

Professor Anil Kumar has presented this talk as an extra satsang. He has selected important messages Baba has imparted to the students gathered around Him during the afternoon sessions on the veranda at Prashanti Nilayam. These talks will continue.

ANIL KUMAR'S SATSANG: BABA'S CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS

"Sai Pearls of Wisdom"

Part Twenty

February 25th, 2003

"Village Seva Experience"

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

Sai Ram to all of you.

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

FEBRUARY 25th, 2003

Thanks to Swami for having brought us again to this evening session. As we have been doing all along, we are going backwards in time. What I am going to speak now was published in the Telugu *Sanathana Sarathi* during the month of December 2000, regarding the month November. November 23rd has a special significance, as it is the Birthday of Bhagavan. Bhagavan started village work, entrusting it to the students during November of that year, 2000.

OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THE VILLAGERS

Well, boys had been asked to take up this village work. First they did the following: students in different groups visited so many villages in and around Puttaparthi and made a thorough survey of every village.

Bhagavan called them all, students and teachers, and said, "Look here, I am sending you to villages, giving you an opportunity to serve the villagers there. I want you to serve them food -- give them food packets. I want you to

give them sweets. I want you to give them clothes. And I want you to see that you do not forget anybody. Every villager should necessarily receive these gifts of Grace.”

Bhagavan was very particular about it. He gave them all possible directions in this connection. I should also bring to your attention that about 35 lorries were deployed for this purpose -- to carry students to different villages. 35 lorries! Apart from the lorries, the other four-wheelers were also put to work. Well, boys were divided into batches. They were given the lorry numbers and they got into the lorries, ready to go to the villages.

TRUE INDIA IS IN VILLAGES

My friends, here I want to let you know that the true India is in villages. The Indian culture could be well known only in villages. The cities like Bombay, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Delhi, as you see them today, they have little traces of Indian culture left. But in the interior of the villages, you find Indian culture still followed today. So, Swami wanted this rural development programme to be taken up by the students as a part of their study, so that they know the village life. Then they will know the problems in a village. They will also know how to face these problems and how to solve these problems. So, it is a part of their study.

PUTTAPARTHI: TRANSFORMED INTO A GLOBAL VILLAGE

And who is the leader whom we can look up to, as an ideal in this rural activity? I can tell you, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the best possible guide and ideal, who we can look up to, following and emulating His example. You may ask me, why and how? When Bhagavan was born here, there were about 100 residences -- that's all! There were about 100 houses in this village of Puttaparthi.

And today, it is a global village. In those days, there was no power supply, no electricity. And today, we have electricity and electronic gadgets of the latest order. Those days, there were no schools at all. And today, we have a university. In those days, there was not even a primary health centre. No medical facility. And today, we have a Super-Speciality Hospital. In those days, people had to walk kilometres and kilometres to fetch a pot full of water; and today, drinking water supply is extended so that we get water out of the taps in almost every room at every residence.

This is what a rural development programme is! To this stature, Bhagavan has developed the village: so that the village then, has been transformed into the global village of today.

THE MODUS OPERANDI

Now, around 75,000 *saris* were distributed to women; 75,000 *dhotis* were distributed to men; and 75,000 school uniforms were distributed to schoolchildren during that 10-day service activity.

Here let me also speak to you about the *modus operandi* or the procedure adopted. We had around 1,000 girls from Anantapur campus who worked throughout the night to make the food packets ready for distribution by the boys. They started packing the material around midnight. They continued until 7:30 or 8 o'clock in the morning. These one thousand girl students, who were supervised by teachers, made the food packets. There were two packets: one, the sweet and the other, hot. We had to give these packets to every member of every family in every village, every day. So you can imagine what sort of work it was.

Cooking started at 10 o'clock in the night. It was quite unbelievable -- I don't know what to call it. There were hundreds and hundreds of utensils, hundreds and hundreds of cooks, as if some very big *yagna* was going on, with floodlights all over! Oh! Oh! Oh! It is only possible for Baba to have the work done at that magnitude -- impossible for anybody else!

BOYS EAT WHAT THEY DISTRIBUTE -- NOTHING SPECIAL ABOUT IT

All the food packets were ready by 7:30 in the morning. There were special teams of students to load these lorries -- huge baskets containing the packets, depending upon the number of houses and the number of residents at every home. So, all these lorries were loaded with foodstuff, and also full of students. They started here, everyday in the morning, doing some *bhajans*, receiving Baba's blessings and only then leaving. You must have seen them. They got into the lorries and the lorries went to far distances to reach the villages. They returned by the evening *bhajan* time. So the boys had to eat there. A few packets were kept for the boys also. They ate what they distributed -- nothing special about it. This was really something very grand.

BHAGAVAN'S METICULOUS CARE

About 350 villages were selected for this rural development programme. See our Bhagavan, what meticulous care He gave! As lorries started off to their destinations, half-an-hour later, Bhagavan used to send additional lorries with *more* food packets and clothes. Additional things! Why? In case we ran short of stock, this would be used immediately. So, nowhere was there any shortage of food packets or clothes because we had received additional supplies from the lorries coming behind us, which Bhagavan had sent. It was really a very, very beautiful experience!

In addition to that, there were some students travelling in cars with wireless sets, giving instructions to everybody:

“Lorry # 4, where are you? How many packets are there?”

“Lorry # 10, how many students are there? How many packets?”

“Sir, packets are over. Is there any additional truck behind?”

It was as if some military camp were going on! (*Laughter*)

I don't think that even war camps will have the kind of perfection as I have seen there! These boys are all M.Sc. students, M.Tech students. So they put all their technology into this work. Well, it was amazing!

“Sir, Anil Kumar, sir! In which lorry are you? #10 lorry or #12 lorry?”
(*Laughter*)

“Sir. Please stop the lorry. Anil Kumar sir is missing!” (*Laughter*)

Very interesting, you know! Very interesting!

And there was no confusion at all at any point of time! Not at any point of time!

A BIG FESTIVAL IN EVERY VILLAGE

There in the villages, immediately as the students got down from the lorry, they did *Nagarsankirtan*. Then they started food distribution from one point, so that the whole village would be vibrant with God's Name. I, too, participated in this activity in my own humble way, travelling in lorries, jumping and all that. Most surprisingly, in every village, wherever we stopped, hundreds of children...oh! All were shouting and coming over there! There were all big people, all residents – it was a grand *gala* welcome, a big festival in every village!

Now we should see Swami's comments here, which are even more important. My attempt is not merely to describe what happened during that time. The message behind this is more important because this rural development programme was just an excuse to convey the Divine Message to everybody.

THE DIVINE MOTHER'S CARE

After our return in the evening, we always found Swami waiting for us -- just standing there!

“All lorries have come? No? Why? Who is in charge? Call that fellow. Five lorries are yet to come? Why? What happened?”

Ah! Very anxious! Very nervous! Much more than a mother waiting for the kid! In case the kid returns home, late by half-an-hour, the mother will have high blood pressure and all those things. (*Laughter*) Sai, the Divine Mother, was full of anxiety.

“Why? What happened?”

“Swami, they are on the way.”

“Why? Why have you come earlier, leaving them? All lorries should come at the same time, you understand?”

Well, we didn't dare to face Him at all! So there were also occasions when we stopped lorries at the outskirts to make sure that all lorries assembled, in order to see that we were all safely here, as we faced Bhagavan. (*Laughter*)

HUNGER IS THE SAME TO EVERYBODY

After our return, during one of those days, one lecturer said to Swami, “Swami, when we were distributing those food packets, everybody was happy to receive them! Those of all religions, Muslims and Christians -- everybody received food packets!”

Baba said, “Don't speak like that. Why do you say, ‘Muslims and Christians’? Hunger is the same to everybody. There is nothing like ‘Muslim appetite’, ‘Hindu appetite’ and ‘Christian hunger’. Useless fellow! All need food. Food is the same. Hunger is the same. There is nothing like ‘Muslim and Christian’! *Tsk!* Keep quiet.” (*Laughter*)

DO BHAJANS -- BHAJANS GIVE US ADDITIONAL STRENGTH

Then He also said, “Make sure that you visit every house and talk to them with a smile. Tell them, ‘Sir, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has sent *Prasadam* to you. He has sent clothes to you. Let's know how many men are here, how many women are here and how many children are here. We are ready with these things.’ Distribute like that.”

“Talk softly and sweetly, so that they will have the best opinion of our institution. And remember, it is better that you take more packets than required. Never go with the exact number and never take less number than what is required.” He was very sure about it.

And He said, “While distributing food, do *bhajans*. Do *bhajans*.”

It's a lesson for everybody, my friends! As we do our work, let us do *bhajans*. One may be in the kitchen. One may be in the dining hall. One may be at the work spot. We can do *bhajans*. Why not? *Bhajans* give us a sort of additional boost, additional strength. This is the message to everybody.

MERE ENERGY IS NOT ENOUGH -- YOU SHOULD HAVE SOME INTEREST

Then He said, “First give *Prasadam*, next clothes. This is the Indian tradition.”

We don't give clothes first and serve food later.

“Serve food first, and give clothes next. That’s very important.” That’s what Bhagavan said.

And then, “Be respectful. Show respect to everybody and be respected.”

“Let you be respected later. By showing respect to others, you will be respected in turn.” That’s what Bhagavan said and He also said, “It is not enough if you have sufficient energy to serve. You need the interest also.”

“There are many people who have energy. They go on doing many things. If you are simply energetic, you are mechanical. Mere energy is not enough. You should have some interest, some dynamism, some leadership, some activity; some cheer so that you will gladly do it.” That’s what Bhagavan said.

BABA'S VISIT TO VILLAGES

Then, Bhagavan was waiting for the boys there on the veranda everyday, ready with baskets full of apples. He started distributing one apple to every boy, staring at each boy, looking deeply into the eyes of another boy, making fun of each and every one of them. It was a sight for the gods!

I can also tell you that when we mentioned the names of certain villages, our good God recalled His past association of sixty years ago, telling when He visited that place, whom He visited at that place and how He spent His time there. This was an extra bonus to all the students. They forgot all the strain; they forgot their tiredness, and they laughed when Swami started speaking about His ‘good old days’ of sixty years ago, when He visited those distant villages.

JANAKAMPALLI

For example, we mentioned the name of one village by the name of Janakampalli.

Immediately Swami said, “Oh! Sixty years ago, I went to that village. I spent a good number of days there. There is one Reddy family there. That man -- he must be very old now. Did you meet him?”

“Yes, Swami! We met him, and he told us about how You made them happy -- how You stayed there with them. “

“Oh, I see.” Bhagavan was happy.

And then I just asked, “Swami, what did You do there in that village, sixty years ago?”

“What? Same thing. Discourses, *Prasadam*. Same thing.”

“Swami, people assembled?”

“From all neighbouring villages – full of people there! I used to talk to them.”

“Oh, Swami.”

ENUMULAPALLI

Then Swami started talking about another point. He asked somebody else, “Where did you go?”

“Swami, we went to one village by the name of Enumulapalli.”

“Oh, I see. Did you go there?”

“Yes.”

“Ah! On the way, there are two mad people. Did you give them *Prasadam*?”

See that!

“Yes, Swami, we gave.”

“Umm...if you go still further, there is an old man, who cannot stand also. Did you give him *Prasadam*?”

“Yes, Swami”

“And when you went to the by-pass road, there is old blind fellow. Did you give him *Prasadam*?”

See that! He was telling where people stayed, inquiring if the *Prasadam* was received or not. That is the meticulous care that Bhagavan took regarding our activity.

KARNATAKANAGEPALLI

Then we said, “Swami, we have been to another village, named Karnatakanagepalli.”

“Oh, I see!” Swami said, “Oh, I stayed there for a long time. I used to go there almost every alternate day.”

But Karnatakanagepalli, which is very close to here, is full of mountains and thick forests. Swami, as a boy, used to run away into the forest, climb up the mountains and stay there.

Karanam Subbamma, who was very fond of Baba in His childhood, served Swami right from His childhood. She was a very rich lady in this village. So, all looked upon her with all esteem and all respect. This lady went in search of Baba, to find out where He was, as she carried food to Him every day.

“Where is this Baba? On the mountain top? Or deep in the forest? What to do?”

So this lady, being a rich lady from a rich family, used to take along with her two grown-up *Pahilvans*, well-built fellows, to search out where Baba was, and to carry Him back in their arms.

'This little Baba, will He be able to walk home all the way or not?' She wanted them to carry Him back in their arms. This is what Bhagavan went on telling about those days.

KUNKALAPALLI AND DUPAMPALLI

Then we made mention of another village, *Kunkalapalli*.

Swami said, "What did you see there?"

"Swami, we met 400 people. They are all Tamilians. They came from a long distance, and are working as casual labour there in the fields. When we were distributing clothes and food packets, we saw tears of love on their faces, tears of thankfulness and tears of gratitude, Swami! We were so happy."

Another gentleman said, "Swami, we have been to another village by the name of Dupampalli."

The boys who went to that village of Dupampalli said, "Swami, all the local people started singing their own *bhajans*, not our Prashanti *bhajans*!"

Every village has got its own local culture, as I said earlier. They have got their own local *bhajan* songs, full of philosophy, which is expressed in very simple language.

Swami was very happy. "I see!"

And then the lecturer-in-charge said, "Swami, when we said, 'Baba sent *Prasadam* to you, Baba sent clothes to you', well, they could not control their emotion. Most of them burst into tears, Swami! There were really lost in ecstasy."

DHARMAVARAM

Then I should also make mention of a town by the name of Dharmavaram. (Most of you must know that place.) We had been to that town. And it was 9:30 by the time we returned -- 9:30 in the night. It took time because it was a thickly populated town.

And I tell you, till 9:30 PM, our good God was waiting there on the veranda! He did not even have a sip of water till then! He had cancelled *bhajans*; He had cancelled interviews. He was just standing there on the veranda till 9:30 PM, waiting for the boys to return. Can you ever estimate His Love for the boys? Can you ever imagine His concern for the boys? It is unimaginable!

SRI SATHYA SAI SUPER SPECIALITY HOSPITAL

So, we had been to many villages. All the village names are not necessary to know, as the names are more confusing. But I can tell you what some of the villagers expressed when we had been to those places:

We met one old man, who came close to us: “Boys, look here! I got my eye operated on there in Sri Sathya Sai Hospital. So I am able to see today. I am able to earn my bread because my sight is normal.”

And then at another place, we found another man coming to us: “Sir, look here! I got my heart operated on in Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospital. Had I not been operated on, the whole family would have been on the streets. I am the only breadwinner. Baba gave me a second life.”

It is a thrilling experience to hear people telling how they were benefited by Baba’s service institutions.

And the boys also responded to the call of Bhagavan. They responded to the message of Bhagavan. Well, while the lorry was coming towards Puttaparthi on the return journey, wherever they found some people working in the fields, the boys stopped the lorries and carried food packets to those agriculturists and farmers working there. That made Swami very, very happy.

And then, in certain villages, on coming to know that Baba’s students were coming there, they made special village-type of decorations, and gave a grand *gala* welcome to everybody! Plus they started singing songs in praise of Bhagavan, giving a tumultuous welcome to all of us.

HE LOVES ALL RELIGIONS

In some villages, we saw people coming close and telling us, “Sir, we had no water till now. We were getting water from the neighbouring village. Thanks to Swami, we now have water available here in this village. Thanks to Swami!” That is what they said.

In some other village, we met a few Muslims who came and said, “Sir, Baba constructed a mosque for us, a place of worship for Muslims, Darga. Baba constructed that Darga or mosque for us to pray in. We are very grateful to Him.”

These are all the acts of Bhagavan, which will tell us that He loves all religions. All religions are one. The truth is one; only the paths are many. The goal is one; the paths are many. Destination is one; but worship procedure may be different, practices may be different. But God is One. That is the message.

AFFECTION EVERYWHERE

In some villages, the poor people had spread out mats on the ground. “Boys, please sit down.”

They were telling, "Shall we give you some water? There is cold water. Please have water." Some people were offering buttermilk.

Some people said, "Boys, you don't know the villages. Shall we give you groundnuts to eat? Please don't refuse. We have some groundnuts. Eat them."

And some villagers gave them pieces of sugarcane. "Come on, would you eat it?" They were extending their hospitality, courtesy and reception in their own way. That is really grand, grand!

'CITY CULTURE' OR 'FLAT CULTURE'

Most of these boys are from cities. In cities, nobody is bothered about anybody. Even if the neighbour is on their deathbed, one is not concerned. Even if there is a wedding in the neighbour's house, one is not bothered. That is 'city culture', particularly for those who stay in flats -- 'flat culture'. There is nothing -- life is flat. There are no human relationships, no courtesies, no acquaintances and no social contacts. We don't know anyone there.

"Who is your neighbour?"

"I don't know!" And furthermore, we are not ashamed of it. We even call it 'culture and civilization'!

But in villages, it's not like that. They are all one; they cooperate with each other. And what a humility and courtesy they have! Obedience, and such a nice reception with folded hands: "Please come, sir!"

In cities, we don't find this. If they see any stranger, they say, "Hi." That's all. Nobody will say, "Sir, what do you want?" Nobody will say that, that's all. The fellow, that stranger, will be afraid of these places because there is no welcome and no concern for him.

So the boys, coming from the cities and watching this kind of village hospitality and reception, could not believe their eyes, I tell you! And moreover, the kind of devotion in the villages! The villagers are innocent. They are poor and pure. They have no doubts. But most of the fellows from the cities, who are highly educated, their head is full of doubts! They have no faith in God and no faith in themselves. All the world over today, there is no love anywhere in the cities.

EDUCATION OF HEART IS 'EDUCARE'

So, the education of the heart is 'educare'. That's what we find in villages. The knowledge of the head is education. The feelings, values and sentiments of the heart are 'educare'. That's what we find in villages. In cities, the pomp, show, publicity, pride, ego and vanity are the common features. Humility, simplicity, reverence, respect, faith, obedience, courtesy, concern, sympathy and forbearance -- these are the values found in the villages.

We are very grateful to Bhagavan for having given us this opportunity to visit the villages and to gain this experience while serving them, to know better what Indian culture is -- what it stands for in the true spirit. That has been the experience of all the boys.

Since then, they went on asking Swami every year, "Swami, shall we go this year also?" As a result, the rural development programme, *Grama Seva*, has been going on for the last two years. I think you know that.

The boys were asking Swami for permission to participate, foregoing their vacation. Do you know that? Usually in our places, people want to go home during their vacation to enjoy with their parents and friends the cookies and special preparations. But here, the boys don't want vacations. They want to do this service activity. This is quite an unbelievable phenomenon!

OCTOBER 2000

Now, I shall go to the next month and share with you a few points. These details are published in the Telugu *Sanathana Sarathi* in the month of October 2000. I am sure that I am presenting these things in chronological and sequential order to the best of my ability.

Although there are some pressing engagements and appointments right now, particularly at this time when the academic year is coming to a close and the boys are preparing for examinations, we, the teachers, are also in a hurry to complete the syllabus. But I am also particular to complete *this* syllabus. This is also equally a syllabus. (I am particular to complete this, so that you will have some time there in Bangalore to edit and finish this work.)

Now, here are a few points regarding these October 2000 episodes.

Bhagavan has with Him students from all states, from all over the country, and a few students from overseas also. You know how difficult it is to adjust to the different food habits. You know, when you are asked to take the spicy food in the South Indian canteen, I can imagine your reaction. I cannot even imagine you eating pickles in my dream! Impossible! Because our pickles will land you on the moon straightaway, without the help of any satellite or spacecraft! (*Laughter*) That's my regular diet, you know! I have eaten a lot of chillies, a lot of hot stuff, right from the beginning. It has been my body constitution, that's the thing. And the boys here, who are from the north, eat *chapattis*. Those coming from the South have *sambar* and *rasam*. But all the boys have to eat the same food there in the hostel. Just imagine how difficult it is!

A MEMORABLE TRIP TO THE USA

I remember my trip to United States in the year 1975. I didn't have anything to eat there. I had been to the State of Indiana in the United States. I

had been to Brazil, Indiana; Corydon, Indiana; Bloomington, Indiana; Terre Haute, Indiana; and Indianapolis, Indiana. I had been to so many places there. But I didn't have anything to eat. However, everybody knew that I am a vegetarian. So what they did was, they used to bring a big bowl with potatoes totally crushed into a paste (mashed potatoes).

"Anil Kumar, you are a vegetarian – so, potatoes!" (*Laughter*)

But they are very nice people. I have not yet seen such friendly people till now. They love me – a very friendly people. And potato is certainly vegetarian food. How can I say it's non-vegetarian? It's not. But I thought, 'How can I eat that paste?' (*Laughter*) So, out of courtesy and good manners I said, "Very nice! Thank you very much!"

But some of them were watching what I would eat because I had to be there for six weeks as their guest. They should send me home intact and alive. (*Laughter*) So, they used to watch me. Well, somebody could understand that this fellow is not eating. And some very good people, I tell you, very good people, some of them Americans, came close to me and said, "Mr. Anil Kumar, no! You are not eating anything. Please let's know what you *really* care for? I will cook for you, Mr. Anil Kumar."

Shall I tell them that I eat hot stuff and all that? I said, "Don't bother! I am fine."

Finally what they thought was – they said, "Do you like cakes, Mr. Anil Kumar?"

"Yes"

"Do you like biscuits?"

"Yes"

"Chocolates?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Milk shake?"

"Why not?" (*Laughter*)

"Groundnuts?"

"Very much!" (*Laughter*)

"Cashew nuts?"

"Immediately!" (*Laughter*)

The result was that my dining table was *full* of these cakes and breads, buns and milkshakes. Whereas the non-vegetarian fellows had only one or two items, I had so many! And please believe me, I was more energetic than all those fellows put together, living on cakes, biscuits, milkshakes, cashew nuts, groundnuts, cream, cheese and pizza! *Wah!* (*Laughter*)

DIFFICULT TO ADJUST IN A DIFFERENT LAND

So, it is so difficult to adjust ourselves in a different land with our food habits. They were such fine people -- I cannot forget them for a lifetime. Here is what those people did: My next host used to ring up to the current host and say, "Mr. Anil Kumar is going to be with us next week. Please tell us, what is he going to eat?" (*Laughter*)

"Oh, 1 - Rice."

"Good."

"2 - Some chutneys."

"We will get such stuff for him from the Indian restaurant."

"3 - He is afraid of dogs and cats and guinea pigs."

"Oh I see! We will keep them safe in a room and lock it." (*Laughter*)

"4 - He is very fond of hot, hot coffee."

"Oh, all right!"

"5 - He likes to give any number of speeches."

"Alright! We will arrange for a few meetings." (*Laughter*)

"Ah, OK! And he likes to socialize with people, talk to American friends, know their culture."

"Oh, noted. We will invite them."

Of course, this is all my personal experience. Thinking that you will certainly enjoy hearing this, I am telling you!

SINGING BHAJANS

One day there, somehow I felt, 'What shall I do?' I was very serious. All Americans have smiling faces. Oh, yes! I am yet to find an American with a serious face. No. All smiling faces with bubbling enthusiasm. All!

"Anil! Why are you serious? What is wrong with you? Are you OK?"

"I am fine."

"Why are you so serious?"

"No, no, no! I want to sing for you tonight."

"Sing?"

"Yes, why not? Some *bhajan* songs!"

"*Bhajan*? What is it?"

"They are spiritual songs. I will give the English meaning too. Please invite your friends also."

With the result, please believe me, that from that day, I had 200 people - all American families, hearing my talks and enjoying my company. And I enjoyed their company. So much so that the last day, all of us started crying because we could not part with each other!

So, with all that said and done, be that as it may, what I want to tell is that it is so difficult to adjust to different food habits. The boys coming from the Himalayas, from far off places, they eat South Indian *rasam* and *sambar*! It is

due to their love for Bhagavan. Or else, it's not possible. Well, why? Or else, how are you here, listening to the music of the mosquitoes at night?
(Laughter)

Leaving your own food that you relish very much, what is it that made you still smile and continue to stay here? It is your devotion to Bhagavan. There is no doubt about it. I feel so humble. I feel so little in front of you. Believe me or not, in front of all foreigners, I feel very, very, very sorry! How is it that I am not able to adjust? How is it that these people are able to adjust here? So, you are truly the children of Bhagavan Baba. I am not talking to you just to shower words of praise. I am really speaking from the bottom of my heart. I truly mean it!

LOVE IS THE MOTIVE

So once, as Swami talked to the boys, suddenly He looked at a fellow. "Come on, boy! *Umm...* You have a stomach problem, right?"

"Yes, Swami. Stomach pain!"

"Oh, I see!" Swami laughed and said, "See, Anil Kumar, this boy is from North India. He is used to taking *chapattis*, *rotis* and *parothas*. But here in our hostel, he has to take *sambar* and *rasam*. So, there is a stomach-upset problem, poor fellow! Don't worry, don't worry!"

He materialized tablets for him. Three tablets.

"I am giving you three tablets. Take one now, one tonight and one tomorrow morning. You will be free of this."

That is God! People are here for the Love of Swami. And Swami is here for the Love of humanity. It is Love that has made both of us stay here. That's what I think.

And then, here we also find people from different countries, sitting in circles every day, talking about Swami's message and practising *bhajan* songs, as Swami tells everybody to do. They have to learn from other people. Every second, they make the best use of their time, thinking of Swami and practising *bhajans*. It is really great!

Mind you, I am telling all these things as they were published in the *Sanathana Sarathi*, an ashram magazine, which has His Divine approval and sanction, where a single word cannot be an exaggerated one. It should be correct -- accurate to the fact. That's all! So, what I am telling is recorded here. Therefore you will know that it has Swami's approval and sanction.

HE WORKS WITHIN

I should also tell you that I met Spanish-speaking people who were carrying with them certain books of *Sanathana Dharma*, the titles of which are not even known to Hindus! Some of those books are not even read by us. But

these people from Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Brazil and Guatemala are carrying a book bearing the title "*Tripura Rahasya*", which has got the quintessence of Vedanta philosophy, which I don't even understand. But those people from Argentina, they read! It only speaks of how Swami works within every one of us! When I told Swami, "Swami! Spanish people read all these books and literature!"

Swami said, "You fellows should learn from them. You go and learn from them! Are you not ashamed of this?"

"Swami, that's what they read!"

I am not also ashamed to tell you that I met a few devotees from Argentina, carrying some slip of paper. "Annayya!" (They call me 'Annayya'.)

"Annayya, you gave an English translation for *Satchidananda*. You are wrong. OK?" (*Laughter*)

"Am I wrong?"

"Yes, you are! Now here's what Baba said! Do you understand?"

I was jumping in joy. I felt like dancing. The Spanish people are correcting me, telling me that I was wrong in my translation? It only speaks of their depth in the subject and their thoroughness in the subject – that they are so particular to have a correct translation. I cannot do as I like; I cannot take things for granted. I carry with me a heavy responsibility -- I am accountable to them. I cannot think that all foreigners will say, "Thank you, Anil Kumar! You are doing a good job!" No, not necessarily. There are quite a good number of people who say, "You are wrong! OK? You understand?"

"Oh! I am sorry, sister. Thank you!" I stand corrected.

I CANNOT HELP IT!

There are some who tell me, "You are shouting. So we are not able to understand anything. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sister. I understand. But I cannot help it." (*Laughter*)

"Why?"

I am not a machine. When Swami says a statement with all emphasis, well, I should also convey it with equal force.

When Swami says, "There is no selfishness in Me", I cannot say softly, "There is no selfishness in Me" (*spoken meekly*).

Chee! Then the true spirit is gone! (*Laughter*)

Or Baba says, "All My educational institutions offer education, free of cost!"

"All My educational institutions are..." (*spoken meekly*)

Eh! It is only to make you understand that I cannot dull Bhagavan's discourse (*Laughter*). I cannot make His discourse insipid and tasteless.

“Pardon me! Bear with my shouting -- I cannot help it. Please, I beg your pardon.” That’s what I tell them.

VERY COSTLY RISK!

Some people say, “You translate very fast.”

“Yes, I am fast. But understand my problem. When Swami speaks very fast, I cannot be slow. (*Laughter*) Before I complete my sentence, He completes the next three sentences already. (*Laughter*) Please imagine my position. He won’t give me time. Instead of banging me like that, please pity me, my brother, please pity me. Please pray for me.”

And there are also some foreigners who tell me, “Would you please tell Bhagavan to give you some time to translate?” (*Laughter*)

I said, “I cannot take that risk.” (*Laughter*)

It’s a very costly risk -- I cannot do. I am afraid that I may be substituted. (*Laughter*)

THANK ME FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT!

And there are some who say with a smile, “Oh, Anil Kumar! You made two mistakes. Swami corrected you, right?”

I said, “Yes. I am so happy that you are attentive and that you also enjoyed when I was a flop.” (*Laughter*)

“When I went wrong, when Swami corrected me, you are happy! Good! So, I am giving you some entertainment also, for which you should thank me!” (*Laughter*)

I will never take it personally, whenever anyone comments like that. I don’t take it personally. I enjoy it because they are telling their opinion. There’s nothing wrong about it. We are all devotees. We are brothers and sisters. One can be free and frank about it. There’s nothing wrong. So these are the things that somehow I felt like sharing with you.

SAI IS ALL AROUND!

Then I can also tell you one thing that I noticed. I have floppies with me -- computer floppies or disks -- carrying all Sai literature, classified under 1500 heads! Can you imagine? Canadians read Swami’s literature thoroughly, classify it under 1500 headings, and make floppies for ready reference. Where am I, when compared to those people? And they sent me printouts of about 2000 pages. My cupboard is full of those papers! So, what research is going on!

Then one Australian published a book called, “*Sathya Sai Compendium*”, I believe. It’s a big book. It is Swami’s literature, like a dictionary, in alphabetical order! They collected all of Swami’s literature. So,

all over the world, research on Sathya Sai literature is going on intensively, particularly in the West; particularly abroad, such a thorough study is going on.

And it is unbelievable that so many books are published in Russian language! Earlier in Russia, in the times of Stalin and Lenin, there was nothing like religion. But today, there is Sai literature in Russian, and we have translators who are doing a better job than Anil Kumar himself! (*Laughter*) These two translators (*referring to two people in the audience*), how nicely they are doing it, how fast they speak, how enthusiastic they are! Without any paper, they are doing it. Well, I can't do that! Hats off to both of you. You are doing a really good job!

OUR GOD MADE HIS CHILDREN ABROAD GREATER THAN HIS CHILDREN WHO ARE NEAR HIM

Ah! See that! There are more and more! Oh, I am afraid that you are going to make me unemployed very soon! (*Laughter*) But, please believe me, I will be the happiest person if I am lost, if I am defeated at your hands! Yes, because our God made His children abroad far, far greater than His children very near Him. It speaks of the intensity of your devotion.

So, I prayerfully await the day when you will certainly excel me. You two have already excelled me! I am waiting to meet another two also! (*Laughter*) If you want, I will give you this in writing. Rush the following to the Russians: "Sister so-and-so, Brother so-and-so has excelled me in translation. I mean this in letter and in spirit. Signed, K. Anil Kumar." (*Laughter*)

This is recorded there. You can show it to everybody. Yes, I am so happy. Every teacher would like to be lost to the hands of his own student. Every teacher wishes that his student should excel him. Every parent wishes that his children should excel him. Don't you think so? So, similarly when you are there, I am happy about it!

I SHALL NOT FORGET YOU EVEN IF YOU FORGET ME

OK, now! It so happened that Swami started joking with a boy. He called him and said, "Arey, boy! How is your brother?"

That boy said, "Swami! Very fine!"

"*Ahaa!* He got married?"

"Yes, Swami!"

"Did you give him the clothes I have sent?"

"Yes, Swami!"

"Did you give him the ring I wanted you to give?"

"Yes, Swami!"

“Umm...tell him one thing: Let him not forget his young wife. It doesn't matter even if he has forgotten Me! But let him not forget his young wife!”

That's what Bhagavan has said. Please see that! And Swami said, “Boys, look here! I shall not forget you, even if you forget Me. I shall not forsake you, even if you forsake Me!”

Who will tell that today, tell me? That is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba!

We will continue tomorrow. I am sorry that in today's recording, there has been some personal note and some personal experiences as a translator. Anyway, I am sorry if I have taken your time. I stand guilty and hope I may be excused if I have taken your time. But somehow it has come out like that on it's own.

Thank you very much! Sai Ram!

Om Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu

Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu

Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavantu

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

Jai Bolo Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Ji Ki Jai!

Thank you!