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*"Tattwamasi (That thou Art).
This is one of the profound statements
of the Vedas which propounds your
oneness with God. When you
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and day out, you experience worldly
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why should you establish such a
relationship even with God?"*

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AMRITA DHARA

BHAGAVAN'S DISCOURSE:
27TH AUGUST 1996

DIVINITY IMPARTS VALUE TO EVERYTHING

Truth is the mother, wisdom, the father, righteousness, the brother, compassion, the friend, peace, the wife, forbearance, the son.

These six qualities are the true relations of man.

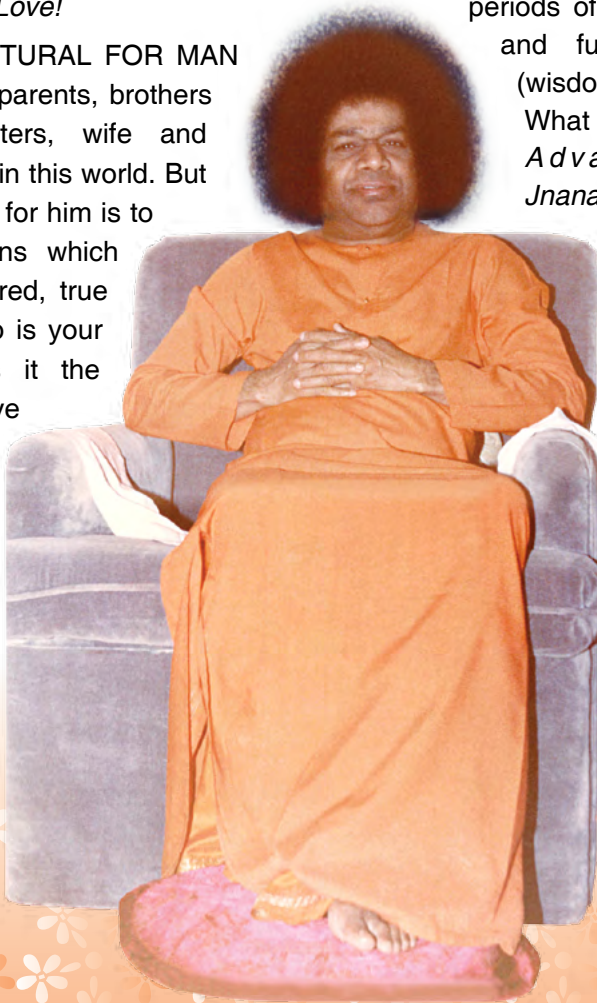
(Sanskrit Verse)

FOCUS ALL YOUR LOVE ON GOD

Embodiments of Love!

IT IS NATURAL FOR MAN to have parents, brothers and sisters, wife and children in this world. But

what is important for him is to have the relations which are spiritual, sacred, true and eternal. Who is your true mother? Is it the mother who gave you birth and brought you up? That mother may leave you at any point of time. Your real mother is truth. *Trikalabadhyam Sathya m* (truth remains unchanged in the three



periods of time – past, present and future). *Pita Jnanam* (wisdom is your true father). What is meant by wisdom? *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* (experience of non-dualism is wisdom). That which is one without a second is true wisdom. That is your father. *Dharmo Bhrata* (Dharma is your brother), *Daya Sakha* (compassion is your friend), *Santham Patni* (peace is your wife), *Kshama Putrah* (forbearance is your son). These are the true relations of man.

To make the divine love flow towards your fellow human beings is the hallmark of supreme devotion. Man's life will be sanctified when he conducts himself with the awareness that he is born to serve society and not to lead a selfish life. He will attain fulfilment when he dedicates his life to the service of man forgetting himself. What is the use of being born as a human being if one does not fill one's heart with unblemished love and serve one's fellow beings? What else is to be conveyed to this assembly of noble souls! (Telugu Poem)

Make yourself Free from Non-Self

Embodiments of Love!

Man undertakes many spiritual practices to have the vision of the Atma, to be in communion with the Atma and to experience Atmic bliss. He follows the nine paths of devotion, viz., *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender) and thinks that he can have the vision of the Atma by following these nine paths. But it is a great mistake. You cannot attain divinity by merely undertaking spiritual practices. These are meant to help you to get rid of all that is non-Self. Once you are free from non-Self, the Self will become manifest everywhere. Fire becomes visible when you blow away the

God has no expectation from anybody. Everyone in this world loves you with some self-interest, but it is only God's love which is totally free from selfishness and self-interest. Even parents love you because of your physical relationship with them. But God has no such relationship. His relationship is heart to heart and love to love. He has no selfish motive in His love. Therefore, you should offer your life only to God.

ash that covers it. You don't need to make any special effort to see the sun; you can see it when the clouds that cover it move away. You are under the delusion that you perform spiritual practices to have the vision of the Atma. In fact, they are not meant for the vision of the Atma. You perform these practices in order to separate yourself from the non-Self and unite with the Self. You pray to God, saying:

*Twameva Matacha Pita Twameva,
Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha
Twameva,
Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva,
Twameva Sarvam Mama Devadeva.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

(Oh Lord! You alone are my father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth. You are my everything).

What does this prayer do? What type of result do you get out of it? This prayer



conveys that you are different from God and you have a worldly relationship with Him. Such worldly relationship is the cause of bondage. Father cannot become son and son cannot become father. Father is father and son is son. Both cannot become one. Therefore, to address God as your father and mother is a sign of ignorance. "You are I and I am you." This is the best prayer. *Tattwamasi* (That thou Art). This is one of the profound statements of the Vedas which propounds your oneness with God. When you realise this, you will be free from all relationships that bind you. Day in and day out, you experience worldly relationships that bind you. Then why should you establish such a relationship even with God?

God alone is present in all. *Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Srutimalloke Sarvamavruithya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). When God is present in all, then how can you say that He is your father and mother? You should develop *Ekatma Bhava* (spirit of oneness). *Mamatma Sarva Bhutantaratma* (I am present as the Atma in all beings), says the Lord. The same Atma is present in you, Me and everyone. The Atma has no differences of caste and religion. It is not bound by time, space and circumstances.

All Names and Forms Belong to God

God is one and the same for all nations, for all people, for all religions, for all communities and at all times. It is with

reference to this that the Vedas declare: *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). God is one, but you call Him by many names. Wherefrom have these differences arisen? You develop these differences and get deluded as you see differences in form. Day by day, you are getting more and more deluded. So long as you have Bhrama (delusion), you cannot attain Brahma (God). When you get rid of Bhrama, you become Brahma yourself. *Ekoham Bahusyam* (the One willed to become many).

God is one and all are one. All are present in God and God is present in all. All names and forms are His. You offer worship to God, chanting the Mantras: *Kesavaya Namaha, Narayanaya Namaha, Madhavaya Namaha, Govindaya Namaha, Madhusudanaya Namaha*. You chant these various names of God but you offer worship to the same idol. *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). Devotees should develop such firm faith. Today there are so many differences between man and man. There is so much difference between the thinking of one man and the other. Then how can you experience oneness? There may be differences in form between man and man but there should be unity in the way they think. Brahman pervades the entire world. Scientists say the entire cosmos is constituted by atoms. Many of them also say it is foolish to attribute a form to God and worship Him. You should enquire what is the reality. The entire world has a form and every atom that constitutes it has also



a form. *Anoraneeyan Mahato Maheeyan* (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest). The atom itself is not without a form. Therefore, there is nothing in this world that has no form.

All names and forms are the manifestations of the Supreme Being who is the embodiment of peace and auspiciousness. He is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute and non-dual. He is Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Goodness, Beauty).

(Sanskrit Verse)

It is God who has assumed all forms. The same truth is declared in the Purusha Sukta: *Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad* (The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes and feet). All forms belong to God. Man degenerates himself to the level of animal when he does not realise this truth. There is no harmony between his thoughts, words and deeds. This is not humanness. *The proper study of mankind is man.* There should be complete unity in your thoughts, words and actions. Therein lies the true meaning of humanness.

God is Present in Everything

We say all forms belong to God, but we also say that God is formless. *Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nitya, Suddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Swarupinam* (He is attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). What is the inner meaning of this? Diversity has value only when it is associated with unity.

God is one and the same for all nations, for all people, for all religions, for all communities and at all times. It is with reference to this that the Vedas declare: Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). God is one, but you call Him by many names. Wherefrom have these differences arisen? You develop these differences and get deluded as you see differences in form.

When you add a zero after 1 it becomes 10. If you go on adding more and more zeros, the value goes on increasing to 100, 1000, 10,000, 1,00,000, etc. How does zero assume value? It assumes value when it is associated with one. Therefore, one is hero, world is zero. World has value only because of God who is the hero. It is only divinity that imparts value to everything. There can be no world without God. God is the cause and world is the effect. This creation is nothing but the manifestation of cause and effect. How is it that man is unable to realise this divine principle having attained human birth? There is divinity in every atom of the universe. This is the truth you have to realise. If you always identify yourself with your body, mind and Chitta (mind-stuff), how can you understand the truth that you are God? Body, mind, Chitta, intellect, etc., are mere instruments. You are the master. That is the Atma. The



Atma is all-pervasive. Brahman and Atma are one and the same. Brahman signifies all-pervasive and ever-expansive divine principle. The same truth was declared by child Prahlada long ago. Prahlada was the son of Hiranyakasipu and Virochana was the son of Prahlada and emperor Bali, in whose name we are celebrating the Onam festival today, was the son of Virochana. Emperor Bali was the embodiment of righteousness and sacrifice. He considered the welfare of his subjects as his own welfare. The minister who spoke earlier mentioned in his speech that service to man is service to God. Emperor Bali also followed this noble principle.

Once some people went to Buddha and asked, "You have been performing spiritual practices for a long time. Can you tell us something about God?" Then Buddha remained silent. It only means that there is no scope for arguments and counter arguments in matters relating to God. In fact, what do you know about God to involve yourself in argumentation? God is present in "yes" and also in "no." He is present in truth and righteousness and also in untruth and unrighteousness. How can you argue about God who is present in everything? Therefore, do not enter into any sort of discussion with regard to God. It is sheer waste of time and utter foolishness.

God is the embodiment of truth, righteousness and non-violence. That is why the scriptures teach, *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness). Truth, righteousness

and non-violence are the real forms of God. Some people went to Ramakrishna Paramahansa and asked, "Oh master, you are always in communion with God. Have you seen God?" Laughing heartily, he said, "Yes, I have seen God. In fact, I am seeing you as the very form of God. God is present right in front of my eyes in your form. All are the embodiments of God. However, your outlook is different. You consider yourself as human beings. You consider what you see around you as the world. *Pashyannapicha Na Pashyati Moodho* (he is a fool who sees, yet does not recognise the reality). What you see around you is only God. How can you deny God when you see Him everywhere and all the time? How is it that people are not able to see God? People cry for their wife, husband, power, position, name and fame. But do they really cry for God? No. If you cry for God just as you cry for other material things, He will immediately manifest before you."

You have part-time devotion for God, whereas you have full-time devotion for the world. You are prepared to sacrifice anything for worldly things. The Vedas declare, *Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaike Amrutatthwamanasu* (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice). What is it that you have to renounce? There is no need for you to renounce your home and hearth. What is required is to get rid of your delusion.

Renunciation does not merely lie in giving up one's wealth and family and



going to forest. Real renunciation lies in giving up evil qualities. This is real Thyaga and yoga. (Telugu Poem)

Drive away evil qualities from your mind. That is real sacrifice. But how many people practise this? You can experience the reality only when you put this principle into practice. If someone comes in the way of your sacrifice, whoever he may be, you should disown him.

Emperor Bali noticed Vamana entering the Yajnasala (platform for the performance of Yajna). He welcomed him, offered him a seat with respect and said, "Swami, what is your desire that I can fulfil?" Vamana replied, "I don't want anything else, I just want three steps of land." Emperor Bali said, "What is this? Do you need to come all the way just for three steps of land which anybody else would have given you?" Vamana said, "I want three steps of land from you only." Bali's preceptor Sukracharya who was standing behind, cautioned him, "Oh king! He is not an ordinary man. Do not make the mistake of granting his request." Then Bali said, "Is there a greater mistake than going back on one's promise? I have already given him my word. I can disobey even my Guru, but I cannot go back on my promise." Accordingly, Emperor Bali fulfilled his promise to Vamana. He was the embodiment of truth. He was the one who would never go back on his word. That is why the people of Kerala enshrine his memory in their heart and celebrate the festival of Onam every year. What is that

It is only divinity that imparts value to everything. There can be no world without God. God is the cause and world is the effect. This creation is nothing but the manifestation of cause and effect. How is it that man is unable to realise this divine principle having attained human birth? There is divinity in every atom of the universe. This is the truth you have to realise.

you have to worship? You have to worship truth. Nothing other than truth has any value.

*Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace and love,
the value of all your education is zero;
Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace and love,
the benefit of all your acts of charity and kindness is zero;
Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace and love,
the utility of all your positions of power is zero;
Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace and love
the result of all your good deeds is zero.
Truth, righteousness, peace and love are the very foundation of human life.
What else is there to be conveyed to this assembly of noble souls!*

(Telugu Poem)



You should recognise the importance of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema (truth, righteousness, peace and love). These are the true human values. Truth is God. Righteousness is God. It is said, *Ramo Vighrahan Dharma* (Rama is Dharma personified). Dharma assumed the form of Rama. Then where is peace? It is not outside. Outside in the world there are

force in man. But, unfortunately, people make improper use of love. There is love between wife and husband, between mother and children, friends and relatives. In this way, people fragment love. Join all these pieces together and direct your entire love towards God. (Swami showing His handkerchief) You can see how strong this cloth is because all threads have come



Once you are free from non-Self, the Self will become manifest everywhere. Fire becomes visible when you blow away the ash that covers it. You don't need to make any special effort to see the sun; you can see it when the clouds that cover it move away. You are under the delusion that you perform spiritual practices to have the vision of the Atma. In fact, they are not meant for the vision of the Atma. You perform these practices in order to separate yourself from the non-Self and unite with the Self.



only pieces, but no peace. Peace is the precious pearl and ornament for man. You are the embodiment of peace.

God Alone is your True Friend

Love is God. Live in Love. There is no life without love. Love is the main life-

together. If threads are separated, you can break them with your fingers. Therefore, focus all your love on God. *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava* (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God). Even friend is God. In fact, God alone



is your true friend. Among the nine paths of devotion, friendship comes before self-surrender. Once you develop friendship with God, you will have everything. If you want to completely surrender to God, then you have to develop friendship with Him first. Developing friendship with God signifies surrendering your Trigunas (three qualities of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas) to Him. That is Maitree (friendship).

Worldly friends look at your pocket and see the position of your father. When there is money in your pocket and your father is in high position, hundreds of friends will come to you, saying hello, hello. If your pocket is empty and your father is retired, everyone will desert you without even saying goodbye. Can you call them your real friends? No, no. God is your real friend. He is always with you, in you, around you, below you. He will never forsake you. All your friends and relatives will follow you only till the burial ground. It is only Divine Name that will never leave you. God is your only saviour in times of distress. He will follow you wherever you go. Therefore, develop friendship only with God. Emperor Bali considered God as his friend and surrendered to Him. There are many in this world who give away in charity land, gold, food, clothes, money and other worldly possessions. But Emperor Bali's was an act of supreme sacrifice. He offered himself to God. This is the highest form of devotion. He did not give merely three steps of land; he gave away himself.

I offer my family, wealth and everything to you. I surrender before you and offer

myself also. Protect me.

(Sanskrit Verse)

I offer myself to You. Do whatever You like to do:

Oh Lord! I offer my heart to You which You have given me. What else is there for me to worship Your feet with? Please accept this with my humble salutations.

(Telugu Poem)

Bali said, "What else can I offer You? If I want to offer You the water from the river Ganga, I realise that Ganga is Your very form. If I want to worship You with flowers, I realise that You are the one who created them. If I want to buy fruits from the market and offer You, are they not Your own creation?" Vedanta teaches the inner meaning of offering flowers and fruits to God. Once Rukmini prayed thus:

One may offer You a leaf or a flower or a fruit or even water,

But, if it is true that You offer Yourself to one with devotion,

Oh Krishna! May You be weighed by this Tulasi leaf!

(Telugu Poem)

What does the leaf signify? Does it signify Bilva leaf or Tulasi leaf? No, your body is the leaf. What is the flower that you should offer to God? Is it jasmine flower or marigold flower? No, no. You should offer the flower of your heart. Then what is the fruit that is pleasing to God? Is it banana, guava or orange? No. These are not the fruits that you should offer. You should offer the fruit of your mind. Similarly, God does not expect you to offer Him water from the Ganga or any other river or a well. You should offer Him your tears of joy.



These flowers and fruits do not grow on a tree; they grow on the tree of your life. Your body is the leaf, heart is the flower, mind is the fruit and tears of joy is water. That is why Emperor Bali offered himself to the Lord. No other offering can match the offering made by Bali. If you offer a worldly object, it is transient. But what Bali offered to the Lord was something which would not fade away with time. That is why he attained great name and fame. He was from the lineage of Jaya and Vijaya who were the guards at the door of Lord Vishnu. Jaya and Vijaya took birth as Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada was the son of Hiranyakasipu.

Character is your Greatest Wealth

Students must know the greatness and nobility of Prahlada. He was the personification of highest character. Once Prahlada achieved victory over Indra and started ruling over his kingdom, heaven. Having lost his kingdom, Indra was very much distressed. He went to his preceptor and asked him, "Swami, how can I win back my kingdom? Kindly, show me the way." The preceptor replied, "Now Prahlada is performing a Yajna called Viswajit. During this time, he will give away in charity whatever one asks from him. Therefore, go to him at an appropriate time and ask him for his character in charity." Accordingly, Indra assumed the form of a Brahmin and went to Prahlada. Prahlada welcomed him and asked him what he wanted. As advised earlier by his preceptor, Indra asked Prahlada for his character. Prahlada

enquired of the Brahmin of what use was his character to him. The Brahmin replied that there was no need to go into all that. He had expressed what he wanted in response to Prahlada's offer to give whatever anyone asked for in the Viswajit Yajna. "Are you prepared to give or not?" He asked. Prahlada immediately gave what the Brahmin asked with due ceremony.

Within a few minutes, an effulgent form emerged from Prahlada. Seeing the effulgent form, he asked: "Who are you?" The effulgent figure prostrated before Prahlada and said: "I am your character. Hitherto I was in you. I fostered your name and fame. Now you have given me away as a gift. Hence, I am leaving you."

When character left Prahlada, shortly thereafter another beautiful effulgent form issued forth from him. Prahlada asked him: "Who are you, oh king?" The radiant figure replied, "Prahlada! I am your Kirti (reputation). When character has left you, I have no place within you. I am the servant of character. When character has left you, I have to follow suit."

Prahlada was puzzled. Then came another beautiful radiant female form from Prahlada. Prahlada respectfully asked her, "Mother! Who are you?" She said, "Prahlada! After the departure of character and reputation, I, namely, Rajya Lakshmi, (the goddess of royal prosperity) have no place within you." After this, another effulgent form emerged from Prahlada and asked his permission to leave him. When



Prahlada asked who he was, the effulgent form replied that he was Dharma. Prahlada then said no to him because if Dharma left him nothing would remain with him. He held on to Dharma and prayed to him not leave him. Dharma granted the prayer of Prahlada and stayed with him. When Dharma decided to stay with Prahlada, the goddess of royal wealth, his reputation and character also returned to him, saying that they would stay where there was Dharma. Thus, Prahlada proved that Dharma was most important for man.

From the story you can see that where there is Dharma, there lies all the wealth, name and fame. Prahlada was endowed with six types of opulence – Dharma (righteousness), Aiswarya (wealth), Yashas (fame), Sakti (power), Jnana (wisdom) and Vairagya (detachment). But when he lost character, he lost all the six types of opulence. What is your true wealth? It is the wealth of wisdom, love and righteousness. Prahlada was one of great character and righteousness. You should understand the importance of character from the spiritual point of view also. You may give up any quality but not character. You should offer yourself only to God and none else because God is the embodiment of selflessness.

Never Forsake God

God has no expectation from anybody. Everyone in this world loves you with some self-interest, but it is only God's love which is totally free from selfishness and self-interest. Even parents love you because

of your physical relationship with them. But God has no such relationship. His relationship is heart to heart and love to love. He has no selfish motive in His love. Therefore, you should offer your life only to God. This was the ideal demonstrated by Emperor Bali. Revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God so long as they don't come in the way of your relationship with God. Kaikeyi was instrumental in stopping the coronation of Rama and sending Him to the forest. Because of this evil deed of Kaikeyi, Bharata disobeyed her. How can you revere your mother as God when she takes you away from God? Bharata demonstrated that if your mother came in the way of your association with God, you should forsake her. Hiranyakasipu tried to stop his son Prahlada from chanting the Divine Name "Om Namo Narayana" in many ways. Prahlada was ready to forsake even his father but would not stop chanting the Name of the Lord. Similarly, Emperor Bali disobeyed his preceptor and offered himself to the Lord. One should make any sacrifice for the sake of God.

When Maharana commanded Mira to leave the Krishna temple and go away, she had a doubt as to what was her Dharma, whether to stay with her husband or go away and offer herself to God. Expressing her doubt, she sent a letter to Tulsidas, who was her contemporary, through a messenger. Tulsidas was living on Chitrakuta mountain at that time. She asked, "Swami, what am I supposed to do now? Should I give up my husband or



God?" Then Tulsidas sent a reply, saying, "Wives and husbands keep changing from birth to birth. It is only God who is with you in all your births. Therefore, you may give up your husband but not God." Then she decided to leave her house and sang, "*Chalore Mana Ganga Yamuna Teer* (Oh mind! Go to the bank of Ganga and Yamuna). Prayag is the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna. There is no need to book a ticket to travel to Prayag. Ganga and Yamuna signify the subtle channels Ida and Pingala. Bhrumadhya (centre of the eyebrows) is the real Prayag where three nerve channels Ida, Pingala and Sushumna meet. *Ganga, Yamuna Nirmal Pani, Sheetal Hota Sareer. Chalore Man Ganga Yamuna Teer* (The water of Ganga and Yamuna is very cool and pure which will make one serene and peaceful. Therefore, oh mind! Go to the bank of Ganga and Yamuna). There you find Lord Krishna donning Pitambara (yellow silk robe) having a crown of peacock feathers and glittering earrings." In this way, Mira renounced her house, family and husband for the sake of God. Never heed anybody's words who advises you to go away from God. Even if a fierce calamity befalls you, never leave God. Even if you were to carry a ball of fire in your hand, never leave God. Even if earth becomes sky and sky becomes earth, never leave God. Under all circumstances, your faith in God should remain firm. Such unwavering faith is your true protection.

Before going to the battlefield, Abhimanyu offered his salutations to his mother Subhadra and prayed for her

blessings. But she tried to dissuade him from going to the battlefield, saying:

The Kaurava army has been arrayed in the shape of Padmavyuha by Dronacharya who has the power to subdue the pride of the mightiest of enemies at will. It is not easy to withstand the onslaught of Bhishma. Moreover, your wife is in the family way. We do not know whether the time is favourable to us or not. Your father and uncle Krishna are not here to help you. Hence, give up your resolve to enter the battlefield. (Telugu Poem)

When his mother tried to stop him thus, Abhimanyu became furious and said,

At a time when I am about to pounce fearlessly on the Kaurava army like a lion and annihilate them with the rain of powerful arrows, is it proper on your part to dissuade me from going to the battlefield, instead of conferring your blessings on me and saying a few words of encouragement?

(Telugu Poem)

In this manner, youth of those days upheld the honour of their family with courage and valour. They were prepared to make any sacrifice to protect the honour of the family. Abhimanyu prostrated before his mother seeking her blessings and pleading with her to permit him to go to the battlefield. Subhadra had no choice but to put her hand on his head and bless him thus:

May you be the recipient of the same blessings which mother Gauri conferred



on her son Kumara when he went out for battle against Tarakasura, the blessings Bhargavi bestowed on her son at the time of slaying of Shambarasura, the blessings showered by Vinata on her son when he set out on the sacred mission of getting his mother freed from servitude, the blessings mother Kausalya conferred on her son Rama when He went to forest to safeguard the Yajna of Viswamitra, and above all the most powerful and divine blessings of Rama be with you and protect you in the battlefield. (Telugu Poem)

Conferring her profuse blessings on her son for his protection, Subhadra permitted him to go to the battlefield. One may have all types of blessings and protection, but if one lacks the protection of God, all types of other protection will be useless. You may have all types of power, but without the power of God, they will be of no use. As it is described in the Ramayana, there was no one more powerful than Hanuman. Similarly, in the Mahabharata, Bhima was considered the most powerful. If they were so powerful, you can well imagine the power of God. It is the power of God that can shake the entire earth in a moment or cause deluge in a trice. It is the same power of God that gives light to the entire world through the sun. There can be no power greater than the power of God.

One may have physical prowess and power of intelligence,

But one will come to grief if one lacks divine grace,

Karna was a great warrior but what was his fate?

Never forget this truth. (Telugu Poem)

Physical power, manpower and the power of intellect, wealth and position are not so important. What is most important is the power of righteousness and the power of God. Whether you do any spiritual practice or not, but do contemplate on the Vedic maxim *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). Then you become Brahman. *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi* (the knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman Himself). Do not develop meaningless relationship with God. I and you are one. You should strive to experience this oneness. You may do Dhyana, Japa, Bhajan and Yajnas, but all these are meant only for your mental satisfaction. Mind is of fickle nature. Therefore, do not try to satisfy your mind; satisfy your conscience. Only then can you have the experience of Satchidananda. Sat is being, Chit is awareness. The unity of Sat and Chit is Ananda (bliss). You should always remember this divine principle and contemplate on it.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...*")

– From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 27th August 1996.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

HOLY SIVARATHRI FESTIVAL

AESTHETICALLY BEDECKED SAI Kulwant Hall reverberated with soul-stirring Bhajans when a huge congregation of devotees assembled in the hall and sang the glories of Lord Siva on the night of 28th February 2014 to celebrate the sacred festival of Sivarathri at Prasanthi Nilayam. Besides the students of Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions, many groups of Ashram staff and devotees led the Bhajans during the whole of Sivarathri night from 6.00 p.m. on 28th February to 6.00 a.m. on 1st March 2014, thus suffusing the entire milieu with spiritual vibrations.

On the eve of Sivarathri, Prasanthi Dance Group made a dance presentation “Abhinayanjali” (dance offering) dedicated to Lord Siva on 27th February 2014. Sweet music, skilful footwork of the dancers and sensitive expression of noble feelings made the dance a beautiful presentation. This was followed by Bhajans. On this auspicious occasion, recipients of 300 additional houses constructed by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust for the flood victims of Odisha were felicitated and clothes and mementoes were presented to them. With this, the total number of houses given by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust to the flood victims of Odisha came to 999 as 699

houses had been handed over earlier to as many beneficiary families.

The Sivarathri programme on 28th February 2014 began with a devotional music presentation comprising Stotras and devotional songs by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning which included the Stotras “Viswanathashtakam,” “Lingashtakam” and devotional songs “Shambho Mahadeva,” “Sankar Siva Meri Laaj Rakho” (Oh Lord, save me), etc. This soul-stirring presentation which began at 8.30 a.m. came to a close with Arati at 10.00 a.m.

The evening programme began with Lingabhishekam (ceremonial bathing of Siva Linga). At 4.00 p.m., the Sayeeswara Linga was brought in a grand palanquin procession amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras by priests and auspicious notes of Nadaswaram music by a group of students and placed on a beautifully decorated platform in front of Bhagavan’s Samadhi. The chief priest assisted by other priests then performed Abhishekam of the Sayeeswara Linga with milk, curd, ghee (clarified butter), honey, sugar, bilva leaves, Akshata (sanctified rice), Vibhuti, Kumkum (vermilion), etc., amidst chanting of Sri Rudram and other Vedic Mantras. The Linga was thereafter decorated and ceremonially worshipped amidst recitation





Palanquin procession of Sayereswara Linga.

of Sri Sathya Sai Ashtottara Sahasra Namavali and Arati was offered to it.

Lingabhishekam was followed by a Divine Discourse of Bhagavan wherein Bhagavan said, truth is changeless in three periods of time. He exhorted one and all to experience the oneness of the Atma and realise this transcendental

truth to attain Atmic bliss. Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan “Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma” at 6.00 p.m. which marked the commencement of Sivarathri Akhanda Bhajan for 12 hours. Soon after the start of Sivarathri Bhajan, Teertham (sacred water) of Lingabhishekam was sprinkled on the devotees in the entire length and breadth of Sai Kulwant Hall.

The night long Bhajan was led by groups of students, devotees and Ashram staff. Video screening of Lingodbhava by Bhagavan during an earlier Sivarathri Bhajan added to the sacredness of the occasion. A large number of devotees observed night long vigil and participated in the Bhajan with great devotion. The Sivarathri Bhajan

came to a close at 6.00 a.m. on 1st March 2014 with the Bhajans “Om Sivaya Om Sivaya” and “Subrahmanyam Subrahmanyam” sung by Bhagavan followed by Arati. At the conclusion of the Bhajan, Prasadam of tamarind rice and sweet rice was offered to the entire assembly of devotees and students in the hall.



Devotees observing vigil and participating in Sivarathri Bhajan.

INAUGURATION OF ANNEXE BUILDING

In a simple function held on the morning of 12th March 2014, an annexe building of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning was inaugurated amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras. Besides the students and staff of the Institute, Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and many other dignitaries attended the function. The function started with Bhajans at 8.45 a.m. and concluded with Arati at 9.30 a.m. after Poornahuti.

PILGRIMAGE OF BIHAR AND JHARKHAND DEVOTEES

About 700 devotees including Bal Vikas children from Bihar and Jharkhand came on a two-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam and presented music and cultural programmes on 15th and 16th March 2014 to celebrate the sacred festival of Holi.

On 15th March 2014, a beautiful programme of dances by Bal Vikas children and devotional songs by the youth of Bihar and Jharkhand was presented in Sai Kulwant Hall depicting the rich cultural heritage of these States, enlivening the vibrant spirit of Holi and showcasing the Divine Glory of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Bhajans that followed at the conclusion of this enchanting presentation were also led by the devotees of these two States. Meanwhile, participants in the programme were felicitated. The programme which began at 5.00 p.m. came to a close with Arati at 6.00 p.m.

The programme on 16th March 2014 comprised a drama “Kya Aapne Bhagavan Ko Dekha Hai?” (have you seen God?). Depicting how an ordinary young man Naren was transformed into a great spiritual master by the touch of Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the drama vividly portrayed the main incidents of



A scene from the drama “Kya Aapne Bhagavan Ko Dekha Hai?”

Swami Vivekananda’s life. The concluding song “Manav Seva Madhav Seva, Yahi Sandesh Hamara” (service to man is service to God is our message) summed up the main ideal and philosophy of Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa which Swami Vivekananda adopted in his glorious life. At the end of the drama, the participants in the drama were felicitated. The Bhajans that followed were also led by the devotees of Bihar and Jharkhand. The programme came to a close with Arati at 6.15 p.m. after the Bhajan “Chitta Chora Yashoda Ke Bal” (the son of Yashoda is the stealer of hearts) sung by Bhagavan.



From our Archives

DEVELOP FAITH IN THE IDEALS OF RAMA

Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Rama. Constant repetition of this sweet Name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself. Therefore, one should contemplate on the Name of Rama incessantly.

(Telugu Poem)

DEVELOP FAITH IN THE SELF AND LEAD GODLY LIFE

Embodiments of Divine Love!

ALL OBJECTS IN THE WORLD are liable to change. All living beings must perish some day or the other. But ideals and sacred objectives established in human heart shine forever. If one has to live up to an ideal, he must be prepared to face many ordeals, difficulties, calumnies, trials and tribulations. These ideals have continued to glow in the hearts of the people up to the present day because they have been upheld in spite of vicissitudes and ordeals. Aeons may come and go, continents may appear and disappear, people may pass away, but ideals and values remain as perennial source of inspiration to the world.

Buddhi Receives Illumination from the Atma

What cannot be achieved through physical prowess, the strength of numbers or the power of wealth, can be accomplished through the power of Buddhi (intellect).

Viveka (discrimination) is the hallmark of intellect. Man acquires discrimination only by adherence to Sathya (truth) and Dharma (righteousness). Wisdom cannot be nourished without following truth.

The light of wisdom is derived from Buddhi and illumination of Buddhi is due to the Atma (the Indwelling Spirit).

Everyone must aim at becoming an ideal person. Ideals, not ostentation, should be the watchword. The Rama era will come into existence from the moment we give up ostentation, develop faith in the Self, and lead a godly life. Then everyone will be a lover of Rama. Rama does not mean the son of Dasaratha. The Atma is Rama and hence Rama is referred to as Atma Rama.

Human beings in their ignorance consider only the illumination emanating from Buddhi, forgetting the basic source of its effulgence, the Atma. That Atma is the foundation. It is Brahman. It is Paratattwa (Supreme Cosmic Principle). It is the Paramatma (Omni-Self). It is the Avataric principle.

The Divine in Human Form

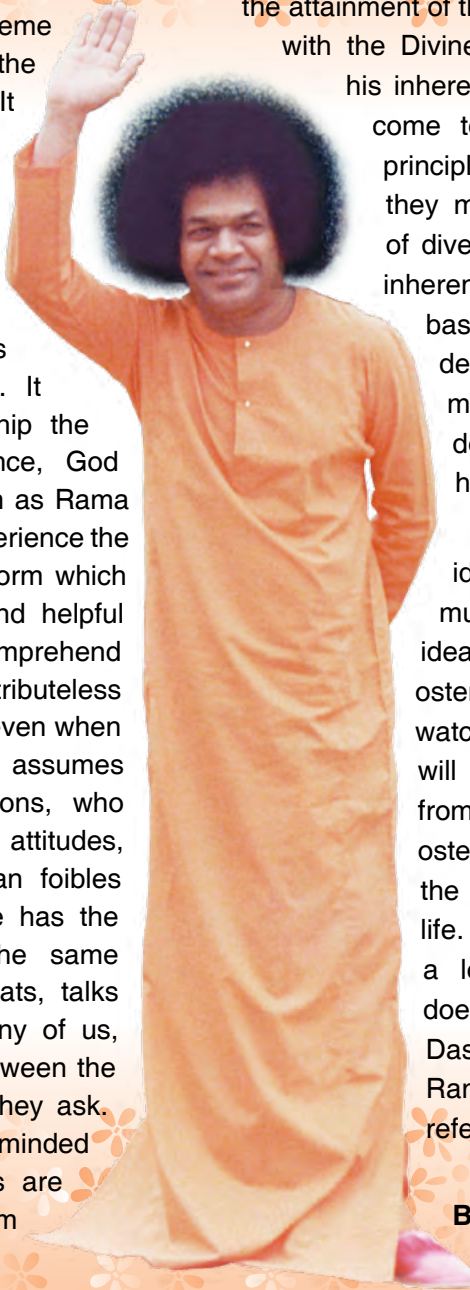
Common people can derive no benefit if the Formless Absolute remains in Kailasa or Vaikuntha. It is not possible to worship the Formless Absolute. Hence, God incarnated in human form as Rama to enable humanity to experience the Formless Absolute in a form which is accessible to them and helpful to them. Men cannot comprehend the Formless and the Attributeless Absolute. Unfortunately, even when the Formless Absolute assumes a form, there are persons, who impelled by their own attitudes, attribute their own human foibles to the Avatar. "When he has the same form as ours, the same physical features, and eats, talks and moves about like any of us, what is the difference between the Avatar and ourselves?" they ask. Because of this narrow-minded approach, these persons are distancing themselves from the Divine.

Avatars Come to Teach the Principle of Oneness

The essence of the religion of Bharatiyas as proclaimed in the Vedas is the attainment of the unity of the individual with the Divine by the recognition of his inherent divinity. The Avatars come to teach humanity this principle of oneness so that they may get rid of the idea of diversity and manifest their inherent divinity, realising their basic spiritual nature. The descent of the Avatar means the Divine coming down to the level of the human.

Develop faith in the ideals of Rama. Everyone must aim at becoming an ideal person. Ideals, not ostentation, should be the watchword. The Rama era will come into existence from the moment we give up ostentation, develop faith in the Self, and lead a godly life. Then everyone will be a lover of Rama. Rama does not mean the son of Dasaratha. The Atma is Rama and hence Rama is referred to as Atma Rama.

– Excerpted from
**Bhagavan's Sri Rama
Navami Discourse.**



UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES OF BHAGAVAN'S LOVE

Kamala Padmanabhan

PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD have experienced, enjoyed and drank the nectar of love in the immediate presence of our dear Lord Sai. They have experienced and acknowledged Sathya Sai Baba's omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. My husband, Dr. R. S. Padmanabhan and our family were fortunately blessed by Swami to be with Him and in His service. I would like to share some of my experiences with Swami, which illustrate His abundant love and Divine Message.

My Journey with Swami from a Tender Age

In the year 1944, I visited my aunt's house in Chamrajpet, Bengaluru to help her, for she was suffering from an ailment. I was happy because I had an opportunity to visit a city and experience city life. Little did I know that this trip would be the beginning of my journey with Swami. It was in my aunt's house that I heard of Swami and His miraculous ways of healing people. Hence, our relatives insisted they take my aunt for Swami's Darshan the following day. I accompanied my aunt

along with other relatives for Swami's Darshan and stood at a corner of the room. I was then 14 years old. The Darshan was in a devotee's house. After some time, I became restless because of hunger. Meanwhile, other ladies occupied their

seats close to Swami. I was standing uninterestedly far away from Swami but I was surprised that Swami kept on looking at me fondly and asked me to come near Him. I was perplexed, and refused to go closer to Swami, for I thought it was my aunt who was suffering and she needed to be cured. But when Swami insisted I had to go near Him. Swami very lovingly told me that I would get married and he had already chosen a boy for me, a dentist by profession. I was taken aback and refused to accept Swami's words.

On the other hand, Swami met Dr. Padmanabhan and told him that he had already seen a girl for him and he would get married on 14th February. He tried to convince Swami that he had no job, but Swami firmly told him that he would get married on that date. The marriage took place on 14th February as planned by Swami. This was an unforgettable experience for me. It was a lesson on the omniscience of Swami, for it was only He who knew everything about the chosen couple who would be His instruments in the divine drama of Avatarhood.



Everything is in His Hand

At that time, Puttaparthi was just a tiny hamlet and a visit to Parthi meant literally carrying all the groceries also for stay there. One evening, Bhagavan gave us Darshan on the bank of Chitravathi river. As Darshan was for quite a long time, myself and my cousins were getting restless because of hunger. My aunt was not very happy with our behaviour. But Swami noticed our restlessness and smiled. Later, He asked my aunt as to what was troubling all of us. She answered that we were all feeling hungry and prayed Him to give something to eat.

Swami smilingly put His hand in the sand and lo! He took out piping hot Rava Laddu with the aroma of Kumkum Puvvu (saffron), dry fruits and dripping with ghee. It was divinely delicious. He distributed the sweet to all of us and asked us to eat it. We were disappointed for the Laddu was delicious beyond description, but the share was too little. I remember how my Peddamma (aunty) complained to Swami, "Everyday my cooked food is going waste, Swami; these girls are not eating anything for the last one week." We never felt hungry for more than a week after partaking of the divinely delicious Rava Laddu. When Mother Annapoorna herself satiates our hunger and showers her grace, how can we ever feel hungry?

Beginning of Bal Vikas Movement

One Sunday morning in the year 1969, Swami retired to His inner chamber after Darshan and my husband and other gents

were in their office completing their day's work. We were a group of eight ladies, waiting for the men to finish their work. So, we all sat in front of Lord Krishna's idol in Brindavan and were engaged in idle gossip. None of us noticed Swami coming close to us as we were engrossed in talking.

After some time, we heard Swami's sweet voice, "Instead of idling your time, can't you do something useful?" We turned back and found Swami standing there. We bowed with reverence and told Swami, "We are prepared to do anything, Swami." I took the lead and conversed with Swami as I was the only one who knew Telugu. Swami asked, "Do you know the art of storytelling? Do you remember the stories told by your grandparents?" I said, "Yes, Swami."

Then Swami said to all the ladies, "Go to your neighbourhood and convince the parents to send their children to you. Tell them stories with values; try to imbibe values in the young minds. Initially, have a class just for 10 minutes and later seeing the response, increase the duration of the class." All the ladies said, "Yes, Swami." Swami sent word to Dr. V.K. Gokak to arrange for a Value Education class and also told him that He Himself would conduct the class to teach the ladies. I remember how Swami taught us every minute detail of conducting a class; from selecting a place, convincing parents to send their children, teaching values through stories, introducing Bhajans, songs and finally teaching children the value of time.



Thus, the birth of Bal Vikas movement took place and I am happy that the Lord selected me in His great mission. When the Lord Wills it, everything has to happen.

Swami's Love and Concern for His Devotees

It was a blessed moment for our family when Swami showered His grace and visited our home on Global Akhanda Bhajan day. My husband was busy, along with other senior people of the organisation going to and fro to Brindavan to invite Swami for the Global Akhanda Bhajan. Hence, the responsibility of arranging many things fell upon me. I had to get permission from the higher authorities of Lalbagh to open the gates of Lalbagh and seek permission from the Police Commissioner to divert the traffic to facilitate Swami's visit to our house. I thank my husband for training me well in advance to manage all the peripheral works all by myself. To shower His love and grace on a humble devotee like me, Swami told my husband, "I am sending a car and a driver. Kamalamma can use it whenever she needs it."

As all preparations were completed, we eagerly waited for the Lord's arrival. After inaugurating the Bhajan at Adarsh Mahila Samaj at 6 p.m., Swami graciously came to our house. Swami retired to His room by late evening. I was exhausted after a day of hectic work, but had an urge to attend the Akhanda Bhajan at least for some time. My husband was sleeping outside Swami's room and I was in the hall feeling restless as I could not sleep. Hence, I woke up my husband around midnight and requested

We had a swing next to the Tulasi plant for Swami. So, I got it cleaned and spread a new blanket and cushions for Him. I was so engrossed in my thoughts that I lost the sense of time. After these preparations, I was getting ready for the Puja at 6.00 p.m. I just turned back and I could not believe my eyes for I saw Swami entering the house. Tears of joy welled up in my eyes and rolled down my cheeks.

him to drop me at the venue of the Bhajan. Hearing our voice, Swami came out of His room and enquired from my husband, what was that I was requesting him. My husband told Swami that I wanted to attend the Bhajan. Swami looked at me and asked me to go to bed as I was very tired, and went into His room. After some time, once again I pleaded with my husband to take me to the Bhajan centre. The third time when I was about to repeat the request, Swami came out and said, "*Chudu Kallu Entha Yerraga Unnayoi!* (See, how red your eyes are!). You are tired. Go and sleep." Without any further word, I slept and got up fresh the next day. Swami lovingly told me the next morning, "You were very tired yesterday. Therefore, I asked you to sleep so that you can work today." Who else can have such affectionate concern for us but the Lord Himself!

Time Personified

It was one of those memorable days when Swami was with us. I knew Swami would have coffee everyday at 5.30 a.m. It was customary for me to wake up at 4



a.m., have a bath, prepare the decoction and wait for the Lord to open the door of His room. I would be waiting for Swami to come and be seated in His chair, ready to offer Him coffee. One day, as usual, I was waiting for the sound of the door. Meanwhile, my maid insisted I keep the milk ready and in the process, I wondered how Swami did not get up on time. With those thoughts, as I turned back I saw Swami standing behind me. He lovingly enquired, "Kamamma, couldn't you hear the sound of the door?" I was speechless. He knew my thoughts. That was a great assurance that He is always with us at all times and in all places. We may forget time, but the Lord can never, for He is time itself. Even by this small incident, Swami taught me the importance of time.

God Responds to Devout Feelings of our Prayer

Ksheerabdi Dwadasi or Tulasi Puja is celebrated in the Kartika month of the Hindu calendar. Being an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna, I always performed this Puja with great reverence. As I was getting ready and making preparations, like arranging Diyas (lamps), decorating the Tulasi plant, making designs and patterns with various colours on the floor (Rangoli), etc., I had a strong desire to offer my prayers to Swami in His physical form. So, I prayed to Swami that my prayers would be answered if only I could offer worship at His Lotus Feet. We had a swing next to the Tulasi plant for Swami. So, I got it cleaned and spread a new blanket and cushions for Him. I was so engrossed in my thoughts

that I lost the sense of time. After these preparations, I was getting ready for the Puja at 6.00 p.m. I just turned back and I could not believe my eyes for I saw Swami entering the house. Tears of joy welled up in my eyes and rolled down my cheeks. I was spellbound and speechless.

Swami walked straight towards the swing and sat on it. I tried to tell Swami that it was not fit for the Lord to sit. He chided me and said, "You do everything meticulously; complete your Puja." As commanded by Him I performed the Puja with great devotion and love for His grace. Later, I expressed my desire to perform Pada Puja to His Lotus Feet. Swami agreed and I could offer my prayers at His Lotus Feet. After completion of my Puja, Swami asked me for Prasadam. While Swami was partaking of Prasadam, I asked Him, "How did You come here, Swami? I never knew Your programme." To this Swami smilingly replied, "I had some work this side, and you too prayed that you wanted to perform Puja to My physical form, so I came." When I told my husband about Swami's surprise visit, he too was overjoyed to hear it.

This episode is an eye opener for all of us that God sees only the Bhava (feelings) in our prayer and can manifest Himself anywhere. Place and time do not matter to Him.

— The author, Smt. Kamala Padmanabhan, is State Coordinator (Education), Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Karnataka.



Adherence to Righteousness

THE KAURAVA AND PANDAVA armies lined up in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Both the sides blew conches as the signal of the commencement of the battle. Just at that time, Dharmaraja suddenly removed his shoes, took off his crown, put down his weapons and started walking towards the Kaurava army. Seeing this, Lord Krishna gestured to his younger brothers to follow their elder brother. Accordingly, the younger brothers followed Yudhishtira. When Duryodhana saw this strange conduct of the Pandavas, he imagined, "Oh! What is this? Are the Pandavas coming to surrender before us?"

Yudhishtira approached Bhishmacharya and made a humble submission



Yudhishtira offered his salutations to Bhishmacharya in the battlefield and prayed for his blessings before the commencement of the battle.

while touching his feet, "Oh grandsire! It is only you who brought us up after the death of our father. As ordained by fate we have to fight against you. Though we are very sorry to do so, we cannot avoid this war. Please grant us your blessings." Shedding tears of joy, Bhishma drew them near and showered his blessings on them saying, "Oh embodiments of righteousness! Your righteousness will protect you. *Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah* (if you protect Dharma, you will be protected by Dharma). There is nothing more that I can say."

Thereafter, all the five Pandava brothers went to their Guru Dronacharya, offered salutations to him and said, "Revered Guru! We regret that we are compelled to fight against you who has imparted all types of knowledge to us. Please bless us." Overwhelmed by their devotion, Dronacharya blessed them, saying, "Your righteousness will protect you."

The five Pandavas demonstrated their adherence to Dharma by expressing their devotion and trust in their grandsire Bhishma and Guru Dronacharya who were fighting on the side of their enemy in the battlefield.



Effulgence of Divine Glory

Swami is Ever Present

LIKE ALL DEVOTEES, I FELT lost and depressed after Swami left His physical body, even though we know very well that He is with us in our every breath. Knowing my heart like any father would know his daughter's, Swami gave me the feeling that He is ever present with me! What an assurance! Just to make me happy! Here is what happened.

Swami left His body on 24th April 2011, Easter Sunday. The whole world was in shock including me! Our Sai Centre was told to hold Bhajan on Monday, 25th April. So, I thought of making a garland for Swami. I cut a few roses that I had in my garden including buds so that I could have enough flowers to garland both Shirdi Sai's and Sathya Sai's pictures which are in our Centre's altar. Even though I was happy that the garland was big enough for both pictures, I felt sad that it was not long enough.

At the end of that Bhajan, the Centre President announced that he got the news that we should have Bhajans on Tuesday, 26th April also, in the evening, since the final rites were going to be performed at that time in India (Wednesday morning).

Next day, I went to work, but my only worry was that I did not have any flowers in

my garden. My heart told me that I should offer a garland for Swami that night as it is the time for the last rites. So, what should I do? I need a lot of flowers to make the garland but I have not a single flower in my garden since I myself cut on the previous day including the buds. I was restless and kept conversing with Swami (internally). I thought I would let Him down as a daughter if I can't even garland Him to show my love and respect. I felt sad and came home at 4 p.m. The Bhajan was going to start at 7 p.m.

When I parked my car on my driveway, the first thing I looked at was our rose garden and could see a few flowers. I was shocked to see even the few and felt happy and ran inside and got a small bowl and scissors to cut the flowers. In a few moments, that bowl was full. So, I ran inside and got a bigger bowl. Soon, that too was full with flowers! Hence, I ran inside and got a very big aluminium foil tray and started cutting the roses and it was full soon too. I got another aluminium foil tray and cut the roses. To my shock that too was full with flowers. Joy in my heart had no bounds after realising what Swami had done to make me happy by giving me the opportunity to show my love! I ran inside

[continued on page 26...](#)

DIVINE HEALER AND SAVIOUR

Air Vice Marshal (retd.) Dr. Vinod Kumar Varma

Bhagavan's unconditional love and compassion for His devotees is indescribable. He always grants us whatever we deserve at the right time and right place.

BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI Baba remained in His physical form on earth for 85 years, during which time He transformed millions of people all over the globe with His Divine Love. But still, in His formless state, He is transforming mankind and establishing Sanathana Dharma with His Absolute Divine Eternal Spirit pervading each and every atom in micro and macro form. His glories and Leelas cannot be described in words. I am settled in Puttaparthi with my wife Rama for the past nine years. Bhagavan has provided me a golden opportunity to serve in His Mission for which I am highly grateful to Him. Now, I shall narrate two Divine Leelas of the most compassionate and merciful Lord experienced by us.

Bhagavan's Healing Touch

On 30th September 2001, we lost our only son, Rohit aged 28 years, who suffered from Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (blood cancer) for two months. As our faith in Bhagavan Baba was very strong,

we surrendered Rohit's physical body at Baba's Lotus Feet. Since this sudden and shocking bereavement was unbearable, we both came to Puttaparthi for Baba's Darshan in October 2001, so that we might get solace and peace of mind from Swami's blessings. The omniscient Lord knew everything, came near me, materialised Vibhuti for me, and said, "Santosham," showing Abhayahastha (blessing pose). This one word of the Lord took me out of utmost agony and shock. In a similar manner, Rama also, being seated in the first row, was showered with blessings of Bhagavan Baba as He took her letter. After coming back from Parthi, I was very much consoled, but Rama being the mother was always depressed, sad and lost in the memory of her only son. She prayed to Swami to grant her the strength to overcome this irreparable loss.

A Divine Messenger

After six months of passing away of Rohit, a student wearing white pant and



shirt with white shoes, holding a packet of Vibhuti Prasadam came to my friend's house on 21st March 2002 at 9.30 a.m. and said, "My name is Shivam Subramanyam. Swami has sent me from Puttaparthi to convey His message that Varma aunty remains very sad for her son, Rohit. You tell her that her son, Rohit is with Baba." After receiving this Divine Message, my friend's wife made Shivam sit on the sofa seat with love and respect. A little while later, Shivam got up, entered their Puja room and sat down for meditation. At that very moment, my friend rang me up, telling

me to come immediately to their house. As soon as I reached his house, which was just a hundred metres away from my residence, all of us entered the Puja room and were very much surprised to see that Shivam had disappeared. Bhagavan's unconditional love and compassion for His devotees is indescribable. He always grants us whatever we deserve at the right time and right place.

(The author, Air Vice Marshal (retd.) Dr. Vinod Kumar Varma, is the Medical Superintendent, Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Prasanthi Nilayam.)

...continued from page 24

the house and started making the garland. It was a very thick garland big enough for both pictures and lo and behold! I was left with lot more flowers and I could make another garland for the picture of Swami's face on the mantel!

I could not control my joy of Swami's love which was showered in the form of rose flowers! This experience has given

me the strength that Swami is with me and with each and everyone of us who open their hearts to God! Aren't we all blessed to have such omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent Swami among us! He has given many more such heart-whelming experiences to show His love to this lost child!

– Yasoda Mukkamala, U.S.A.

One should first establish oneself in what is proper; then only one should teach others. A wise man should not incur reproach.

One should act as one teaches others; only with oneself thoroughly tamed should one tame others. To tame oneself is, indeed, difficult.

*– The Dhammapada
Verses 158 - 159*

Students Corner

EDUCARE IS THE ESSENCE OF ALL SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

IN MODERN SOCIETY, STUDENTS consider that the aim of education is to study well, secure a good job and attain financial stability. I was also influenced by this prevailing trend. But fortunately my parents provided me the opportunity to join Bal Vikas started by the Avatar of Kali Yuga, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself. The main teaching that influenced me in the Bal Vikas class was that one should become like a lamp placed on the threshold of a house which spreads light both inside and outside the house. Not only that, one should become like a lamp post, a lighthouse or even a pole star to spread light everywhere. This is the message of Bhagavan Baba. Sometimes, doubts may arise in our mind as to how we can attain that height like a pole star. Such doubts gradually get dispelled when we listen to the teachings of our Gurus in the Bal Vikas class. Bhagavan has said:

Students should pursue such education which confers on them the sacred qualities like good character, adherence to truth, devotion, discipline and duty.

(Telugu Poem)

Maxim like this given by Bhagavan teach us to know what is true education, what is worldly education and what is educare. By understanding the inner meaning of educare, which is like fifth Veda, man can achieve victory over the entire world and

reach the highest state of spirituality. This is the great truth we should know. Educare is that light which illumines our mind, inculcates human values in us, raises our stature and enables us to know our Self. Let us see how this truth leads to Loka Vikas (welfare of the world). This can be done by following the ideals of highest standards of ethics, morality and spirituality exemplified by great and noble personages of India in their life. They include emperor Sibi who gave meat of his own body to a hawk to save a bird's life, King Harishchandra who gave away his kingdom to uphold truth and Lord Rama who went to forest for 14 years to uphold the promise of his father. These are the shining ideals we have inherited from our great Indian culture.

Teachings of Bal Vikas Gurus, reading of stories, practice of meditation, singing of group songs, performance of Seva activities and cultural programmes help us to manifest our innate good qualities which blossom like a thousand-petalled lotus. This is truly educare. Bhagavan Baba has said many times that educare is the essence of humanness and all spiritual knowledge. Stories told by Bhagavan are not mere stories, they are a treasure trove of love and wisdom. As Bhagavan says, there is no value greater than love; when we develop love, all other qualities will automatically develop in us. The process

of our becoming the embodiments of love, thus, starts in the Bal Vikas class. Swami has said:

*In this world, money comes and goes,
Only morality and ethics remain with
you forever,
Human birth is sanctified when the
heart is filled with morality and ethics.*

(Telugu Poem)

Whatever profession a Bal Vikas student may adopt, he is aware that he has to give priority to rules and regulations. It is only Bal Vikas which inculcates the feelings of devotion to mother and motherland in the hearts of the students, develops the spirit of selfless service in them, brings about transformation in them by making them

realise that welfare of society is more important than individual welfare. This is the supreme truth I learnt in the Bal Vikas class. Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas is a divine umbrella, a protective armour which not only protects the students but their entire family also. We now see only limited scope of how individual transformation brought about by Bal Vikas helps in developing Loka Vikas. In future, we may see it happen in the entire world.

– From the speech of Pranay Vidyut, a former Bal Vikas student from Andhra Pradesh who spoke on 4th January 2014 in the National Convention of Bal Vikas Alumni and Group 3 students at Prasanthi Nilayam.

O	B	C	F	D	P	U	N	P	O	W	X	N
U	G	E	E	B	R	N	G	O	D	K	H	S
T	R	H	A	P	P	I	N	E	S	S	I	F
R	O	O	R	K	M	O	R	A	L	I	T	Y
L	W	L	P	H	A	N	D	S	J	O	P	N
M	S	I	C	H	A	R	A	C	T	E	R	S
Q	X	E	D	U	C	A	T	I	O	N	C	A
Z	P	R	A	Y	N	D	F	G	E	L	N	O

Given below are some important maxims of Swami. Remember these maxims and find the following words given in the crossword:

Happiness, morality, union, God, grows, education, character, holier, hands, pray, fear.

- Happiness is union with God.
- Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows.
- The end of knowledge is love, the end of education is character.
- Hands that help are holier than lips that pray.
- Why fear when I am here.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

CROATIA

A BOUT 1,00,000 PEOPLE attended the 36th international book exhibition, *Interliber*,



International book exhibition, Croatia.

which was held in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, from 12th to 17th November 2013. Literature on the life and works of Bhagavan was presented in this exhibition, which generated considerable interest in Swami's teachings and the activities of the Sathya Sai International Organisation. The exhibition was attended by the President of Croatia, the Mayor of Zagreb and several ministers, and received press coverage by the national television station, HRT. A heart-warming special programme, based on human values, was also presented by Sathya Sai devotees at this exhibition.

NEPAL

Bhagavan's 88th Birthday was celebrated in Nepal with enthusiasm all across the nation. Thousands of Sathya Sai devotees participated in devotional and service activities at more than 90 locations between 19th and 23rd November 2013, including visits to centres for senior citizens and hospitals, cleaning of temples and streets, and planting of trees. Blood donation drives were organised, collecting 794 pints of "Liquid Love" from 23 camps. Scholarships were awarded and clothes and supplies distributed to hundreds of needy students. Food was lovingly offered to more than 11,000 people at 90 locations, and blankets were distributed to about 300 street dwellers. Flower pots containing saplings were distributed to children in order to train them in plant care as an expression of love for Mother Earth.

KENYA

Mahali Pa Usalama in Tudor, Mombasa County, Kenya, is a Rescue and Recovery Centre operated by the Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa for destitute children. Since 2008, the Centre has helped more than 1,000 children to be reunited with their families or integrated into schools. The centre depends on borehole water from the ground for its daily needs, as there is no other reliable supply of fresh water. The previous borehole had dried up, causing hardship to 30 children and other residents. In January 2014, the Sathya Sai Centre of Mombasa constructed a new borehole to supply water to the centre as well as to surrounding communities.



GREECE

On 7th December 2013, 12 Sathya Sai volunteers distributed 35 bags of food, clothes and medicines to 30 needy families in Perama, Piraeus, near Athens. Medical services and vaccinations were provided to about 20 children.

On 29th December 2013, Sathya Sai volunteers restored the damaged roof and repaired the kitchen of a house where a single mother lives with her son.

MEXICO

Fifth Latin America SSEHV internship diploma course was held from 4th to 31st January 2014, in Cuernavaca, in the State of Morelos, Mexico. Twenty students from Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Argentina attended the course taught by 17 facilitators from five countries. On 19th January, the group visited the pyramids of Xochicalco and the city of Taxco, where a discussion was held on the spiritual tradition of pre-Spanish and current Mexican cultures. In a closing



Medical camp for flood-affected people.

thousands homeless. Sathya Sai devotees immediately started offering humanitarian relief services. On 25th January 2014, more than 90 volunteers from Sri Sathya Sai International Organisation of Indonesia, including 11 doctors, 4 nurses and 12 pharmacists, organised a medical camp on the outskirts of Jakarta. Healthcare was offered and medicines were distributed to 433 needy individuals affected by the floods.



Spiritual songs by the students of Sathya Sai School of Cuernavaca, Mexico.

ceremony, children of the Sathya Sai School of Cuernavaca presented spiritual songs and hymns about light.

PERU

Two medical camps were organised on the outskirts of Lima on 10th October and 15th December 2013. In the October



Medical camp in Peru.

camp, 105 needy individuals received care in general medicine, dentistry, obstetrics and psychology, along with prescribed medicines. In the December camp, 63 patients received examinations in the same speciality areas, as well as prescribed medicines. Six to ten medical professionals participated in each camp, along with about six volunteers. Sathya Sai volunteers in Peru continued to deliver prescription drugs every month to the Trujillo Teaching Hospital. During Christmas 2013, medicines were donated to medical centres in the mountains of the Huacaybamba Province, at an elevation higher than 3,000 metres.

JAPAN

Swami's 88th Birthday has profound significance for Japanese devotees, since "88" is pronounced as "Baba," or "Haha," meaning "mother" in Japanese. About 170 people attended Bhagavan's Birthday celebrations at Tokyo Sathya Sai Centre. The altar was decorated in gold, silver and red, and a swing decorated with colourful fresh flowers was offered to Bhagavan. A drama titled "Loving God" was performed by SSE students and concluded with a devotional song by the children. A documentary film about Swami titled "Message of the Lord," which had been dubbed in Japanese, was shown. The programme concluded with a newly-written Japanese devotional song and the screening of a video of Swami from the 1988 Birthday celebrations.

– Sathya Sai International Organisation

BHARAT

Haryana and Chandigarh: In a grand function held on 23rd February 2014, foundation stone of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Kendra, Kurukshetra was laid by the Chief Guest, Justice Rajiv Bhalla, Judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. The function was presided over by Justice Nawab Singh, President, Haryana Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission.

After the welcome speech of District President, Sri P.S. Tanwar, Sri Subhash C. Dheer, State President delivered the keynote address, stressing the Divine



Message: Love All, Serve All. Addressing the gathering of devotees, the Chief Guest Justice Rajiv Bhalla, expressed his concern at the prevalence of anger all around in society as noticed through TV and newspapers these days and emphasised the relevance of Bhagavan's teachings to modern society. In his presidential remarks Justice Nawab Singh narrated his personal experiences with Bhagavan Baba. Speaking on this occasion, Sri Ashok Yadav, Managing Director, HAFED highlighted the sanctity of the sacred area of Kurukshetra. Over 3,000 devotees from all over the State of Haryana and Chandigarh including distinguished citizens of Kurukshetra attended the function.

The road crossing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Kendra was named as Sai Chowk and a statue of Shirdi Baba was unveiled after Abhishekam.

Karnataka: The Bhumi Puja (ground breaking ceremony) for the new hostel building of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL), Muddenahalli Campus took place on 3rd March 2014 at the Muddenahalli Campus of the university. The ceremony commenced with Veda chanting and Bhajans at 9.15 a.m. The Chancellor, accompanied by the Vice Chancellor sought the blessings of Bhagavan and broke coconuts and shovelled a handful of earth, signifying the ceremonial ground breaking. The Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and other senior members of the university also took part in the ground breaking ceremony. This

was followed by talks by the Registrar, the Vice Chancellor, the Chancellor of SSSIHL and Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations and Dr. A.R. Manjunath, Director, Muddenahalli Campus. The morning function came to a close with Bhajans followed by Arati.

In a colourful function organised by the Mahila Vibhag of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Karnataka on Sunday, 9th March 2014, at Brindavan, Bengaluru, the prestigious Easwaramma Award was presented to Smt. Parvathy Ponnappa, Trustee of Sai Ranga Deaf and Dumb School, Mysore and a renowned social worker. Dr. Swarna Bharadwaj, Director, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences presented the Award in the presence of Sri Nagesh Dhakappa, State President, Sri Y.N. Gangadhar Setty, Convener and many distinguished guests including past recipients of the Award. A large gathering of devotees present on this occasion applauded the awardee. The programme concluded with Narayana Seva.

The 62nd Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva Kendra was inaugurated on 19th January 2014 at village Kodkani (Kumta) in North Kanara district of Karnataka. A large gathering of over 2,500 villagers attended the programme and received Bhagavan's blessings. The Kendra will be of immense benefit to the villagers in conducting all the spiritual and Seva activities.



NEW RELEASES

The following are the new English books released. Please send your orders / enquiries by post to Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam - 515134 India or send email: orders@sssbpt.org

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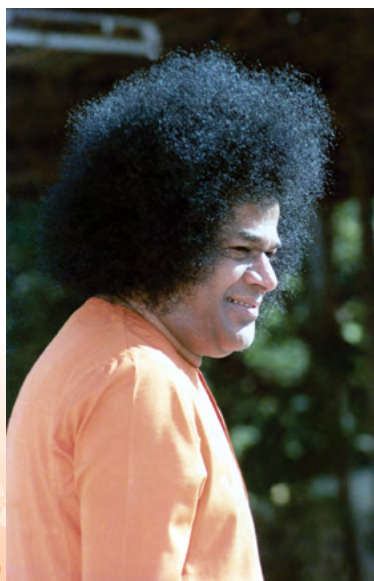
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On 1st January, 2009, Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust (SSSST) commenced operations with four divisions; the Bhakta Sahayak divisions (one in Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi and another in Brindavan, Bangalore), the Publications division, and the Media division.

The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

- 1) The publication and distribution of spiritual, religious, and educational Sai Literature and the production and distribution of audio and visual multimedia, photographs, calendars, and diaries, educational software etc for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- 2) The publication and distribution of Bhagawan Baba's monthly spiritual journal - Sanathana Sarathi - in English and Telugu languages. Since 2011, e-versions of the magazine are also released simultaneously and are available in PDF and EPUB formats on www.sanathanasarathi.org.
- 3) Maintaining a reporting channel, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers'- for free distribution.
- 4) Organising and conducting seminars

and conferences on spirituality, religion, education, and human values.

- 5) Providing library and Reading room for visiting devotees, with a very large collection of various spiritual and religious books.

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1. Sai Sathya Sakha
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Bliss of Experiencing the Divine

People are wasting their precious lives in the pursuit of fleeting and petty pleasures. Make the best use of the opportunity you have now got. That is true devotion. You alone are responsible for your condition because of the way your mind works. Do your duty, recognise the truth of your being, and you will be able to experience your divinity. You have to purify your heart to experience the Divine. You may have desires, aspirations and yearning for happiness. But there is nothing equal to the bliss of experiencing the Divine.

– Baba

