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"Do you need a special time to think of God? You can think of God all the time you are discharging your duties. Let your every thought be of God. See all work as God's work, feel every place you go to as the temple of God. If you think like this, you will have no need to worry about time."

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AVATAR VANI

PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF OTHERS

Trees bear fruits for the benefit of others.

Water flows in the rivers, for the benefit of others.

Cows yield milk for the benefit of others.

Human body has been gifted for the service of humanity.

(Sanskrit Verse)

THINK OF GOD ALL THE TIME

Embodiments of Love!

Body is Meant to Serve Others

IN THIS VAST world, all trees bear fruits. Do they do so for their own sake? If you enquire, you will know that they bear fruits for the benefit of others. They do not eat their own fruits, however tasty they may be. Likewise, rivers do not drink their own water and cows do not drink their milk. Cows give milk for the sustenance of others. We must realise as to why we have been endowed with this human body. Just as trees, rivers and cows do not consume what they yield, human body has been gifted to man not merely for his own pleasure but for engaging it in the service of others.

Thoughts, philosophies and attitudes may vary, but the same Divinity shines forth in all its splendour in all human



beings. Names and forms may vary but the five elements in all the bodies are the same. Pots are many, but the clay is one. The same clay is used in making different types of pots. Gold is one, but the ornaments made out of it acquire different names and shapes. Cows differ in colours and forms, but the milk of all of them is white. Similarly, bodies differ from one another but the same Divinity resides in all of them. We see the superficial aspect of the bodies but fail to see the basis.

No object can exist without a basis. The table is the basis for the tumbler which in turn is the basis for the water it holds. A vessel is required to drink water. Our body is like a vessel. Like the insipid water in the vessel, the pleasures experienced by the body are tasteless and transient. But people have a misconception that the happiness derived by

this body is of a permanent nature. It is not true.

Realise your Indwelling Divinity

What is this body? What is the basis of its indwelling Divinity? Take a vessel containing water and add some sugar in it. The sugar remains at the bottom of the tumbler. The sweetness of sugar does not pervade the water in the tumbler, if you do not stir the water thoroughly. You taste the water at the surface and conclude that the entire water is tasteless and you feel dejected. It is only when you use a spoon and stir the water that the sweetness of sugar pervades the entire water and you enjoy it. Divinity too is similar to this sweetness which can be experienced only by using the spoon of discrimination. Indeed, Divinity does reside in every heart. Sadhana can make one understand this great truth and help one realise that the indwelling divinity is one and the same in all.

What are the primary functions performed by the sense organs? A tumbler contains sweet syrup but it is not aware of it. Likewise, this physical body is full of sweetness; but it is unaware. Put a straw in the tumbler and drink the syrup. But the straw does not know how sweet the syrup is. The tongue, after tasting it, sends it to the stomach without keeping it with itself. The stomach enjoys the syrup and after digesting it, sends it to the different parts of the body. The body is similar to a vessel; it is filled with sweetness of Divinity. With the help of the straw, the tongue is able to taste the sweetness of the syrup. In the same manner, the sense organs (straw) enable wisdom (tongue) to experience Divinity (sweetness). Buddhi decides as to whether the food is sweet or bitter. If it is bitter, the tongue rejects it, and if it is sweet, it sends to the master.

Who is the master? People pray for varied reasons. Students invoke Brahman before

If you rejoice at the success of others, you too will be assured of success sooner or later. Gradually, you should try to get rid of narrow-mindedness and develop broad-mindedness. Developing a universal outlook will drive away your selfishness. This vast world will confer happiness on you only if you nurture generous feelings within you. Then the day will not be far when Divinity shines forth within you in all its glory!

having food by reciting Brahmarpanam and offering it to the Lord. Who is the God they refer to? This God is the fire of hunger who replies from within, "I am the fire of hunger residing in your stomach. By digesting food, I grant you strength and satisfaction". Prayer is the native land of the inner senses where Divinity resides. So, Divinity is enshrined within us. One need not look for it outside. What is more important is realising this indwelling Divinity. We need a mirror to see our face, as it is not possible to see it otherwise. Likewise, with the help of the mirror of wisdom, we can experience the Divinity that resides within us. Oh man, before using the mirror, you must wipe off the dirt over it. You hold the mirror in front of others and see their faces but not yours. Rather, you should hold the mirror of wisdom to see your own face. Man should know his own truth. He undertakes all kinds of spiritual practices, but fails to know his self. How can such a person know the world? He is busy enquiring, "Who are you"? but he never asks the question, "Who am I"? If you are unable to give the answer, when

you are asked “who are you”?, you will be considered a fool. Hence, be ever engaged in self-inquiry, “Who am I”? “Who am I”?

Know Who you are

Socrates was an optimist. Once while walking along a lane, he was engaged in self-inquiry as usual. A retired officer who was coming from the opposite side happened to dash against him. He was apparently engrossed in his family problems. Problems faced by man may differ, although the path undertaken is the same. The enraged officer asked him, “Who are you”? Socrates said, “That is what I am pondering over. Kindly tell me who I am”. We are forever trying to understand our real inner nature. All the time, Socrates was contemplating on “Who am I”? “What am I doing?” “What am I seeing?” “What am I thinking?”

Propagate Divinity. Do not waste your time in the pursuit of petty desires. The purpose of human birth is to attain Divinity and bestow happiness on others. Do not forget this truth. Always remember that your ultimate aim is to attain oneness with God.

Once a disciple of Socrates stood up to ask a question. He asked Socrates, “God has given man a lifespan of hundred years which may be divided into four parts. The first 25 years of the lifespan are spent in sports and enjoyment. During the next 25 years, he has to shoulder the family burden. Responsibilities towards his children and their future consume the next 25 years. During the last 25 years, one is worried about his bank balance. Thus, man has no time to think about God. If God would give man another 25 years, he could think of Him”. Socrates was sitting silent listening to this. He wanted to give him the practical lesson. So, he pretended to cry. “What is the

reason for your grief?” asked the disciple. Socrates replied, “Three-fourths of this earth is covered by ocean water, and the remaining portion is made up of mountains, forests, cities and villages. There is no place for me to stand, since the whole earth is covered”. The disciple said, “Sir, when there are crores of beings living on earth, can you not find a place to stand”? Then Socrates gave him a sharp reply, “When you have 100 years as your lifespan, how is it that you have no time to think of God? This is nothing but laziness”.

Forgetting the Body is Meditation

Do you need a special time to think of God? You can think of God all the time you are discharging your duties. Let your every thought be of God. See all work as God’s work, feel every place you go to as the temple of God. If you think like this, you will have no need to worry about time. Time itself is God, so salute time. Time is also man; man has time as his Atma. Everything is time. If you have a Atmic principle within, you do not need a separate time to think of it.

Once a devotee asked Ramana Maharshi, “How long should we meditate – five minutes, half an hour or one hour”? Ramana Maharshi replied, “As long as you think you are meditating, you have to continue to meditate”. Forgetting the body is meditation. You sit for half an hour but you cannot control your mind even for half a second. What is meditation? Walking is meditation, talking is meditation, eating is meditation, everything is meditation. Without concentration, one cannot perform any action. In order to study, we need concentration. Meditation is not separate; daily life is meditation. When you offer all your actions to God for His pleasure, that is meditation.

During meditation, even if a fly sits on your nose, you are disturbed. Is it meditation on the fly or on God? What is the patience of man? What is the nature of the fly? The fly comes again and sits on the same place. So, you try to kill it; you are fighting with a fly. Man has become very weak. If he cannot tolerate even a fly, how can he control the senses? When you sit in meditation, forget the body, direct the mind to God, and offer your mind, body and senses to Him.

When you sit in your car, you give the responsibility to the driver and sleep without worry. Offer the responsibility for your life to God who is driving your life chariot, and He will look after everything. The rich man sleeps thinking the watchman will protect him and look after his house. When you go

house to the watchman, your head to the barber, your car to the driver, but you cannot surrender to God. This is the weakness of man today. When you offer everything to God, He will take over your troubles and worries. Man does not have faith. Develop faith in God and recognise the truth that the same Divinity exists in everyone. Troubles do come; confront them. Think, "The Divine is within me, so troubles cannot harm me". This will power is there in every person. You are able to work, study, talk and do everything because of will power. Will power is truly God.

Develop Universal Outlook

There are two things in the world, matter and energy. Energy gets converted into matter, and matter into energy. The body



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to a barber, you give him the responsibility to hold your head and cut your hair, but you cannot bend your head before God. You surrender your clothes to the Dhobi, your

is the matter and Atma is the energy. The union of consciousness and physical body enables us to perform all actions just as light is produced when positive and negative

charges are connected. Whenever negative thoughts, depriving you of peace, raise their ugly hood, you must overcome them by drawing positive energy from the well-spring of joy hidden in your heart. Be blissfully immersed in the thoughts of the Atman while doing any work. Swami never asks you to remain idle, for work, in itself, is worship. In India, people perform many types of Puja. But there is no synchronisation between what is said and what is done. You utter Namaha and Netram Samarpayami (I offer my eyes) while offering a flower. But you are not offering your vision to the Lord; whereas it is your vision that is to be offered to Him. You have a sacred vision but you use it to enjoy the pleasures offered by the mundane world. Rather focus your vision inward.

Today people are prepared to listen to vain gossip but when the sacred stories of the Lord are narrated, their ears get clogged. People are never tired of going to cinemas but their eyes find it very difficult to concentrate on the beautiful form of the Lord even for a minute.

(Telugu Song)

Today selfishness is prevalent everywhere in the world. You show great enthusiasm in locating your face in a photograph without bothering about others in it. While you are going through the examination results, you make sure your roll number is there in the list. While standing in a bus queue, you are anxious to reserve a comfortable seat for you in the bus, with no consideration for others, especially the elderly and the aged, who deserve priority.

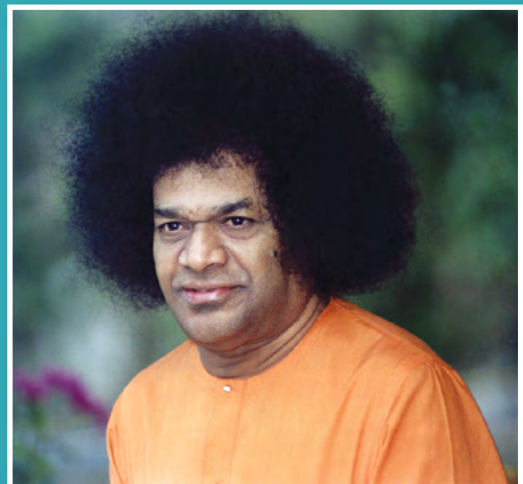
Develop universal outlook. If you rejoice at the success of others, you too will be assured of success sooner or later. Gradually, you should try to get rid of narrow-mindedness and develop broad-mindedness. Developing a universal outlook will drive away your selfishness. This vast world will confer happiness on you only if you nurture generous feelings within you. Then the day will not be far when Divinity shines forth within you in all its glory!

(Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Govinda Krishna Jai...")

– Bhagavan's Divine Discourse at Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 2nd May 1997.

Have firm faith that the body is a temple. Will anybody use a temple for unsacred purposes? So, make proper use of your body. This temple has many doors, but the doors of senses like the ears, the eyes and the mouth are very important. Do not allow any evil to enter your body and mind through these doors.

– Baba



INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUAL CONFERENCE ON "LIVING WITH SRI SATHYA SAI"

AN INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUAL conference on the theme "Living with Sri Sathya Sai" was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation at Prasanthi Nilayam on 20th and 21st November 2018 as part of 93rd Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Day 1: 20th November 2018

The proceedings of the first day of the conference began at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting followed by an elevating group

or studied. What was the use of participating in the activities of the Sai Organisation or studying scriptures if one did not observe ethics and morality in life? Bhagavan asked. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram" which the entire congregation in the hall followed in chorus with great devotion.

Bhagavan's Discourse was followed by a talk on "The importance of Gayatri Mantra" by Sri K.R. Vedanarayanan, a faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, who explained the meaning of this important Mantra and stated how Bhagavan made it a universal prayer for all without any distinction and stressed its significance as the greatest source of inner power and illumination. What followed next was the recitation



A group of singers rendering the theme song of the conference.

song "Soham Sai Om" by a group of singers, both ladies and gents. The keynote Address of the Conference was thereafter delivered by Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, who emphasised that Sai is the cosmic power. This faith, he said, was the foundation of the Sai Organisation. Referring to Seva as the highest Sadhana, Sri Pandya reminded the devotees that Bhagavan had provided the opportunity of Seva to devotees to transform themselves.

Bhagavan's Divine Discourse was then aired on the public address system. In His Discourse, Bhagavan underlined the importance of practising what one learned

of the Gayatri Mantra by Bhagavan, which the entire gathering in the hall repeated in chorus after Him, filling the entire milieu with powerful spiritual vibrations. Bhagavan's Divine Message on Gayatri Mantra was then broadcast, wherein Bhagavan explained how the chanting of this powerful Mantra gave a sense of fulfilment to man and led him to realise his oneness with God. There was a short speech after this by Sri Sai Giridhar who spoke about the wisdom of the Bhagavadgita which revealed to man the essence of Vedanta. He also exhorted the devotees to see the exhibition "Living with Sri Sathya Sai" based on the Bhagavadgita in the Poornachandra Auditorium.

The last item of the morning programme was a soul-stirring musical offering by Prasanthi Bhajan Group which gave the powerful message of inherent divinity of man in the devotional composition of Sant Kabir “Moko Kahan Dhoonde Bande Mein To Tere Paas Mein” (oh man, where do you search for Me when I am within you). Blending the teachings of all faiths in a unified musical composition, the singers transported the entire congregation to a higher plane by



A devotional music offering by Prasanthi Bhajan Group.

this engrossing devotional offering. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati. The next session of the conference was held in Poornachandra Auditorium.

The proceedings of the Conference in the evening commenced with an enlightening talk on “The Power of Japa” by Ms. Divya Tyagi, Education Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Delhi-NCR. Speaking about her personal experience of the power of Japa which she practised from the tender age of eight, Ms. Tyagi observed that Namasmarana was the easiest Sadhana for man’s liberation which ensured all virtues. His Divine Name is His best gift to mankind, stated the speaker referring to Bhagavan Baba. Ms. Tyagi then led the entire



Mass recitation of the Mantra “Om Sri Sai Ram”.

congregation to collective chanting of the powerful Mantra “Om Sri Sai Ram”, the rendition of which reverberated in the entire hall.

This was followed by a most uplifting session of Soham Japa, an audio clip of which on the potency of Soham Japa by Bhagavan Himself was played followed by collective rendition of this powerful Mantra by the devotees led by Bhagavan.

An elevating session on Jyoti Meditation followed this. An audio clip was first played, in which Bhagavan explained the significance of Jyoti Meditation and recounted its performance step by step. How the flame should be lit inside which should spread its light and illumine the inner being and thereafter engulf the entire universe, was



Jyoti Meditation session in Sai Kulwant Hall.

the quintessence of Bhagavan's message. Thereafter, all the assembled devotees in the hall performed Jyoti Meditation which was led by Smt. Kavita Bhatnagar, Education Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Uttar Pradesh.

The final session of the evening witnessed a presentation entitled "Science of Living with Sri Sathya Sai" which was not only innovative and interesting but enlightening also. The presentation showcasing the difference between the physical science and the science of spirituality was beautifully interspersed with thematic songs and was made by Sri Girish Atre, an alumnus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning who led the audience to the truth of the existence of the cosmic choreographer to whose tune the entire creation was eternally dancing. Singing melodious songs along with explaining the science of awareness, the speaker exhorted one and all to tie the mind with the rope of Namasmara and realise the omnipresence of God because He is here, there and everywhere.

Day 2: 21st November 2018

The proceedings of the Conference on 21st November 2018 commenced with an exposition on the significance of Ashtottara Shata Namavali, the 108 Names of Bhagavan, by Dr. Aparna Tiwari, Education Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Madhya Pradesh who advocated that this was the link between Bhagavan and His devotees and the best Sadhana in Kali Yuga. A reverberating collective chanting of 108 Names of Bhagavan led by the Mahilas from Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh followed this which filled the entire milieu with the Divine Name.

After this, Dr. Shashank Shah, an alumnus of the Institute spoke on the topic

"Power of Prayer – Conversation with God". Elucidating his talk with befitting anecdotes, Dr. Shashank lucidly explained the significance of prayer and observed that true yearning was the soul of prayer and it awakened the Divinity within man. "Prayer can make the sitting one to stand, standing one to walk, walking one to march and the marching one to merge with the Divine," said Dr. Shah, reminding the audience of the efficacy of praying to Bhagavan.

A musical and soulful prayer session on the theme, "Together we Pray" followed this talk on prayer. Led by Ms. Preeta Nair and Sai Youth from Kerala, the musical was an assortment of prayers tuned to the style of "Vaishnava Jana To Tene Kahiye Je Peeda Parayi Jaane Re" (one who knows the pain of others is the true devotee of God). The musical ended with chanting of "Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu" (May all the worlds be happy!).

Dr. B.G. Pitre, Director, Institute of Sri Sathya Sai Education, India delivered the final talk of the session, deliberating on the topic "Self-Audit – the Royal Road to Transformation". A pioneer in the field of Sathya Sai Education, Dr. Pitre observed that being good was of paramount importance. He recalled Bhagavan's teaching and said, "You are doing good things, that does not mean you are good. When you are good, everything you do will be good". There should be a sync between the thought, word and deed, so that one does what one speaks, concluded Dr. Pitre.

The evening session of the Conference featured talks by four eminent speakers. Speaking first, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman, Prasanthi Council spoke on the subject "Living with Sai – the Loving Way" and elucidated that Sai is love personified

and He can be reached only through love. Man could attain the goal of life by following the path of love shown by Swami, he said.

“God alone serves, granting the credit to individuals,” said Dr. V. Mohan, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, speaking on the subject “Living with Sai – the Selfless Way”. Citing Bhagavan’s quotation, “Hands that Serve are Holier than Lips that Pray”, Dr. Mohan stated that if one million Sai devotees performed one act of selfless service everyday, Sathya Yuga would come on earth.

A lively exposition ensued next, on the subject “Living with Sai – the Happy Way” delivered by Sri Ajit Popat from the UK. Rich with experiences of Bhagavan, with many an interaction, Sri Ajit Popat defined the word HAPPY as being holy, being aware, being patient, being peaceful and being yogic. The speaker was full of verve, entertaining the evening audience with some of the most beautiful anecdotes with Sai in Prasanthi, in Brindavan and at Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal.

“Living with Sai – the Youthful Way” was the final exposition on the subject which was elucidated by Sri Vinay Kumar, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Karnataka. He spelt out five Divine Commandments that Bhagavan personally imparted to Sai Youth of Karnataka, namely, serve the society not just with passion but with intense feeling,

plan every activity in detail with utmost perfection, annihilate ego, purify yourself and never ever forget the existence of God. Explaining the five commandments in detail, the speaker sent a solemn reminder to Sai Youth that every single interaction Bhagavan had with the youth was always embedded in highest spiritual wisdom.

Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, in his concluding remarks exhorted the devotees to be consistent in their Sadhana. This would surely take them more and more close to their goal of Self-realisation every passing day, said Sri Pandya, sharing an ancient story involving a master and his disciple.

A pledge of commitment followed next. Smt. Kamala Pandya, National Coordinator, SSSSO, read out the pledge that was followed by the audience en masse. The pledge of commitment is a promise to hold Sai’s Hand and walk with Him with every step. The pledge rightfully ended with the prayer “Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu”, Bhagavan’s Mantra for cosmic peace and happiness. Collective musical notes from thousands of throats reverberated the spacious Sai Kulwant Hall for the next few minutes, as the entire congregation of participants joined in chorus singing a melodious musical of commitment to Sai. Bhajans next ended with Arati, bringing the curtain down on this most inspiring spiritual conference.

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– Convener



LIVING UNDER THE BENEVOLENT CARE OF SWAMI

Nidadavolu Suri Babu

MY FATHER NIDADAVOLU Achyuta Ramaiah was a famous artiste of Burra Katha (a folk art form of Andhra Pradesh). Sri Dandamudi Rama Rao and Sri Nagavarapu Suryanarayana were close devotees of Swami from Rajahmundry (now Rajamahendravaram) in those days. Upon Sri Rama Rao's persuasion, perhaps in 1956 or 1957, my father went to Puttaparthi for the first time to perform Burra Katha in the Divine Presence of Swami.

The Nagavarapu family were staying in Puttaparthi in those days, to whom Swami said in an insightful tone, "Earlier I tied the first knot to Rajahmundry, a second knot subsequently, and now I am tying the third knot". By this remark, I surmise that my father was pulled by Swami into His Avataric Mission.

Burra Katha Presentation and Bhagavan's Prasadam

Just as my father was entering Swami's abode, He accosted him, "Achyuta Ramaiah! Bagunnava – (how do you do, Achyuta Ramaiah?)"! My father was wonderstruck as to how Swami could recognise him; and then presumed that He could have been told by Sri Rama Rao. It is an irony that everybody demands proof from Swami, and no one comes to His Darshan without first imposing conditions. People do not hesitate to engage Swami in a kind of business quid pro quo... "If only He can prove Himself as God"? This is the kind of imposition they make on Swami.

The next day, Swami called my father and asked, "Achyuta Ramaiah! What is the story you are going to render today"? "Swami! I can render the story of the famous minister Timmarusu or about Karna or about Abhimanyu of Mahabharata," my father submitted. Swami told him compassionately, "You have come to Prasanthi Nilayam for the first time. Why should you bother about wars, fights and killings? Can't you render something auspicious and pleasing"? "Swami! I cannot do any other story. Only in my earlier days, I rendered the story of Parvati Kalyanam (Parvati's marriage)," my father replied. Swami sent him back saying, "Alright then! Go and take rest. We may talk about it tomorrow".

In the night, my father had a dream, in which the entire script of Parvati Kalyanam, page by page, was visible to him. By the time of dawn, my father was totally prepared to render Parvati Kalyanam. In the morning, Swami called my father and asked smilingly, "Can you render Parvati Kalyanam now"? After the Burra Katha was over, Swami gave envelopes containing respective amounts of money to each of the performers. He then turned to my father and said, "Don't go. I will give you Prasadam". Considering money itself as Prasadam from Swami, my father rushed to Rajamahendravaram by boarding a bus.

My father was an asthma patient. A few days after reaching Rajamahendravaram, he was sitting in a reclining chair in Sri

Nidamarthi Sathyam's house, where he suddenly gasped for breath. There was no one available to help, as all were asleep. As he was struggling with his breath, my father could clearly hear Swami's voice, "Achyuta Ramaiah! I told you I would give you Prasadam. But you left without receiving it. Alright, go to your house immediately. I have kept some Vibhuti under your pillow".

Our house was situated next to that of Sri Nidamarthi Sathyam. My father ran and searched under the pillow of his bed. Just as Swami told, many packets of Vibhuti were found there! My father was then fully convinced that Swami was none other than the Almighty Lord. As soon as he mixed some Vibhuti in water and drank, he got immediate relief. Thus, his faith in Swami became firm. Since then till his last breath, my father engaged himself in the task of propagating Swami's ideals.

My Upanayanam by Swami

Swami has always been the head of our family. My father had never proceeded to do anything without submitting before Swami. Whenever he purchased new clothes for the family members, he would inform Swami through a post card. Swami would immediately reply with the words, "Manchidi (good), Bangaru". Now, even though we are physically distanced from Swami, we keep on submitting everything to Him mentally. Even now we are wedded to the task of propagating Swami's life and philosophy. Swami is the sole hero of all our lives as well as our endeavours.

Whenever Swami visited Rajamahendravaram, He would spend some time in our house. One day, we came to know that Swami would come to Rajamahendravaram, and also perform Upanayanam (thread ceremony) of Sri Sathyam's son and some other boys.

Swami came to Rajamahendravaram and stayed in the house of Sri Nidamarthi Sathyam. My father wished that I too should be initiated in the thread ceremony, along with the sons of Nidamarthi family. My father was bestowed the liberty of approaching Swami without hindrance. So, he went and appealed to Swami, "Swami, I beseech that my younger son too be given initiation along with other boys". We had the chance of having a photo with Swami after the ceremony.

By then, my elder brother had studied 84 verses of Krishna Yajur Veda in the Veda Pathashala (Vedic school) of



The author with Bhagavan after his Upanayanam.

continued on page 16...

Effulgence of Divine Glory

IT IS THE SAME BABA IN SHIRDI

Padmamma

W E MOVED AND SETTLED DOWN in Bombay (Mumbai). But my bad Karma followed me there also. The situation was unbearable. I wanted to run to Parthi, to Swami. I wrote a letter to my father. My father replied, saying that Swami was on tour – so it was of no use to come to Parthi. I was disappointed. The same night Shirdi Baba appeared in my dream and said, “If not to Parthi, come to me at Shirdi”. It was a great revelation to me that both the Babas were the same.

But, how was I to go to Shirdi? That was my problem. However, He arranged everything. The One who called me, took the necessary steps to enable me to reach Shirdi. Swami was on tour. He did not take my father with him. My father wanted to go to Shirdi for his birthday on Christmas day. He came to Mumbai to my house. Some Mumbai devotees arranged a car for us to travel to Shirdi. We stayed there for three full days! Thus, Swami as Shirdi Baba fulfilled my desire.

The Grace

While I was in Bangalore (Bengaluru) my father-in-law became very sick. He had an enlargement of the heart. At that time, Swami was in Bengaluru at Dr. Bhagavantam's house. Swami had come to perform the thread ceremony of one of his sons.

I went to their house for Swami's Darshan. I told Swami about my father-



in-law's condition and about how he was longing to have Swami's Darshan. Swami said, “I will come to your house to see him”.

When I returned home and told my father-in-law what Swami had said, he was not satisfied. He said, “No, I do not think that He will ever come. You better take me to Him”, he insisted. I arranged for a taxi and both my parents-in-law and myself went to the house where Swami was staying.

As soon as we reached, I could see that Swami was in a car. The car was about

to start. I took courage, quickly got down from the taxi and ran towards Swami's car. Swami stopped the car. Thank God! He did not scold me. Instead, He asked me, "What happened? Why are you here?" I said, "Swami, my father-in-law is desperate. He forced me to bring him to You. I have brought him. He wants Your Darshan". Swami, the very embodiment of compassion, got down from His car, got into the taxi, blessed both my parents-in-law and materialised Vibhuti for them. They were very happy!

Do not Fear

My husband always kept changing jobs thinking that he would get a better one each time. But, in most cases, he met with failure. Between jobs, it was critical, especially in terms of finding resources to sustain the family. We had to live on credit. Sometimes it was smooth, but at other times it was hard. During one crucial phase, the creditors kept coming demanding what was owed. My good fortune was that Swami, the Apadbandhava, had come to Bengaluru. I ran to Him. Because of my agony wherever Swami was, I approached Him directly. Nobody used to stop me. This was a blessing in disguise!

I explained to Him my position. He said, "Don't be afraid. I will see that those people do not come and trouble you. I am going to Salem just for two days. After I come back, you come with me to Parthi. Not by train. I will take you with me. Be ready".

Then He told my father, "Poor girl! May be she needs some money to repay those creditors? Tomorrow, ask her to come and stand on the main road that goes to Salem. I think it is very near her house. I will give her some money". He mentioned the time, also.

Accordingly, I waited on the main road. At the exact time given by Him, Swami's car came. He stopped and handed me an envelope and said, "Count and see whether it is enough. If required, I will give you more". Thus, He solved my problem. He has been helping me all through life – physically, mentally and even materially. I do not have words to thank Him!

Swami returned from Salem two days later. I went to the house where He was staying. The next day, I travelled to Parthi, in a separate car, which followed His car. We indeed followed the Master!

– Excerpted from "Twameva Matha..." by Smt. Padmamma.

...continued from page 14

Swami under the tutelage of Sri Nidadavolu Rama Manikyala Rao. Three months before the death of my father, Swami called my brother and said, "Bangaru! You go back home". In those days, students would regret treating it as punishment when Swami asked any of them to go back home. Their parents would also regret, apprehending some misdeed committed by their son. Even before my brother ventured to talk, Swami

patted his shoulder and said, "Bangaru! Do as I say and go at once". In this manner, Swami helped my brother to spend some time with our father during his last days, as also understand family matters.

(To be continued in the next issue.)

– The author is an old-time devotee and Burra Katha exponent from Rajamahendravaram, Andhra Pradesh.

Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

37TH ANNUAL CONVOCATION

SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF Higher Learning, (a Deemed to be University), held its 37th Annual Convocation at Prasanthi Nilayam on 22nd November 2018. The Chief Guest of the ceremony was Dr. Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India and Chairperson, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance (BIRAC).

The Academic Procession and Vice Chancellor's Speech

The event began at 10.30 a.m. when the academic procession led by the university brass band entered Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the ceremony. The dignitaries

The proceedings of the Convocation began with invocatory Vedic chants by a group of students. Thereafter, the Vice Chancellor Prof. K.B.R. Varma prayed to the Revered Founder Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to declare the Convocation open. The Revered Founder Chancellor then declared the Convocation open, saying, "I Declare the Convocation Open" amidst a burst of applause.

The Vice Chancellor, delivering the introductory speech, highlighted the golden jubilee celebrations of the Anantapur Campus, the first of the four campuses of the Institute. It is a testimony that our system of Values-based Integral Education, which addresses the holistic development of our students, has stood the test of time, observed the Vice Chancellor.

On the academic front, he said that the student-teacher ratio of 9:1 and highly qualified and dedicated faculty members had led to excellent academic performance in the Institute. This was reflected in the fact that SSSIHL had an overall examinations pass rate of 96%.

He mentioned the commitment SSSIHL had to teaching quality and gave examples of new initiatives such as the introduction of a new M.Sc. in Data Sciences programme and the addition of need-based electives such as Healthcare Management as a part of the existing MBA programme.

Prof. Varma underlined the progress in the area of research at SSSIHL in the



Academic Procession in Sai Kulwant Hall.

who joined this grand procession included the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor, the Chief Guest, Deans and Heads of Departments along with Members of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning Trust, Academic Council, the Board of Management and Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

past academic year. The most significant was the Central Research Instruments Facility at the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. Established recently, it provides state-of-the-art infrastructural facilities under a single roof, housing a complement of latest and advanced characterisation/analytical tools, including several sophisticated advanced instruments in the areas of disease biology and plasmonics. As a result, the research output of the Institute had witnessed a significant rise during the last two years, noted the Vice Chancellor. This was reflected both in the quality and quantity of research and the number of Ph.D.'s, he said. Above all, the academic and research output at the university continued to be dynamic and addressed the societal needs and demands, in line with the vision of the Revered Founder Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, said the Vice Chancellor.

Graduands Admitted to their Degrees

After the introductory speech of the Vice Chancellor, 471 candidates, which included 282 undergraduates, 82 postgraduates, 90 graduands of professional courses and 8 Ph.D. awardees, were admitted to their degrees by the Chancellor, Sri K. Chakravarthi. The convocation pledge was then administered by the Vice Chancellor to the graduands after which 19 Gold Medalists of the Institute were honoured. These fine women and men students excelled in the Faculties of Sciences, Management & Commerce and Economics & Humanities during the academic year 2017-18.

Convocation Address by the Chief Guest

Following this, the Chief Guest, Dr. Renu Swarup delivered her Convocation Address. Addressing the fresh graduands,

Dr. Renu Swarup hailed the uniqueness of the Institute's system of values-based education of blending secular knowledge with spiritual knowledge and its great



Convocation Address by the Chief Guest, Dr. Renu Swarup.

contribution to society. She went on to stress how education and science must play a key role in transforming lives, impacting society through improved healthcare, agriculture, environment and industrial growth.

Dr. Swarup then summarised the recent developments of India in the field of science and technology such as the number of research publications and patents to achieve the government's Sustainable Development Goals. She touched upon areas of excellence such as agricultural productivity, healthcare and technological advancements to enhance the provision of clean water and energy for the country.

Dr. Swarup highlighted the achievements of the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, for which she is the Secretary. Apart from support to over 800 institutes and laboratories and nearly 5,000 scientists across the country, they support over 1,000 start-ups and an equal number of entrepreneurs, academic researchers and small industries. This would ensure that the Biotechnology sector created a positive

impact nationally and globally, observed the Chief Guest.

Dr. Renu Swarup ended her talk with a special mention of the increasing number of women graduates and the important role they play in driving scientific development. She encouraged the graduands to embrace the huge responsibility of taking forward the values of this great institution. Advising the graduates to make the best use of the education received by them in this unique institution, she said, "You have had the privilege of being part of a learning system which has taught you the importance of ethical and moral behaviour and instilled in you a great potential for discipline, leadership and teamwork. There are not many institutions that give you such a 360-degree exposure." she concluded.

Benedictory Address of the Founder Chancellor

Finally, the graduands were blessed with the Divine Benediction by the Revered Founder Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who exhorted students to follow the culture of Bharat and uphold unity and integrity. Instead of going abroad to earn money, the students should serve the villages and the country. Advising the students to have a check on their hearts and thoughts, Bhagavan said, good thoughts would lead them to morality. He advised the students to give up negative thoughts and become free from tension.

After this, the entire assembly stood up to sing National Anthem. The convocation ceremony came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.

Convocation Drama – Watch Your WATCH

In the evening, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presented a

thematic drama "Watch your Watch" based on Bhagavan's teachings: watch your words, watch your actions, watch your thoughts, watch your character and watch your heart. The story of the drama depicted how a watch maker from Kolkata regretted when his watch materialised by Bhagavan for him stopped as there was exchange of harsh words between him and his son who left home in a huff. However, it started working again when there was happy reunion of the family in the end after 40 long years of their separation. Through this simple story, the drama taught that there were happy and difficult times in man's life but man should



A scene from the drama "Watch your WATCH".

not have remorse for the past and worry about the future; he should learn to live in the present. Bringing parallels from the Mahabharata depicting the Pandavas in exile, the presentation brought in the message of Krishna for the Pandavas, 'This Too Shall Pass', as no difficulty in life was permanent. Kolkata touch with vernacular Bengali 'fillers' and a Durga Puja dance made the drama interesting. Excellent acting of the cast, apt dialogues and good direction made the drama an impressive presentation.

Bhajans followed next and Arati to Bhagavan brought the curtains down on the 37th Annual Convocation of SSSIHL.

GRANDEUR AND DEVOTION MARK BHAGAVAN'S 93RD BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

THE 93RD BIRTHDAY OF Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was celebrated in a grand manner with deep devotion and piety at Prasanthi Nilayam, in which a mammoth gathering of devotees from all parts of the world came to participate. Many programmes of great spiritual significance were organised during the weeklong celebrations held from 18th to 24th November 2018. The Chief Guest of the celebrations was Sri N. Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

The entire Prasanthi Nilayam township bore a festive look with beautiful decorations. Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue



Sri Sai Sathyanarayana Puja.

Lord Sai Sathyanarayana) which has deep connection with the Advent of our Beloved Bhagavan. A platform with aesthetic floral decorations was set up in Sai Kulwant Hall in front of Bhagavan's Samadhi for this Puja, which began with chanting of sacred Mantras by a group of priests at 8.00 a.m. Devotees in the hall were ecstatic with joy witnessing the Puja of their Beloved Lord Sai Narayana along with chanting of sacred Vedic Mantras. Besides the Puja with floral offerings, Abhishekam of the Padukas of the Lord was performed, offerings were made and Arati was offered. In conclusion, Sri Sathya Sai Katha (story of Sai Avatar) was narrated which the devotees listened intently.

The proceedings of Rathotsavam began after the conclusion of this Puja. While Bhajans started in Sai Kulwant Hall, the idols of Venugopal Swami as well as Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman were carried to Gopuram gate in a grand procession led by Nadaswaram musicians



Illuminations at the Yajur Mandir.

of the celebrations and Yajur Mandir were aesthetically illuminated at night. Free food was offered to all the devotees during the entire week of celebrations in a specially erected Pandal in the Ashram premises.

SRI SAI SATHYANARAYANA PUJA AND RATHOTSAVAM

The programme on 18th November 2018 had an auspicious beginning with Sri Sai Sathyanarayana Puja (worship of



Rathotsavam procession in Puttaparthi.

and Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of students. After due ceremony, the idol of Venugopal Swami was mounted on a decorated chariot. The procession then moved towards Patha Mandir witnessed by residents of Puttaparthi who occupied every available space on the road and balconies of their houses to see this grand spectacle of Rathotsavam. All through the route, people offered Arati and broke coconuts with great reverence before the idols. After the arrival of the procession at the Old Mandir, the procession started its return journey with idols of Sita, Rama, Lakshmana and Hanuman. The sacred festival of Rathotsavam concluded with the conclusion of Bhajans in Sai Kulwant Hall.

The programme in the evening featured an enrapturing violin recital by a renowned classical carnatic musician Ms. A. Kanyakumari and her large team of 24 musicians, both men and women who offered a sumptuous feast of choicest classical compositions which included "Rama Nannu Brovara" (Oh Lord Rama, save me), "Rara Mayinti Daka" (Oh Lord, come to my house), and a specially composed Sai Namavali to name a few. She concluded her scintillating concert with the evergreen Bhajan "Raghupati

Raghav Raja Ram". Bhajans followed next and concluded with the Bhajan "Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam" sung by Bhagavan.

LADIES DAY

Ladies Day was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 19th November 2018 as part of Bhagavan's 93rd Birthday celebrations. The morning proceedings commenced at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting by the students of Anantapur Campus of the Institute. Even as



Nadaswaram group of students offering musical tributes to Bhagavan.

the sonorous strains of Rudram chanting filled the air, a grand procession of ladies entered Sai Kulwant Hall led by Nadaswaram and brass bands of Anantapur Campus and bagpipers band of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School. Senior ladies carrying Poornakumbham then offered obeisance



The procession of ladies entering Sai Kulwant Hall.

at Bhagavan's Samadhi. Prof. Rajeshwari Patel, Director, Anantapur Campus of the Institute, in her welcome address, stressed that women themselves should work for their uplift by engaging themselves in the Divine Mission of Bhagavan. Speaking next, Dr. Hymavati Reddy from the US spoke of her unique experiences with Bhagavan. Calling Mother Easwaramma, the exemplar of ideal womanhood, the speaker called upon the women around the world to resolve to follow Swami's commands to become ideal women. Narrating a couple of her beautiful experiences with Bhagavan, Dr. Reddy opined that Bhagavan's love is unfathomable, and all the institutions set up by Him bear witness to His unbounded love for mankind.

The Chief Guest of the celebrations was Ms. Wided Bouchamaoui, Nobel Peace Prize Winner 2015 from Tunisia.



The Chief Guest Ms. Wided Bouchamaoui delivering her Ladies Day address.

Ms. Wided Bouchamaoui reminded the ladies of the rapidly changing world of globalisation, technological advancement and digitisation, effecting into a changing world of inequalities. Having traversed the road of peaceful dialogues of Mahatma Gandhi style, securing peace in her own country, the Chief Guest exhorted the

ladies to set an example by speaking about gender equality, addressing problems with meaningful, peaceful dialogue and negotiations. At a time when mankind was facing big challenges, Ms. Bouchamaoui, a woman of Arab Muslim backdrop, aired the voice of unity, harmony and equality. Ms. Wided Bouchamaoui is a businesswoman who since 2011 has been the leader of the Tunisian Confederation of Industry. As leader of the organisation, she took part in the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet which ultimately won her the coveted Nobel Peace Prize for 2015.

Bhagavan's Divine Discourse followed next, wherein He praised women as the embodiments of love, truth and sacrifice. Referring to great women of Bharat such as Sita and Savitri, Bhagavan said that Ladies Day was meant to uphold Indian culture and values. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin". The final programme of the morning was a sterling musical offering by the students of Anantapur Campus and display of band music by the Nadaswaram and brass band of Anantapur Campus and bagpipers band of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School.

The programme in the evening began with an introductory talk by Dr. Neelam Desai representing the committee of organisers of Ladies Day. Referring to essential harmony of the two genders in the family, Dr. Neelam Desai called for greater balance of the two through mutual respect, understanding and interdependence. The significance of celebrating this day lay in this delicate balance for harmony in the family, said Dr. Desai, who is the Head of the Department of Cardiothoracic Vascular Surgery at SSSIHMS, Prasanthigram.

After this, Justice Isabella Chu, Permanent Judge from Hong Kong, spoke on her awe-inspiring experience of absolute surrender to Swami. Having found her true love in Mother Sai, she of late had a desire to fulfil, to be a speaker on this year's Ladies Day at Prasanthi Nilayam. To fulfil her wish, her family gathered in prayer to Bhagavan, appeasing the Lord. As the intensity peaked, there came another clue of Sai Satcharitra Parayana (ceremonial reading of Sai Satcharita). The search for the holy book went on and finally the book reached her family on 15th October, precisely at 2.40 p.m., the exact day and time when Shirdi Sai Baba left his mortal coil. ...And Justice Isabella finished her Parayana in three days, literally demanding from Swami to do the rest, reposing absolute faith in Him. After a peaceful night's sleep when she awoke, she was greeted with an international call from Prasanthi Nilayam, inviting her to be a guest speaker on this very day! Don't give up, keep trying, hold on to Swami, exhorted an elated Isabella divulging her secret of reliance on Bhagavan.

Next to come was a musical offering by the Sundaram Bhajan Group (ladies), Chennai, who presented a bouquet of devotional songs which included "Sai Sathyam Sai Nithyam", "Hare Rama Hare Krishna Hare Sai Hare Hare" "Hum Ko Tum Se Pyaar Kitna", to mention a few.

The grand finale for the evening was a musical dance drama by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prasanthi Nilayam. The presentation titled "Sai Katha" was the story of Swami's unmatched glory, lucidly illustrating some of the most beautiful episodes from the life of Bhagavan. The presentation interspersed with beautiful commentary, songs and dances turned out



Sai Katha, a drama by Primary School students.

to be a reminder of the Supreme Divinity who walked on earth. Bhajans by Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School girls followed next and the session came to a close with Arati.

BHAGAVAN'S 93RD BIRTHDAY FUNCTION

The Birthday function of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was held in magnificently decorated and brilliantly lit Sai Kulwant Hall on 23rd November 2018, which was joyously witnessed by a mammoth gathering



The Samadhi of Bhagavan beautifully decorated on Bhagavan's Birthday.

of devotees who came from all parts of the world to offer their reverential tributes to Bhagavan.

The morning programme began at 8.00 a.m. with sacred Vedic chants by the Mandir Veda Group. This was followed by a grand

display of band music by Panchavadyam, Nadaswaram groups of Institute students as also the band music of the Primary School students. They all took turns to offer their



Display of band music by Institute students.

musical tributes to Bhagavan on this most auspicious morning.

The students of Bhagavan's educational institutions thereafter made a reverential musical offering "Guru Vandana" (salutations to the Guru) comprising Stotras and devotional songs. Beginning their offering with recitation of Sai Gayatri, the students poured out their hearts to sing the glories of their Divine Mother with deep love and devotion. The compositions rendered by them included "Dil Chahta Hai Ye Din Baar Baar Aaye" (we wish that this day



Musical offering "Guru Vandana" by students of Bhagavan's educational institutions.

comes again and again), "O Maa, O Maa, O Maa Sai Maa" (Beloved Mother Sai),

"Chitravathi Theera Chidrupa Baba" (Baba, the Embodiment of Consciousness residing on the banks of Chitravathi).

After this elevating musical offering of the students, the Annual Report of Sri Sathya



Annual Report (2017-18) of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust released by the Trustees.

Sai Central Trust for the year 2017-18 was offered at the Samadhi of Bhagavan. Giving salient features of the Annual Report, Sri S.S. Naganand, Trustee of the Central Trust then described in brief the activities and initiatives of the Central Trust in sociocare, medicare and educare. One of the notable features of the Trust activities, he said, was its participation in the government initiated NTR Sujala Pathakam to provide quality drinking water to villagers, for which 8 more water purification plants were installed by the Trust to provide clean drinking water to 1,690 households in rural habitations. Another important initiative of the Trust was the installation of Solar Power Projects which would meet 40% of the electricity needs of the Ashram and allied institutions. Speaking about the healthcare services of the Trust, Sri Naganand informed that Bhagavan's hospitals provided treatment to more than seven lakh patients in the previous year alone. Citing statistics, he informed about the excellent performance of the students

of Bhagavan's institutions in their board examinations. He also praised the service activities of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, India and Sathya Sai International Organisation.

Bhagavan's Divine Discourse followed this which was aired on the public address system. In His Discourse, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to develop love and experience oneness, which was the way to experience bliss. Man should leave duality which was the cause of his suffering, said Bhagavan. If man mastered his mind, all his problems would be solved, said Bhagavan. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin".

After this, the Chief Guest of the celebrations, Sri N. Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, offered reverential tributes to Bhagavan. Reminiscing his old association with Bhagavan and Prasanthi Nilayam, the Chief Minister expressed satisfaction at the same level of dedication, enthusiasm and energy which he witnessed at Prasanthi Nilayam earlier when Bhagavan was physically present. Referring to his visit this time, he said, "This is Baba's call to do better service, and to work with all of you". Profession would give professional satisfaction, business would give monetary satisfaction, but the real satisfaction was given only by Baba, asserted the Chief Minister. Speaking on the aim of human life, he stressed the importance of service. He said, our service in this lifetime alone would be remembered. Hailing Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation for its yeomen service



The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Sri N. Chandrababu Naidu addressing the devotees.

worldwide, the Chief Minister reminded the devotees of their collective responsibility to carry Bhagavan's legacy across the borders, on to globally expansive vistas. The Chief Minister concluded by expressing hope to visit Prasanthi Nilayam often to get himself



Felicitating the Chief Minister Sri N. Chandrababu Naidu.

recharged and inspired. The Chief Minister was felicitated by the Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

After this, the Chief Minister formally inaugurated the "Central Research Instruments Facility" at Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning premises. CRIF is aimed at providing high quality research facility at the SSSIHL, that houses major equipment and infrastructural resources required for the university faculty, doctoral research scholars and postgraduate



The Chief Minister lighting the lamp to inaugurate "Central Research Instruments Facility" (Inset: a view of the building).

students assuring them of high quality training. The Chief Minister had a detailed



Research scholars explaining their field of research to the Chief Minister.

round of inspection at the new facility where in-house research facilities were explained to him.

A huge congregation of devotees from all walks of life attended the morning function. Arati to Bhagavan at 12.30 p.m. brought the morning function to a close.

After the glorious morning celebrations, the evening programme commenced at 5.00 p.m. with golden chariot procession, which started from the Ganesh Mandir, went round the Yajur Mandir and came back to Sai Kulwant Hall through Gopuram Gate where Arati was offered to it. Participated by



A grand procession of the golden chariot going round the Yajur Mandir.

a large number of devotees and led by Veda chanting, Panchavadyam, Nadaswaram groups of students, this grand procession was witnessed with great reverence by a huge number of devotees who thronged both sides of its route.

Jhoola Mahotsava, which followed this chariot procession, marked the grand finale of Bhagavan's 93rd Birthday celebrations.



Jhoola Mahotsava in Sai Kulwant Hall.

A magnificently decorated swing for this ceremony was set up in front of Bhagavan's Samadhi in Sai Kulwant Hall. As the Jhoola with a beautiful photograph of Bhagavan started swinging, a renowned

continued on page 28...

BHAGAVAN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

LOVE ALONE MAKES YOUR LIFE SACRED

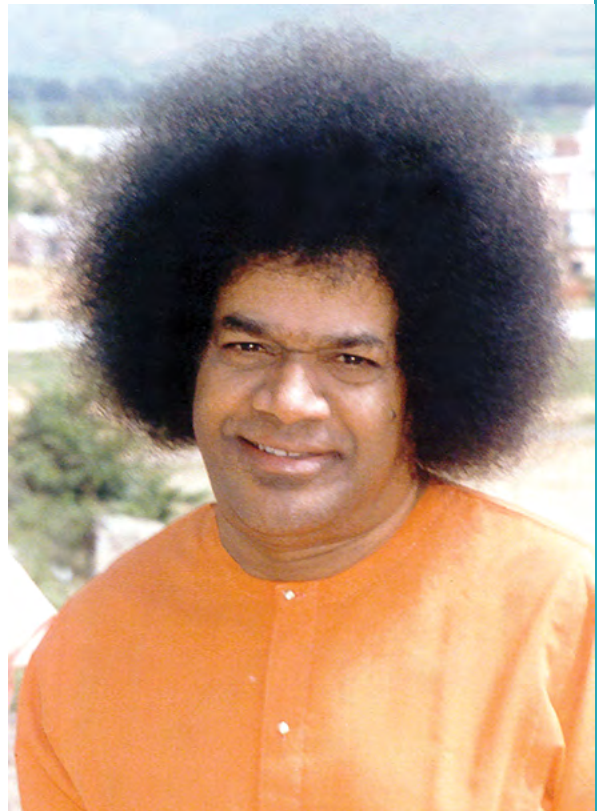
People may praise or criticise, but none can shake Sai. Sai lives in truth. None can shake truth at any point of time. Lead your lives with such strong conviction. Develop faith in God day by day. As faith increases, all the wickedness will perish. Do not give up the spiritual practices that you have been doing all along. Since Jesus bore all the difficulties with fortitude, he is being adored and worshipped to this day, said Bhagavan in His Discourse on 25th December 2000.

JESUS WAS THE EPITOME OF COMPASSION

SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, THIS LAND has been the birthplace of sages, seers and saints who propagated the sacred culture of Bharat to the rest of the world and earned name and fame; but such noble souls are forgotten today. You have to recognise that the reputation of Bharat is entirely dependent on its spiritual wealth and nothing else. In this sacred land, many men of nobility and virtue had to put up with a lot of hardship and criticism, yet they remained firm in their resolve to set an ideal to humanity.

Jealousy is the Cause of Man's Wickedness

Today you have to remind yourselves of the ideals Jesus stood for. For ages, from time to time, many noble souls, endowed with immense spiritual power, have taken birth to propagate sacred teachings to the world. They struggled hard to make the world a good place to live in. But without understanding their noble intentions, foolish people tried to ridicule and persecute them. Right from his birth, Jesus had to face many trials and tribulations. When the name and fame of noble souls spread far and wide, many people become jealous. The history



of Bharat is replete with many examples that bear testimony to this truth. The three wicked sons of jealousy are desire, anger and hatred which caused a great deal of suffering to Jesus, who strove tirelessly for the peace and welfare of society. Jesus was

the epitome of compassion and the refuge of the poor, needy and forlorn. But many people tried to create troubles for Jesus, since they did not like his sacred teachings and activities. Their hatred for Jesus increased day by day. Even the priests turned against Jesus as they became jealous of his growing popularity. The fishermen held Jesus in high esteem. They started following his teachings and became his disciples.

Develop Firm Faith in God

One becomes a devotee in the true sense only when one cultivates patience and conquers the evil qualities of anger, hatred and jealousy with love. Do not be elated by praise or depressed by blame. It is not proper on your part to love only those who praise you and hate those who criticise

you. Be equal-minded in both praise and censure. Criticism of others will only help you to progress. So, do not harbour hatred toward those who criticise you. Accept anything good that comes in your way. Ignore all that is bad. People may praise or criticise, but none can shake Sai. Sai lives in truth. None can shake truth at any point of time. Lead your lives with such strong conviction. Develop faith in God day by day. As faith increases, all the wickedness will perish. Do not give up the spiritual practices that you have been doing all along. Since Jesus bore all the difficulties with fortitude, he is being adored and worshipped to this day.

– Excerpted from **Bhagavan's Christmas Discourse on 25th December 2000.**

...continued from page 26

carnatic music exponent Sri Sean Rolden and his team of musicians offered musical tributes to Bhagavan. Some of the songs included in this soul-stirring musical offering by the accomplished singer were: "Gangadheeshwaram Sankaram", "Sai Rama Namoh Namah Sai Krishna Namoh Namah", "Narayana Narayana Jai Govinda Hare". Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m., bringing the celebrations of Bhagavan's 93rd Birthday to a joyous conclusion.

SNEH DHARA BARSAO SAI: A DEVOTIONAL MUSIC PRESENTATION

The students and faculty members of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music and Department of Music, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning made a devotional music offering entitled "Sneh Dhara Barsao Sai" (shower Your bountiful love, oh Sai) as part

of Bhagavan's 93rd Birthday celebrations on 24th November 2018. Beginning their programme with the Bhajan "Koti Pranam Shata Koti Pranam" (crores and crores



Sneh Dhara Barsao Sai: A devotional music presentation.

salutations to You), they next presented a vibrant percussion item and followed it with melodious songs which included "Shyamal Komal Murali Manohar" (dark coloured Krishna who holds the flute), "Aaya Tere Dar Pe Deewana" (Your devotee has come to Your door) and a carnatic classical composition of Thyagaraja.

CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM NELLORE

A LARGE CONTINGENT OF devotees came from Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh on their two-day Parthi Yatra (pilgrimage to Puttaparthi) on 27th and 28th October 2018 and offered beautiful music and cultural programmes on both the days. The first programme presented by them on 27th October 2018 was "Naad



Naada Vadya Goshti presentation by the devotees of Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh.

Vadya Goshti" a medley of melodious songs and instrumental numbers. Full of musical charm, this scintillating musical presentation was an ensemble of various art forms of this district. While the singers suffused the entire milieu with deep devotional fervour by their devotional songs, the percussion artistes gave a sterling performance showcasing their skill and artistry.

A video presentation featuring Bhagavan's visits to the towns of Nellore district, especially His visits to Venkatagiri, followed next, showcasing the palace of the Raja of Venkatagiri containing old black and white photos of Bhagavan's frequent visits.

Earlier, the programme began with a special Poornakumbham procession of ladies, gents and children of this district which was followed by a group dance presented to the tune of the song "Jai Jai Vijayee Bhava".

The programme on 28th October 2018 commenced with a brief talk by a member of royal family of Venkatagiri who spoke about the unique blessings of Bhagavan enjoyed by the royal family. This was followed by



A musical dance drama by the Bal Vikas children showcasing the unique bond of love between Bhagavan and the Raja of Venkatagiri.

a musical dance drama "Venkatagirilo Varaladevudu" (wish-fulfilling Lord in Venkatagiri) presented by the Bal Vikas children of this district, showcasing the unique bond of love between Bhagavan and the Raja of Venkatagiri. Embellished with beautiful dances of children, the drama showcased the Divine glory of Bhagavan as witnessed by His ardent devotee, the Raja of Venkatagiri.

A beautiful musical offering "Sri Sathya Sai Sangeeta Vibhavari", comprising melodious songs was offered by the devotees of this district in the morning.

SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE

Bhumi Puja (ground breaking ceremony) of the forthcoming Sri Sathya Sai International Convention Centre at Prasanthi Nilayam was performed amidst



A model of Sri Sathya Sai International Convention Centre.

Veda chanting and Bhajans on 31st October 2018. It is envisaged that the Convention Centre will have two halls with 1,000 and 300 seats which will facilitate groups of devotees from India and abroad in organising programmes, meetings and conventions on spiritual topics.

DEVOTIONAL MUSIC OFFERING BY SANATHANA VAIBHAVAM

On 3rd November 2018, Sanathana Vaibhavam, a group of alumni of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music, presented a sterling music concert which was their 25th musical offering to Bhagavan as part of 95 concerts to be offered by them in preparation of Bhagavan's 95th Birthday celebrations. Beginning their concert with a prayer song to Lord Ganesh, the singers and musicians presented instrumental



A musical concert by Sanathana Vaibhavam group.

pieces and devotional songs which included "Mamta Ki Devi Hai Maa" (mother is the goddess of love), "Varade Varade Veena Vaadini Varade" (shower your grace, oh Mother Saraswati) and concluded their programme with the Bhajan "Vanamali Radha Ramana" (Krishna, who is dear to Radha).

DEEPAVALI AND GUJARATI NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

A large contingent of devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam from the State of Gujarat to celebrate Deepavali and Gujarati New Year as part of their two-day Parthi Yatra (pilgrimage to Puttaparthi) on 7th and 8th November 2018. The programme on 7th November 2018 began with a devotional song titled "Mangal Deep" (auspicious lamp) sung by the Mahilas (ladies) of Navsari district. This



A dance presentation by the students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Surat.

melodious song seeking the lights of the lamp of illumination within was followed by a dance presentation by the girls students of Sri Sathya Sai School Surat, to the tune of the song “Maa Saraswati Varade” (grant the boon, oh Mother Saraswati) invoking the grace of the goodness of knowledge. The last presentation of the evening was a thematic drama “God, Nature and



A beautiful dance presentation by the students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Surat.



The drama “God Nature and Man” showcased the necessity of preservation of Nature.

Man”, which was enacted by the boys students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidyaniketan, Navsari, giving the powerful message of preservation of Nature and cautioning man not to pollute the environment and the five elements. A beautiful Qawali as part of the drama made the presentation all the more enriching. After Bhajans and Arati, the programme concluded in Sai Kulwant Hall. Thereafter, devotees enjoyed the display of fireworks in Yajur Mandir in celebration of Deepavali, the festival of lights.

The programme on 8th November 2018 began with an elevating devotional song titled “Tattwamasi” (That Thou Art) sung by Sai Youth (girls) of Gujarat. This was followed by a dance presentation “Siva Stotram” performed by the boys students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Surat,

wherein the students recited Siva Stotra and made eye-catching formations. The last item of the programme was a devotional music concert by a renowned musician Sri Raghav Dave and his fellow musicians from Gujarat. Commencing his concert with the prayer song “Vakratunda Mahakaya” dedicated to Lord Ganesh, the singer enthralled the devotees with melodious songs which included “Ab Mohe Hari Milan Ki Aas” (I now yearn to attain the Lord), “Mana Laago Mero Yaar Fakiri Mein” (I enjoy my adversity) and “Sada Bhajo Prabhu Sai Ko” (always recite the name of Sai).

GLOBAL AKHANDA BHAJAN

Global Akhanda Bhajan for 24 hours is an event of great spiritual significance, in which devotees in all parts of the world belonging to all faiths, nations and races take part with great devotion. At Prasanthi Nilayam, it has special significance because here the Avatar of Kali Yuga Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself graced it by His Presence. This year, it was held at Prasanthi Nilayam from 6.00 p.m. on 10th November to 6.00 p.m. on 11th November 2018. The programme began at 5.00 p.m. with Veda chanting, and at



Akhanda Bhajan at Prasanthi Nilayam.

6.00 p.m. sharp, the Akhanda Bhajan led by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning started in Sai Kulwant Hall, wherein a large concourse of devotees and students participated. Besides the students, groups of Ashram and hospital staff and devotees from India and overseas countries took turns to lead Bhajans. It continued throughout the night of 10th November and concluded at 6.00 p.m. on 11th November 2018 with the beautiful Bhajan “Narayana Bhaja Narayan” in the golden voice of Bhagavan. After Arati, Prasadam of sweet rice and tamarind rice was distributed to the entire congregation.

SPECIAL ISSUE OF SANATHANA SARATHI

Earlier at 5.45 p.m., the special issue of Sanathana Sarathi, brought out as an offering to Bhagavan on His 93rd Birthday, on the topic “Free Quality Healthcare for

All: Healthcare Mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba” was released by the Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Sri S.S. Naganand, Sri R.J. Rathnakar and Sri G.S.R.C.V. Prasada Rao. This issue of Sanathana Sarathi showcases how Bhagavan’s Healthcare Mission



Special issue of Sanathana Sarathi released in Sai Kulwant Hall.

has spread to all parts of the world and is providing best quality healthcare by highly qualified medical experts to most vulnerable sections of society totally free of cost through hospitals, clinics, medical camps and mobile hospitals. Containing insightful articles by 20 eminent authors and medical experts, this issue gives a comprehensive coverage of Bhagavan’s Healthcare Mission at national and international level. A book “Prasanthi Nilayam at a Glance” was also released on this occasion.

Love is God, God is love. Where there is love, there God is certainly evident. Love more and more people, love them more and more intensely; transform love into service, transform service into worship; that is the highest Sadhana. There is no living being without the spark of love; even a mad man loves something or somebody intensely. You must recognise his love as a reflection of the Embodiment of Prema (Premaswarupa), of the God who is residing in your heart.

– Baba

NEW TITLES

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15927	Chinna Kathas of Sri Sathya Sai Part IV English	₹ 80	195	Suresh Rao Savkur	Poems
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16050	Divine Teachings ... Vol. 1 Silence - English	₹ 20	105	Compiler Vijay C. Desai	Teachings
16034	Loving Lord and His Miracles Vol. 1 English	₹ 60	210	B.V. Ramana Rao	Experiences
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15980	Paramartham Amritam English	₹ 35	200	Ms. Suchismita Mahanty	Philosophy
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15926	Sai in Kodai (1987 visit) - English	₹ 70	182	Rama Mohan Rao	Teachings
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Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515 134 Andhra Pradesh, India is happy to announce the availability of the above new books for the benefit of devotees. Packing and Postal charges are extra. Orders can be placed online at www.srisathyasaipublications.com or through email: orders@sssbpt.org

– Convener

SRI SATHYA SAI HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL PRASANTHI NILAYAM – 515134, (A.P.) ADMISSION NOTICE 2019-2020

Phone no: 08555-289289, website: www.ssshss.edu.in E-mail: ssshss@gmail.com

Admission to Class I (Boys & Girls) and Class XI (Boys & Girls) for academic year 2019-20 will take place in June 2019. The medium of instruction will be English and the school is wholly residential.

Admission criteria for class I**

Age Limit: 5 ½ years to 6 ½ years as on 30-09-2019. The Date of Birth should be between 30-03-2013 to 30-03-2014. ** Note: Admissions for class I will be under “RTE Act 2009” by Random method.

Admission criteria for Class XI

Only English Medium students are eligible to apply. Prospectus and Application forms can be downloaded from our website: www.ssshss.edu.in. from 1st January 2019 till 31st January 2019 only. The downloaded filled in application should be sent along with Demand Draft, drawn in favour of “Principal Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School” on State Bank of India, Puttaparthi Branch (code no: 02786) Or payment can be done through online “SBI collect” for the value of ₹100/- with self-addressed, envelope with stamp ‘Rs. 10/-’. The size of the cover shall be 15 cm x 24 cm.

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– Principal



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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 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-version of the magazine is also released simultaneously and is available in the popular Interactive PDF format on www.sanathanasarathi.org.
- 3) Maintaining a reporting channel www.theprasanthireporter.org, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
- 4) Providing library and Reading room for visiting devotees, with a very large collection of books written by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and books on Bhagawan besides various spiritual and religious books.

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Music programme by Sri Raghav Dave and his fellow musicians.

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— Baba



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