

## 2. Sanctify sports and games

*The advent of the Sankraanthi festival is greeted by farmers who have brought home their harvest, singing with joy.*

THIS sacred and auspicious Makara Sankraanthi is a divine occasion for people to transform their lives so that they may experience the divinity, the grandeur and greatness of human birth.

*Whatever possessions and luxuries one may have,*

*They will not confer peace of mind.*

*Only when Godly feelings are developed,*

*Man will realise peace and bliss.*

In this mundane world, what people regard ordinarily as *jnaana* (knowledge) is not proper *jnaana* at all. *Aathmajnaana* (knowledge of the Self) alone, is true knowledge. *Aathma and Jnaana* are synonymous. *Jnaana* is fundamental. It cannot be got through thought or sense perceptions. All that is acquired as knowledge about the things of the world is not *jnaana*. *Jnaana* is that which remains after the mind is stilled.

*Students!* Remember that wealth lost can be regained, health lost can be recovered, but time lost is lost forever. Hence, do not waste time. Time is God. Sanctify the time given to you by worthy deeds, experience bliss and share it with others.

### **Commercialisation of sport has lowered its value**

Sports and Arts are intended to give pleasure. But the commercialisation of sports and music has lowered their value, together with the decline in human values. There should be no room for hatred or jealousy in games and sports. Our Institute students should engage themselves in sports for health and enjoyment. The participation of students coming from different regions and different backgrounds in games should be conducive to the promotion of unity. Even games should be regarded as sacred. Thereby, the participants become holy.

*Students!* Uphold your human status by developing firm faith in the Divine. Men act on faith in a hundred trivial things in daily life but why don't they have firm faith in the *Vedhic* dictum that they are one with the *Divine--Tath Thvam Asi* (Thou art That)? Because immersed in sensual pleasures, they are oblivious to their real potency and state.

In worldly matters, every action has a subject, object and predicate, as in the statement: "Raama killed a dog." But this rule does not apply to the actions of the Divine. He is the doer, He is the deed and He is the object of action (*Kartha, Karma and Kaarana*). No one is competent to enquire into the actions of the Divine. One cannot know how the Divine is directing his actions in relation to his past. Each one should carry out his self-examination himself. Students should continue spiritual exercises together with academic studies.

### **Regard yourselves as instruments of the Divine**

Men should realise that they are entitled only to carry out their duties without concern for the fruits thereof. Duties come first. The results will come in due course. Men should realise how so many vital things are happening without any conscious efforts on their part. Their breathing, the functioning of their hearts and digestive organs are taking place naturally without any effort on their part. Even the time and manner of one's death are dependent on the Will of the Divine.

However, man should regard himself as an instrument of the Divine. This was the advice Krishna gave to Arjuna. After Arjuna has exhausted all his questions to Krishna and got the answers from Krishna, his final decision was: "*Karishye vachanam thava*" (I shall abide by what you say).

Priding himself on his talents and powers, man ruins himself. He does not realise that all his powers come from God. But it is in his power to ruin himself by the misuse of his talents.

No one can know the origin of anything. For example, there is a green gram seed. Who can trace its genealogy? But one can recognise its future. The moment it is placed in the mouth and munched, that will be its end. Its origin is not known, but its end is in our hands. This is the reason why man is enjoined to concern himself about his end. Do not worry about rebirth because that is not in your power. Strive only to ensure that your end is pure and sacred. That calls for *saadhana* (spiritual practice). Many imagine that the quest for God is *saadhana*. There is no need to search for God. When the God is all-pervading, inside and outside, where is the need to search for Him? The only *saadhana* one has to practise is to get rid of the *Anaathma bhaava* (identification of the self with the body). *Anaathma* is that which is impermanent. When you give up the impermanent, you realise what is permanent and eternal.

Man today foolishly seeks to enjoy all things indiscriminately. This is wrong. One must enjoy what is good and wholesome and eschew what is bad and unwholesome. In spiritual terms, this means that one should give up the impermanent physical objects and realise the *Aathma* that is permanent. This alone is true *saadhana*---not various forms of worship and meditation, which are not genuinely concentrated on God.

### **Combine studies with elevating actions**

All acts should be performed in spirit of dedication, realizing that God is omnipresent. Then bliss will be experienced.

Students should combine normal studies with the refinement of their way of living through *Samskaaras* (elevating actions). This refinement cannot be got from teachers or books, but only by one's daily conduct.

Some students refrain from taking part in sports and games on the pretext that they are not interested in winning prizes. This is not genuine detachment, but only a form of laziness. Participation in sports and games is necessary for your health and recreation.

Our Institute students are doubtless filled with devotion and faith. But together with these, they should cultivate humility and discipline. Their behaviour should be exemplary. When Svaami's car is going, students run beside it faster than the car. This is a bad example to others. During *bhajan* sessions students are eager to sit as near as Svaami as possible. But in their eagerness they rush forward and fall upon each other in a manner which may cause serious collisions. Is this a good example for others? No. Students should set a good example even in small matters like these.

Students have abundant love for Svaami but this is exhibited in unseemly ways. There should be restraint in doing anything.

### **Life is a game! Play it!**

Students think that sports events are confined to a few days in January. On the contrary, they should regard life itself as one continuous game. Life is a game! Play it! Treat the play as an ideal. Thereby you will be adhering to your ideals wherever you go.

Understand the true meaning of discipline. It is not something that should be observed only when you are in the hostel. Discipline must accompany you like your shadow. After leaving College, when you get employed, then also you should observe discipline. Discipline is the life-breath of man. It is like the spine for the human body.

Moreover, students should take care to avoid undue risk in their physical feats. You may desire to please Svaami to the maximum extent. But if you sustain injuries, will it give joy to Svaami? Your safety is important. All the spectators should feel happy. Your displays should be attractive without being unduly hazardous. You may perform thrilling feats. But do not give room for anxiety to others. Svaami is concerned about your welfare. Whatever you do, it should be pleasing and enjoyable. Where there is devotion and earnestness, nothing serious may happen, thanks to the grace of Bhagavaan.

### **Devotion earns the grace of God**

One student fell from a height with the head downwards. Doctors felt that it was a serious case and that the boy should be sent to Hyderabad. But I declared that it was nothing serious and that all would be well with him. The boy is full of devotion for Svaami. Without any bandage or treatment, he was all-right. (Svaami summoned the student to come on stage. The entire audience cheered as the student came walking to Svaami). Look at this boy. The doctors said that his entire leg has sustained a fracture. How did he come here after the severe fall? His devotion and faith helped him to overcome the effects of the fall.

Hence, if devotion and earnestness are present, even great dangers can be averted. Dangers may come from any cause. But even mountains of danger can be removed by the grace of God. But that does not mean you may take any risk. You should be cautious. Moreover, when some hazardous exercises are performed, there should be safety measures to meet any untoward contingencies. Soft mattresses should be kept on the ground. Such precautions should be taken by the organisers of the sports events.

### **Cars for hostels presented by Svaami**

The students from the Brindhaavan Campus put up a good show. They spent money from their own pockets to go to several places and arrange for attractive programmes. They suffered from lack of adequate facilities. Our Prashaanthi Nilayam students, despite the nearness of the old hospital, have oftentimes need to go to the speciality hospital by taxi or auto-rickshaw.

You have witnessed the superb performance of the Primary School children. Not even the grown-ups reached the level of their excellence. All their programmes were designed by themselves without any outside help. This is an amazing achievement. Their displays were done with ease and were thoroughly enjoyable. Likewise, the performance of the girl students from Ananthapur was splendid. Even they desired to perform some hazardous feats. They showed great presence of mind in their exercises. No accidents occurred. Their only concern was to please Svaami and win His approbation.

All the students from all the three campuses are full of devotion to Svaami. To meet the needs of the four Institutions in regard to transport facilities during emergencies. I am presenting cars to each of the three Institute campuses--Brindhaavan, Prashaanthi Nilayam and Ananthapur--and one for the Primary School. In view of the high cost of petrol, they are being given diesel-driven cars. Students, however, should use the vehicles carefully. The Wardens and principals must see to this.

The cars should not be entrusted to juveniles. I am handing over the keys of the cars to the Wardens of the Brindhaavan Campus, the Prashaanthi Nilayam Campus and the Primary School. The key of the car for the Ananthapur hostel has already been given.

I bless you all that you should continue to give joy to your parents and others by your performances in the future and acquit yourselves well in every way.

*Discourse in the Puurnachandhra Auditorium on 14-1-1993.*

*Hate breeds fear; hate is the seedbed of anxiety, scandal and falsehood. It drains your mind of peace. You may have light without oil, fire without smoke, breeze without a bearer fanning you, a chillness in the air of your room in the sizzling heat of summer but, unless you are at peace with yourselves and with those around you, your pulse will be quick and your blood will be racing in rage and rancour. Love alone can alleviate anxiety and allay fear.*

*BABA*