

body is a gift of God. But we are born to offer everything to God that has been given by Him. Lord Krishna declared: *Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). Hence, you are not a mere human being. The name that you bear has been given to you by your parents. In fact, at the time of your birth you had no name at all. Therefore, man cannot be identified with the body which is temporary and impure. He is essentially divine. That is why God incarnates on earth in human form from time to time to make man realise his divine origin. Whenever righteousness declines, God incarnates to uphold it as declared by Lord Krishna in the Gita.

*Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya Glanir Bhavati
Bharata,
Abhyutthanamadharmasya Tadatmanam
Srujamyaham. (Sanskrit Verse)*

(Oh Arjuna! When there is a decline in Dharma and rise in Adharma, I incarnate for the establishment of Dharma.)

In today's world, righteousness has declined and truth has gone into oblivion. The whole world today is beset with injustice, disorder, indiscipline and unrighteousness. Faith in God is the greatest truth of man's life. *Truth is God. Love is God. Live in Love.* Lead your life with love. There can be no life without love. Love God to receive His love. It is by love alone that God can be attained.

The Vedas Contain Deep Spiritual Truths

As stated by the Pandit (head priest) who spoke just now, Rudram consists of Namaka and Chamaka, the Mantras of which are full of great power. Rudram occurs in Krishna Yajur Veda which is the source of many Sastras (scriptures), Itihasas (epics)

and Puranas (mythologies). Unfortunately, the Vedas lost their pre-eminent position because there were very few people who chanted Vedic Mantras regularly. The study of the Vedas is very beneficial for all as they are rich in spiritual knowledge and contain the fundamental principles governing man's life. The Vedas are the gift of God for the welfare of the entire mankind. Vedic Mantras can be chanted by one and all without any distinction whatsoever of religion, caste, nationality, etc. (Swami then called on the dais two students, one belonging to Russia and the other to America, and asked them to chant Vedic Mantras in front of the entire gathering. They chanted Sri Suktam and Rudram together with correct pronunciation and perfect intonation to the joy and surprise of one and all.)

It is Swami's wish that the people of all countries, irrespective of religion, caste, nationality, etc., should learn Vedas and chant Vedic Mantras. Learning of the Vedas is not limited only to Indians or to people belonging to Brahmin caste. The other day, some people from Iran and Iraq came to Puttaparthi. The devotees from Iran are still here. We are making efforts to teach Vedas to all. The Vedas remove all types of sorrow. The Yajna that is now being performed does not have a limited objective like that of Putrakameshti Yajna or Aswamedha Yajna. It is for the welfare and emancipation of the entire mankind. A few fortunate ones are learning the Vedas and propagating them. However, there are some unfortunate people who learn the Vedas but do not make any effort to share this knowledge with others. However, the students of Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions learn the Vedas and share this knowledge with others.

In order to learn the Vedas, one should acquire the knowledge of Sanskrit to begin with.



Vinay Kumar has been appointed as the Youth Wing leader of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Karnataka State. He is entrusted with the responsibility of mobilising the youth of Karnataka to learn the Vedas and spread their message. Youth Wing leaders of other States of India like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, etc., have also been appointed for this purpose. Similarly, the youth of other countries of the world are learning all the Vedas, especially the Rig Veda.

We should not neglect the Vedas. The secret of the entire creation is contained in them. They reveal to us the goal and purpose of life. In fact, they are the repositories of all knowledge. They set the norms of the four stages of man's life – Brahmacharya (celibate stage), Grihastha (householder stage), Vanaprastha (recluse stage) and Sannyasa (renunciant stage). People have started realising the glory of the Vedas now; you can find even women chanting the Vedic Mantras. Men and women appear to be different so far as their body structure is concerned, but there is no difference between them as regards the learning of the Vedas and chanting of Vedic Mantras. The Vedas are replete with divine mysteries and deep spiritual truths. Rudram forms a very important section of Krishna Yajur Veda. Rudram is generally understood to be a prayer to Lord Rudra. In fact, it is the essence of all the Vedas, viz., Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvana Veda. Another important feature of Rudram is the Ekatwa (unity) between its two parts, Namaka and Chamaka. Namaka lays stress on Virakti (detachment) whereas Chamaka dwells on desires for this and that. What is to be discarded



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and what is to be desired? That which is evil is to be discarded and all that is good is to be desired. Understanding of both these aspects is essential for man.

Realise the Principle of Oneness of God

People generally think that giving up of family life, house, land and other forms of wealth is Thyaga (sacrifice). But this is not true sacrifice. This can be done easily. One who renounces the fruits of his desires and actions is a true renunciant. One has to understand the purpose of human birth. We are not born merely to eat,



drink and make merry. Human birth is given to us to help our fellow human beings. *Help Ever, Hurt Never*. Do not hurt or harm anybody. Do not speak harsh words. Do not criticise anyone. To criticise others is the greatest sin. Do not criticise even your enemy.

Human body is made up of Pancha Bhutas (five elements). It consists of Panchendriyas (five senses) which crave for the fulfilment of desires. However, there are also certain values like Sathya (truth), Dharma (righteousness), Santhi (peace), Prema (love) and Ahimsa (non-violence) which are inherent in us. These have to be brought out and manifested in our daily life. This process is called educare. The knowledge acquired from the study of books can be termed as education. This is not the type of learning that we have to acquire. What we should acquire is educare, by which the noble qualities that are immanent in us are manifested in our life. This is the sacred internal path which requires self-effort and does not depend upon the reading of books written by others. Educare is, in fact, the gift of God. It can be attained only by God's grace and by no other means. Therefore, one should constantly contemplate on God. *Sarvada Sarva Kaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintanam* (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God). That is real devotion.

We may call God by any name, Rama, Krishna, Jesus or Allah, but God is one. These are all the different names ascribed to God. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). Hence, we should never make any distinction between the different names of God.

*Ornaments are many; gold is one,
Cows are of many colours, milk
is one.* (Telugu)



Poem)

One should have an open heart to know the mysteries of God. There is nothing wrong in worshipping God by the name of your liking. But it is wrong to revile other names and forms of God. Some people have Narayana as their Ishta Devata (chosen deity), but they do not like Siva. This is a big mistake because Siva and Narayana are the two names of the same God. God is one, but He is worshipped in many names and forms. He who realises this oneness will have peace of mind. One who loves one form of God and hates another can have no fulfilment in life. It is not only for the youth to realise this principle of oneness; all should follow this and put it into practice in their life. It is God who protects the world. The name of God is more powerful than even the most powerful bomb. God's name protects that which is good and annihilates all that is evil. Hence, if you worship God, the whole world will be protected.

Youth should Learn and Propagate the Vedas

This Yajna is being conducted for the welfare of the world. A very important aspect of this Yajna is that it will protect and foster the divine nature of man. At the same time, it will eradicate his demonic qualities. Thus, it will promote the welfare of humanity. This Yajna can be performed by anyone interested in the welfare of mankind. The material and other resources for conducting this Yajna have been arranged by Vinay Kumar. He undertook the job lovingly and performed it almost single-handedly. Many people came forward to give rice, fruits, vegetables and other materials, but

he did not accept anything from anyone.

The expenditure for conducting this Yajna involves a large amount of

money. He arranged the entire material for this Yajna by himself. I wish that every State has such dedicated youth leaders. He is doing a lot of service. I am very happy with his service. He declined all offers of help for conducting this Yajna, saying, "Sai is with me; He alone will help me."

He was married ten years ago. Both he and his wife are serving Swami. When the proposal to conduct this Yajna was placed before Me, I asked them, "Dear ones! Do you propose to conduct this Yajna with the desire to have a son?" They replied in one voice that that was not their desire and motive of their prayer. Then I enquired what else they wished to have. Their reply was, "Swami! We want You only!" I have not heard such a reply so far from any couple. True to his name, Vinay Kumar is doing a lot of good work with love and humility. His father was an Income Tax Commissioner. He was a friend of Lakshmi Narayana. They were together for a long time. Now Vinay Kumar and Lakshmi Narayana are working together to organise this Yajna. Vinay Kumar treats him like his own father. Such noble souls and youth leaders are needed in the world more and more. When the leaders are good and competent, the whole world will progress and prosper. The world has come to this sad state due to lack of good leaders. Nowadays, we rarely find good leaders in any field, be it the field of education, politics, religion or spirituality. Wherever you see, all human endeavours are beset with craze for money. Everything is business.

However, money is not the consideration so far as Sri Sathya Sai Organisation is concerned. Everything is free in our Organisation. Education from 1st Standard to the Ph.D. level is totally free. Same is the case with our hospitals. Our General

Hospitals and Super Speciality Hospitals are providing medical services totally free of cost. The hospitals outside charge three to four lakh rupees for performing a heart operation. How can poor people pay such a huge amount? It is beyond their means. The medical services including the specialist services are totally free in our hospitals. Poor people come to our hospitals for treatment without having even a rupee in their pocket and return to their places completely cured of their diseases. We should render all services free of cost. I wish that all our Seva Dal members and college students render free service. Thereby, they will attain Swami's grace. You may forget anything, but never forget the Name of God.

(Bhagavan sang the Bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi ...*" and continued His Discourse.)

Embodiments of Love!

Ati Rudra Maha Yajna is most sacred and highly efficacious. The lives of all those who participate in it will be sanctified. There will be 11 Ritwiks (priests) performing the Yajna at each Yajna Kunda. There are 11 such Yajna Kundas. Thus, there will be 121 Ritwiks who will perform the Yajna. For each Yajna Kunda, there will be one person, who will look after everything concerning the rituals. All the people connected with the Yajna will work in unity to make it a success. It is only by unity that anything can be achieved. From unity comes purity which ultimately leads to divinity. Hence, all should conduct themselves as brothers and sisters. If, for any reason you get angry on a particular occasion, consider anger as your enemy and get rid of it. Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (delusion),

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An Event of Great Spiritual Significance

ATI RUDRA MAHA YAJNA AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

Yajna being performed in 11 Yajna Kundas in Sai Kulwant Hall.

A NEW DIMENSION WAS ADDED to the fostering of the Vedas and Vedic lore when Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba blessed the performance of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna at Prasanthi Nilayam from 9th to 20th August 2006. Ati Rudra Maha Yajna is one of the most sacred forms of worship of Lord Siva, who is the conqueror of death and embodiment of infinite mercy, compassion and love. Performed with the objective of promoting the welfare of the entire mankind and establishing peace, love and harmony in the world, it was a significant step in the purification of the world's environment vitiated by hatred, greed, violence and other evil propensities of man. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who is Himself Siva-Sakthi Swarupa (embodiment

of Siva and Sakthi), graced the occasion by His Divine Presence on all the days of the Yajna both in the morning and evening and blessed the participants and priests with His benedictions and Divine Discourses. Huge concourse of devotees thronged Prasanthi Nilayam to witness this grand spectacle of immense spiritual significance.

The Yajna programme comprised Abhisheka (sacred bath) of a specially installed Siva Linga, Parayana of Rudram (chanting of sacred Mantras of Siva worship) by 121 priests and students along with Linga Puja (worship of Linga), and offering of sacred oblations in 11 specially constructed Yajna Kundas with sacred Vedic Mantras, more particularly Rudram and Sai Gayatri. Besides, there were illuminating talks on spiritual topics by a galaxy of learned speakers, and



presentation of devotional music programmes by well-known musicians and the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam. The venue of the Yajna was Sai Kulwant Hall which was beautifully decorated with colourful buntings, charming



A view of the beautiful Yajna Mandap that was set up in Sai Kulwant Hall. The picture shows the priests doing Rudra Parayana in the Mandap.

festoons and plantain leaves. A beautiful Yajna Mandap was set up in the centre of the Hall where 11 Yajna Kundas were made according to the scriptural injunctions. The decorations of the Yajna Mandap was as beautiful and natural as it was innovative. The material used for decoration was bamboos, coconuts, mango leaves, plantain leaves, coconut leaves and fresh flowers. An altar was also set up in the Yajna Mandap where 138 Kalashas containing water of all the sacred rivers of India were installed for Kalasha Puja (worship of pots containing sacred water). Besides, many other Kalashas were placed along the sides of Yajna Mandap.

Inaugural Ceremony

Bhagavan was offered a traditional welcome with Poornakumbham by the chief priest when He came out of His abode, Yajur Mandir to shower the



bliss of His Darshan on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall at 2.30 p.m. on 9th August 2006. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall in a grand procession led by Nadaswaram musicians and Veda chanting priests. After coming to the dais, Bhagavan graciously inaugurated the programme by lighting the sacred lamp at 2.45 p.m. amidst chanting of sacred Vedic Mantras by the students and priests. This was followed by an excellently rendered invocation song on the glory of Bhagavan Baba addressing Him as Ati Rudra Maha Yajna Purusha and Sathya Sai Guru Mahadeva.

In his introductory speech, Sri Vinay Kumar, youth organiser of the Yajna, said that Ati Rudra was the highest among the four forms of worship of Lord Siva, the other three being Rudra, Ekadasa Rudra and Maha Rudra. Referring to the performance of this Yajna as an historic event, Sri Vinay Kumar expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for providing this sacred and rare opportunity to devotees to witness and participate in it. This was followed by a brief speech by Sri D. Lakshmi Narayana, former Income Tax Commissioner, who coordinated the organisation of this Yajna along with Sri Vinay Kumar. He remarked that Bhagavan had showered His grace on the youth by permitting them to organise this Yajna in His Divine Presence. He hoped that the youth in other parts of the country would follow this noble example set by the youth of Karnataka. After this, the chief priest, Sri Nanjunda Dixit addressed the gathering. The learned Vedic scholar said that the concept of worship of Lord Siva by the performance of Ati Rudra Yajna had been propounded by ancient saints and sages of Bharat. But the performance of this Yajna at Prasanthi Nilayam was a unique event because it was being performed in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan who is Himself the incarnation of

Siva, said Sri Nanjunda Dixit. Giving the details of the Yajna, the learned priest said that 11 priests would perform Rudra Homa at each of the 11 Yajna Kundas daily in addition to Linga Abhisheka and Linga Puja along with 11 Rudra Parayanas by 121 priests daily for 11 days, making a total of 14,641 Rudra Parayanas which was the prescribed number for Ati Rudra Maha Yajna. In the end, Bhagavan blessed the huge gathering of devotees, priests and students with His Divine Discourse. The Vedas, Bhagavan said, were the source of all knowledge and the repositories of ultimate wisdom and spiritual truths. Everybody, Bhagavan added, could chant the Vedas without any distinction of caste, colour, creed, religion or nationality and derive benefit from chanting because they contained eternal and universal truths. Bhagavan asked two overseas students to chant Vedic Mantras in front of the gathering and said that it was His wish that Veda chanting should be done by the people belonging to all the countries of the world irrespective of their religion or race. (Full text of Bhagavan's Discourse has been given elsewhere in this issue of "Sanathana Sarathi".) After the Discourse of Bhagavan, Abhisheka and Puja of the Linga installed in Sai Kulwant Hall was done and Arati was offered to it. The programme came to a close at 6.45 p.m. with chanting of Mantra Pushpam by the priests and students. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

Performance of the Yajna

On 10th August 2006, Sai Kulwant Hall started reverberating with sweet notes of Mangalavadyam by Nadaswaram musicians and Vedic chants of priests at 5.30 a.m. Bhagavan came to the Hall at 6.10 a.m. and blessed the mammoth gathering of devotees



Abhisheka and Puja of the Linga, symbolising the manifest form of Siva, was performed along with Rudra Parayana. (Inset) Beautiful jewel materialised by Bhagavan at the time of Prana Pratishtha of the Linga.

in the Hall with His Divine Darshan. After His arrival on the dais, Bhagavan went near the Siva Linga and performed the sacred ceremonies of Prana Pratishtha (energising with life principle), Namakarana (naming) and Kumbha Abhisheka (bathing) of the Linga at 6.20 a.m. surcharging it with divine power. It was named Sayeeswara Linga. Bhagavan also materialised a beautiful jewel in the resemblance of three lines of Vibhuti mark on the forehead of Siva with a ruby in its centre symbolising his third eye. The chief priest decorated the Linga with this divine creation of exquisite beauty amidst Vedic chants of the priests and joyous notes of Nadaswaram musicians.

Bhagavan returned to the dais and occupied His seat at 6.30 a.m. Two priests then produced

the sacred fire in the traditional way by churning one piece of wood over the other. They brought it to Bhagavan for His blessings before placing it in the Yajna Kundas. After this, the chief priest described the importance of the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna and gave details of Linga Abhisheka, Rudra Parayana, Rudra Homa and other rituals which were proposed to be performed on 11 days from 10th to 20th August. At 7.30 a.m., the chief priest started the Panchamrita Abhisheka and Puja of the Sayeeswara Linga amidst Vedic chants. Collective



Rudra Homa being performed by the priests by offering oblations in the sacred fire along with chanting of Vedic Mantras.

Rudra Parayana by 121 priests began soon after Linga Abhisheka and Linga Puja. A unique feature of this Parayana was that the students of Sri Sathya Sai schools and colleges also did Parayana along with the priests. After the completion of each of the 11 Parayanas, Arati was offered to the Linga. After completing 11 Parayanas, Puja of the Linga was performed by offering flowers, silk clothes, basil garlands, Bilva leaves and other sacred articles at the Linga along with chanting of Vedic Mantras of Linga worship. This was followed by Rudra Homa by 11 priests on each of the 11 Yajna Kundas presided over by a senior priest. Oblations were offered in the sacred fire with the chanting of Rudram by all the 121 priests jointly, sanctifying the environment with highly surcharged sacred vibrations. After Rudra Homa, Sai Gayatri Homa was performed by offering oblations in the sacrificial fire with the chanting of Sai Gayatri.

Poornahuti of the Yajna

Linga Abhisheka, Linga Puja, Rudra Parayana, Rudra Homa, Sai Gayatri Homa

and other connected rituals continued daily for 11 days from 10th to 20th August 2006 when Poornahuti (final oblations) was offered by Bhagavan to conclude this grand spiritual event of far reaching importance. A sea of humanity thronged Prasanthi Nilayam to witness the grand spectacle of Poornahuti of the Yajna on the morning of 20th August 2006. The programme of Linga Abhisheka and Linga Puja started on this day at 4.00 a.m. Rudra Parayana began at 5.00 a.m. when all the priests jointly commenced the chanting of Rudram. The students of Sai institutions and many devotees also participated in the chanting, filling the Hall with sacred sound energy from where it radiated to all parts of the universe. After completing the prescribed 11 Rudra Parayanas, the priests started Rudra Homa. Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.30 a.m. amidst sacred Vedic chants and auspicious musical notes of Nadaswaram. As the auspicious time of Poornahuti neared, all the devotees in the Hall were filled with eager expectation. At 8.05 a.m., the chief priest started putting oblations in the Yajna fire with



a long silver ladle instead of the usual short wooden one while Rudra chanting continued with full vigour and devotion by the priests, students and devotees. At the conclusion of Rudra Homa, Sai Gayatri Homa began at 8.15



Poornahuti of the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna was performed by Bhagavan on 20th August 2006 by offering oblations in Yajna Kunda with His Divine Hands.

a.m. At 8.30 a.m., Bhagavan went to the main Yajna Kunda presided over by the chief priest and offered Poornahuti by putting oblations in the Yajna Kunda. A bundle of valuables and precious clothes blessed by Bhagavan was also offered in the Yajna Kunda amidst loud joyous notes of music and sacred Vedic chants. Thereafter, Kumbha Abhisheka of the Linga was performed and sacred Kalasha water blessed by Bhagavan was poured over the Linga and Arati was offered to it.

After Poornahuti and Kumbha Abhisheka, Bhagavan went into the rows of devotees and sprinkled Teertham (sacred Kalasha water) on them with His Divine Hands as a token of His blessings on all after the successful completion of the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna. While Bhagavan sprinkled Teertham on the devotees, the students sang Bhajans in praise of Siva and all the priests performed Kumbha Abhisheka

of the Linga by pouring sacred water from the Kalashas worshipped during the course of the Yajna. Soul-elevating Bhajans then commenced at 9.00 a.m. in which thousands joined with vigour and devotion. The Bhajans came to a close at 9.20 a.m., after which the final chanting of Rudram was done by all the priests jointly. The programme of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna came to a happy conclusion with offer of Arati to Bhagavan at 9.40 a.m. Prasadam was distributed to all in the end.

Talks by Learned Speakers

Besides witnessing the Linga Abhisheka, Linga Puja and Rudra Homa, and hearing Rudra Parayana, the devotees were blessed by Bhagavan with His nectarine and illuminating Discourses during the course of the Yajna. In all, Bhagavan gave 10 Discourses during the performance of the Yajna. Before the Divine Discourses of Bhagavan, many learned speakers addressed the august gathering and shared their knowledge with them on a variety of spiritual themes. All talks were given in the afternoon sessions before Bhagavan's Discourses after the conclusion of usual Linga Abhisheka and Linga Puja with sacred Vedic chants. The speaker on 10th August 2006 was Sri N. Srikanta Rao, a learned Telugu Pandit and Sanskrit scholar from Bangalore. Sri Rao dwelt on the glory of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna and emphasised the need for worship of Lord Siva for peace and prosperity in the world which was passing through difficult times due to agitation and restlessness in the mind of modern man.

On the afternoon of 11th August 2006, Sri Subbaraya Sharma, a learned Vedic scholar gave a talk on Dakshinamoorthy, the incarnation of Lord Siva. Hailing Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as Dakshinamoorthy of this

Age, Sri Sharma observed that in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan, one experienced bliss as one's doubts melted away just as doubts of people were dispelled by Dakshinamoorthy's divine power of silence.

Two learned speakers shared their thoughts with the devotees on 12th August 2006. The first speaker was Dr. R.L. Kashyap, Director, Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture, Bangalore. Explaining the meaning of various Mantras of Rudram, the learned speaker observed that Mantras were not ordinary words; they came from the highest plane and revealed the power of the soul. Dwelling on the significance of Namaka and Chamaka, which form two parts of Rudram, Dr. Kashyap remarked that the object of chanting the Mantras of Rudram was to harness the intense power of the mind in order to achieve perfection in all spheres of life and ultimately achieve the goal of life. The second speaker, Sri S.V. Giri, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, referred to the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna and observed that Yajna was meant to internalise knowledge and destroy hatred and other evil propensities of man. Praising the work done by the Youth Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Karnataka in organising this Yajna with meticulous planning, Sri Giri hoped that the example set by the Youth Wing leader Sri Vinay Kumar would be replicated by the youth in other parts of the world.

Two eminent speakers addressed the gathering on 13th August 2006. The first speaker was a renowned educationist of Karnataka, Dr. Gururaj Karjagi. The erudite speaker explained deep spiritual truths by narrating a number of educative stories and explained that

symbolism was the medium through which common people could attain the knowledge of reality. Giving an example, he said that the idol of Ganesh is worshipped for a few days and thereafter it is immersed in water after attaining the knowledge of real Ganesh who has no form or attribute. The second speaker was Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations. Referring to the performance of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna at Prasanthi Nilayam as an unprecedented event, Sri Srinivasan observed that never in human history had an Ati Rudra Maha Yajna of this magnitude been performed and that too in the presence of Rudra Himself who has incarnated on earth in the form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sri Srinivasan complimented the youth of Karnataka not only for the perfect planning and execution of the Yajna, but also for the spirit of unity, devotion, discipline and sacrifice with which it was being conducted by them.

On 14th August 2006, Prof. N.S. Ramaswamy, former director of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore and at present Chairman, Indian Heritage Academy, Bangalore was blessed by Bhagavan to address the devotees. Prof. Ramaswamy observed that at a time when the world was plagued with conflicts, violence and restlessness, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has incarnated to restore peace, harmony and love between man and man. 21st century, he said, belonged to India and in essence to Bhagavan who has practically demonstrated to the world how love can unite people of all religions, cultures and nationalities in the bond of brotherhood.

On 15th August 2006, Dr. Easwaran, Head of the Department of Chemistry, St. Stephens College,



Delhi addressed the gathering. Dr. Easwaran beautifully illustrated through a number of mythological stories that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is none other than Lord Siva Himself. Dwelling on the significance of the Panchakshari Mantra “Om Namah Sivaya”, the learned speaker observed that it contained the essence of all the Vedas.

There were three speakers who addressed the devotees on 16th August 2006. The first speaker was Swami Nirbhayananda Saraswati, President, Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission, Bangalore. The learned speaker observed that Rudram Mantras were lyrical, uplifting, elevating and ennobling. Quoting from scriptures, he said that one could attain health, peace, prosperity and ultimately liberation by chanting these Mantras with devotion. The next speaker, Sri Kishan Bhagwath, an M.B.B.S. student and an alumnus of Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Pre-university College, Alike, observed that a Poornavatar like Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba came after thousands of years. It was a great privilege to be His contemporaries and a rare opportunity to take part in His Divine Mission as His instruments, said Sri Bhagwath. The third speaker of the day was Sri Sanjay Mahalingam, a research scholar of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Sri Mahalingam said that real Yajna was internal and it was to seek goodness, nobility, spiritual eminence, splendour of our true Self, and to offer all our desires in the Yajna Kunda for one desire – to be one with God.

Two speakers were blessed by Bhagavan to speak on 17th August 2006, the 9th day of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna. The first speaker was Dr. N. Gopalakrishnan, Director, Indian Institute of Scientific and Cultural Her- itage, Thiruvananthapuram. Speaking

on the subject of science and spirituality, the learned speaker likened the Tandava Nritya of Siva to the rhythmic movement of heavenly bodies in the universe and the dance of electrons in an atom, which was the source of stupendous energy. Referring to Sai Samithis as atomic reactors of Bhagavan’s love, the learned speaker observed that the divine energy of Bhagavan’s love was vibrating in the whole world and was uniting mankind. The second speaker was Sri Ajit Popat from London. Sri Popat referred to Bhagavan’s educational institutions, hospitals, water projects as Yajnas which were providing spiritual education, healthcare and social welfare for the progress and prosperity of mankind. He exhorted all to put their selfishness, greed and hatred in the sacred Yajna fire, purify their hearts and begin the Yajnas of healthcare, educare and sociocare as demonstrated by Bhagavan by His example.

Sri S.V. Giri, former Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was the first speaker on 18th August 2006, this being his second speech during the course of the Yajna. Sri Giri felt that it was a rare opportunity for all to listen to the chanting of Rudram in a meticulously correct and rhythmic manner. Not only was it being chanted 11 times daily by 121 priests for 11 days, but the college and school students were also chanting it along with the priests, and hence it far exceeded the number of 14,641 Parayanas prescribed for Ati Rudra Maha Yajna. The speaker who spoke after Sri Giri was Sri Gunaranjan Pemmaraju from Bangalore. Sri Pemmaraju beautifully described how the road of man’s journey of life could become smooth and even when the Right Hand Side (Royal Highway to Sai) was equated with Left Hand



Side (Love, Humility, Service) as in an equation of mathematics. After these two speeches, Bhagavan blessed the audience with another nectarine Discourse. He also blessed two renowned actresses, Smt. Sowcar Janaki and Smt. Anjali Devi, to address the devotees. Smt. Janaki paid glowing tributes to Bhagavan for organising this soul-uplifting Yajna and expressed her gratitude to Him for curing her knees which had immobilised her and also for cancelling the cancer of her daughter-in-law. Smt. Anjali Devi who made the tele-film “Shirdi Sai Parthi Sai Divyakatha” expressed gratitude to Bhagavan for making her an instrument of His Divine Mission and for permitting her to perform the role of Mother Easwamma in this tele-serial.

The first speaker of 19th August 2006 was Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Dwelling on the exalted ideals set forth in the Vedas, the erudite speaker quoted the celebrated poet Jayadeva who sang at the beginning of his immortal work Gita Govinda: “The revival of the Vedas and the survival of this planet earth are interdependent.” Referring to Bhagavan’s Divine Mission of Veda Poshana (fostering of the Vedas), the learned speaker said that it was the Divine Sankalpa (Will) of Bhagavan to spread the universal wisdom of the Vedas to all parts of the world, and added that this was happening before our eyes as witnessed by the entire gathering, how perfectly the children from Iran, Russia and America had chanted the Vedic Mantras in the presence of Bhagavan.

The last speaker was Sri Vinay Kumar, Youth Wing Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Karnataka. Sri Vinay Kumar thanked all who had

helped in the organisation of the Yajna, and added that the entire credit of the grandeur and glory it acquired was solely and truly due to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s meticulous planning, His direction and His advice at every step. Sri Vinay Kumar concluded his talk with a prayer to Bhagavan to make the youth of India and the world effective instruments of His Divine Mission. The programme of illuminating talks which provided subtle insights into the various aspects of spirituality, devotion and Vedic wisdom to the mammoth gathering of devotees by a galaxy of learned speakers came to a close with this prayer of Sri Vinay Kumar to Bhagavan.

Musical Presentations

A fine medley of captivating classical music, devotional songs and instrumental music by a galaxy of renowned musicians, child artistes and the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning enthralled the gathering in Sai Kulwant Hall during the course of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna. The first musical presentation was made on the afternoon of 10th August 2006 by two talented child artistes. The programme began with a classical song in praise of Lord Siva rendered by the child artiste Karthik Gyaneswar which earned him the appreciation of the audience and blessings of Bhagavan who showered His grace on him at the end of the presentation and also materialised a gold chain for him. The second presentation was a masterly flute recital by the child artiste Akash who showed great maturity and talent in his captivating presentation.

Two excellent musical presentations were made on the afternoon of 11th August 2006. The first presentation was made by a well-known musician, Sri O.S. Arun of Chennai, who started with a prayer



to Lord Ganesh, “Gayiye Ganapati Jaga Vandana” and followed it up with Panchakshari Mantra “Om Namah Sivaya” and three more excellent songs in praise of Siva and Sai which had a spellbinding effect on the audience. No less spellbinding was the musical presentation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning students who occupied the stage after the conclusion of Sri Arun’s presentation. The very first song of this presentation “Sivasankari Sivanandalahari ...” had a captivating effect on the audience. The students sang six songs between themselves to the delight of the entire audience and were greeted with a thunderous applause at the end of each song. Everyone in the audience was so lost in these divine musical presentations that none took notice of time as the programme stretched up to 7.00 p.m. There was no trace of fatigue on any face; instead, everyone displayed joy and exuberance. The students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning made another equally enthralling presentation of devotional songs on the afternoon of 13th August 2006. First three songs were in praise of Lord Siva and the remaining three were Mira Bhajans relished by the audience with much delight.

Another scintillating musical presentation comprised devotional songs by Sri M.R. Vaidyanathan of Coimbatore on the afternoon of 14th August 2006. Commencing with a prayer song in praise of Lord Ganesh, the renowned artiste delighted one and all by singing songs in praise of Vitthala, Rama and Krishna. Bhagavan blessed the artiste at the end of his presentation and also materialised a gold chain for him.

The evening of 15th August 2006 was enlivened by two outstanding presentations. The first presentation

was made by Ustad Rafique Khan and Party of Gwalior Gharana fame. The first item they presented was a scintillating Sitar recital. This was followed by a Kirtan of Om Namah Sivaya in which the huge gathering of devotees also participated. This was followed by an exquisite rendering of Mira Bhajan, “Rama Nama Rasa Peeje Manava ...” The audience responded enthusiastically to their grand performance with a thunderous applause. Bhagavan showered His blessings on the entire group and distributed clothes to them with His Divine Hands. After this, the Institute students made a delightful dance presentation to the accompaniment of songs in praise of Rama, Krishna, Siva and Sai. Among the dance items presented by them, two items stood out conspicuously by their excellence – one was a Yaksha Gana dance (a traditional folk art form of Karnataka) and the other was Tandava dance of Siva. Pleased with their performance, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the participants and posed for group photos with them.

A musical presentation of excellent devotional songs was made by two sisters Smt. Ranjani and Smt. Gayatri, reputed artistes from Chennai, on the afternoon of 17th August 2006. Displaying their exquisite musical talent, the artistes enthralled the audience with four devotional songs including a Mira Bhajan. Bhagavan blessed the artistes at the conclusion of the programme and gave Saris to them with His Divine Hands.

On the afternoon of 19th August 2006, Sri Ghatam Karthick and his troupe delighted one and all in Sai Kulwant Hall with a fine medley of instrumental, light classical and classical vocal devotional music. Besides,

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Ati Rudra Maha Yajna



(9th - 20th August 2006)



not be performed for attaining selfish ends. It should be performed for the welfare of the world.

In Bharat, people have been performing Yajnas and Yagas since ancient times. Yajnas were performed in Treta Yuga, but demons tried to disrupt them because they did not understand the truth about them. With the dawn of Dwapara Yuga, most people tried to understand the truth about the performance of these ritualistic practices. Kings like Janaka performed many Yajnas. People, especially those who are educated, should understand the true meaning of Yajnas. In fact, it is necessary that everybody should participate in them. It only means that whatever actions one does, one should do them to please God. It should be our firm conviction that we do everything to please God and attain liberation. In fact, the very purpose of human birth is to please God. Human life is not meant to be wasted on eating and drinking. Man should try to recognise his true nature. You keep enquiring from others, "Who are you?" and thus waste your time. But you never enquire, "Who am I?" Once you know the truth about yourself, you will know the true nature of everybody. You should not waste your time on trying to know about others. God is the embodiment of time. *Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah, Kalateetaya Namah, Kalaswarupaya*

Namah, Kalaniyamitaya Namah (salutations to time, to the one who is beyond time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, to the one who is the embodiment of time, and to the one who ordains time). Time is most precious. Therefore, do not waste even a single moment. People today make efforts to attain materialistic gains and mental power. They do everything to satisfy their senses. But nobody tries to attain



It is only in Bharat that people, despite their trials and tribulations, are able to lead a peaceful life by thinking of God at all times. Such sanctity and sacredness is not noticed anywhere else in the world. All over the world, wherever you go, you find only turmoil, misery and suffering. It is the great good fortune of the people of this country that they have taken birth in this sacred land. Performance of sacred rituals like Yajnas and Yagas is not found anywhere else in the world. People think that offering oblations in fire is Yajna. But true Yajna is to offer oneself to God, to please God and to become deserving of His love.



self-realisation. How long do the sensual pleasures and bodily pleasures last? They are all momentary. Only the heart is permanent. You should make efforts for the satisfaction of the heart. This is possible only by associating yourself with good company.

*Satsangatwe Nissangatwam,
Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam,
Nirmohatwe Nischalatattwam,
Nischalatattwe Jivanmukti.*

(Sanskrit Sloka)

(Good company leads to detachment; detachment makes one free from delusion; freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind; steadiness of mind confers liberation.)

You become bad by associating with bad company. *Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.* The type of qualities you acquire depends upon your company. Therefore, you should associate with noble and spiritual-minded people. The people gathered here form a great spiritual company. This type of company is not available anywhere else. When you associate yourself with such a noble company, you get noble feelings.

Good Words Result in Good Actions

When water evaporates, it forms into clouds. But all clouds do not bring rain. Rain depends upon the type of clouds and many other factors. Today we are not getting proper rains. Man's life depends upon water. Pure water ensures good health and long life. Many diseases are caused by polluted water. Similarly, pollution in the environment is also the cause of many diseases. Therefore, we should keep our environment clean and pure. It is also necessary that we consume only pure water. Then only can we become healthy and blissful. Happiness is very essential for good health.

Students – Boys and Girls!

You are all young. It is essential for you to keep your environment clean. Eat only clean and pure food and have only good company. Speak good words, have healthy entertainment and engage yourself in good activities. *Life is a game, play it.* Engage yourself in the welfare of others and conduct yourself in such a noble way that it leads to your emancipation. Whomsoever you converse with, you should always converse in a peaceful manner, filling your words with empathy. Never use harsh words. Your harsh words will hurt the feelings of others. You should speak such words which melt the heart of others. *Help Ever, Hurt Never.* Help everybody.

*Saha Navavathu
Saha Nau Bhunakthu
Saha Veeryam Karavavahai
Tejaswinavadheetamasthu
Ma Vidvishavahai.*

(May the Lord protect and nourish us!

May we grow in intelligence and valour working together!

May we live in friendship without any conflict!)

Develop friendship with others by speaking good words. Good company will fill your heart with goodness. When your thoughts are good, your actions will also be good. And when your actions are good, their result is bound to be good. The tongue, that is the gift of God, should therefore be used to speak softly and sweetly in a sacred way. It is a noble tradition of Bharat that people here speak sacred words. When some elderly person comes to your house, you should treat him respectfully and offer him a proper seat. Never use improper and disrespectful words while talking to elders. Your being



teachers in the classroom. All bookish learning is artificial. This type of artificial education is of little worth. What is important is not artificial but 'heartificial'. In the coming days, you will listen to the talks of many learned speakers on lofty themes which will enhance your knowledge and purity. *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender). Out of nine paths of devotion, Sravanam is the first one. So, listen to good things and try to assimilate the goodness contained in them. Move away from the place where unpalatable words are spoken. Let everything bad dissolve in thin air. Accept all that is good. Then, only good will remain with you for ever. All that is related to God is good. Only that is true, eternal

and sacred. Absorb all that is sacred and true and base your life on these eternal values. God's teachings are full of sweetness. His words are nectarine. One should never ignore the teachings of God. You may even give up the body, but not the teachings of God. Body is made up of five elements. Nobody knows when it will meet its end. It is bound to fall one day or the other. Do not give undue importance to the body. Life is not meant merely to sustain your body. Associate yourself with sacred company for mental purification and attainment of bliss. It is not enough if you merely associate with sacred company; you should suffuse your heart with sacred teachings of such an exalted company.

– **From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 10th August 2006 on the occasion of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna.**

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enemies of man. These are the cause of his troubles in life.

Embodiments of Divine Self!

You are not ordinary human beings; you are the embodiments of the Divine Self. Each individual is given a particular name only for the sake of identification. But in reality, all are essentially divine, not mere human beings. I wish all of you a happy, peaceful, contented and blissful life. You cannot have peace

without devotion. Hence, develop devotion, Bangaru! (an endearing term used by Bhagavan, meaning gold). Immerse yourself in devotion, not in the deep ocean of Samsara (worldliness). It is only your devotion that will take you to God.

– **From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 9th August 2006 on the inaugural day of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna.**

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devotional songs in praise of Siva, there were captivating flute recitals and other instrumental compositions which enraptured the audience. Bhagavan blessed the entire troupe and distributed clothes

to them at the end of their presentation. He also materialised a gold ring for one of the members of the troupe. With this excellent presentation, the devotional music programmes came to a happy



FESTIVALS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

Worship of the Divine Mother

WORSHIP OF THE FEMININE principle of God is an important feature of Indian spiritual history. It is customary to worship Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati during the nine days of Navaratri festival. But in many parts of India, special worship is offered to goddess Lakshmi by the ladies and the function is known as Varalakshmi Vrata. Like last year, Varalakshmi Vrata was organised at Prasanthi Nilayam this year also with great piety and devotion in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The function was held on 4th August 2006 in Sai Kulwant Hall which was tastefully decorated for the festive occasion. Special floral decorations were done on the dais where an idol of Varalakshmi was placed for offering worship. More than 1,500 ladies participated in this function and offered worship to the goddess.

Bhagavan was offered a traditional welcome with Poornakumbham amidst chanting of

Vedic Mantras and auspicious rendering of Nadaswaram music by a group of musicians when He came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.30 a.m. Soon after coming to the dais, Bhagavan went into the rows of the ladies who were taking part in this function and showered His blessings on them. Bhagavan returned to the dais at 7.40 a.m. and formally inaugurated the function by lighting the sacred lamp placed there. The programme of Puja started with the worship of Lord Ganesh by the participating ladies as instructed by the chief priest. After this, the ladies performed Puja of goddess Varalakshmi for nearly one hour as per the instructions given by the chief priest. At the conclusion of the Puja, the chief priest offered Arati to the idol of Varalakshmi placed on the dais. In the end, Prasadam blessed by Bhagavan was distributed to all. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.00 a.m. A sumptuous feast was offered to all the participating ladies in the South Indian Canteen at the conclusion of the function.



Bhagavan graced the occasion by His Divine Presence during the performance of Varalakshmi Vrata in Sai Kulwant Hall.



A section of the participants in Varalakshmi Vrata performing worship of the goddess.

Sri Krishna Janmashtami Celebrations

Sri Krishna Janmashtami this year assumed added significance at Prasanthi Nilayam since it was celebrated on 16th August along with the performance of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna. On this day, Bhagavan came to Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.15 a.m. when the priests were doing Rudra Parayana collectively after completing the Abhisheka and Puja of the Sayeeswara Linga.

The procession of beautifully bedecked cows and calves led by richly caparisoned Sai Geeta (Bhagavan's dear elephant) and followed by Bhajan singing group of students entered Sai Kulwant Hall at 7.45 a.m. from Gopuram Gate. Bhagavan came down from the dais to shower His love and blessings on them. First, Bhagavan fed a 5-day-old calf with a feeding bottle full of milk and watched it lovingly as it guzzled the milk. Then it was the turn of Sai Geeta. It was a very touching scene when tears started streaming down its eyes when Bhagavan lovingly fed and caressed it with His Divine Hands. Bhagavan then fed it a second time also and showered His love on it again. After this, Bhagavan fed a fawn. Thereafter, it was the turn of robust and healthy cows of Gokulam. They were fed with bananas and apples. All the while, a group of students kept singing Krishna Bhajans with zeal and devotion. After this, Bhagavan returned to the dais where two students who were dressed as Krishna and Balarama received Bhagavan's blessings. Thereafter, Bhagavan released white pigeons for peace in the world. Prasadam was distributed to all on this occasion. Meanwhile, Rudra Parayana by the priests continued which was followed by Rudra Homa and Sai Gayatri Homa. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.00 a.m.

Ganesh Chaturthi Celebrations

In an environment sanctified by the collective chanting of the Vedic Mantras by Prasanthi Nilayam school and college students, and sweet notes of Nadaswaram music by the Anantapur College students, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba showered His blessings on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall when He came to the Hall at 8.10 a.m. on the auspicious day of Ganesh Chaturthi on 27th August 2006. After coming to the dais, Bhagavan blessed the idols of Lord Ganesh and Kalashas brought by the students for worship in their respective institutions. This was followed by an excellent programme of devotional music which included Stotras (hymns) and group and solo devotional songs in praise of Lord Ganesh. Presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, this programme of soul-stirring musical compositions in Sanskrit, Hindi and Telugu filled each heart with sacredness and sweetness. The programme came to a close at 9.30 a.m. with Arati to Bhagavan.

The idols of Lord Ganesh worshipped in schools, college, hospitals and premises of Ashram departments by the students and Ashram staff were brought in a grand procession to Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 31st August 2006 for the blessings of Bhagavan before their immersion. Brought in beautiful chariots and palanquins, the idols which were lined up in Sai Kulwant Hall presented a grand spectacle displaying innovativeness and fine workmanship of the students and staff. Some of these reminded of the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna performed recently. One of them was shaped like a Linga which was worshipped during the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna. Another showed a Yajna Kunda where two boys in the dress of Ritwiks kept offering oblations in the Yajna fire. Other displays were also very beautiful and attractive.





Some of the beautifully decorated vehicles with Ganesh idols which were brought to Sai Kulwant Hall for Bhagavan's blessings before being taken for immersion.

Bhagavan blessed all the students and staff members accompanying them.

After Bhagavan was seated on the dais, the Institute students presented a short skit to relate the significance of celebrating Ganesh Chaturthi. At the end of the skit, they presented a jubilant dance to the delight of one and all. After this, Veda chanting and Bhajan singing

groups of students and staff members brought the chariots and palanquins before Bhagavan in the centre of the Hall and offered salutations to Him. After seeking the blessings of Bhagavan, they circumambulated the Bhajan Mandir and took the idols out for immersion, bringing the joyous festival of Ganesh Chaturthi to a happy conclusion.

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Director

SIGNIFICANCE OF YAJNAS

*Thought, word and deed, when man keeps as one,
He is acclaimed on earth as truly great,
Wedded to truth, the presence of God is gained,
Liars, like pebbles, abound; true men, like diamonds, are rare.*

Embodiments of Love!

THE PRESENCE OF GOD, THE vision of the Absolute, is not a state to be attained or newly achieved. God or the Absolute is the very nature of the Self. The individual is the indivisible God. Even when enmeshed in this world of conflict and confrontation, the Self is God, in reality. Deluding himself as the body in which he lives and attaching himself to the charm and challenge of Nature, he imposes selfhood on himself and suffers from that limitation. The rain drops clear and pure from the clouds, but on earth the water is rendered turbid and polluted by its contact with the ground. That does not affect its real nature. The water that rose as cloud and fell as rain is clear and pure. The salt of the sea is discarded in the sea itself. All the rivers of all the continents end in the sea; they lose, on merging with the sea from which they started their long journey, their forms and their taste or characteristic qualities.

Similarly, the selves that have assumed human forms and that are designated by separate names, emerge from the same source and merge in the universal form which they particularised. In the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna declares, *Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhuta Sanathana* (the

eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). They may appear different but their reality is the One. The Vedas, therefore, accost all selves as *Amrutasya Putra* (sons of immortality). They remind every living being of its being the undying divine.

These Yajnas serve one purpose more than all else – the cleansing of all levels of consciousness, Chitta Shuddhi, for they involve renunciation, invocation of Divinity and ascetic practices. This achievement alone cannot ensure Moksha (liberation). That can be won only by the awareness of the reality leading to Kshaya (removal) of Moha (attachment) to the unreal. But, this ultimate objective is seldom kept in view.

A millionaire may take on the role of a down-and-out in a play and act the part remarkably well on the stage,



but that impersonation does not make him a down-and-out. Even while on the stage, he knows that he is a millionaire, pretending to be poor. He will indeed be a fool if he forgets his reality. The individual self is the role; the reality is God.

Every role and action has a method, a mode, a way. The engineer, for example, works according to certain norms, certain principles and processes. These have to be decided upon with reference to the nature of the subsoil, the type of foundation, the height of the structure, etc. A painter has to calculate the area, the base, the background, etc. If they do not pay attention to these, the structure won't be strong, the picture won't be liked. The same holds good for the Yajna (sacrificial rite) that was inaugurated this morning. First, the fire altar, where offerings are poured into the sacred fire. It has to be made to measure, as laid down in the ancient past. If the prescribed rules are broken or bypassed, the result promised cannot be secured. The fire that is lit in the altar has, according to the texts which recommended the Yajna, to be churned out of the hard wood which was used this morning. After it is lit, tongues of flame have to be raised in order to receive the articles that are offered to the deities that are invoked by the sacred incantations.

The Vedas invite us to realise that everything – living and non-living – every quality and characteristic of everything is only an aspect of the one Atma, the source and substance of all. The Aham or the ego is an appearance on the Atma as the foam on the edge of the wave, which is but the ocean itself. The Atma can well be devoid of ego, but ego cannot exist without the Atma as the reality underneath. However, man validates Aham (ego), giving it Akaram (form) full of attributes and so, it gets polluted



Yajna involves renunciation. It means 'giving up'. What is it that we have to give up? Riches? That is quite easy. The home? That too is not difficult. Giving up one's wife and children, one's lands and houses and removing oneself into the forest? That too has been done by many. But, though one's body and mind are in the recesses of the jungle, the wife and children, the lands and houses might still occupy the thoughts and emotions of the person who has come away. What have to be given up, therefore, are one's evil tendencies, harmful thoughts, selfish feelings and longing for sensual pleasures.

as Ahamkaram (egoism)! When the ego is free from the status of 'ism', it is a facet or factor of the Atma. Attributes, modes, Gunas (qualities) drag it into the tangle of dualities and so, it gets malefic and sheds its positive, purifying role. The oblation that is done here in the sacred fire is symbolic of the evil adhering to the ego, the animal urges that still animate it.

The 'ism' or mould in which the ego gets hardened tantalises man and blinds him to the truth. Sankaracharya has described the harm it inflicts and prescribes the recitation of the name of God to defuse the consequence. The pure ego will then merge and lose its identity in the Atma, which has no birth and no death. These Yajnas serve one purpose more than all else – the cleansing of all levels of consciousness, Chitta Shuddhi, for they involve renunciation, invocation of Divinity and ascetic practices. This achievement alone cannot ensure Moksha (liberation). That can be won only by the awareness of the reality leading to Kshaya (removal) of Moha (attachment) to the unreal. But, this ultimate objective is seldom kept in view. Vedic rites were gone through in order to win the boon of sorrow-free worldly life and blissful heavenly sojourn, and only as a stage in realising the freedom from birth and death, and merging in the truth.

With a cleansed mind, one has to pursue the enquiry into the reality, until no trace of fascination for the unreal persists. Yajna involves renunciation. It means 'giving up'. What is it that we have to give up? Riches? That is quite easy. The home? That too is not difficult. Giving up one's wife and children, one's lands and houses and removing oneself into the forest? That too has been done by many. But, though one's body and mind are in the recesses of the jungle, the wife and children, the lands and

houses might still occupy the thoughts and emotions of the person who has come away. What have to be given up, therefore, are one's evil tendencies, harmful thoughts, selfish feelings and longing for sensual pleasures. One has to get rid of envy, of the love for parading oneself. When these have been renounced, hearth and home cannot harm us.

The Vedas desire man to give up the animalist ego, and its complement, anger. The evils of envy, pride and spite belong to the same brood. These are all bestial though human in appearance. The Vedas declare that love, tolerance, compassion, non-attachment and adherence to truth are the genuine human traits.

Jesus Christ said, "Ask, and it shall be given you"; "seek, and ye shall find"; "knock, and it shall be opened unto you." But, are we asking, seeking and knocking? Yes. We are asking, we are seeking, we are knocking at the door. But, whom are we asking? What are we seeking? At whose door are we knocking? We are not asking for everlasting bliss; we ask only for short-lived material pleasures. So, we do not get all that we ask for. What is the reason? Has He no compassion? The child is sick but it asks for many varieties of sweets which the mother refuses to give. Does it mean that she hates the child? Or, is she hard-hearted? Has she lost her affection? The refusal is itself a sign of compassion. For, each person is an invalid, suffering from recurrent birth and death. Granting whatever is asked can only lengthen the suffering. Hence arises the withholding and the denial. And, you too do not ask for the indispensable! You do not pray for the peace that knows no break. If you do, the boon will be granted.

Of course, you do seek. But, do you seek God, or someone ungodly? God will respond when the call arises from



the heart. Your call is fouled by greed, by hatred against others, by the desire for vengeance, by the hiss of envy and intolerance. I know you knock at the door. But, at which door? Keeping the door of your own heart closed, how can your clamour succeed in getting other door opened? Knock at the door of your own heart. God, the resident, will come into view. Prahlada had the faith that God resides in every heart and everywhere. So, when a pillar in the palace was knocked at, the Lord manifested therefrom. Believe that He resides in you and turn your vision inward.

You complain that God is merciless, hard to please, etc., only because you do not wish to give Him what you ought to or ask from Him what He would gladly give. Tender hearts, holy thoughts, loving speech – these can invoke the Divine Atma to manifest into awareness. For, these personify Sathya, embody God as Sathya or the Truth of truths. Therefore, Sathya has to be adored and propitiated. The Homa or offering of oblations in this ceremoniously lit and ceremoniously fed fire is the symbolic adoration of the Truth of truths, Sathya.

Philosophy is interpreted as the search for truth. But, truth is not something to be sought for. You have only to be aware of it, to experience it, to be it. Without it, philosophy is but full-loss-ophy! These Yajnas which encourage you to sublimate your emotions are all designed to direct you towards the goal.

Truth is totality, the One which integrates and includes the many. The sages of yore were not satisfied with one facet of the truth or one view, not of one god but of That where all streams merge. As Bairagi Sastry told you now that it is Keshava whom adoration addressed to all gods reaches.

Sarva Deva Namaskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati (whichever deity



The Vedas desire man to give up the animalist ego, and its complement, anger. The evils of envy, pride and spite belong to the same brood. These are all bestial though human in appearance. The Vedas declare that love, tolerance, compassion, non-attachment and adherence to truth are the genuine human traits.

you worship, it reaches God). One house cannot become a village, nor one individual, a society, nor one tree, a forest! To be conscious of the totality, one has to fill oneself with the sublime grandeur of the forest, not squat under a single tree. This is the inner purpose which led aspirants and seekers after truth to the core of the Himalayan forests. Keeping away from the din of the populace was only an excuse. In the sylvan hermitage, the prayer resonant with Yajur Veda, 'Let all be of one mind, of one heart, towards one goal, sustained by one strength' rose more meaningfully and more effectively. The present socialist ideal of the unity of mankind is a Vedic concept; in fact, the Vedic ideal was even wider and more comprehensive. 'Let all the worlds be happy and prosperous. The world is one family', the Vedas proclaimed.

It is wrongly assumed that the Vedas had only one section of the population, one caste, one race, one community in view. This is the result of misreading and mistaken inference. They are concerned, it was said, only with Brahmins and with the Pandits among them. This too is a wrong conclusion. Every Vedic ritual had as its goal

the prosperity and peace of the world. The Vedas yearn to establish the welfare of the three worlds – the nether regions, the earth and heaven. It is a pity that a narrow outlook is foisted by short-sighted people on such profound texts. The Vedas do not allow scope for distinctions on the basis of caste or creed. They assert, “I shall save whoever keeps Me in memory.” “I shall be beside whoever is beside Me.” “Whoever adores Me in whatever form and through whichever name, I shall manifest Myself before them with that form, bearing that name.”

Oblations are offered in this sacred fire to the One, but the One is invoked through many names: ‘Om! Prostrations to Rudra! Om! Prostrations to Aditya! Om! Prostrations to Varuna’, etc. The Rishis or sages had each a favourite form and name and, as a result, the One Lord acquired many names. Many among you perform the worship named, Laksharchana or Saptaham. What is done then is repeating the names of God a hundred thousand times or for full seven days and nights. A flower is placed before the picture or idol with the recitation of a name – Madhava, Keshava, Narayana, etc.

The idol is the same throughout. When we name Him Madhava, we are conscious that He is also Keshava and Narayana, and we derive delight from that knowledge.

Each hymn of the Vedas is called a Rik, which means ‘praise’. And the word Veda is derived from the root Vid, ‘to know’. What exactly should we strive to know? We must know the One, which has no second, no another, no other. So, every word, every statement in the Vedas, every Mantra or Rik in them, connotes only the One, though out of insufficient or wrong understanding people mistake the lesson and ascribe the words to indicate the many.

It is essential that the true import be grasped by all. Since the opportunities to learn it have declined, mistaken interpretations gain currency. In the course of this weeklong Vedic Yajna, we shall delve into the deeper significance of the Vedic teachings.

– From **Bhagavan’s Discourse on 21st October 1982 on the first day of Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna (“Sanathana Sarathi” March 1983)**

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF SANATHANA SARATHI **Exhibition on “Journey with Sai”**

An exhibition of photographs and other audio-visual materials is proposed to be organised at Prasanthi Nilayam as part of golden jubilee celebrations of “Sanathana Sarathi” around Sivarathri 2007, highlighting the visits of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to various places. It will be based on the reports in “Sanathana Sarathi” and other relevant records. Copies of publications/records giving details of these visits as also the relevant photographs, CDs, video films, documentaries, etc., are required by us for this purpose. All the material received will be gratefully acknowledged and safely returned, if required.

It is therefore appealed that those devotees / Sai Organisations who possess such materials may kindly send them to: The Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam – 515 134, Dist. Anantapur (A.P.). Email: editor@sssbpt.org

Convener
Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

UNITED KINGDOM

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 80TH birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the 50th anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh Award for Youth, the Queen hosted a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 13th July 2006. About 8,000 invitations were sent out to individuals who had made a unique contribution to the United Kingdom. The National Youth Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation was chosen by the Queen and the Duke of

Edinburgh to attend and receive a special certificate and recognition for the outstanding contribution made by Sai Youth towards nation building and promoting happiness and harmony within the community. Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation of the U.K. has been a recipient of the Duke of Edinburgh award in the past (please see "Sanathana Sarathi" October, 2005).

National Youth Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of the U.K., Shitu Chudasama attended the function and was asked to address the audience regarding the work of Sai Youth and Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation. He told how Sri Sathya Sai Baba teaches that only youth can transform youth and how He calls upon them to be leaders like lions - bold and courageous. A miracle of Swami's omnipresence occurred during the ceremony. When the certificate was presented, it bore the name of Divinity itself, Sri Sathya Sai.

MOROCCO

An SSEHV teacher training conference was held at the American School in Casablanca, Morocco from 1st to 2nd July 2006. Morocco is a French-speaking kingdom in North Africa. As many as 120 teachers from 14 schools attended the conference that was conducted fully in French by Carole Alderman, Director, British Institute of Sathya Sai Education and Christina Wilson, a French-speaking trainer of the Institute. During the two days of the course, teachers were introduced to the five human values and five teaching techniques through lectures and interactive activities in which



Certificate presented by the Queen to the National Youth Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of the U.K., Shitu Chudasama.



As many as 120 teachers from 14 schools participated in the Teacher Training Conference conducted in Casablanca, Morocco for introducing Sri Sathya Sai Human Values in the curriculum.

everyone participated enthusiastically. The teachers made sincere efforts to incorporate Sathya Sai Human Values into their training sessions and even in their interactions during the conference. Later, various schools discussed together and reported back on how they would take SSEHV further. A resolution was made to translate SSEHV books into French and Arabic languages to facilitate their use in schools in Morocco. At the end of the conference, all the teachers were extremely enthusiastic and eager to implement SSEHV as part of the curriculum.

INDONESIA

Since December 2005, Indonesia has been repeatedly struck by tsunamis and earthquakes. There is a great need for humanitarian help in these devastated islands. Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in Indonesia has been tirelessly providing disaster relief and medical care to the victims. The exemplary and timely mobilisation of massive resources by the Sai Organisation in response to these sequential natural calamities was partly reported in the

July 2006 issue of “Sanathana Sarathi”. The selfless service rendered by the dedicated Sai devotees in Indonesia continues:

On 1st June 2006, one public kitchen was set up in Klaten and another in Gunung Kitul. In addition, large quantities of food, healthcare materials, and clothes were delivered. Sai Medical Teams increased from three to six. On 3rd June 2006, Sai devotees from Jakarta began to manufacture bricks for the reconstruction of many houses that were destroyed. The flow of relief materials, food and clothes accelerated. On 4th June 2006, Sai devotees from Bali set up many tents to house homeless victims. Working with Sai Youth, they began reconstructing damaged houses. On 5th June 2006, rebuilding and rehabilitation work was initiated by Sai devotees in several villages, and Sri Sathya Sai Central Council provided financial aid, building materials and financial resources to rebuild houses.



To provide relief to the victims of the tsunami that struck the south-western coast of Java on 17th July 2006, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Java drew up a plan and started implementing it immediately.



As this disaster relief was being rendered, the south-western coast of Java was again hit by a tsunami on 17th July 2006. Sri Sathya Sai Organisation again rose to the occasion. Office bearers visited the devastated areas, assessed the damage, ascertained the needs, drafted a plan to provide the urgently needed humanitarian aid, and began, without delay, to implement the plan. Withstanding these horrendous natural disasters, the people of Indonesia have been comforted by the loving care of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and His devotees from Indonesia.

U. S. A.

Jasper, a small town in the State of Texas, was hit by Hurricane Rita. Six months later, the population is still recovering from the destruction and water-borne diseases resulting



A child being examined in the medical camp held at Jasper, a small town in the State of Texas, which was hit by Hurricane Rita.

from the hurricane. In response to this major calamity, Sai devotees from the Sai Centres in the States of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana, working together selflessly conducted a medical camp on 4th February 2006 providing free medical care for the

needy. During this camp, 400 patients were seen. Preventive health screening was done for diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis, etc. Groups of devotees visited a nearby nursing home for the elderly and provided love and care to the residents.

On 12th August 2006, a free Sai Medical Camp was held in St. Louis, Missouri in which 227 patients were seen. In addition to treating those in need, healthcare education and preventative healthcare screenings were provided. Most importantly, a booth was set up in the Medical Camp titled "Sai Human Values and Health." Information about Swami's teaching on human values and health in English and Spanish languages was made available. Dr. William Kincaid, the Director of Health for the City of St. Louis, Missouri came to the medical camp. On behalf of the city of St. Louis, he expressed his gratitude to Sri Sathya Sai Organisation for conducting these free medical camps for the people of St. Louis.

– Prasanthi Council

B H A R A T

Andhra Pradesh: Anantapur district conducted Bal Vikas Children's Joy Festival at Anantapur on 1st and 2nd July 2006 in which 400 children, 110 Gurus and 100 active workers from all over the district took part. 50 children had the opportunity to show their creativity in making various articles like flower pots, bouquets, wall hangings, greeting cards, paintings, etc., with waste material like used CDs, leaves of different trees, flowers, etc. Some children wrote Sai Ram on rice grains. 14 students impressively spoke on Swami's childhood, Indian Culture and the importance of Bal Vikas. Some children showed their talent in heritage sports

like playing top in different ways, stick fights in self-defence, etc., to the joy of the assembled audience. Nine teams from different parts of the district took part in cultural programmes like dance, drama and group singing on spiritual themes. Children demonstrated Puja methods in Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions and recited Veda Mantras. They also took part in a debate on cultivating human values. A very interesting and enlightening quiz programme on the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata and Bhagavadgita was held in which five teams of 80 selected students took part. All winners and participants were given prizes.

West Godavari district conducted Bal Vikas Children's Joy Festival on 23rd July 2006 at Eluru in which 400 children took part. Bal Vikas rally, parents meet, talks highlighting the importance of Bal Vikas and Sri Sathya Sai Education and cultural programmes were the highlights of the festival.

Assam, Manipur and N.E. States: A two-day training programme for Bal Vikas Gurus was successfully hosted by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Dimapur, Nagaland on 24th and 25th June 2006. About 150 devotees attended the meet from Assam and Manipur besides the host State of Nagaland. Faculty members from the State Organisation dwelt at length on the various aspects of conducting Bal Vikas classes as well as the need for parent contact programme. On the conclusion of the programme, certificates to 74 Gurus who received training were awarded. A happy augury of the meet was the presence of a number of Naga tribal people hailing from even the trouble-torn Wokha district of

Nagaland. The devotees enthused by the nice atmosphere resolved to conduct regular Sai Bhajans in Dimapur. Another attraction of the camp was a cultural programme hosted by Dimapur Bal Vikas students and youth on the evening of 24th June 2006. The audience enjoyed the programme and expressed joy at such an arrangement.

Jammu and Kashmir: In a function held in R.S. Pura under the chairmanship of the Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu on 28th July 2006, free services offered by the Sai Organisation to improve cattle health by launching free mass vaccination and other programmes for the cattle of border villages were explained by the President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Jammu and Kashmir. On this occasion, copies of the book "Seva Pushpam Sai Amritam" were distributed among the faculty members of the university. Dr. A.K. Srivastava, Dean of the Faculty, said that one should redeem one's life by engaging oneself in service of others. This selfless service would come to one's help in time of need without any limit, observed Dr. Srivastava.

Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal: About 30 km away from Allahabad, fire broke out in a village Kante in which about 50 houses of the poor villagers were burnt. They lost everything. Our Seva Dal members rushed to help them. They distributed all the essential food items for a week and clothes to the victims of the fire. On 23rd April, our Seva Dal members went along with doctors and visited each house. 210 patients were checked and medicines were distributed. Villagers were amazed at the way Seva was done by the devotees of Bhagavan.



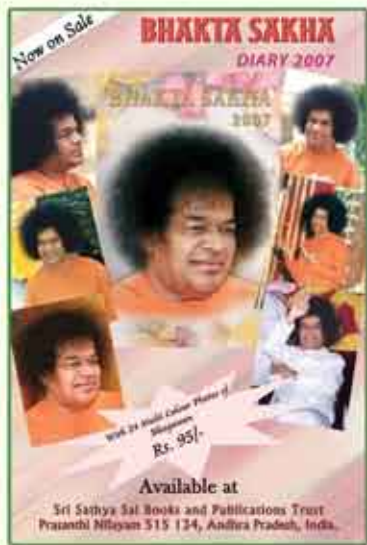
Sri Sathya Sai Samithi, Mirzapur organised a bio-tech programme in a big way and villagers from Sheker, Bihampur, Bhagalpur and many other villages attended the programme. The queries raised by the villagers were answered by experts from Allahabad University. Every villager was given Bhagavan's photo and Vibhuti.

Seva Dal members of Kasgavan and other villages set an example of selfless service for others when they repaired the thatched roofs of the huts of poor villagers and put plastic sheets on 30 of them as these were damaged in heavy rain in Kanpur Dehat. During Guru

Purnima, Narayana Seva was conducted in Kanpur Dehat and 3,000 villagers were served food. Chants of "Sai Baba Ki Jai" could be heard all over.

Noida Samithi organised a blood donation camp on 2nd July 2006 in collaboration with doctors of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. Total blood donated was 88 units. On the same day, an eye check-up camp was also organised with the help of eye specialists of the Medical Institute. Total number of patients examined and treated was 110. Free spectacles were given to the needy patients.

BHAKTA SAKHA 2007 DIARY



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Truthfulness

CHINNA KATHA

SIR C.V. RAMAN WAS A renowned scientist. He established an institute for conducting scientific research. He was the director of that institute. Many young men applied for various posts in this institute. He called them for interview.



Sir C.V. Raman told the young man not to entertain any hope of securing the job in his institute as he did not fare well in the interview.

An incident of great significance occurred at that time. A young man, who was also called for interview, could not give correct answers to the questions asked in the interview. At the end of the interview, Sir C.V. Raman gently said to him, "My dear boy, do not entertain any hope of securing a job here. Better you try for a job elsewhere. You may collect your train fare from the office before you go." Highly discouraged and disappointed at his failure, the young student went to the office and collected the money that was due to him.

After some time, Sir C.V. Raman came out of the interview room. Seeing the young man

pace up and down in the verandah, he said to him in a rather angry tone, "There is no use waiting here. Have I not told you already to try for a job elsewhere? Why are you still loitering here?" Folding both his hands in all humility, the young man replied, "Sir, I am not waiting here with the hope of getting the job. I will certainly follow your advice. I am waiting here for a different purpose. They have given me five rupees more than what was due to me as railway fare. I did not count the money at the time of receiving. Meanwhile, they closed the office and went home for lunch. I am waiting so that I can return the extra money to them."

Putting his hand lovingly on the young man's shoulder, Sir C.V. Raman said, "Come and meet me tomorrow. I will give you the appointment order for the job. I need persons of honesty and integrity like you."

Students should cultivate the habit of truthfulness like this.



"Come and meet me tomorrow. I will give you the appointment order for the job. I need persons of honesty and integrity like you", said Sir C.V. Raman to the young man.

