permission, and he continued to sing.

Swami specially blessed him. Sonu Nigam said he wanted to come to Prashanthi Nilayam. And Swami said, “Certainly you can visit.”

Dharmakshetra is a large complex and the residence where Swami stays is called “Sathya Deep”: *Sathya* meaning ‘Truth’ and *deep* meaning ‘light’; hence, it means ‘the light of Truth’. It has a large hall. On the morning of November 1, all the top bankers were seated there. They were no ordinary people: they were the top directors and managing directors of well-known financial companies such as the Canara Bank, ICICI Bank, Corporate Bank, etc. They were all waiting for Baba’s *darshan*. Dr. Mistry spoke on Baba’s mission, and he was followed by Nithin Pandya who also explained Baba’s service projects.

DARSHAN AT GANDHI MAIDAN

Then some Dharmakshetra volunteers came and sang *bhajans*. Swami arrived and blessed everybody. From there we went to Gandhi Maidan in Worli, Mumbai. This is a spacious open area where 40,000 people can sit. A huge dais had been set up, and Swami gave *darshan*, as *bhajans* went on enthusiastically. Swami blessed everybody. From there, the convoy left for the residence of Ashok Chavan, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, who hosted lunch for all of us.

WITH SWAMI, YOU BECOME A VIP

If I go to Bombay, who will invite me? I do not think the Chief Minister will invite me! With Swami, you are a V-VIP, 'a very, very important person'. Without Swami, you are also VIP, but 'very insignificant person'. So you are an important person with Swami, but without Him you are insignificant! The Chief Minister himself hosted lunch for all of us with so many items!

SAI STUDENTS SING AT BRABOURNE STADIUM

After lunch we returned to Dharmakshetra and rested. That evening Swami went to the Brabourne Stadium near a cricket club in Mumbai. Brabourne Stadium is huge like our Hill View Stadium, with a very big dais and thousands of chairs. Swami let our college students, our Sathya Sai University students, sing. The group of students selected to go on this trip were all singers, and they also played many different instruments. So Swami asked these boys to sing. They sang some Hindustani songs, some Meera *bhajans* and some Carnatic music from South India. Swami was very happy and blessed everybody.

MEETING WITH RATAN TATA

When we returned to Dharmakshetra, a very important man had been waiting for two and half hours. I am sure that man might not have waited so long before in his entire life! Who was he? Ratan Tata, the biggest industrialist in our country, an internationally known man, was waiting for Baba's *darshan* for two and half hours! And Swami came and spoke to him and blessed him.

BACK TO PRASHANTHI NILAYAM

Afternoon of November 2, we started for the Sivaji Terminal, Mumbai Airport. There we boarded Jet Airways' chartered flight and returned to Prashanthi Nilayam. By the time we reached here, *bhajans* had started. We were so happy.

During our stay in Mumbai, I noticed one important point which I want to share with you. In Mumbai today, there are about 300 students from our Sri Sathya Sai University. One student came to me . . . because all students love me and I love them.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AWARD FOR SWAMI'S STUDENTS

One student came and said, "Sir, you will be happy to know, if I tell you one thing."

I asked, "What?"

There is one Barclays Bank, which presents annual International Barclays Bank Chairman Awards--cash prizes for corporate social responsibility.

That boy said, "Sir, there are 54,000 employees in Barclays International Bank, and this year for the first time, Barclays Bank Mumbai branch won the award--first time in India! Fifteen of our old students have participated throughout the year in this service project. We made roads in a village named Mirchiwadi, and we did so much more *seva* (service) throughout the year. We

built roads, made plantations, provided sanitation . . . and for the first time, India has won the award!

“Sir, my name is Sai Krishna Reddy, and this is Abhishek Sharma. Both of us are from Sathya Sai University. We know you, sir. We were invited by Great Britain to travel to London to receive the award and there we were interviewed for one and a half hours. We are so happy to share this news with you, sir.”

I hugged them and I felt so happy and excited to find Baba’s bountiful blessings on the children of Sri Sathya Sai University.

I thank you for your time and for listening to the details of the Divine Trip to Pune and Mumbai. Sai Ram.

OM...OM...OM...

*Asato Maa Sad Gamaya
Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya
Mrtvormaa Amritam Gamaya*

*Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu
Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu
Samastha Loka Sukhino Bhavantu*

Om Shanti Shanti Shantih

Jai Bolo Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaji Ki Jai!

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