

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-One

February 26th, 2003

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

Sai Ram.

**With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan,
Dear Brothers and Sisters!**

These are the details published in the month of October 2001 in the Telugu *Sanathana Sarathi*. Somehow, it slipped my attention. As I was referring back, I found that this was not covered. We will deal with the aspects relating to those episodes.

BAL VIKAS FROM LONDON

That day Bhagavan was busy with the Bal Vikas children from London. Around fifteen hundred children came to see Bhagavan in Brindavan. Swami allowed them to stage a cultural programme. These children staged a drama depicting the life of great saints from the State of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, as well as from the epics. They sang a number of songs composed by Kanakadasa and Thyagaraja. They also depicted the devotion of a great character by the name of Markandeya. Kanakadasa, Thyagaraja and Markandeya: Their songs and their lives were so beautifully depicted and so wonderfully enacted on the stage in front of Bhagavan.

The next day Swami was speaking about their performance. "See their devotion. They came from London - such a long distance - and staged a drama in front of Swami. They brought all the dresses, the backdrops and the make-up, all the way from London. Look at their devotion!"

DEATH SHOULD NOT SHAKE YOU

Bhagavan made special mention of the Bal Vikas teacher in charge of the London Bal Vikas centre – of her devotion and her leadership qualities. Bhagavan said, "See that lady, the Bal Vikas *guru* from London. She is a very noble lady. She is an ardent

devotee of Bhagavan. She has learnt all the messages of Bhagavan's teachings and she is practising them. She could face all the problems in life. She could resist all the difficulties in life and still hold on to Bhagavan with all courage!"

Then Swami said, "You know what happened? Last time, when she was going to the airport on her way back to London, she got news of the demise of her husband. She didn't break down. She didn't cry. Along with the Bal Vikas children, she travelled all the way to London. Then she did what she was expected to do, by way of last rites. She saw to everything that had to be done."

Then here Swami said (please note this point), "That Bal Vikas *guru* from London knows well that death is certain. When there is birth, there is bound to be death. It's inevitable! Death should not shake anyone. People should not lose their faith in God. Without giving any chance for depression, frustration or hopelessness, she could face all the problems in life. At the same time, she could proceed with Sai's message and mission. She is really a great lady!" That's what Swami said about her.

GREAT DEVOTEES ARE MORE FROM WOMEN

Then turning towards all of us, sarcastically He remarked, "Great devotees are more from women. Comparatively speaking, men are not that great as women." (*Laughter*)

"Oh, I see! Swami, is that so?"

"Yes."

"Then, please excuse me, Swami. If there are more devoted women than men, I say that the mistake lies with Creation, *Srishti!*" (*Laughter*)

The Divine God will not keep quiet. He turned and said, "There is nothing wrong with *Srishti*, Creation. The mistake lies with your *drishti*, vision. There is nothing wrong with *Srishti* or Creation."

"Oho!"

Still, I didn't want to keep quiet. I should champion the cause of men. Given the chance to represent men, how could I keep quiet? Then I said softly, prayerfully and respectfully, "My Lord! Men are less devoted according to You, on genuine grounds, for some valid reason."

Swami said, "What reason? What reason?"

"Swami! The only reason is that men have many responsibilities. They have many avocations, many responsibilities."

Immediately Swami said, "What responsibilities? Women have greater responsibilities than men. They take care of the home; they take care of the children; they take care of

the husband; they maintain accounts and what not. Women carry more responsibilities than men.”

“All right, Swami. The last point - men have more avocations.”

“What avocations?” Swami immediately said. “Going to clubs? Playing cards? Watching TV cross-legged and asking the wife to serve him hot coffee? What avocations? No, no, no, no!” *(Laughter)*

Then Baba said, “The heart of a man is hard like a stone. It has to be chiselled.”

I know my limitations, so I said, “Swami, if You start chiselling the hearts of men, we will break into pieces. Please Swami, please don’t do that! We will be reduced to powder!”

Swami said, “No, no, no! You have to be broken into pieces, not into powder!” *(Laughter)*

INTEREST – IN REST

Now we come to the next episode. Devotees from Germany staged a drama in Brindavan in front of Swami. We had the character of a queen by the name of Elizabeth. That lady sacrificed all her lot. She spent her life in service to humanity. Not only that, she brought to the palace the poor people from the streets - the needy and the handicapped. Then she served them. Alas! The very same people who benefited from her harmed her. They chopped off her hands. She was deceived. She was betrayed by those whom she has helped. That was the story.

The next day, Swami commented on the German’s presentation: “Have you seen that drama? Have you heard the dialogues? The devotees from Germany wrote all the drama, full of Sai teachings, full of Swami’s messages. See those people from Germany, how devoted they are!”

Then He said, “The drama presented by the devotees from Germany is so interesting. You know why? It came from the heart, whereas what you fellows do comes only from art. Art is outside. Heart is inside. Because it was a presentation from the bottom of the heart, it was so interesting.” That’s what Bhagavan said.

“OK, Swami. It is London and Germany season. OK.” *(Laughter)*

He went on praising them: “See how they changed from one scene to another scene, in quick succession. They didn’t delay; they didn’t take time. Immediately they were shifting, changing scene-to-scene. Did you understand that?” Bhagavan said.

“Oh, Swami.”

“They did it quickly, but you do it with tricks. Theirs was quick; yours is the trick! Our boys’ presentations are full of tricks, whereas those Germans...”

“OK, Swami!”

Finally, He said, “They did it like that because of their interest, whereas you fellows are always in rest. Theirs is interest; yours is always in-rest!” (*Laughter*)

DIVINE THOUGHTS IN LITTLE BRAINS

Then we go to the next episode: the Vinayaka Chaturthi festival. You all know that Vinayaka Chaturthi is the first festival of a calendar year. Vinayaka Chaturthi is the worship of the deity of knowledge, the deity of wisdom, Lord Ganesa. On the third day, people take all these idols or statues in procession and immerse them in water. You must already know that. You must have seen that grand function. Students from all institutions bring idols of Vinayaka, while dancing and singing. Oh, they are so nicely decorated. Swami goes up to every group and takes photographs with them. He breaks coconuts and cheers them on. He blesses them and asks them to go in a procession to the Chitravathi River, where all the idols are immersed.

The immersion ceremony, occurring on the third day after the Vinayaka Chaturthi, is an interesting festival. I want to share with you what happened that day. Swami came out. Most of the boys were close to the Chitravathi, immersing their Ganesa idols. In the meantime, Swami started talking to the primary school children. He went on asking them to make speeches. One boy after another boy – *tata, tata, tata!* Very interesting! Without preparation, without advance notice, one child after another made a speech.

At that moment, I returned from the Chitravathi and found that the veranda was free. I sat in my usual place. From a distance, our mischievous God, Swami, wanted to convey a message. He always sees that the message is conveyed at the right time and in the presence of everybody.

So this is what happened: He called the primary school children. He started asking questions. What was the first question?

“Eh, boy! Where do you come from?”

The boy said, “From You, Swami.”

Swami turned to us and said, “If I put that question to you, you will say, “From Hyderabad, Swami, or from Bombay, Swami! *Ch!* See these boys - from *You*, Swami! That is his devotion!”

Then the second question: He asked another boy, “Boy, what is the form of God?”

The boy said, “Swami! Love, Swami!”

“See that, you M.A and M.Sc. boys! If I ask you what the form of God is, you say, ‘Rama, Krishna.’ *Ch!* See the primary boys: ‘Love is the form of God!’ ”

He went on teasing. Asking more questions, He just went on teasing us.

Baba asked another boy, "How do you love God?"

That boy said, "Swami! The best way to love God is to love all and serve all!"

"Arey, see! Can you give those kinds of answers? See those young ones!"

Then He asked another boy, "Hey, boy! Who is your friend?"

"Swami, You are my friend."

"Arey boys, would you say that? You will say another fellow is my friend, Swami! *Ch!* 'Who is your friend?' 'God is my friend.' See how nicely that boy gave an answer."

Then Swami asked another boy, "*Oho!* God is your friend, all right! Then tell Me, who is your enemy?"

That boy said, "Swami, anger is my enemy."

He looked at me and said, "Do you give that kind of an answer?"

"Swami, I can't, I am sure. That boy is great! OK!"

Then He looked at another boy, "Hey boy, what is the way to Immortality?"

That boy said, "Removal of immorality is the way to Immortality."

"See! See the standard of our young boys!" He was very, very happy.

Then He asked another boy, "Hey, boy! What is the meaning of *Namaskar?*"

I think you all know that *Namaskar* is joining both hands as per the Indian tradition. As reverence and respect to elders, we join both hands. That's called *Namaskar*.

Swami asked that boy, "Boy, what is the meaning of *Namaskar?*"

You know what that boy said, "Swami, *Na-ma. Na-ma-skar. Na-ma:* not mine, not mine! That is the meaning."

"*Oho!* What does it mean?"

"Everything is Thine, not mine, Swami!"

“See the primary school boys! The college boys should learn from these boys. See what nice answers they are giving.”

EGO MAY ARISE ANYTIME

This episode did not end there. Swami went on asking, “Boy, how many marks have you got?”

“85.”

(Turning to another boy,) “How many marks?”

“90.”

“Oh! Did you get those kinds of marks? See, our boys!”

Another boy came slowly to Swami and whispered something into His ear. We could not hear.

Swami looked at me and said, “Anil Kumar, what is it that this boy said to Me?”

“Swami, how can I know? He whispered in Your ear. I did not hear anything. I don’t know what he said.”

“No, no, no! What do you think he might have said?”

I said, “Swami, that boy must have got a low mark. When everybody got 90’s and 80’s, that fellow must have felt very shy. So, he didn’t want to speak loudly. He must have whispered into Your ear that he got a low mark.”

He said, “What nonsense are you speaking? No, no, no! He got 100%. He told me in My ear, ‘Swami, I got 100%. I don’t want to say it loudly. Why? Ego may develop in me! Ego may raise its hood anytime. I don’t want to see that.’”

“Oh, Swami, very great! Very great!”

Then I said, “Swami, I am also happy to report to You that the standard of English of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School is very high. They speak very good English.”

“I know.”

That ended the episode for that day.

EVERYDAY IS A FESTIVAL

The next day Swami started distributing new clothes to all the teachers. I didn’t understand why He was doing that. It was not a festival day. Why was He distributing new clothes? I put on a question mark face.

He said, "Why do you look like that?"

"Swami, there is no festival. I don't know why You are distributing clothes."

Baba said, "Here, everyday is a festival. Understand that you don't have to wait for a festival. Everyday is a celebration in Prashanti Nilayam!"

It's very true. We find two hundred coming from Iran. We find three-to-four hundred coming from Russia. We find six hundred coming from London. Large numbers of people come from different places. We find people coming on motorcycles. We also find people arriving here by walking thousands of kilometres! So, everyday is a festival in Prashanti Nilayam.

LEARN DISCIPLINE FROM ANTS

The next episode: Swami looked at an elderly man. He was writing something on paper. Swami said, "Come on, what is that you are writing?"

"Swami, I am writing an article."

"Show Me, show Me."

"Swami, it is only a rough copy. It's not worth showing to You."

Then Bhagavan said, "Why?"

"Swami, I have written in small letters."

"Bring it. It doesn't matter. Ants are small, but they are very powerful. Before you sit, watch whether there are ants or not. Ants are very small, but they are very powerful. It doesn't matter if they are small. Come on - bring that book."

This elderly man should have kept quiet. Before Swami, more silence is better, because we can say something wrong.

This elderly man said, "Swami, there is lot of discipline among ants."

As I have been telling you every time, Swami's is always the last word!

He turned around and said, "Oh, ants have high discipline, you say. But you don't have it. Learn from them."

The man learned from those ants what discipline is! (*Laughter*)

ONAM AT PRASHANTI NILAYAM

The next episode happened on the following day, which was the Onam festival. Onam is a festival celebrated in Prashanti Nilayam every year in August by the devotees from Kerala.

The following day, Bhagavan commented on their celebration. “Kerala is a land of culture. Kerala also has high respect for classical music. Another point: If a beggar stands at someone’s doorstep, he will never be turned away. Whatever food these people have, the housewife will serve it to the beggar.”

Baba went on, “People say that politicians are atheists. Politicians have no faith in God. As far as politics are concerned, they have no faith in God. But individually, they are great devotees. For political purposes, they are atheists. Yet in their individual lives, they are great theists.”

Then He went on describing a drama entitled “*Mohini-Bhasmasura*”, which was enacted by the devotees from Kerala. Well, this “*Mohini-Bhasmasura*” is a beautiful drama. I will tell the story so that you will appreciate it.

Bhasmasura is a modern man - a demon. Mohini is nature, an enchanting world, an attractive world - for example, a beautiful woman. Mohini, a beautiful woman, attracts Bhasmasura. The beautiful woman is nature by the name of Mohini. The man, Bhasmasura is attracted by Mohini - so much attracted that he has forgotten God. Ultimately, he even wanted to harm God. Mohini became more and more attractive; she started dancing. This fellow also started dancing. Bhasmasura had got a boon from God. Whoever’s head he laid his hand on would be burnt to ashes. Bhasmasura would put his hand on everyone and all were burnt to ashes. That was the boon he received from God.

While dancing, Mohini kept her hands on her head. While this fellow danced, he also kept his hands on his head. So, he was burnt to ashes! Man in his excessive desire, man in his enchantment towards the world, man because of his excessive attraction towards the world, gets burnt. That is the message of this drama and Bhagavan explained it so nicely.

“You know,” Bhagavan said, “The whole world is managed by three qualities: one, the animal quality - *Thamasik*; two, the emotional quality - *Rajasik*; and three, the *Satwik* quality - auspiciousness.”

Swami said, “Music also requires three qualities: one is *Sruthi* – the correct tuning; second is *Raga* - the wavelength / the tone; third is *Thala* – the beat. All three are necessary for music. Similarly, for the whole world to sustain, the three basic qualities are necessary.”

Communicating in the same wavelength on the greatness of the state of Kerala, Swami mentioned the name of a king, by the name of Sibi. He also mentioned the name of

another emperor by the name of Bali. Then He mentioned another king by the name of Bhishma. They were all kings of sacrifice. They were kings of penance. They were kings of truth. They were kings of eternal values. They all belonged to the State of Kerala. He went on praising them.

I CAN BEAR ANYTHING!

Now we move on to the next episode. Someone had put a very comfortable chair on the dais for Swami. Immediately Swami asked, "Who brought this new chair?"

Without His permission, you cannot do anything. Before He took anyone to task, I intervened. "Swami, the chair is very good, very beautiful to look at. The chair must have been brought here for Your comfort and convenience."

Baba remarked, "Comforts and conveniences are for you. I am beyond. I don't want these comforts and conveniences. I can bear any problem." (*Laughter*)

SARVA DHARMA PRIYA SAI

The next episode: About three hundred Muslims came from a nearby village by the name of Bukkapatnam. Long ago, Swami had built a school for the children in that village. The Muslims came here with a special prayer.

Swami asked, "What do you want?"

"Swami, You constructed a *Masjid* for us. Thank You!"

"*Achcha!*"

"Swami, You constructed a school for our children."

"Very good. Now what do you want?"

"Swami, we want a community hall, *Shadhi Khana*, where we can perform the marriages of our Muslim community."

Swami said, "Done. You go back. I will give instructions to the engineers. They will start construction tomorrow. Be happy."

I should tell you, the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan attract people of all religions, of all faiths, of all nations and of all age groups. That is His Divinity. That is Divinity!

I said, "Swami, it is fantastic! How You attract people of all religions? Unbelievable!"

Do you know what Baba said? "Whatever differences you have, you have to drop them off at the gate and then enter Prashanti Nilayam! The moment you come in, only unity! Differences are outside, but all should be one, like brothers and sisters."

Before I close this month's episodes, let me end with a note. The brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God is the quintessence of the message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

OCTOBER 2000

Now I pass on to another episode. This was recorded in the month of October 2000.

TRUE DEVOTION

That same day Swami was talking to some devotees from Croatia. Most of the people here have not heard of the country named Croatia. We don't know where it is located. If you place a world map in front of me, I will be a successful failure.

Swami gave them an interview. After it, He came out of the Mandir, walking gently and slowly. He stood in front of us and started telling us about them. "You know who they are?"

"Swami, I don't know."

"They are devotees from Croatia."

"Oh I see, Swami. What is their speciality? After all, people from all over the world come here. What is special about them?"

He said, "What do you know? You seem to be a fool."

"Swami, why do You say I *seem* to be a fool? I *am* a fool! Not seem-to-be-a-fool"
(*Laughter*)

Swami went on explaining: "You know, all those Croatians made a trip to this place by saving money every month from their salaries. Every month they saved some of their hard-earned money. They came from a long distance and spent a lot of money."

Swami said, "I should also tell you another thing."

"What is it, Swami?"

Bhagavan said, "Watching all the Croatians save money, bearing all the difficulties and suffering to come here, one rich man wanted to finance them. He told them, "Why do you worry like that? Why do you struggle so hard? I will pay the money for many people. Don't worry."

"Swami, what a nice thing it is." I said.

"You are a fool!" (*Laughter*)

"Why, Swami? What happened?"

“The Croatians told that rich man, ‘Sir, we don’t want your money. Swami would not appreciate it if we took money to make a trip to this place. So, thank you very much for your generosity and for your kindness.’ That’s what they said. That is the standard of devotion of the devotees from Croatia.”

Well, I don’t know about others. I felt very much humiliated because most of us don’t stand anywhere near them in respect to their high standards of devotion. It may be that Swami said all this for us to learn.

QUALITY IS REQUIRED, NOT QUANTITY

Now, I will take you to another episode: A previous Prime Minister of Nepal, by the name of Koirala, visited this place. Today we have another Prime Minister. I am speaking of the past Prime Minister of Nepal. Swami granted an interview to all the members of Koirala. After saying goodbye to them, Swami came and stood in front of us. What did He say?

“Hey, Anil Kumar, you know him? You saw him?”

Shall I say ‘yes’? Then He will say, “Are you here to see everybody?”

Can I say, “I did not see”? Then He will say, “What happened to your eyes?”

So I kept quiet. “Swami, I want to know from You.”

Then He said, “He is the Prime Minister from Nepal.”

I said, “Oh, I see. Swami, I want to know what happened in the interview room. Please tell me.”

Swami said, “In the interview room, the Prime Minister told Swami, ‘Bhagavan, how lucky are these boys! How lucky are these people! They see You every day. They see Your lovely Form every day. They see You in the morning and in the evening. But we people, the administrators, the people at the helm of affairs, cannot afford to travel. We don’t have time. We have pressing engagements and appointments. But these people are so lucky to see You every day.’ The Prime Minister added further, ‘Bhagavan, how lucky I would be if I could become a child right now and get admission in Your primary school.’”

Swami said, “See what he said!”

Everybody laughed. That was the height of the Prime Minister of Nepal’s devotion. Baba consoled him. Laying His Hand on his back, He said, “Look here, Koirala, why do you worry? Why do you feel so sad that you are not able to visit Me frequently? It’s not the number of trips that are important, no. Your feeling, your yearning, your prayerfulness,

your love for Swami -- they are more important than the number of trips that you make to this place. You have total bliss. Is it not? That is enough.” That’s what Swami said.

Then Koirala, the Prime Minister of Nepal, wrote in the visitor’s book at the Super Speciality Hospital: “This hospital and the people of this land enjoy the benedictory blessings of Guruji.” (As you know, Guru is preceptor.)

In the interview room, Swami asked him, “Why did you say ‘Guruji’? Why did you write like that? Who is your Guru?”

Koirala said, “Swami, You are my Guru; but as Your devotee, I should be very humble. I should not spell Your Name out loudly: ‘Sathya Sai Baba’. No, no, no! I call You ‘Bhagavan’; I say ‘Swamiji’; I say ‘Guruji’. But I don’t call You by Name, Swami.”

Swami said, “See, that is his devotion.” His devotion is so great that He did not want to address Swami by Name. He called Him ‘Bhagavan, My Lord’!

With that, we come to an end of this month’s episodes.

INFORMATION CANNOT BRING TRANSFORMATION

Now I take you to the next month, which is reported in the August 2000, Telugu *Sanathana Sarathi*.

Next episode: Swami was smiling. He walked to his chair and sat on it. How can I ask Swami, “Why do You smile?” Can you ask? We can’t ask. So, we also started smiling. No one knew why. Everyone was smiling. (*Laughter*)

Then Baba said, “A gentleman is going to speak tomorrow on the subject, ‘Information to Transformation’.”

“Oh Swami, it’s a very nice subject.” I said, “Is there anything wrong?”

Nothing is wrong. It’s a good subject – ‘Information to Transformation’.

Then Baba said, “There will never be transformation through information. Information will never bring about transformation.”

“Oh! Swami, if information is not going to bring about transformation, how do we achieve transformation?”

Baba said, “Transformation is possible only by practice, not by information.”

“Oh!”

“And information without practice is useless, leave alone transformation! Information should take you to practice and practice will bring about transformation.”

UNITY IS STRENGTH

Now to another episode: Bhagavan gave an interview to a very important chief minister. He was well experienced in politics. After it, Swami came out of the interview room and said, "Just now I gave an interview to the Chief Minister. You must have noticed."

"Swami, what did You tell him?"

He said, "Why are you interested?" (*Laughter*)

"Swami, I want to know because whatever You say is a message to all humanity, and is of interest to us all. If You don't mind, please tell me."

Baba said, "In clear terms, I told the Chief Minister that the country should stand united. You should not break your country into pieces on linguistic basis, on regional basis or on silly considerations like caste and community. No! The country should always stand united. It should never be divided on silly grounds."

And Swami also said, "Furthermore I told him, "Look here, Chief Minister! The whole body is one and it acts united. You cannot cut off hands. You cannot chop off legs. You cannot behead and separate parts. That is useless. You are killing the person. So, the whole country is a body, a single body. Don't break it into bits."

It's a good lesson to all politicians. When the country stands united, the country will be strong. Baba gave one example: "When threads are separated, they are easy to cut with a little finger. When threads are woven into a cloth, you cannot break it; you cannot cut it. Am I not right? So, a strong nation cannot be conquered, cannot be defeated. Unity is its strength." That's what Bhagavan said.

BE GRATEFUL TO ELDERS

Now I move on to the next episode: One MBA boy gave a talk. Swami commanded him to make a speech, so he gave a short one in front of Bhagavan.

After it, Swami started speaking about the boy, "Anil Kumar! You know him?"

I wanted Swami to speak more. I did know him. I saw him everyday. Still, I could not say I really *knew* him. So I said, "Swami, not intimately - but I have seen him every day."

Then Swami said, "Look here! He has been with us for the past seventeen years. He has been a student right from the primary school."

"Oh Swami, is that so?"

"When this boy was studying in the primary school, he used to look at our university: 'When I grow up into a big boy, I want to study there. Will I get admitted to that

university?' That was his dream. Today he is a student of this university. And Anil Kumar, do you know what he is doing now? He is looking at the primary school where he studied!"

"Oh. Swami, why should he look at that school? Now that he is in the university, he can forget about that school."

Swami said, "You are wrong. That boy is looking at the school where he studied with an expression of thanksgiving, as an act of gratitude."

Then Swami told us, "Remember -- you should always feel grateful to your parents, grateful to your institution, grateful to elders, grateful to everyone who helped you and brought you to this present stage." That's what Bhagavan said.

DIVINE METAPHOR

My friends, here is a lesson for everyone. Swami said this: "As food is served on the plate, you should first offer it to God; only then eat it. Why? Then the food that you partake will be free from all impurities, will be free from all adulterated stuff. It will become a *Prasadam* - sanctified. You are not doing this. You offer the food to the demons, not to God!"

"Oh, I see." I said, "Swami, when You said that I felt very sorry. Please explain a little more about this."

Baba said, "You, children, are the plate. The foods served on the plate of your life are the senses -- the senses of perception and the senses of action. This food of senses must be offered to God. Who is He? Goodness, Truth and Beauty - Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram. God is Truth, Goodness and Beauty. This food of the senses must be offered to God. You are not offering the food to God. You are offering this food of senses to demons. Who are the demons here? Anger, lust, greed, hatred and avarice. That's what you are doing."

"Swami, what a fantastic expression! What a beautiful metaphor! You started it as a simile and made it into a metaphor!" We are really grateful to Swami.

ALL OUR PRAYERS REACH HIM

In the meantime, the boy who spoke in the auditorium that morning got up, came close to Swami and took *Padanamaskar*. Please note this point! Swami immediately looked at him and said, "Why extra *Padanamaskar*? Extra - why? This morning you did *Namaskar* to My photo! Why do you do it now?"

My friends, what is interesting is that Bhagavan knew the boy had done *Padanamaskar* that morning. He had received the boy's humble salutations offered at His Lotus Feet and He remembered it even now and asked, "Why this extra? I already received it."

My friends, when we pray in front of Baba's picture, when we offer our humble salutations to the picture, be convinced that it goes to Swami. Swami receives all of our prayers, be sure of that. This is the lesson. That is the purpose of my writing these episodes in *Sanathana Sarathi*.

Why should Swami's conversations with the boys and teachers be recorded and published? According to me, the gospel of Sai, the teachings of Sai, are everyone's property, not the sole property of students and teachers. God's teachings have no copyright! There is no copyright on the air. God gave it to us. Earth has no copyright. We are seated on the earth. So, it is in this context that I decided to record every bit and share it with everyone. Then it will be preserved for posterity. In the future, the gospel of Sai will be valued more and more.

OFFER THE SENSES TRULY

The next episode: There is an old man, who is a man of tradition. He does *pakka* worship; he is an orthodox man. You must have seen people like him in the Mandir, and the kind of prayer that they do. They keep flowers in front of the picture and then they say, "Bhagavan, I offer my eyes to You"; in Sanskrit, "*Netram Samarpayam*", meaning "I offer my eyes to You." In the ritual, they do this: They take a flower, touch both their eyes and put the flower in front of His photograph, which means, "I offer my eyes."

Swami started joking, "You are not offering your eyes; you are offering only flowers. You may be saying, 'Oh God, I offer both my eyes', but you are offering only flowers. What sort of worship is this? Bogus!"

I didn't want to keep quiet. It was time for clarification!

"Bhagavan! What? When I say 'I offer my eyes', should I pluck them out and keep them in front of Your picture? Is it not sufficient to offer a flower as a symbol? You want both of my eyeballs? What is this, Swami? I want Your guidance in this matter." (*Laughter*)

Baba said, "No, no, no! When you say, 'I offer my eyes to You', it only means, 'Oh God, let these eyes watch only sacred things of nature. Let these eyes be sanctified. Let my vision be sacred.' That is the meaning of offering your eyes to God. When you offer both your ears - *Srotram*, hearing - it doesn't mean that you have to cut off your ears and offer them to the photograph. No. It means, 'Oh, God, let my hearing be sacred. Let my audition be sacred. Let my ears be sanctified.' That is the purpose behind it."

"Swami, all right. Should I offer this every day? Once my eyes are sanctified, should I offer them to You tomorrow also?"

Baba laughed, "Arey, you seem to be a businessman!" (*Laughter*)

"Oh, I see. I am sorry, Swami. But I want to know the inner significance."

Baba said, "Don't you wash vessels everyday? Why? To keep them clean. Similarly, you should offer the whole body to God every day, so that the whole body will be sacred. That's why you have to pray to God every day."

THANKS - NOT WANTS

Now I move on to the next episode: Every day you see boys trying to give letters to Swami. We are inquisitive to know what they write. After all, they are unmarried young fellows. What problems can they have? If I give Him a letter, it is understandable because I have a wife, four children and six grandchildren! What more is necessary for problems in this world? (*Laughter*) So, I write my problem and give it to God.

Swami said, "Anil Kumar, do you know what they write?" (As the thought came to me, immediately Swami said it! We should be careful about our thoughts. We should be careful about our words. We should be careful about our actions. Everything is registered in the Divine camera, in the Divine lens!)

So, I cannot bluff. (*Laughter*) The thought came to me and I wondered, "What is it that the boys write about?"

Bhagavan said, "You see, 'Thank You, my God' is one letter: 'Thank You, Baba. You inspired me to write a poem.' 'Thank You, Swami. I got first mark in the class!' 'Thank You, Swami. I sang in *bhajans*!' When hearts are innocent, everything is an offering to Swami. That's what they write. You can learn how to write a letter to Swami!"

"OK, Swami. Hereafter, I will be careful. Till now, I have not written. So, from tomorrow, if I write, I will be careful."

NO EMERGENCY FOR MY DEVOTEES

Swami sat down and gave a beautiful smile. Then He said (*kidding with the boys*), "Boys, from tomorrow, I am not going to receive your letters. I am not going to take your letters."

Immediately they said, "Swami, please don't say that! Please take our letters. We have the satisfaction of handing our letters to You. Please don't say that, Swami! Please accept our letters."

Swami said, "Why?"

Then I said, "Swami, there may be situations of emergency. We should bring the emergency to Your notice; so we write a letter. Swami, if You don't receive the letter, well, our heart beat stops!"

My friends, this next statement is very, very important. Please listen carefully. What did Baba say? "Emergency? There will be no state of emergency for My devotees! There will be no time when they will feel in an emergency situation."

Oh! God is serious! “Swami, what do You mean?”

“I don’t wait for their letters! I go to them and see that they are rescued and see that they are saved. There will be no state of emergency in the lives of My devotees.”

That is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba! Who else can say that?

INSTANT FIT

Then I go on to the next episode: It is very funny. I don’t know whether you heard about it or not. Well, Swami started walking. Then He stood in front of a student, materialized a ring for him, and made it to fit on his ring finger. Then the boy was doing this. (*Prof. Anil Kumar adjusts a ring to his finger.*)

I noticed that Swami turned back. “What’s the problem?”

“Swami, it is very tight!”

“Oh! Cut your finger and you can remove it easily!” (*Laughter*)

“Oh, Swami! Very tight!”

“Oh, I see!”

Then Swami touched the finger and the boy said, “Swami, loose!”

“Oh, I see,” While doing that, Swami stopped there.

So, it is neither here nor there. It stopped in the middle. “Swami!”

“What?”

“Swami, it is neither loose nor tight. It stopped in the middle. What shall I do?”

Swami laughed. How He plays with the boys! “Oh, it stopped in the middle? I will see!”

“Now it’s OK?”

“Swami, fine!” This miracle is important: As He started moving it, the ring got loose and in an instant, it got tight. Then it became a perfect fit! There on the finger of the boy, I witnessed a miracle - a correct fit. I had not seen this before!

Swami laughed and laughed and then He asked, “Is it OK now?”

“FEARLESS WITH MY ABHAYA”

Next Swami asked, “Boy, what’s your name?”

“Swami, my name is Abhay.” (*Abhay* means fearlessness.)

Swami said, “Oh, Abhay? What is the meaning of ‘Abhay’?”

“Swami, fearlessness.”

“Oho! Fearless? Are you really fearless?”

“Yes, Swami. I am fearless.”

“Mmhhh...How to be fearless? Anil Kumar, do you know?”

“Swami, I have a lot of fear. So I cannot give an answer on how to be fearless.” (*Laughter*) (I have a terrific fear of all cats and rats and the like. I am very much scared of them! I cannot speak on being totally fearless.)

Then Swami said, “Where there is a mistake, there is fear. When there is no mistake, there will be no fear. So, Abhay! (Be fearless!)”

Next Swami addressed the boy: “You are fearless because there is no mistake.”

Swami turned to me and said, “It is not enough if you have the name Abhay – fearlessness. You should have My *Abhaya*.”

“*Abhaya* - blessing! You can be *Abhay* – fearless with My *Abhaya* – blessing!”

That is what Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba said: One can be fearless with Divine Blessings!

SAI IS OMNISCIENT

I am coming to the last episode for the evening: It was time for examinations and suddenly Swami called the warden. “There are two sick boys in the hostel. They could not write their examinations yesterday. However, one boy came and wrote his examination today. The other boy still could not come.”

The warden was shivering because he did not inform Swami. “Swami, Swami!”

“Arey! I know. You don’t have to tell Me. I know. I know everything!”

Then looking at the students and at me, He said, “Arey, boys! You think Swami is sitting here on the chair. Though I am sitting here, I look all around. I know all that is happening everywhere. Understand that!”

EVERYTHING IS GOOD

Another conversation came up. Someone mentioned good and bad. Immediately Swami remarked, "Don't say 'good and bad'. In My sight, all are good. In My sight, nothing is bad. There is no one bad. Everything is good. All are good."

Bhagavan is the Embodiment of Love. He is the very personification of Love. Divine Love is beyond good and bad. Divine Love is beyond success and failure. Divine Love is eternal. Divine Love is unconditional. So says Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

May Baba bless you!

***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!