

SECOND SESSION

1:45 PM – 3 PM November 20, 2005

The afternoon session was opened with some brief remarks, by the conference moderator, Dr. David Gries. He announced some changes in the timings and the fact that the Sai International Symphony would be performing in Sai Kulwant Hall at 4 PM. The three speakers for this session would be Dr. Narendra Reddy on 'Devotion,' Professor Anil Kumar on 'From Education to Educare' and Air Chief Marshall N. C. Suri on 'Service.'

Dr. Narendra Reddy

Dr. Reddy is a member of the Prasanthi Council and Chairman of the International Medical Committee. He began his talk by asserting that everything about Swami can be summarized in one word – Love!

Bhagawan's life, message, mission, His ideals, His humanitarian works - all can be enshrined in one word: LOVE. But His Love cannot be expressed in words, nor can it be comprehended by the mind. We can only experience His Love, enjoy His Love and expand His Love by sharing that Love with others. Love has no bounds, no limits. Love is infinite. We are really fortunate and blessed to be in the presence of the embodiment of Love. Swami has come not to destroy the evil doers but to transform them and to inculcate in all of us this Love, to teach us this path of Love, this message of Love, this obligation to Love, this duty to Love. He has also said He wants us to realize that Love is our essential nature, that we are Love personified.

But what is this "Love" of which Swami speaks? He says that true Love is often confused with attachment and affection, etc. But real Love, He says, is pure, selfless, unconditional, eternal, universal and never-changing. On Guru Poornima day of 2005 He said that we should pray to Him only for pure Love. Contemplating on that, I was reminded of what Jesus said, "Seek ye the kingdom of God and everything will be added unto you." So if we have pure Love, everything will be added to us.

Swami says our Love should be one-pointed. He compares Love to a single seat sofa, not a double seat sofa. Similarly, Jesus said you cannot serve two masters, nor ride two horses at the same time. We can remember JOY, J-O-Y. Jesus first;

others second, yourself last. We can also apply this to SAI: **S** - Swami first, then **A** - All others next and then **I** - I myself last. Jesus said the greatest commandment is: "Love thy God with all thy heart, mind and soul." Hence, Divine Love must be the highest goal for all of us. Swami also says that our Love must be intense, not merely one-pointed. I remember once, when I asked Swami, "How do I know I have devotion?" He said when you have intense longing for God that indicates you have devotion.

Sri Ramakrishna said devotion should be like the combined Love of the mother for her child, of a miser for money, and of a chaste woman for her husband. One should have an intense yearning for God.

Swami emphasizes that true Love gives priority to quality, not quantity. Quality is more important. Once I mentioned to Swami that the number of devotees attending the Center meetings in our home had grown from ten up to 100. Swami admonished me, and said, "Is that all you've learned after all these years? Quality is important, but not quantity." However, He said in another context, "Expansion is the essence of Love." How to reconcile these two apparently contradictory statements of His? The clue may be found in another beautiful alliterative Telugu dictum of Swami: "Premanu penchuko, panchuko." It means, "Expand your Love and then share it with others."

How to develop that Love? Swami has given nine modes of expressing devotion in His discourses. Because of time constraint, I shall not go into the details, but you can find them in many of His discourses. They include listening to the stories of the Lord, singing the glories of the Lord, constant remembrance of the Lord, serving His Lotus feet, salutations to the Lord, worshipping the Lord, service to the Lord, friendship with the Lord, and ultimately complete surrender to the Lord. The details of this can be found in *Prema Vahini*. If we follow any one of these paths, we will reach the goal, because according to Baba, Love is the common 'sutra' or thread running through all the nine modes of devotion.

Swami tells us that in order to experience pure Love, we should rid ourselves of impurities. Instead of fighting with the six cardinal enemies, Swami says we should channel all our desires towards God. Even negative emotions can be made beneficial by directing them toward God. For example, if we feel greed, we should convert the greed to wanting more and more of God. If we have pride, we should be proud to be a Sai devotee by following His teachings. We can have anger at our failings and shortcomings. In past ages, the sages prayed that God would come into their midst. But today we have the good fortune to be