

The Sunday Talk Given by Prof. Anil Kumar

“More Personal Experiences”

June 7, 2010

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

Sai Ram

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Without any further delay, we would like to ask Prof. Anil Kumar to please address us with what he feels would be most inspirational and important to us, and with what would help us grow in our spiritual lives. If time permits, please allow us to ask you some questions. Thank you very much.

*Nanda Mukunda Sai Natha
Satchidananda Sai Natha
AnandaMardhana Sai Natha
Parama Dayalu Sai Natha*

Sai Baba Maharaj Ke Jai!

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

GIFTS OF BABA

How shall I thank Swami? Is it possible to thank Him adequately? Are words enough to convey the depth of feeling? How do we estimate His kindness and mercy? How do we weigh His compassion?

A lecturer, brought up in a small town and speaking the regional language of Telugu, suddenly rose to international recognition when he started translating the Divine voice into English; thus

he came into the limelight. It's quite unimaginable—even to that individual by the name of Anil Kumar! How am I to believe all this? Is this real or a dream? How is it that I travelled around fifteen countries? How could I win the love of so many people? Is there anything special about me? Believe it or not, there is nothing special about me. That nothingness is my speciality. All over Prashanthi Nilayam thousands and thousands of people come and say, "Sai Ram, Anil Kumar." Some people say, "You are Arjuna", while some others say, "You are Hanuman."

But within I feel that all these greetings, all this appreciation, all these comparisons, all these tributes and encomiums actually belong to You, Swami, not to me. Believe it or not, brothers and sisters, more than the number of times my heart beats, I am one hundred percent conscious of the fact that all this honour, respect and high stature in the Sai circle are verily the gifts of Baba and not my achievements. You cannot feel proud of your grandfather's property. After all, you just inherited the property. Similarly, these are Baba's gifts and grace that I am enjoying; I do not think I deserve it. I never desired it.

THOUGHTS HAVE BECOME A REALITY

About thirty-eight years ago, I saw a postcard-size black and white photograph of Baba speaking in front of a mike. A family friend standing by His side was translating the talk. That gentleman, Dr. Amarendra, was the first principal of Baba's college. He was a great poet, writer and scholar. Watching that picture on the wall, I started feeling, 'Oh God, will I ever get a chance to have a picture with You? Will I ever get a chance to translate Your talk? Will I ever be near You?'

And slowly those thoughts have taken the form of reality. Baba not only spoke to me but would often joke with me on the stage. My seniors tell me that He never jokes and is always tough and serious with them. They were surprised to see how easily he smiled and joked with me. I am not able to believe all this even now.

DIVINE ROMANCE

One time Swami distributed diamond watches to everybody, and I received one as well. You cannot simply pocket it as if it is gift from your father-in-law. Nor can we say 'thank you' because He might be offended. What should I do?

The veranda of Prashanthi Nilayam is a bit extended. I sat towards the periphery and as Swami walked, He could not avoid me because that was His usual path. So I sat there and started shaking my hand like that. (*Laughter*) Baba watched me from the side of his eyes in such a way that he could see me, but I could not see Him seeing me. That is the Divine romance.

BHAGAVAN BABA IS THOUGHT-LESS

As He passed by I looked at Him. Then He came close to me and said, "What happened to your hand? Why are you shaking it that way?"

I said softly, "Swami, Your watches are shining, our hearts are dancing, and our joy knows no bounds, Bhagavan."

Then He said, "Alright you keep it."

But I didn't want to leave it at that; I didn't want Him to just pass by. So I said, "Swami, You distributed watches to everybody yet You have no wristwatch. You distribute sweets to all, but You do not eat sweets. I don't understand why."

My friends, I am telling this to convey Baba's message, not to blow my own trumpet.

*Sathya Sankalpamula Cheta Sadhurvagunu
Dushta Sankalpamula Cheta Dukkhithudagu
Sakala Sankalpanyude Santhinundu
Sathya Maina Maata Ee Sai Maata*

Truthful ideas will make you very noble, while wicked thoughts will make you wicked. It is only a thought-less man who enjoys peace. Thought-less state is the ultimate in meditation; that alone confers peace. Taking advantage of the watch, Baba conveys the message that He is thought-less.

DESIRE-LESS IS GOD

Baba says, "You have desires; I must fulfil them. You have ambitions and goals; I should help you attain them. But I have no desires, no goals, no ambitions; I am I." Thus Baba conveys the message that one who is desire-less is God.

*God + Desire = Man
Man - Desire = God*

So it is only desire that takes me away from Him or else He and I are one.

BABA HAS NO BIRTHDAY SO SAME DRESS

It was His birthday. He was walking in the veranda. He looked at me as I was wearing a new suit. Somehow, from my childhood I have had a fascination for good clothes. As a discipline I like to dress well. It makes me feel more confident because once you are well dressed, you cannot go to the class unprepared. Your students love to see your presentable personality. Passing by He stared and looked at me from top to bottom. I thought perhaps he did not approve of my new suit.

He said, "You guys have new clothes, Swami has only one dress."

I said, "Today is Swami's birthday therefore I am wearing this new suit."

Baba said, "I have no birthday. You are observing My birthday."

Please note this point. Swami has no birthday, so same dress. The Divinity has neither a beginning nor an end. He conveyed His message in a beautiful subtle way.

KRISHNA AS BABA

It was lunch time in Kodaikanal. It is an experience to be at the dining table with Swami. He sits and then tells everybody where to sit. He watches as the boys serve food. Thus it is training for

the boys on how to serve. By mistake if a drop of *sambar* falls on curry, that's it - Swami is very harsh towards them. He is very particular about discipline. And as you start eating, He watches you. (*Laughter*) He teaches table manners to the boys. One fellow who was eating *sambar*, started licking like this. (*Laughter*) Swami was serious.

Swami said, "Why do you look lick like that? You can have an extra spoon of *sambar*!"

Now comes the message, please note it. Swami finished eating but we were still eating the first item. He started walking between the lines.

I said, "Swami I have not seen You eating curd."

This is an interesting point. Do you know what He said? "Ah I am bored of yogurt. I had plenty of milk, curd and yogurt in my previous *Avatar* as Krishna."

As you know Krishna was always fond of butter and curds. Telling us that He is bored of curds is an indirect hint that the same Krishna is again in front of us in the name and form of *Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*.

ALL COLOURS ARE HIS COLOURS

It was *Dasara* time. *Dasara* festival is in praise of God as mother Divine. Swami sent a word for me. As I went into the interview room I saw *Bhagavan* sitting relaxed in His silk robe, like a typical mother who is totally exhausted after a long day. I immediately came close to Him and touched the silk robe examining its quality.

He said, "Are you a cloth merchant? Why do you check?" (*Laughter*)

I said, "Swami, what a wonderful dress!"

Immediately He became shy. "Do you like it?" (*Laughter*)

I like that gesture very much. I said, "Swami when we wear coloured dresses we are colourful. But when you wear these colours they have their own value."

Then *Bhagavan* said, "All colours are mine."

Then looking at me He said, "Today I see you in your true colours." (*Laughter*) This was a sarcastic remark. Every sentence, every instance, every joke has a message behind it.

MANIFESTATION OF DIAMOND RING – DIVINE SPORT OF GOD

While walking between the lines He collected a *puri* from my neighbour's plate. The *puri* was not fried properly. "Ask that cook to get out," He said.

With the other hand He tore the *puri* lengthwise and there appeared a diamond ring. He collected the diamond ring and out it on the ring finger of my neighbour. I was watching the whole thing. Then I started eating small pieces slowly. Baba noticed it.

"Why are you eating like that?" He said.

“Who knows Swami? My *puri* may also have a diamond! (*Laughter*) And if I eat it, the diamond may get stuck in my gullet.”

Baba laughed and said, “I am not going to give you a diamond ring. Ask your mother-in-law to give you one.” (*Laughter*)

What shall I say my friends? Is it believable? Unbelievable are the mysteries of God, unbelievable are God’s *leelas* - the Divine sport.

MOMENTS TO TREASURE FOR MANY LIVES

In Kodaikanal Swami usually comes down at eight o’clock in the morning. So there is a lot of time. That day I had a watch and knew that that there was another hour and a half left. Wearing a big towel around my waist with no *banian* (vest) and holding a toothbrush in one hand I was going towards the rest room to brush my teeth. Suddenly I heard the sound of the door opening. Baba stood behind me.

Baba said, “*Chi*, you have not brushed your teeth yet. What is this? People have come for my *Darshan* and you are giving me your *Darshan*!” (*Laughter*)

These are the moments I would certainly treasure for many lives to come.

BABA IS MOTHER TO EVERYONE

Once in Kodaikanal He was distributing chocolates. Some chocolates looked like gold coins, others like silver coins. I had never seen them before so I was excited. He was giving a handful to everybody. Next day He gave Cadbury’s chocolates. Cadbury’s is a brand of chocolates. Suddenly He said, “I give sweets but this fellow does not eat. *Arrah*, come on check all suitcases!” - like customs authority!

I said, “Swami, why trouble everyone? I am the one not eating. So let them not open everyone’s suitcases.”

Then He said, “Why you are not eating?”

“Swami, when I go back I can give these chocolates to my children as Baba’s gifts. They will be very happy Swami.”

Then Baba said, “You are happy when your children eat. I am happy when you eat here. I am your mother, you know that.”

Since that day He has been giving me sweets and asking me to eat in front of Him. (*Laughter*) How shall I explain that love? Where shall I get that love?

UNFORGETTABLE WONDERFUL MOMENTS WITH BABA

In Kodaikanal Swami distributes money to boys – one day for hiring a boat, one day for horse riding, one day for shopping etc. Along with boys He also gave me money for boating.

I said, “I can understand the boys going for boating, but Swami me too?”

Swami said, "Oh, I understand your problem. Do you want your wife to come as well?"
(*Laughter*)

I said, "Swami that's not necessary, I will go."

Then next day He gave money for horse riding. The trainers stand by the horse while you sit on its back. They take you around the lake which is approximately 6 kilometres. The trainer runs along with the horse holding its rein. They charged hundred rupees in those days and so He gave me hundred rupees go for horse riding.

"Me? Horse riding? I don't think so Swami. I will immediately fall and have unnecessary fractures, Swami. I am afraid of sitting on the horse."

Swami laughed and said, "Sit on the horse's back, I will stand here and the trainer will stand there. Don't fear, I am here, come on."

(Signs as hitting the forehead) What could I do, I could not run away! He was standing there. Hesitatingly, shaking with fear I somehow sat on the horse's back. Swami was laughing.

He called a photographer and said, "Take a picture of this fellow." (*Laughter*) And He said, "Show this picture to everybody that you rode a horse." (*Laughter*)

I cannot forget those wonderful moments.

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD'S GRACE

Swami has a red Benz car.

"He is looking at the Benz car, not Swami. (*Laughter*) You will have it one day." (*Laughter*)

And then He asked a boy to stand next to the car for a picture. He wanted me to stand for a photograph too. Like a good boy I also stood next to the car.

He said, "You're standing like a driver; stand like an owner." (*Laughter*)

Then Swami said, "I will show you how to stand."

He stood on the other side. Then he called the photographer to come and take a picture. That picture is at our residence. God coming to my level, God asking me to be the owner of His car! Can this ever be true?

And then in front of everybody He said, "Anil Kumar, you buy My car."

I said, "Buy Your car? Impossible! It is very expensive."

There is a message in what He said.

“This is not the reply I expected from you. You should have said that with Swami’s you can buy His car. That by Swami’s grace you buy the whole world.”

The message is that with God’s grace you can be the richest, most powerful man.

BABA GRANTS NICEST EXPERIENCES IN SWEETEST PROXIMITY

One year He presented new shirts made in the Philippines to everybody. The shirt had pockets and embroidered design. One would look like a hero, no doubt about that. He gave me one and asked me to wear it. How could I take off the shirt I was wearing to wear the new one in front of Swami? And, moreover, being ready made shirts they have pins in all corners and I was struggling to remove them.

He called one of the college boys and said, “Take him inside and help him remove all the pins. Let him wear the shirt and come out immediately.”

I wore the shirt and when I came out He said, “Come on, turn this way, turn that way, let me see you.” (*Laughter*)

“Why Swami?”

“The back of the shirt may go up so I want to check it”, He said.

Loveliest *Bhagavan* God, the almighty, the all-knowing, grants nicest experiences in His sweetest proximity.

PLEASANT ROMANTIC MOMENTS WITH BABA

One day He gave me money to go shopping. I am a very poor shopper. I have never purchased even vegetables until now. It’s been four and a half decades since my marriage, I have never purchased anything, nor done any household chores. Along with others, he gave me money and said, “Go and buy something.”

“What?” I asked.

He said, “Buy something for your children, your wife, your mother.”

I didn’t know what to buy. I went to the shop and at the suggestion of the boys, I bought a biscuit-coloured sweater. They said that it would be nice for aunty. By the time we returned, Baba was already there. I went through the back door to my room. Swami asked the boys what they had bought and was joking with them. He asked where I was.

“Ask him to come down with what he bought.” He said. The boys came and called me and I walked in, holding the packet behind me.

Swami: “Is shopping over?”

Anil Kumar: “Over Swami.”

Swami: “Did you buy anything?”

Anil Kumar: “Yes, Swami.”(Laughter)

Swami: “Where is it? Show it to Me.” (Laughter)

Anil Kumar: “It is all right, Swami, it is all right.”

“Hey, take it out. Boys, show Me the packet,” He said. (Laughter)

Then He saw the sweater I bought.

Swami laughed loudly. “You belong to Guntur—a very hot place. (Laughter) Who would wear this sweater in that weather? Useless fellow! (Laughter) Why did you buy this? Is this sweater for you?”

I said, “No Swami, the boys said it would be nice for aunty.”

Baba said, “She will throw it in your face. How could she live with such a useless fellow for this long?” (Laughter)

He went inside and brought two nice saris. “You take these. Tell your wife that you purchased these. She will be happy. Don’t mention My name.”

“Swami, she has lived with me all these years; she knows my capacity and will never believe me.”(Laughter)

What pleasant and romantic moments with Baba! I could go on and on for hours.

UNFORGETTABLE SITUATION

One day while I was in Brindavan, a Punjabi boy named Ajay Raana wore a Punjabi outfit—a long *kurta* (shirt) and *pyjama* (trousers). I liked it. That boy had a very fair complexion. Punjabis are also well-built. I told him that the outfit suited him. Within forty-eight hours, he ordered a Punjabi outfit for me! He told me that his parents asked him to present it to me. He asked me when I would wear it. I told him I wanted to show it to Baba first.

Baba went to Madras and I followed Him. When should I wear the Punjabi outfit? If I wore it while translating the public discourse, He may kick me out. I was not sure if He would like it. So I chose to wear it during the *nagarasankirtan*. If you happen to visit Madras, please do visit Sundaram Mandir. There are no lights in the front at dawn. All lights are focused on the Sundaram building. It is a three-storied building with a lotus on the top. Swami gives *darshan* there.

Early in the morning, with the birds singing, with the melody of *nagarasankirtan*, with the touch of the wind from the Marina Beach, with the dark backdrop of the ground, and the glittering flood-light focused on Bhagavan waving His hand—it is a sight for the gods! So I chose that moment to wear the Punjabi outfit and went inside through the back door. When Swami gets down from that dawn *darshan*, He goes to His room. I stood there so He had to see me.

“Oh! A new outfit!” He said.

Anil Kumar: “Swami, I wanted to show You this outfit.”

Swami: “Did your wife see you?”

Anil Kumar: “Not yet, Swami.”

Swami: “I see, let Me see you. Shall I tell you how you look?”

Anil Kumar: “Yes, Swami. Why not?”

Swami: “You look like a Punjabi truck driver!” (*Laughter*)

How can I forget these situations?

OUR PRAYER CAN MAKE BABA DO ANYTHING

One day in Kodai Kanal He was sitting with the boys. Suddenly He started shivering and called a lecturer and said, “Please close all the glass doors. I am very cold; I have a fever.”

He called another lecturer, “Touch and see what the temperature is.”

“Swami, it feels like you have high fever,” he said.

He called another lecturer, “Get a thermometer.”

He kept it under His tongue. The temperature was 104.8. He looked at me and said “How can I give a speech when the temperature is so high?”

I kept quiet.

I said, “Swami, please don’t give the speech today; please rest.”

Swami: “No, no. You give the speech.”

Anil Kumar: “Swami, they have all come to hear Your speech, not my speech.”

“No. You speak.”

Anil Kumar: “Swami, these fellows will throw me in the lake. I want to live for some more time.”

Swami: “How can I speak when My temperature is 104.8? Boys, do you want me to cure Myself?”

They all said, “Yes!”

Swami: “Boys, close your eyes for five minutes. Now open your eyes.”

He called the lecturer, “Bring the thermometer and note the temperature.” He kept it under His tongue again; it was 98.4 – normal temperature!

Swami said, “Swami can do anything, you should know that. Your prayer will make me do anything. Your love, your devotion and you can make me do anything—transform sky into earth, earth into sky.”

I have witnessed this miracle.

SWAMI CAN MANAGE ANYTHING ANYTIME

Once in Prashanti Nilayam He was suffering from cold and cough. He was to speak that evening. He called me and said that His voice was not good and so He would not speak.

“Swami, I am not going to believe this. I have experienced it once. (*Laughter*) I also know of Your temperature coming down from 104.8 to 98.4. I will keep my mouth shut . You do whatever You want.”

“My voice is not good.” (*Laughter*)

“Swami, it is up to You. I don’t know.”

Then He said, “He wants me to go.”

And He slowly got up from the chair and came out of the interview room for the discourse.

*Paramam Pavana Mainatti Bharathaa Vaniyandhu
Sahana Mannadhi Manaky Chakka Danamu
Madhura Bhavammedhi Manadesamandenna
Matru Bhavembu Kanna Maryamedhi
Vratamulanniti Yandu Vane Kanchina Yatti
Ghana Sathya Seelame Katina Tapamu*

*Pranambu Kante Manammbu Ghanamanu
Mana Desa Neetini Manta Galipi*

*Netiki Ichiri Vesachechuyanu Viti Kattuluavura
Yemandu Bharatha Palanambu*

That is the poem He started to sing. The meaning of this poem is:

Paramam Pavana Mainatti Bharathaa Vaniyandhu

In this land of Bharath which is highly sacred

Sahana Mannadhi Manaky Chakka Danamu

The beauty is forbearance or tolerance

*Madurau Bhavembedhi Manadesa Mandanna
Matru Bhavembu Kanna Manyamedhi*

*What is the sweetest feeling in this country?
It is the feeling of the mother towards the child.*

*Vratamulanniti Yandu Vane Kanchina Yatti
Ghana Sathya Seelame Katina Tapamu*

Of all the rituals, adherence to Truth is the best.

Pranambu Kante Manammbu Ghanamanu

Character is more important than life itself.

Mana Desa Neetini Manta Galipi

The life pattern of Bharath is completely ruined.

Netiki Ichiri Vesachechuyanu Viti Kattuluavura

We have modern attire and modern civilisation, all in the name of freedom.

Yemandu Bharatha Palanambu

What am I to comment on the administration in India?

The same Baba, whose throat was in very bad shape a moment ago, was singing melodiously. He is the Master of masters; He can manage anything.

DIVINE TECHNOLOGY OF BABA

In western countries, men and women sit together. Baba doesn't like that, even if they are husband and wife. Women should sit on one side and men should sit on the other side. Many doctors attended the conference of International Cardiac Thoracic Surgeons (heart surgeons). All of them were top doctors, including personal doctors to Hillary Clinton. Some of them earn one hundred thousand dollars per day! It was their first time. Men and women were sitting together. We could not say anything to them as they were special guests. Baba silently watched, smiled and blessed everybody. He sat on the side where there were several rows of empty chairs.

He called one doctor and said, "Hello, how are you?"

The doctor came immediately and He made him sit by His side. Thus he was separated from his wife. Then He turned to another doctor, said hello and made him sit next to Him. In this way He separated all men from women. (*Laughter*) That is the Divine technology of Baba. I was watching and enjoying.

IT IS ONLY POSSIBLE FOR BABA TO RUN A FREE SUPER SPECIALITY HOSPITAL

One doctor said that he was from America and was specially sent by the government of America to study the hospital's operations and evaluate how the treatment and surgeries were conducted free-of-charge. He concluded that running a hospital that way was only possible for Baba and nobody else. Listening to his statements, a crazy fellow like me was lifted an inch above his seat!

BABA AS BEAUTIFUL COMBINATION OF DIVINITY AND PLAYFULNESS

Another doctor came and said, "I am from Rome, and I am Catholic. Last evening I was kneeling and praying in my room behind closed doors and reading the *Holy Bible* and suddenly I felt a gentle touch of a hand. I turned back and found Sathya Sai Baba there. I tell you, Baba is cosmic Christ. I may be disowned by my doctors, I may be disowned by other Catholics, but I now declare Baba is the universal Cosmic Christ."

Listening to that, I was five inches above the ground. Swami sat in His car to return. I ran behind the car. Many were wondering why I was running like that. But I did not care; I never care for others' opinions. I ran to Swami's room and knocked on the door.

Swami asked, "Why are you running like that? Calm down. What happened?"

Swami, the Italian doctor said that You are the universal Cosmic Christ. The American doctor said that You alone can manage this hospital. That made me crazy and mad, Swami."

Baba was cool and calm. He said, "Oh, you want those fellows to tell you who Baba is, as if you did not already know!" (*Laughter*)

He plays like a boy and jokes like a boy. On one side is Divinity, while the other side is boyhood playfulness. What a beautiful combination!

BABA IS FULL OF HUMOUR AND BLISS

He distributes *saris* to ladies from all over the world. They wear the *sari* that same evening because it is Swami's *sari*. You should see Swami watching them. And when they look at Him, He looks the other way! (*Laughter*)

Sometimes He will go to a lady and say, "I gave you this colour last year, so take another colour this year." (*Laughter*)

To an old widow Swami said, "You look beautiful, so your husband is coming from heaven to see you." (*Laughter*)

That is God, full of humour and full of bliss.

REASON FOR BABA'S HAPPINESS - NO ATTACHMENT

One day we asked Swami, “Why are You happy all the time? How do You joke all the time?”

This message is important, my friends.

He said, “I am not bothered about the future. I don’t brood over the past. What is bound to happen will happen. I have no attachments; I have no expectations. So I am always happy.”

Anil Kumar: “Swami, is it possible for me to be like You?”

Swami: “For you, it is impossible!” (*Laughter*)

Anil Kumar: “Why Swami?”

Swami: “You are attached to hot coffee. How can you be happy?” (*Laughter*)

Therefore my friends, attachment makes us unhappy. If there is no attachment, we will be happy.

SWAMI LOOKS ATTACHED BUT IS DETACHED

A simple example: Swami gives you an interview in the morning, talking to you nicely and giving you the feeling that you are the most important man and that this *Avatar* is for you only! But in the evening when passing by your side, He lifts both his hands and looks at you as if you never met. That is the supreme detachment of Baba. There is detached attachment in Him. He looks attached, but is totally detached.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IS ADVANCING FROM ATTRIBUTES TO ATTRIBUTE-LESS

One day in Kodai Kanal, He asked me who God is.

Chavu Puttukuleni Sasavathundu

The One who has neither birth nor death, who is permanent.

Adimadyantha Rahithudu

He has no beginning and He has no end.

Thanu Chavaka Champabadaqa Alarunatti Sarva Sakshi Brahma

*He cannot be killed and He won't kill;
He is the eternal witness.*

My answer was His own poem, so He could not say that it was wrong! (*Laughter*)

He asked, “How do you know?”

I just quoted Him, but when He asked how I knew, what could I say?

Please note what He said. This is important because all actions and gestures of *Avatars* have a message. They are not for our entertainment.

Swami asked, "What is the form of God?"

Anil Kumar: "God has no form."

Swami: "Oh, I see. How do you know?"

Anil Kumar: "Swami, we are from *Brahmo Samaj*, and we believe that God has no form nor attributes."

Swami: "How do you know?"

Anil Kumar: "Swami, I don't know. Please explain." (*Laughter*)

Swami said, "Don't you see the hall?"

Anil Kumar: "Yes, Swami I see it."

Swami: "Do you see that it is full of students?"

Anil Kumar: "Yes, Swami."

Swami: "I am seated here; don't you see Me? Don't you hear Me? But at the end of this tour, you will go back to your place. At that time, if you just imagine it, the hall appears, and you watch the boys. You will experience Swami also. So you went from form to formlessness, from attributes to attribute-less-ness. That is the spiritual journey."

Who would explain that way?

GOD'S GRACE FREES US FROM ILLUSION

Once I or somebody said, "Swami, this *maya* (illusion) is really disturbing us." Please note as this is an important question.

Swami: "What is this *maya* doing to you?"

"Swami, it is holding me tightly, so what can I do?"

Swami: "Oh, *maya* has hands and holds you tightly? *Maya* has legs and comes to you? There is no *maya*; it is all your imagination. You are holding *maya*, *maya* is not holding you."

I laughed.

"Why do you laugh?" He asked.

"Swami, Adi Sankara said:

Jagan Mithya

World is illusion,

Brahma Sathyam

God is real.

Adi Sankara used this word *maya*, yet You say that there is no *maya*; so what am I to do, Swami?”

“Good question!” He said. “At twelve o’clock in the afternoon, when the sun is straight overhead, there is no shadow; whereas before noon the shadow is behind you, and in the afternoon the shadow is in front of you. When the sun is right on the top of your head, there is no shadow. That shadow is *maya*. When you are right under God’s grace, *maya* cannot affect you.”

“Swami, it is easy to hear this, but how do we free ourselves from *maya* everyday? Twelve o’clock is all right, but all the twenty-four hours is not twelve o’clock. How do we free ourselves from *maya*?”

My friends, note what He said: “When the bus is speeding, there is a cloud of dust behind the bus. But when the bus stops, the dust gets into the bus. Your body is the bus. When it moves, that is when you practice *sadhana*, the dust of *maya* is behind you. When the bus stops (that is, without *sadhana*), the dust of *maya* will get into you. So to be free from *maya*, you should continue your *sadhana* eternally.”

Who will explain like that?

NOW FIRST, BUT TOMORROW LAST

I asked a simple question: “Swami, You don’t look at a devotee who has been here for the last six months. But You look at a fellow who has just come. Why this injustice?” (This is an important question because we all feel this way when we are not called.)

Baba answered, “When a bus stops, all of you get in. The first one in sits near the driver, while the last man in stands near the door. When the bus stops at the next station, the last person to enter gets down first and the first in is the last one out. So though you may be first today, you may be last tomorrow.”

How long can I tell you all these things, my friends?

SWAMI DOESN'T CARE FOR MONEY

One day He introduced me to a man who gave three hundred *crores* (a *crore* is ten million *rupees*) for our hospital. A doctor from America gave hundred *crores*. I was feeling very badly as I did not give a single *paisa*.

“Swami, I am very sorry that I have nothing to give You. When You say that they gave two *crores*, three *crores*, I feel ashamed of my life, Swami.”

Baba said, "Why do you say that? Where do they stay? They all stay at the Carlton Hotel. Where do you stay? You stay with Me. Swami does not care for money, understand that."

Who would say this? "Millions are nothing; I want you." Who would say that? That is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. (*Applause*)

ALL-KNOWING SWAMI

He brought two *saris*, one in gold and the other in dark blue colour.

He said, "Which colour is good?"

I said, "Swami, both colours are good."

Swami said, "This is a *Dharmavaram* silk *sari*. This is a *Kanchi* silk *sari*."

I said, "You are very near *Dharmavaram*; therefore this *sari* is good. In *Kanchi* there is Goddess Kamakshi; therefore this *sari* is also good. What can I say about it?"

Then He said, "Which *sari* is good for your mother?"

I answered, "Swami, my mother was a college beauty. You know her, Swami; she is most beautiful indeed. Any *sari* will suit my mother, but don't give it to her."

He said, "I shall give; who are you to stop Me?"

I said, "No, Swami. You gave *saris* yesterday to all our family members." (He had performed the wedding of my eldest daughter.)

"At the wedding party, You gave my mother a *sari*. You may have forgotten. Another is not necessary," I said.

Baba said, "That *sari* was as a member of the marriage party, but this *sari* is because she has given you to Me." (*Applause*)

I was thrilled and shocked and gave the gold colour *sari* to my mother.

She cried and cried and said, "I have purchased this colour several times but could never keep it with me as I always gave it away to someone. How does your Baba know that I need this colour?"

That is Sathya Sai Baba.

SAI BABA IS OUR LIFE

At the interview on the wedding of my first daughter, looking at my mother, He said, "You are worried about your son, Anil Kumar. Your eldest son is a chartered accountant, your youngest son is a big doctor, your son-in-law is a big engineer, and you are feeling badly about this fellow, who is only a professor, always saying, 'Baba, Baba, Baba' every day. (*Laughter*) He has three daughters and a son. You are worried about his future. Look here *Amma*, all those who know

Sai Baba will know your son too. *(Applause)* You will see how he comes up in life. Do you think Baba is so cheap and ordinary? Even for twelve generations, you cannot not perform a marriage like this because I performed his daughter's marriage." *(Applause)*

But He did a little mischief with me.

He asked me, "Have you found a match for your first daughter?"

Anil Kumar: "No, Swami."

Swami: "Why don't you start looking?"

"Swami, only retired people attend my meetings, not eligible bachelors."

Swami: "I will not allow you into Prashanti Nilayam if you don't find a suitable boy!"

Somehow we thought of a boy and came to Baba.

Swami: "Where is the boy?" He asked.

"Swami, the boy's parents asked for two hundred thousand as dowry."

Then Baba said, "The expenditure for the marriage would be three hundred thousand. So it means a total of six to eight hundred thousand."

He immediately went inside and brought a bundle of currency notes and said, "Take this eight hundred thousand and perform your daughter's marriage. I don't want you to ever feel badly. I am here to support you. Is eight hundred thousand enough or do you want ten (a million)?"

I said, "Swami, sorry."

"Why?" He asked.

"The boy is a little dark-complexioned. Swami, my daughter is not in favour of him." *(Laughter)*

Then He said, "If you don't approve, it is all right; but never say no for want of money."

Everywhere I would go (looking for an appropriate husband for my daughter), people would ask me to sit and have coffee, saying that I am a great Baba devotee, saying that I am a wonderful speaker. When I start to talk about a marriage proposal, the fellow's wife calls him inside and probably tells him that I cannot give dowry. "*Nagarasankirtan* is the dowry. Long speech is the dowry he can pay." *(Laughter)*

Then the husband returns and says, "Sir, we are not in a hurry to perform the marriage." *(Laughter)*

Finally Swami selected a boy and told his parents not to collect a single penny from me. "You ask Me for whatever you want and I will give you. Everything is Baba's expenditure only."

He picked up an envelope containing twenty thousand *rupees* and gave it to the boy and said, "Anil Kumar is giving this money for you to get a new suit for the wedding. It is not My money."

Baba supports you. He will never let you down. He will never allow you to be insulted. Wherever you go, you will be held in respect and honour. Sathya Sai Baba is our life. Sathya Sai Baba is our property. Without Him, we have no life.

NEVER LEAVE SWAMI'S LOTUS FEET

An ant sitting on a flower on the head of Lord Shiva is worshiped along with Lord Shiva. A bull as a chariot of Shiva receives worship; a rat as chariot of Vinayaka receives worship. Away from God, a rat is killed, a snake is killed, and a bull is beaten; but in the company of God, they are all worshipped.

So my friends, if you want to have respect in the community, never leave His lotus feet. If at all we have to beg, let us beg from Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. If at all we are helpless, let us cry in front of Him.

My friends, my life is full of such experiences, and I am not able to believe what I am. All my classmates, all my colleagues in my native place, wonder how I travel like this. They have more money than me, but Anil Kumar has the wealth of Baba's grace. And I have never suffered from want of funds in my life.

He sometimes calls me "A Nil Kumar" meaning my bank account is nil. But immediately He corrects Himself. Is it Baba *nil* (zero), or is *A Nil* full with Swami? *Aa nil* filled with Swami is Anil. (*Applause*) What more do you want in life?

GRACE FOR ALL

One day in front of everybody He asked me, "I am going to give you *moksha*. Do you want it?"

I said, "Swami, I don't want *moksha*, I don't want liberation."

He said, "Why? Everybody wants it. So why don't you want it?"

I said, "Swami, nobody has returned from *moksha* and told me that it is nice. (*Laughter*) I do not know that *moksha* is sweet or hot, tall or short, beautiful or ugly. So why should I ask for something that I do not know about?"

"No, no ask something. I am going to give now." He said.

"Baba," I said, "I know the taste of one thing. I feel excitement, thrill and joy while I speak about You, when I write about You, and when I travel to meet fellow devotees. Since You want to grant me a boon, I beg of You to be born again and again, to travel far in the world speaking about You, Bhagavan, singing about You, Bhagavan. I don't want anything else, Swami believe me."

Baba said, "It is a good wish. It is granted," said Bhagavan. (*Applause*)

Just as sunlight falls on everybody, my friends, all of us carry the blessings of Baba. Just as the moonlight falls on everybody, Baba's grace falls on everybody. You cannot run away from Him. You may not be aware of it but He is behind you, below you, above you, around you and in you.

All He wants from us is that we stand united. We should mingle as one family. There should not be any misunderstandings or fights. We want His grace, that is all. The more united we are, the stronger we will be, the more grace shall follow.

BABA IS THE LIFE-BELT TO SAVE US

A second thing is, let us not change our *guru*. *Guru* is not like clothes that are to be changed every day. Can you change your father? Can you change your mother? So how can you change your *guru*? After all, what is there anywhere that is not here? What is it that Baba has not said so far, tell me? What is it that Baba has not given us, please tell me?

Why should we be beggars? Baba says that we are not beggars. "You are biggers, not beggars." We may have bumps and jumps and shocks in our life, but Baba is the life-belt that saves us. We suffer with pleasure, and we face loss and bear insults with Baba's support. He is testing us on how long we can stand; He loves to test. He cannot see you cry, my friends; unless you cry, He will not come close to you.

Kanneeru Thappinchu Kanneeru Theppinchu

He will wipe out tears and will make you shed tears. He will wipe out the tears of difficulties, misery and sorrow, and make you shed tears of joy, bliss and gratitude.

GRATITUDE TO DEVOTEES

Friends, please excuse me. I have crossed all the norms for time limitations. (*Laughter*) I am very sorry but I cannot leave you; I am emotionally attached. I remember all of you.

For the first time, I saw a massage chair (*Laughter*) at the residence of brother Ram. For the first time, I saw a car garage door being lifted with a remote. While travelling with Heera in his car, for the first time I saw that it is possible to talk to people while travelling in a car.

You are all beautiful devotees, you are all lovely people, and you are all flowers in the garden of Sathya Sai Baba. How can I forget the moments with Jablani and his wife Kavitha, showering concern and love on me? Any number of towels cannot dry my wetness because their water of love is such! (*Applause*)

How can I forget brother Heera? The best man I ever met, the embodiment of organisational skills and talent, a beautiful instrument in the hands of Baba, touches my feet saying that I am the ambassador of Baba. How can I forget?

How can I forget Mahesh and Bhavani, a beautiful couple? How can I forget Manu and Pooja? How can I forget those little girls, Mahima and Kajol?

How can I forget this lovely handsome translator? (*Laughter* and *applause*) I tell you he is the best translator I have ever met till this day, with a broad smile and a nice outfit (*Laughter*)—a perfect match for Anil Kumar! (*Laughter* and *applause*)

I thank those who have come from Tokyo, I thank those who have come from Nagoya and I thank those who have come from fifteen hundred miles!

How can I forget brother Dayal Sandhani and his wonderful singer wife? Their most beautiful affectionate daughter Diva and his handsome son-in-law Abhishek Bachchan (*laughter*), how can I possibly forget you?

I don't feel like leaving this place. Everything has to come to an end eventually. This is not a full stop, this is only a comma. (*Applause*) Many more sentences will follow. (*Applause*) Many more letters are yet to be written on the golden pages of our heart. How can I forget this youth group reciting Vedas full-throatedly and a Bombay boy there whose face lights up with eagerness in front of a camera? How can I forget you singers and instrumentalists? I love you, I love you. (*Applause*)

Sai Sai Saienare

This is a song composed by Baba in His early days.

Sai Sai Saienare

Louder! Are you hungry or what?

*Sai Sai Saienare
Sarvamamu Brahmamu Mayamanare*

Sai declares that:

Everything is Sai.

*Rama Rama Ramanare
Raksha Gunamulu Poommanare
Krishna Krishna Krishnanare
Kashtamulanu Pommanare
Hari Hari Hari Hari Harienare
Atma Ramuni Madiganare
Shiva Shiva Shiva Shiva Shivaenare
Shiva Kesavalanu Samamanare*

Brother Jablani requested me in Nagoya to sing a particular song. The flight cannot take off without singing that song; the luggage will be unloaded though already checked in. (*Laughter*) With due respect to the two office bearers here, who added the flavour of the smile of Rishi Kapoor. (*Laughter*) Come on:

*Adi Sesha Anantha Sayana
Srinivasa Sri Venkatesa (Adi)
Raghu Kula Thilaka Raghu Ramachandra*

*Sitapathe Sri Rama Chandra (Adi)
Yadukula Bhushana Yashoda Nandana
Radhapate Gopala Krishna
(Adi)*

*Kashayambara Sri Parthivasa
Shiridipate Sri Sai Natha (Adi)
Om Sai Natha Jai Sri Sai Natha Jai
Om Sai Natha Jai Sri Sai Natha Jai
Om Sai Natha Jai Sri Sai Natha Jai
Puthaparthi Vasa Jai Sathya Sai Baba Jai
Sathya Sai Baba Jai*

***Samartha Guru Sathya Sai Baba Maharaj Ji ki Jai!
Shirdi Vasa ki Jai!
Dwarka Mayi ki Jai!
Jai Bolo Sri Sathya Sai Baba Ji ki Jai !!***

Anil Kumar finished his talk by singing, "Om Tat Sat Sri Narayana Tu"

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

*Asato Maa Sad Gamaya
Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya
Mrt'yormaa Amrtam Gamaya*

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

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

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