

## *The Sunday Talk Given by Prof. Anil Kumar*

### *“USA TRIP 2009”*

*June 14, 2009*

*OM...OM...OM...*

*Sai Ram*

*With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

#### *SEEKING THE DIVINE PERMISSION*

Welcome to all of you after my long absence. I am glad that you can be here this morning. I have been away for three months, as I have been in the United States on personal work. As you know, March is a very busy period due to university examinations. But I had to be in the United States by 6<sup>th</sup> of March itself because of an important wedding. It is very risky to seek permission to be absent in the very hectic period of university examinations in March. But suddenly towards the end of a cultural program, Swami called me close to Him on the dais itself. He said, “What is worrying you?” (*Laughter*)

I said, “Swami, the only worry is that I have to be there by 6<sup>th</sup> of March for a very important occasion; so I seek Your permission to go.”

Believe me or not, He repeatedly said, “Definitely go. Be happy and go. Both of you go.” I did not inform anybody else except my family people in the US, who were quietly happy about it.

I was there by the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. I went to the wedding and attended to other necessary matters. I was engaged for about 10 days or so with that. Later, I was thinking about what to do during the rest of my stay. The colleges re-open on June 1<sup>st</sup>, and I’m not expected back until then. Having travelled this long distance, I did not think it proper to return immediately, as if I am a foreign minister or the Prime Minister of the country, returning from an overseas business trip. I didn’t want to give that impression to people. So, what was I to do?

People kept asking me to visit their place. Whenever I go abroad, I usually visit Sai centres, give some talks and return. This time, even before I reached the US, there were many requests by phone, and my children in the US faced a dilemma regarding those invitations. They said to me, "You seem to have come here to make us very unpopular, and seem very unfriendly." Such was the situation.

### *WE SHOULD TRAIN THE YOUTH*

Normally, when I go to the US and other places, I deliver some talks which I hope inspire those who attend the meetings; but this time, I wanted a different direction. I informed everybody that I was prepared to attend places where people would organise youth camps, conferences and workshops. The reason for this change was that we are not only devotees of Baba; we also have a role in His mission.

We have experience as organisers, which could help the organisation in a different way. For example, I'm a faculty member in the university. But I thought, 'It is time I apply myself in a different direction.' What is this different direction? We should train younger people to take up the administration of the organisation. We should also train the youth about the Sai mission, the Sai message and purpose. We also need to talk to them closely and intimately, rather than keeping ourselves at a distance and feeling superior to them. 'Let me go and mingle with them freely.'

### *WE ARE DOING NOTHING*

Since we are meeting here as members of a family, I am sure that you won't misunderstand me if I say that damage to the Sai mission is done by Sai devotees only. Damage is not done by outsiders; damage is done by our own people. You may ask me why and how. We do not speak of what we are supposed to. Take the youth in the organisation, for example. If I talk at a youth gathering about *moksha* or *liberation*, *Brahma Jnana*, and *Atma Vidya*, being the devotees of Baba, being highly disciplined Sai youth, they may keep quiet. But their minds are engaged elsewhere.

Sai Youth have certain problems now, as there are others *gurus* who are attracting our youth to their fold. I am very sorry to say that. Those other organisations offer camps and workshops, exclusively for youth. I studied them. I felt very sad about what's happening because there is nothing that our Bhagavan has not said. Bhagavan has covered all topics under the sun. We don't have to go out on the streets to look for information.

I think you are all aware of the fact that all summer courses on Indian culture and spirituality are meant for youth. We have got about 10 to 12 books. All topics addressed to youth are available in the summer courses. There are also Bhagavan's own writings and His letters to our students

staying in the hostel from time to time, plus Swami's discourses to youth from India and abroad. But what are we doing? To be frank, we are doing nothing.

I was reading an article this morning written by a gentleman from the IRS (Indian Railway Service). I held it to be very true. He was writing an article for a magazine, which was released on the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Bhagavan. The author writes, "As I sit and begin to write, I feel that I am writing more about myself than Baba. Therefore, I have put a full-stop to my writing."

Then he gets a phone call from the souvenir committee, "Sir, the book is under publication. We have given it to the printers. So, how about your article?" Then this man prayed to Bhagavan and started writing a few sentences.

I fully agree with that gentleman. Most of the articles and talks given are about one's own biography or blowing one's own trumpet—less on Bhagavan and more about one's own self. The result is that some damage is done to His mission. So I have asked myself, 'What can I do?' There is no point in criticising or commenting, because we are not politicians. We should take a constructive step and proceed in a humble way.

### *WHAT DO YOUTH NEED TODAY?*

So then I questioned myself, "What do the youth need today? What topics do youth need today?"

The first idea that comes to mind is personality development. 'Personality development', as youth understand it, is only about fashion, style, jeans or dress. That is what they think of in terms of personality. No! Bhagavan speaks about personality from different dimensions. He includes three dimensions: physical development, psychological development and intellectual development.

Personality development requires equal progress of body, mind and intellect. If personality development is merely physical, it is like that of an animal. If it is merely mental, it is like the memory stick of the computer. If it is merely intellectual, it is pride and ego. All three dimensions should grow uniformly, and only then we can call it 'personality development'. Swami gave a number of talks on this topic. So youth need some talks on personality development. That is what I thought.

Secondly, I have observed that they go through so much more stress and tension, compared to our days, due to more competition today.

When I joined the Sai service, my results were not even published. I was just walking on the road and the principal stopped his car and said, "What are you doing?"

I said, "Sir, I wrote the examination. Now I'm waiting for the results."

“You come to the college tomorrow and take up duty,” he said. (*Laughter*)

“How can I start working without my results?”

He said, “Ah, you will get first class, no problem.”

Today, I don't think that I would get a peon's job because of competition. The youth today are passing through unimaginable tension, worry and anxiety, which is reflected in their faces. They cannot dine and enjoy what they eat. They cannot talk freely because their mind is engaged in office targets and computers. I pity them. What youth need today are some suggestions, some tips to be free from worry, tension and anxiety. This is a requirement. There is no point in talking to them about *dhyana* or meditation process, and liberation or the methods to *moksha*. That is not what the youth need.

The third thing I recognised is that youth need information about having a ceiling on desires, as well as information about how to serve and how to be spiritual in a busy life (while being a professional). Just like that, I coined phrases for about fifteen topics. I just wrote them on paper; Baba willed it.

### ***“ORGANISE A YOUTH WORKSHOP AND I'LL COME”***

Suddenly, there was a call from Milwaukee, in the State of Wisconsin, USA. They said, “Sir, we want you to speak.”

I said, “Speaking is over. I have been speaking all along. Now I want to listen.”

“No, no! Sir, we want you to speak.”

“Okay. If you want me to speak, then please organise a youth workshop.”

Then they asked me how to go about it. The idea of a conference phone call, in which any number of people can discuss freely from their own phones, struck me. So I said, “Let us have a conference phone call. Let me see what I can do.”

They connected me to the whole State of Wisconsin, and about 20-30 people from different places were talking to me on the phone. I told them about all these things I had been thinking: “I have fifteen topics. I want you to speak on any of these topics. You should speak for at least twenty minutes. If you speak more than that, I will reward you. And I also want you to talk using aids such as PowerPoint, overhead transparencies, and other technology. Make use of these aids. Spirituality is not just for retired folks like me. Why don't you young people do it with all your skills and knowledge?”

They said, “Okay, Sir.”

They were very happy about it. In the first conference call, I allotted topics to the boys, but on one condition: let there be at least six to eight speakers—four boys and four girls. Furthermore, three of the eight speakers need to be American-born citizens. They thought it was a wonderful idea.

In the next conference call, I enquired about what they were doing. I was very happy about their responses. I put question after question, and they hammered me like anything with their answers! In two and a half hours, we had it all organised, and agreed to have one more phone call, where they would talk about what they wanted to say.

Wow, I was in heaven! Please believe me. One girl, who is a doctor, said, “Uncle, I am not going to tell you what I am going to speak about. I want to raise anticipation.”

I said, “Why not! Please go ahead. I can offer help if you need it. If you can manage by yourself, what more can I want?” So, just like that, the speakers were ready.

### *MILWAUKEE YOUTH WORKSHOP WAS A HUGE SUCCESS*

The first youth conference was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. It was attended by 300 devotees. They even made arrangements for dinner for all the participants that night!

First, I invited all the speakers to the dais. With the help of computer aids, everyone could see the proceedings. *Bal vikas* children presented roses to the speakers, and the state or regional president of the Sai Organisation introduced the speakers. He mentioned also their qualifications, such as MBA and M.Tech, so that everybody knows that the Sai organisation has professionals. The Sai organisation has youth who are highly resourceful and well-informed people. Let everybody know how rich a group we are!

Then the young people started speaking. Whenever I felt like raising my voice, I got up and added some more *masala* to it. (*Laughter*) It should be somewhat informal too, to maintain the audience’s attention. It should not be like any other conference, where people might sleep undisturbed, claiming TA (travel allowance) and DA (dearness allowance) towards the end. (*Laughter*) I didn’t want that to happen.

So, shortly after every speaker finished, I used to run to the dais, make my own comments, and praise that speaker to the sky. If they got a 40% credit, I gave them 150% . . . because of their age. “Well done, my boy!” Wow, how happy they were! Girls also participated and were very nice.

Then I said, “Let there be a question and answer session, based on the talks given by the speakers.”

So the audience asked questions, and then they answered. Sometimes I added an extra point. By Baba’s grace, it was a thumping success!

### *DALLAS YOUTH WORKSHOP—ANOTHER SUCCESS!*

I could feel Baba's grace was there. Bhagavan's Divine Will operates like that, indicating that I should carry on like this throughout the US. He sent me with a purpose and a mission; and with unimaginable success at the very first conference itself, it indicated I should continue the same program.

Next, the invitation came from Dallas, in the State of Texas. They said, "Uncle, we want to invite you for a talk, and we will have a regional conference. Please come."

I said, "Talking is over, my dear boys, please stop it. Let there be a youth workshop and I will come."

They said, "Yes, we will do it."

Due to the internet and Baba's gift of the [saiwisdom.com](http://saiwisdom.com) website, all people knew ahead of time what was going to happen. So the people in Dallas already knew what had happened at Milwaukee.

They said, "Sir, we have visited [saiwisdom.com](http://saiwisdom.com) website and we know what happened there. We want to have the same happen in Dallas."

I said, "Boys, what do you want to do?"

They said, "These are the topics."

I said, "Stop! Please do not repeat the same topics. Topics should be different. If we repeat the same topics, it will be boring to the listeners, and lead to unnecessary complications. There are many topics to choose from."

Then what did we do? I gave them the list of topics. Just like before, we had three conference calls in preparation. The Dallas Regional Conference was attended by 500 devotees from the state of Texas. The speakers were two doctors, two engineers, and two MBA students. I was so happy to see them on the dais, because we were like them just 30 or 40 years ago. Today, because of age, we are like this. Forty years ago, we were as handsome as those boys. Why not? (*Laughter*) I felt as if I was looking into a mirror; each one is a mirror. I felt very happy. After all, they're our own children, and they spoke very nicely.

Every talk was highly applauded; in particular, there was one doctor, a paediatrician specialising in Down syndrome. She looked so young, like a first year BSc student; but she is already an MD and attending many conferences! She brought some slides where Down syndrome children start speaking and explaining their own problems, along with the doctor treating them. She also applied the Sai principles of love.

Really, given the chance, anybody would rise to the occasion. To think that the art of speaking and presenting is the monopoly of some is utter ignorance. All are well informed, all are skilled, all are talented, but not all people have the opportunity. So I was very happy. If you are interested, kindly visit the website [saiwisdom.com](http://saiwisdom.com), where you will read all these things. So, Dallas was also very successful.

### *ATLANTA YOUTH WORKSHOP PREPARATIONS*

Yet another call: “Sir, you promised that you would come to our place. We have been waiting for you for the last nine years. You visited the USA twice, promising that you would come; but you did not. This time, we will not allow you to go back without visiting this state!” So, a spiritually violent threat is given to me! (*Laughter*) The call was from Atlanta, in the State of Georgia, USA.

“Ok, but on one condition: please organise a youth workshop.”

They said, “Yes Sir, we will have it.”

Then we had three conference call sessions of two and half hours each. And so it was arranged in Atlanta. They presented this conference from an altogether different angle.

I just asked, “What do you want to do?”

“Uncle, we don’t want to tell.”

“Why?”

“No, no! We will do it. ‘Why’ is a waste of time? You give us the main points. How we do it, leave it to us.”

### *WE UNDERESTIMATE THE YOUTH*

The youngsters today are very intelligent. We underestimate them because we think we have more experience as we are older, and the youngsters have respect for that. In reality, their intelligence quotient (IQ) is 1000 times greater than ours. Please believe me. Even young children you see—six and eight year old children—play with computers! But when I typed my letter, my finger fell somewhere and the whole typed document vanished! Such an expert I am in computers, while children play all kinds of computer games! (*Laughter*) We have to accept that.

And if I look at the text books, we have to accept the fact that what we teach at the degree level, they learn at the high school. We have to recognise the difference in today’s life. You can speak about Prahlada and Dhruva at home, but not these people. I was very happy. Bhagavan, how

great you are. You have Your children, Your youth ready. They will be the champions of the Sai mission in the years to come. I am happy that You are making use of me this way.

### *BABA'S MESSAGE SHARED AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF MODERN LIFE*

In Atlanta, the workshop was organised like this: 25 students participated—boys and girls, American born and immigrants. I am giving one or two examples. On the dais, there were a few boys, playing pop music with drums, etc. and dancing. The dance was so nice! As I watched suddenly two people appeared and those on the dais stopped. Then two on the corner talked about today's youngsters in the country: "What sort of youth we have in the country? Where are we heading? Where are we going?" My friends, does Baba say anything on this? We find one Sai youth giving Baba's message to youth, against the background of modern life. Wonderful!

In another scene, a student comes to the stage with lot of books and his computer. Pulling his hair, he sits on the table. "Hah, I have too much homework. I want to kill my father for admitting me into this school. I want to kill my mother for forcing me to do homework. I am praying for the death of my teacher, who gives too much homework!" (*Laughter*)

Not able to manage because of pressure, when classmates come, they decide to quit. "We go to the class, but don't do work. Let us see what happens. Let us not go to school at all."

Suddenly one student enters against this background. "When children are tense from so much work, what shall they do in this matter? Does Baba say anything in this matter?"

Another youth says, ""This is what Swami says," and applies it to the context and situation.

In a third scene, a husband and wife were arguing and fighting. Of course, it was a stage presentation, but it is the usual situation everywhere. No *Lok Sabha* or state assembly can equal it, for that matter! (*Laughter*)

She says, "I am waiting for my death."

He says, "No, I want to die first, and you can die later."

Their children come and say, "Let your wishes be fulfilled!" (*Laughter*) In short, there is no harmony and peace at home.

Suddenly the girl comes with her boyfriend, "Daddy, I want to marry him."

Study later and marriage first—that is the family problem. Then we find out what Baba says about extra-marital relationships. What does Baba say about family? What does Baba say about harmony at home?

Swami's message is wonderful! We speak of our own stories, our own miracles, our own biography, when we came to Swami, how many rings we have, etc. People are bored with this

bio-data. We are damaging Sai mission, which is unique. I was so happy with those youngsters who could quote Swami freely on these situations—present situations at home, in the community, in the institution. All topics appealed to youth in general, with about twenty-five participating directly on stage, followed by twenty-five working behind the scenes. One hundred youth attended that conference in Atlanta, in the State of Georgia.

I was extremely happy until somebody came and shook me. I did not realise that I was still on this earth. You can call my state super-conscious or anything else, because my golden dream had come true. I am waiting for these youngsters to come forward and do whatever they can.

It is time we, as the directors, and give a chance to youngsters and see what they can and will do, by directing them and helping them in every possible way. Such has been my psychology and ideology all these years, and that has found shape now. So I was very happy.

### *THE SUCCESS OF WORKSHOPS WAS UNBELIEVABLE*

Then I started getting phone calls from Seattle, in the State of Washington.

They said, “Sir, we want you here, so you should come.”

I suggested the same thing: “Organise a workshop.”

They said, “Sir, we have already heard enough about it. We are ready with our workshop. One engineer from Boeing Aircraft 747 Company in Seattle, one manager, one teacher, and a doctor who served in Vietnam and Afghanistan will speak, based on their experiences, Sir.”

Just imagine how you would feel in my position. You forget your thirst and appetite. Like the businessman who finds out that he has made ten million in profit; it is enough that he is alive. When these youngsters come forward, I feel like jumping so high. So, we went to Seattle. There the youth spoke and nicely answered the questions posed to them.

Thus, four youth conferences were organised by me, through the Divine grace of Bhagavan Baba. Their success was unbelievable!

### *SWAMI CONSENTS FOR EXTENDING THE STAY*

It was time for me to return home. I was to start back by 27<sup>th</sup> May in order to be here for the university teaching work as the first of June happens to be the reopening day. Then I get a phone call from the international president.

“Mr. Anil Kumar, on the 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of May, the first-ever held National Youth Conference of America will take place in Chicago, and we want you to attend.”

I said, “Why, Sir?”

“I am getting a large number of phone calls and emails from those who attended these four workshops, and they all want you to attend.”

I said, “This is my problem. I should go by 27<sup>th</sup>.”

“Can’t you extend by a week?”

“I want to, but it is not in my hands.”

After a couple of days, he rang me once again. “Mr. Anil Kumar, some youth groups are warning us that if Anil Kumar cannot come, they won’t attend the conference. That is our problem.”

This man asks, “Are you going to come or not?”

What shall I do? Then I said, “I will come, provided Swami approves.”

Believe me, an office bearer went all the way from USA to Prashanthi Nilayam, met Swami and got permission for my extended stay and participation at the National Youth Conference in Chicago. (*Applause*)

That gentleman rang up from here, “I am just coming from the interview room, Mr. Anil Kumar. Don’t worry, be happy. Don’t allow your blood pressure to shoot up.”

So I said ‘yes’ to the request. Emails went out all over the states: “Anil Kumar is coming! The result was that there were more and more enrolments and registrations for the conference.

The conference went on for three days. I stayed there for the whole time. I had not gone there as a politician or a chief guest. I stayed right from morning at eight, till night at eleven o’clock or midnight. I stayed with them because I believe that, once a work is taken up, it should be done sincerely.

### *MT. RAINIER LOOKED LIKE A SHY BRIDE*

I would like to share a few more particulars about my trip. I went to Seattle in the State of Washington. When we were about to land in Seattle, the pilot suggested that we look to our left at the mountain range. Mt. Rainier, the highest mountain in the range, was bright white with the sunlight reflecting off the snow on it. Wow! Kailasapathi Bhagavan Shankara Sai Nath Bhagavan! Swami, You must be dancing on that mountain range like on Kailas! How bright the glittering snow was; no silk sari can match that! Impossible! It is God’s saree, a Divine saree. You cannot estimate its value, so beautiful!

I also thought that Rainier, with all the white clouds and glittering, snow had the look of a shy bride about it, just as brides cover their head with a saree in Rajasthan. Oh Rainier, oh queen, how beautiful you are! Just like Gouri Devi, waiting for Bhagavan Shankara to dance, how beautiful!

### *SEATTLE IS LIKE THE KODAIKANAL OF USA*

The gentleman who took me to the mountains is the regional president, Mr. Harish Naidu, who works in Microsoft as a Vice President. Please understand that with Baba, you are not an ordinary man. No one is. Every one of us is V-V-VIP. If you go in Baba's name, you will be treated as Barack Obama is, (*Laughter*) nothing less than that!

On the way to Mr. Naidu's house, I was watching the scenery. It was like Kodaikanal with its bends, mountains, forests, trees, waterfalls, greenery, and flowers. As he was taking me in his car to his house, I said, "Is this Kodaikanal?"

"No, Mr. Anil Kumar. This is Seattle, Washington." Baba must have felt that Anil Kumar is missing Kodaikanal. So the whole of Kodaikanal was transplanted to Seattle!

Then we arrived at his residence, which was on a mountain, with a domed ceiling and glass doors that displayed the mountain views. The doors leading to the rooms were carved with beautiful pictures, as in Ajanta and Ellora, or Konark temple. It was all very beautiful.

I did not know where to go; I was lost. Then they took me around to this circular building with a dome, and space all around it, and with railings on all sides. It reminded me of Bhagavan's *darshan* in Bangalore's "Trayee Brindavan" (Baba's Whitefield residence). If you enter the building, you will notice railings at the top, from where Swami gives *darshan*.

I called that fellow and said, "Is this for family or what? You want to live in a temple? This does not seem to be a residence at all. The building has got a touch of 'Sai Sruthi' (Baba's Kodai residence) or 'Trayee Brindavan', while the approach road is just like Kodaikanal."

He said, "Mr. Anil Kumar, this is the room given to you."

A few steps away from the house, there was the big Washington River. Wah! "Swami, is that the lake of Kodaikanal brought down here? Where am I? Is this true?" I was questioning like that.

That chap said, "Mr. Anil Kumar, the weather in the US is unpredictable. It's quite bright now, but we don't know when it will rain. Let's go for a boat ride after lunch." He owns a steamboat, so after lunch, he took me around that river for forty-five minutes! I imagined myself in those movies (which I saw as a student), imagining myself in the lead role.

In Kodaikanal, Bhagavan gives money to all the boys to go boating. So He did not even allow me to miss boating while in Seattle! He didn't allow me to miss the beauty of Kodaikanal, nor did He allow me to miss His Whitefield residence!

I had a phone call from Kodaikanal, from my host's father, who is also my close friend. He said, "Mr. Anil Kumar, we are here in Kodaikanal. We all miss you."

Then I said, “I am sorry, but I don’t miss you. Swami is here; Swami is not there. You can see His building here and everything!” He was really dumb-founded by my reply. This is the exact situation in Seattle—a complete duplication of Kodai! I liked it very much.

### *AT VIRGIN ISLANDS I WAS DROWNED IN AFFECTION*

Every second day, I was getting a phone call from the Virgin Islands, in the United States. United States purchased these islands, and St. Thomas is one of the main islands. I was getting phone calls every day to visit there. They said they could not organise a youth workshop, but still wanted me to come. I was not sure what to do. As I had the next day free, I said I would try to get there.

In just half-an-hour, I got the ticket over the internet; so I went to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, wow! We read in *Puranas* of Naimisharanya and Chitrakoot Mountains; in St. Thomas, we could see them. As we approached, I could not see the airport for all the water. It felt as if the flight would land in the ocean! I wanted to return to the mainland; I didn’t want to drown! (*Laughter*)

St. Thomas is a small, beautiful place. That little island has forests; there is a narrow road which surrounds the island for the vehicles to go on. The Virgin Islands are controlled by the American government, but maintain their independence. They have their own passports. On the mountains and in the midst of the forests, they have their houses. One hundred percent of them are *Sindhis* (an Indian business community) and all of them are jewellers. I did not find any vegetable market or anything like that. There was only gold and diamonds everywhere! So I was wondering if they ate jewels. (*Laughter*)

All of them are Baba’s devotees. Their shops are side-by-side. So, there is a strong competition till 6 o’clock, and after that it’s Hare Ram, *Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam!* (*Laughter*) What love they showered upon me! I was drenched and completely drowned in the sea of their love and affection.

Everybody wanted me to visit their shop. “Please step into our shop, do *arati* and go.” Like a *pujari*, I had to do the *arati* in every shop—so I have become “*Janardhan Pujari*” (‘world priest’)! The ocean and forest were right outside the house where I was staying! I think those people must have earned some merit points to have been born in such a place.

Then we went on a cruise on a large ship that could accommodate from between 500 to 5000 people. They said, “Anil Kumar, next time we will have the Sai conference on the cruise ship!”

I said, “Please do it. We can have three days of Sai satsang on the cruise. With accommodation for 5000 people, we can have a conference for the whole of the USA!”

They said, “Give us the dates and we are ready, no problem.” So I really liked St. Thomas a lot.

### *AT NEW JERSEY I FELT AT HOME*

And then I had another phone call from a friend in New Jersey. The New Jersey regional conference for 2000 people was about to start. Time was too short to organise a workshop, but I went to New Jersey for a visit. Of the 2000 people, most were Indians, mainly from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka. I knew most of their family names and most of their parents and grandparents, so I felt quite at home. The *bhajans* with 2000 people were very nice!

### *DANCE PROGRAM AT ROCHESTER, NEW YORK WAS DELIGHTFUL*

Then I had an invitation from Dr. Krishna Rao in Rochester, New York. The doctor is a good young man. He hails from Srikakulam and has constructed a temple, a school and an orphanage for Swami at his native place, Katthula Kaviti, in Srikakulam District. Baba had said, "You should do something for your country, for your motherland, your birthplace." So that is what Dr. Krishna Rao did.

I attended the inaugural function for the school, and so it is my duty to go to Krishna Rao. I went there. About 300 to 400 people came and the meeting was very successful. Naturally sweet with delicious Pulla Reddy sweets—whosoever distributes them, we will eat. If I speak on my bio-data, I won't get phone calls again. It is only Baba's subject that is most interesting. I don't take any personal credit at all, not even in the wildest of my dreams. Please take it from me.

Dr Krishna Rao told me of the Indian community centre in Rochester, New York, where they were arranging a dance program. He asked me if I would like to attend. I said, "Why not? I love dances, so why not."

Dr Rao said, "I am requesting you because my daughter is dancing there, and I want you to bless her. It is a big auditorium built by the Indian community. A lady from Chennai has trained all these girls; she has a school with 100 girls learning *Bharatnatyam*. It is very successful and she has organised this *Bharatnatyam* program."

Even now I find it hard to believe that each item of the *Bharatnatyam* program required fifteen to twenty girls, ranging from age ten to twenty-five, and that they all wore unbelievably beautiful dresses—Kancheepuram silks, Dharmavaram silks, Chennai silks, Kumaran silks from Madras. These shining silk *sarees* were no different from those worn by studio dancers and professionals in Madras. Aha, Swami, how great You are! See how these people are dancing, same as in Madras.

Next, there was an announcement that about ten young people from Ireland would dance. Their dress looked like gowns and they wore socks. Both boys and girls danced with their high-heeled shoes *tik tak* like a horse. I was enjoying their steps. I really wanted to learn and join in. It's very difficult to control me under such circumstances. Only by exerting mental restraint do I stay in

my chair! (*Laughter*) I go crazy when I see such delightfully visual things. Particularly when I see Irish dancing! Maybe I need a psychiatrist! (*Laughter*)

Then the next dance was a fusion of *Bharatanatyam* and Irish styles. It was beautiful! In the finale, all 60 dancers were on stage, dancing with Baba's picture. I really enjoyed that.

### *TOPICS DISCUSSED AT CHICAGO YOUTH CONFERENCE*

Finally there was the three-day Youth Conference in Chicago. It was held in the outskirts of Chicago, where there is lot of open land with a few cottages, plus a thick forest and lawns everywhere. Generally, when you mention Chicago, you expect tall skyscrapers; but the venue of the conference was a forest with cottages and lawns. Huge tents were constructed—one for boys and one for girls, plus a canteen. It was a fantastic conference.

The Sai youth in America are studying all topics, while applying Sai literature to their work and their lives. Their work is marvellous. And in fact there were about thirty workshops going on everywhere. I was trying to spend some time with every group. Youngsters often talk a lot about nothing. I remember being like that; but here, they were talking seriously:

"This is what Baba said. You understand?"

One girl says, "No, I am sorry. Baba also said this. Do you know that?"

It was a brilliant discussion and covered four areas. The first area was "Meditation" where they discussed *Jyothi dhyana* or meditation on the inner light (or lamp). There were also three or four workshops discussing *Pranayama* or breathing exercises and meditation techniques.

The second theme was "Ceiling on Desires". There were four or five workshops on time management, food, energy conservation, and general self-management.

The third one, "Living Service", focused on why do service, what service, how to serve, what we learn and receive from *seva*, and what Baba says about service.

"Gayathri *Mantra*" was the fourth topic. In America, they discuss Gayathri *mantra*? How am I to believe this?

Somebody said, "Sir, we organised *Sa, Re, Ga, Ma*."

"What is *Sa, Re, Ga, Ma*?"

"It stands for **Sai Regional Gayathri Mantra**—five hundred youth chanting the Gayathri *mantra*!"

"Then what is *Pa, Dha, Ni, Sa*?" I asked. (*Laughter*) (*This joke is referring to the Indian musical scale system.*)

They discussed why Gayathri and what Gayathri. What are the results for youth from doing Gayathri? Their professionalism, their expertise, their health all come from Gayathri *mantra*.

### *SAFE RETURN*

I returned safely to India after this conference on June 6, five days late. Sitting on the veranda as usual, I expected Swami to ignore me for a whole month, not just one week (*Laughter*), so I suffer and become a little tenser.

But the good Lord came straight over and said, “I know the meetings went very well.”

That made me shed tears and Swami said, “I know all meetings were very well attended, very good. You have done very good work.”

I was very happy. Then what happened? Again on the 8th, He came and said, “Calm down, meetings are over. Have you calmed down?”

I took that Divine acknowledgement. I thanked Swami for this wonderful opportunity. I think it is a learning process, a training process. I don't consider myself above anyone, or consider myself as anything great. The greatness lies in His mercy, while the power lies in His Divine benediction, which empowers me go around all these Sai centres.

I thank Swami, and because we are all family members, I want to share these things with you. I beg your pardon if I have overdone my job. Thank you very much for your patient listening. (*Applause*)

### *SUNDAY TALK SERIES PUBLISHED AS BOOKS*

My friends, all our Sunday talks are published by our publication trust in the form of books, with the Divine blessings of Bhagavan. The first book was *The Universal and Factual Teachings of Baba*. Other titles in the series are *Divine Directions*, *Radiance of Ray*, *Sai Sandesh*, *Saicolgy*, *Sai Vedam*, *Sai Blossoms*, and *The Divine Daffodils*. All these Sunday talk books are published by the Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publication Trust.

I am forever grateful to Bhagavan Baba for many lives to come. But this has not happened because of me alone. You can give a talk and go; but all these talks are videotaped, and then transcribed and edited. Further, they are translated and published on the website in ten international languages. It is done by a team of dedicated transcribers, editors, and translators who are rendering Sai seva silently and selflessly from different parts of the world.

Their team leader, Mr. Lakhi, is here video-taping this morning's proceedings. (*Applause*) I really thank Mr. Lakhi, and everyone on his team—the transcribers, editors and translators—for the

release of all these books for publication. I take this opportunity this morning to present to Mr. Lakhi, the leader of the team, the book recently released by Bhagavan and published by Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust.

The title of the book is *Alarm Wealth Divine*. *Alarm Wealth Divine* contains important information relating to the celebration of different festivals in Prashanthi Nilayam, in particular, the inner significance of these festivals, as given by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. There is also a question and answer section in this book. (Applause)

*Sai the Indweller* is being printed, and we expect it soon. There are five books in Telugu and twelve in English. Swami made this tiny little creature an instrument to publish these seventeen books. It is Sai's manifestation, Sai's miracle. I am also a witness, like you, to all that is happening.

Thank You, Swami. Once again, I thank you all for taking time to listen to the details of my talk covering my visit to the U.S. I wanted to share my experiences with you, as members of our *satsang* in the Sai family. Thank you very much! (Applause)

*OM... OM... OM...*

*Asato Maa Sad Gamaya  
Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya  
Mrtiyormaa Amrtam Gamaya*

*Om Samastha Lokā Sukhino Bhavantu  
Samastha Lokā Sukhino Bhavantu  
Samastha Lokā Sukhino Bhavantu*

*Om Shanti Shanti Shanti*

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