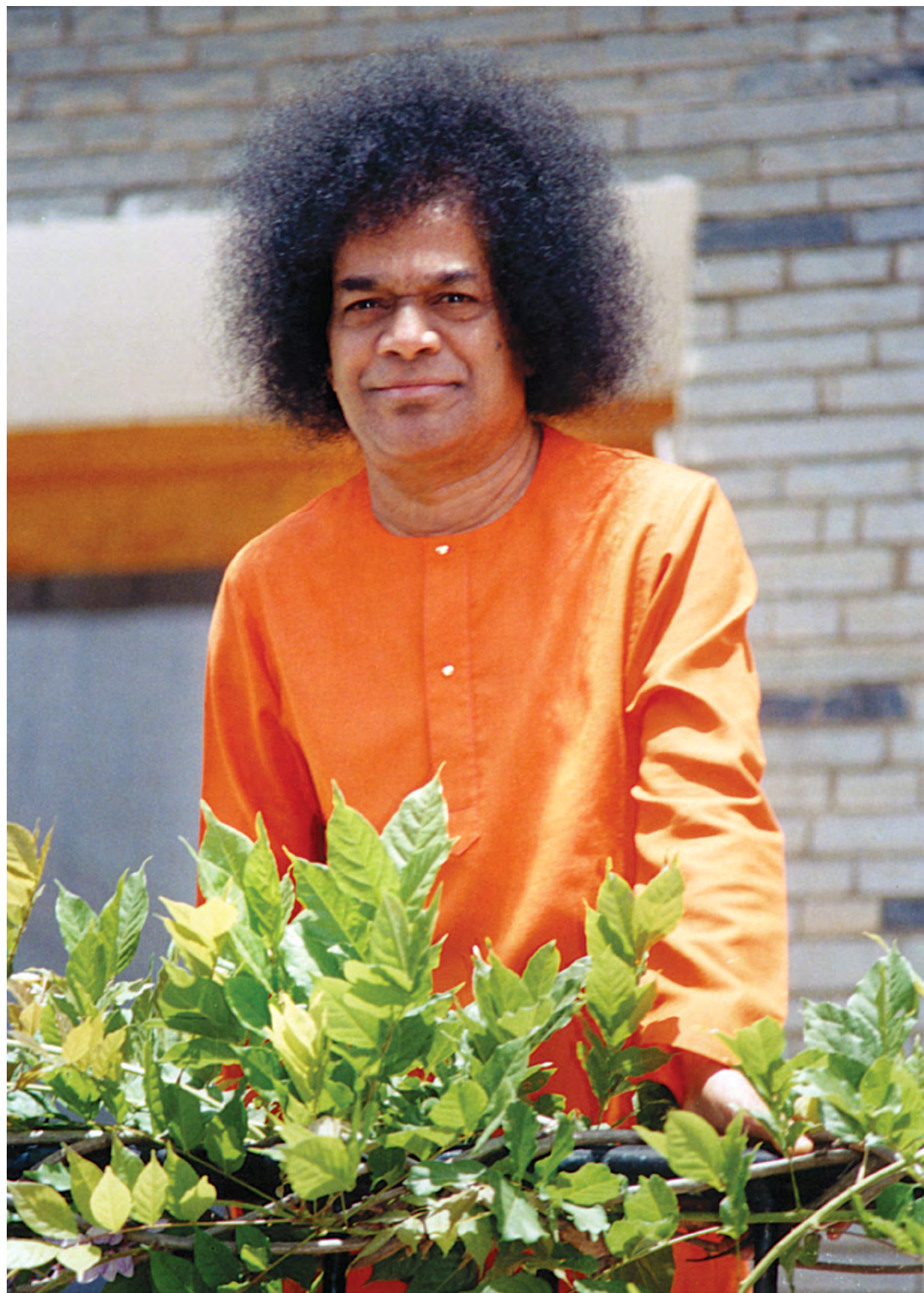




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*"Does the fruit know the taste of its
sweet juice? Does the flower enjoy the
sweetness of its nectar? Does the book
understand the precepts of detachment
written in it? Can you infuse divine
thoughts in the head which is stuffed with
worldly desires? Having forgotten the
divinity present in him, man today
is not able to experience it because he
is carried away by undivine worldly
thoughts and feelings."*



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AVATAR VANI

THINK OF GOD CONSTANTLY

There are two defects that do not allow man to think of God or develop divine feelings. One is, he tries to hide millions of his own mistakes and the second is, he magnifies even the smallest defect of others.

(Telugu Poem)

TO MAKE FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD IS TRUE DEVOTION

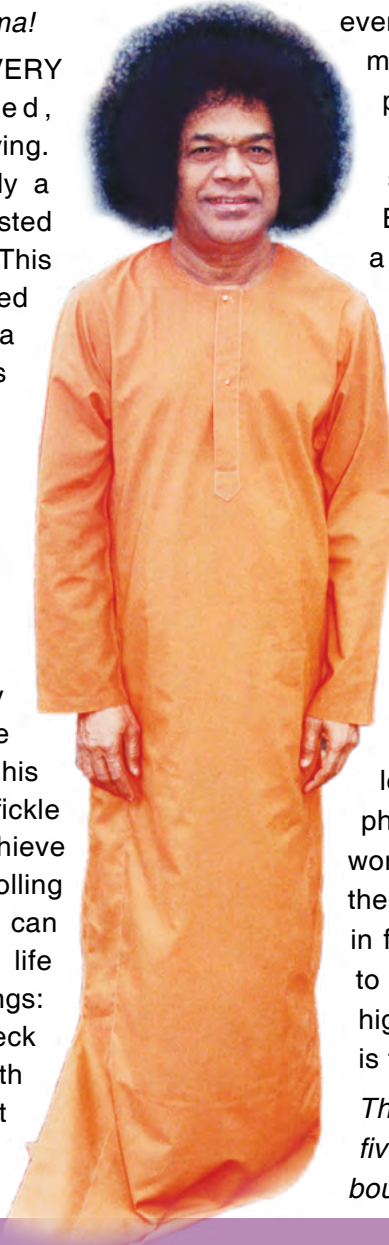
Embodiments of Divine Atma!

HUMAN LIFE IS VERY valuable, sacred, noble and worth living.

Human body is not merely a physical frame; it is invested with divine effulgence. This highly precious and exalted human life has however a short lifespan. Within this limited span of life, man should strive to make use of his senses in a sacred way and show his power and capability to the world.

The Purpose of Life is to Know one's Self

Man can be really healthy only when he exercises control over his wayward senses and fickle mind. In fact, he can achieve wonderful results by controlling his senses and mind. He can attain the objective of his life only when he has three things: control over the senses, check on the mind and strength of the body. Fulfilment of the objective of life is not possible if he lacks



even one of these. Man should make efforts to channelise his potentialities and capabilities in the right direction and show their value to the world. But man forgets that he has a limited lifespan and allows his senses and the mind to take to arbitrary ways. In this way, he not only loses his own peace, he causes restlessness in society also.

The intelligence of man lies in recognising that human body is perishable and the Divine Atma in the body is eternal. But he forgets his divinity and leads his life depending on his physical, mundane, ephemeral, worldly power and pelf. However, the greatness of human life lies in fully demonstrating its divinity to the world and adhering to high ideals. To know one's Self is the very purpose of life.

The body which is made up of five elements is weak and is bound to disintegrate. Though

hundred years of lifespan is prescribed, one cannot take it for granted. One may leave one's mortal coil at any time, be it in childhood, youth or old age. Death is certain. Hence, before the body perishes, man should make efforts to know his true nature. (Telugu Poem)

Does the fruit know the taste of its sweet juice? Does the flower enjoy the sweetness of its nectar? Does the book understand the precepts of detachment written in it? Can you infuse divine thoughts in the head which is stuffed with worldly desires? Having forgotten the divinity present in him, man today is not able to experience it because he is carried away by undivine, worldly thoughts and feelings. In this way, he is subjecting himself to many problems and miseries.

The word 'Manava' denotes that man is not new. 'Ma' means not, 'Nava' means new. So, he is not new. Though he has taken many births, yet he does not know who he is. Then what is the use of having so many births? First and foremost, man has to know himself. He should have inner vision and self-enquiry to find out his own mistakes. Instead of this, he looks at all that is outside. He makes all efforts to know where, when and what is happening in the outside world. He is interested only in the news about the outside world; he does not try to know what is happening within him. Rather, he should make proper efforts to know his own Self. Then only will he be able to realise the purpose of human life. The entire universe is contained within man. His happiness and sorrow affect the universe. He should himself be happy and spread happiness everywhere, not sorrow. Only then will he have fulfilment in life. A chariot without wheels, a field without

If you have gold in hand, you can have all types of jewels. But you need a goldsmith who can make these jewels. There may be thread, needle and flowers. But there should be someone to make the garland. Here is a lamp, oil and wick. But can you get light? No. There should be someone who lights the lamp. He is God. You can achieve everything when you have God with you. Therefore, always think of God, serve Him and worship Him.

water, a wire without current, and a school without teacher are useless. Likewise, life without awareness of the Self has little worth. That is virtually living death.

Hatred of Man Destroys World Peace

Human life has great potentialities and capabilities. Man can accomplish anything and perform any great task when he acts with firm determination. The divine attributes of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute) that are present in God are also present in man. Man is therefore no different from God. But these attributes are not manifest in everybody. Moreover, they are at different levels in different persons. We have many electric bulbs. Many of them look alike. But wattage of all of them may not be the same. They may have different wattages like 40, 60, 100, 500 and 1000. But there is difference only in the quantity, the quality of all of them is the same. There is the same current in all bulbs. Similarly, the divine attributes of Sat-Chit-Ananda are present at different levels in all beings. But

they can be developed up to any extent, from minute to mighty level. The qualities of a person depend upon his thoughts. A small spark can be turned into a big fire and put to many uses when we carefully stoke it. *Sraddhavan Labhate Jnanam* (one with steadfast faith attains wisdom). Determined effort is needed to achieve anything in life. For everything practice is most essential.

*Sreyohi Jnanamabhyasat,
Jnanaddhyanam Vishishyate,
Dhyanat Karmaphala Thyaga,
Thyagat Santhiranantaram.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

(Better indeed is knowledge than practice. Better than knowledge is meditation on God. But better than meditation is renunciation of the desire for the fruits of actions. For, there follows peace immediately.)

Whatever you may earn, whatever you may accumulate, one day or the other, you have to leave it. If you do not abandon it, it will abandon you and you will lose everything. Wisdom lies in leading a purposeful and sacred life before this situation arises. To lead his life as a human being, man should develop human qualities. But man today does not make an attempt to love other human beings. There is hatred between man and man, village and village, country and country. Having so much hatred in their heart, people cry for peace and hold peace conferences!

*Holding the atom bomb in their hand,
they shout peace, peace, peace. Even
though man has reached moon, he has
no peace.*

(Telugu Poem)

What is the reason? The reason is the hatred of man. How can there be peace

when man is keeping the atom bomb of hatred with him? One who lives for others shines like the moon. One who indulges in empty rhetoric is a fool. One who attains the knowledge of the Self becomes the very form of bliss. God is not separate from you. You yourself are verily God. Develop the awareness of this truth. If you think you are a mere human being, you become so. But if you think you are God, God you become. *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati* (the knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman). *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as are the feelings, so is the result). Can you have the belch of mango by eating cucumber? No! You will have the belch of what you eat.

True Devotion of Kuchela

Worldly friends will gather around you, saying hello, hello when you have a high position and your pocket is full. But when you have no money in your pocket and no high position, all of them will leave you without even saying goodbye. This is the reality of the worldly friendship. Only friendship with God is true. God will always be with you, around you, in you, and will protect you as eyelids protect the eyes. Kuchela had to undergo many sufferings. He had many children but there was no food in the house. Day and night, he was grief-stricken. One day, his wife said to him, "Krishna is your childhood friend. Why don't you go and ask Him for help? You know God is large-hearted and compassionate. He is the one who looks after everybody". But Kuchela had other feelings in his heart. "Krishna is a mighty emperor. He is God Himself. Will I be allowed to enter His palace at all?" Then his wife said, "He has been your friend since childhood days. He will never forsake you



or leave you. God is the only true friend". Who thought like that? The Bharya (wife) of Kuchela. Bharya symbolises Bhakti (devotion) and Bharta (husband) stands for Jnana (knowledge). Knowledge has doubts, whereas devotion has steady love for God. Kuchela ultimately went to Krishna when his wife persuaded him in so many ways.

After reaching the gate of Krishna's palace, Kuchela sent the message in. The

Him. He asked Rukmini to bring food and served it to Kuchela with His own hands. Then Krishna asked Kuchela, "Do you remember our childhood days? Do you think of them"? He also talked about their childhood pranks of those days. God will never forget anybody. But man forgets everybody when he attains a high position in life and wails when he suffers a downfall. He has no consideration for his childhood friendship. Seeing the situation in which he was placed, Kuchela was afraid to stay



Man can be really healthy only when he exercises control over his wayward senses and fickle mind. In fact, he can achieve wonderful results by controlling his senses and mind. He can attain the objective of his life only when he has three things: control over the senses, check on the mind and strength of the body. Fulfilment of the objective of life is not possible if he lacks even one of these.

moment Krishna received the message, He came running and took Kuchela inside. Kuchela had a fear whether Krishna would touch him as he had torn clothes, unkempt hair and dirty body. But Krishna took no notice of Kuchela's dirty body and clothes; he observed only the broadness and sacredness of his heart. He valued His friendship with Kuchela, took him inside and made him sit on the throne with

there for a long time. He had no second pair of clothes to change.

Then Krishna smilingly asked, "Kuchela, did you bring any gift for Me"? Kuchela was fear-stricken. He had brought some beaten rice tied in a dirty cloth which he was holding. He thought: "In this vast mansion, shining with all gold and silver, how am I to open this bundle of dirty cloth"? Observing the predicament of Kuchela holding the



beaten rice, Krishna Himself took the bundle from Kuchela, opened it and put a handful of it in His mouth. Fearing that Krishna might eat the entire lot, Rukmini caught hold of His hand. Worldly people may think, "What is Krishna's position and what is Kuchela's level? If Krishna eats that handful of beaten rice contained in a dirty cloth, would it be proper"? People might think that this was the feeling of Rukmini for catching the hand of Krishna. But she had no such feeling. She said, "Krishna, I have my due share in that. You are the servant of Your devotees. I am Your servant. So, I am the servant of Your servants. Please give me my share"! No one can understand the loftiness of Rukmini's feelings. In the ambience of the palace, Kuchela forgot that he had come to Krishna for help. Finally he said, "Krishna, I will go"! Krishna escorted Kuchela to the doorstep, made him sit in a chariot to send him off to his home. Kuchela did not ask for anything. He did not explain the family position either.

Do not ask, oh mind, do not ask. The more you ask, the more you will be neglected. God will certainly grant you what you deserve without your asking. Did He not grant the wish of Sabari, who never asked? Did He not redeem Jatayu, who never asked but sacrificed his life for His cause? (Telugu Poem)

God Alone is your True Friend

Though Kuchela did not ask for any help, yet Krishna showered bounty on him. It is God alone who takes care of all the needs of His devotees. The devotee may ask for trivial things, but God may have great abundance in store for him. Don't ask small favours from God. It is enough

if you develop love for Him. This is most essential.

Kuchela went home in the chariot. But he could not recognise his own house; it had become a big mansion. He saw his children and wife wearing costly clothes and jewels. The house was full of all types of riches. There was no dearth of anything in the house. "Is it a dream or a miracle!" Kuchela wondered. Kuchela's wife came running, wearing all jewellery. She knew well about Krishna because of her devotion. True knowledge manifests when devotion ripens. The wife asked, "Did Krishna talk to you"? Kuchela started shedding tears, he had no words to describe the love of Krishna.

As soon as He heard of my arrival, He Himself came running to take me inside. He got down from His throne, came near me, looked at me from top to toe and embraced me tightly, as if He was pining for me for a long time. How can I describe His compassion for a poor Brahmin like me! Who else can confer such abundant wealth on poor Kuchela who could offer Him only a fistful of beaten rice? He is love personified. (Telugu Poem)

Both of them felt extremely happy by the love they received from Krishna. Then they said, "God is the only real friend. There is no other friend greater than Him". It is God alone who is the real friend; He is always with you in happiness and sorrow, pleasure and pain. Relatives will come with you up to the burial ground. It is only

continued on page 15...



SRI SATHYA SAI EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ANNUAL SPORTS AND CULTURAL MEET 2017



THE ANNUAL SPORTS AND Cultural Meet 2017 was held in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium on 11th January 2017, wherein more than 3,000 students of Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions presented a spectacular show of courage, confidence, elegance and agility to the delight of a huge gathering of spectators who thronged the aesthetically decorated stadium. The singular focus of all Sai students for the Sports and Cultural Meet has always been to please their Revered Founder Chancellor Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. On the other hand, Swami with His divine vision made sure that these pure feelings of Love were translated into the pursuit of excellence in every facet of a student's evolution. One of the foremost of these facets was developing self-confidence. From concept to performance, each event brought home challenges that seemed unsurpassable at first; but with dedication, teamwork and self-confidence, they culminated into outstanding performances.

The educational institutions which participated in this grand event were: four campuses of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, namely, Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan, Anantapur and Muddenahalli, Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music, Sri Sathya Sai Primary and Higher Secondary Schools, Smt. Easwaramma High School and College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences). The sports events were held both in the morning and evening.

Morning Session

The morning session commenced at 8 a.m. with Bhagavan Baba's car entering Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium escorted by motorcycle squad, and welcomed by the women's brass band of Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL). This was followed by an escort by the Slow March squad, a special contingent that was led by the men's brass band of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. Following the ceremonial welcome to Bhagavan, the Vice Chancellor, SSSIHL along with senior members of the Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions, offered salutations to Bhagavan.

The March Past that followed included about two thousand Sai students marching in unison towards Shanti Vedika to offer salutations to Bhagavan.



March Past in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium.

The first presentation was made by the students of Anantapur Campus of SSSIHL



who performed Rhythmic Yoga, a form of Artistic Yoga which offered a perfect blend of thirty-six yogasanas in tune with mellifluous music. Following this, a presentation named Pattern Striders created patterns and symmetry as students marched together in unison with synergy and discipline. The last presentation was Sai Rangers, a motorcycle item characterised by stunts involving creative and daredevil manoeuvring of motorcycles to display various formations,



An Anantapur Campus student performing an adventurous bike stunt crossing over twenty students after getting elevation from a ramp.

dead defied jumps, blind jumps, fire jumps and long jumps. The presentation ended with a human formation of the words: Ever Yours.

The students of SSSIHMS College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences then showcased the importance of traditional art and dance. The first item was Kamsale



Nursing college students performing the ancient art form Dollu Kunita.

Dance, a unique dance form that combined the sounds of cymbal with vigorous rhythmic beats followed by Dollu Kunita, an ancient art created and evolved from a group of villagers. It was characterised by vigorous drum beats, quick movements and synchronised group formations.

The morning session ended with an energetic display by the students of Brindavan Campus of the Institute. The first item, Yobics, showcased the notion of wellness and optimum health through the art forms of yoga and aerobics. Following this, strength and coordination came to the fore as the students showcased their dexterity with a performance involving creative formations on planks. The final performance of the morning was definitely the showstopper. Skyrunners, as the name suggests, saw daring acts of jumping into



A Brindavan Campus student performing a daring stunt of jumping over an SUV on skates.

the sky using jumping stilts, inline skates and pogo-sticks. Fearlessness, vigour and courage were the qualities that came to the fore as the students demonstrated that the sky is certainly not the limit.

Evening Session

The evening session began at 4 p.m. with the ceremonial procession welcoming

Bhagavan Baba into Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium.

Students of Smt. Easwaramma High School presented five colourful and creative presentations. The first one (by Classes 1-5 boys) Sponge Bob and Starfish brought the American animated television characters to life. The presentation chronicled the adventures and endeavours of the characters and their friends. Next up were the Classes 1-5 girls that performed a



Smt. Easwaramma High School students performing a colourful umbrella dance.

Hoop and Umbrella Dance. They artistically juggled hoops around their waist, hip, chest and neck. Semi-classical formations by the students of Classes 6-10 girls then portrayed a series of semi-classical formations of Durga, Siva and Swami. The boys of the same classes then complemented it with a gymnastic display named Body, Mind and Spirit. The senior students of Classes 9-10 then did a Puppet Dance that staged a true learning experience and sent across an inspirational message to young learners out there.

Next up were the tiny tots and senior students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School. They commanded everyone's attention with a number of items starting with a dance as a humble and loving offering of gratitude to Lord Sai. The floor was then painted



Primary School boys performing a dance in a traditional attire.

red for a gymnastics display followed by a Ganesh Dance, after which the item Floral Rhythms depicted dainty angels of Lord Sai creating fountains of joy. German Wheels, an evergreen performance, was followed by a Fairy Drill and a frolicking Hat on the Stick performance to a celestial beat. After a balancing on planks act, they ended their presentation with the item, Fan Fantasy, when enthusiastic trail blazers spread waves of delight as they made waves with



Girls from Primary School performing a dance with colourful fans.

their soothing colourful fans with a lovely song of devotion for God whilst hundreds of balloons were released into the evening sky.

It was then time for the senior boys of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus and Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School to take centre stage. They began with a huge display of Open Hearts ushered into the ground. Rajasthan Royals, a mass colourful display

of dance and formations with the combined styles of Rajasthani and Gujarati folk art performed with props like sticks, swords, drums, fire, etc., was followed by gymnastics with trampoline, a display of various types of jumps using the trampoline. The boys then piloted RC (radio-controlled) planes flying across the stadium offering their aerial Pradakshina and Pranams to Bhagavan Baba. Following this, it was time for a brilliant display of martial arts. From synchronised moves to tile breaking to nostalgia for Bruce Lee fans with the use of the nunchaku, the audience were treated to a brilliant display of coordination, deftness and skill. GODS (Game of Daring Stunts), an exhibition of gymnastics skills on the floor, combined



Using gymnastics skills, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus students somersaulting over an obstacle of fire.

with a few stunts through rings was followed by BOS (Balance, Order and Skill), various formations on structures of different heights. Riders Legion, a scintillating performance with different formations on cycles with stunts thrilled the audience. They then mixed it up with an item, Punjabi Gabrus, that mixed traditional and contemporary Bhangra with Jhaal in the timeless spirit of youth and cheerfulness. The stadium was then lit with the ever-popular item, LED



A traditional colourful dance with drums

Lights. Visual effects created with props having LED strips dazzled everyone with jazz, funky and intergalactic themes leading home to Prasanthi Nilayam.

Fittingly, the students from Muddenahalli, the youngest campus of the Institute, brought the event home with a Torch Drill, a visual display of various patterns, including symbols of faith, simple animation and expressions. The last item of the day was LED and Fire Poi – a visual display of various patterns with LED lights and fire hanging from strings and chains. These patterns included a hue of different colours with fire adding to the thrill. The programme ended at 7 p.m. with Arati offered to Bhagavan Baba.

MUSIC AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMES

Music and cultural presentations as part of Annual Sports and Cultural Meet of Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions were held in Sai Kulwant Hall from 12th to 15th January 2017.

Swargadapi Gareeyasi: A Drama

The first cultural presentation was made by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School on 12th January 2017. Based on the teachings of Bhagavan that mother and motherland are greater than even heaven, the drama “Swargadapi Gareeyasi” glorified mother and motherland through the story of



two brilliant students who went abroad for higher studies together but adopted different paths with regard to their mother and motherland. The one who came back to India served his parents and set up many welfare institutions to serve the motherland, whereas the second one remained abroad to fulfil his high ambitions. But when his mother fell ill in India, he realised his



A drama on the glory of mother and motherland.

mistake. His friend then helped him to come to the refuge of Swami and brought about his transformation. Well-presented and illustrated by multimedia backdrop, the drama conveyed the message of Bhagavan on the glory of mother and motherland.

Sai-wards through Sai's Words

Two cultural programmes were presented on 13th January 2017. The first programme titled "Sai-wards through Sai Words" based on the theme of journey to Sai through Sai's Messages was presented by the students of Anantapur Campus of the Institute. As the students conveyed the profound teachings of Swami through meaningful commentary and melodious songs, His messages came alive on the giant LED screen through relevant video clips presenting His poems and Discourses in His golden voice. Based on examples, insights, analogies and stories culled from



Multimedia presentation of Anantapur Campus students.

Bhagavan's Discourses, the presentation attempted to portray the timeless quest of mankind for his true identity, which is divinity. The presentation thus brought forth the main message of Bhagavan in a very lively and interesting way in just half an hour.

Darshan: The True Vision

This was followed by an insightful drama presented by the students of Muddenahalli Campus of the Institute. The drama depicted how man can develop true vision of oneness with God through Darshan despite trials and setbacks in life if he adheres to the path of righteousness. The stories of Prahlada and Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa introduced



The drama "Darshan: The True Vision" by Muddenahalli Campus students.

in the drama illustrated this theme aptly. Excellent script, good acting of the cast and relevant multimedia support made the drama an absorbing presentation.

Bhakta Surdas: A Dance Drama

The students of Brindavan Campus of the Institute made their presentation on 14th January 2017. They first offered divine melodies through their band at the



A dance number in the drama "Bhakta Surdas".

Lotus Feet of Bhagavan, the synergy of which had a spellbinding effect on the audience. After this, they presented a musical dance drama "Bhakta Surdas" describing the illustrious life story of this great devotee of Lord Krishna who faced hardest trials in life but kept his focus fixed on his beloved Krishna. Though blind by fate, he was conferred divine vision by Krishna. Excellent acting of the cast, fabulous sets, good costumes and make-up and thrilling dances of students made the drama an absorbing presentation.

Bhakti Pravaham: A Dance Drama

The cultural programmes of Annual Sports and Cultural Meet came to a happy conclusion with the drama "Bhakti Pravaham" (stream of devotion) performed by the students of Prasanthi Nilayam



A scene from the drama "Bhakti Pravaham".

Campus of the Institute on 15th January 2017. Showcasing the supreme value of devotion on the spiritual path, the drama depicted that true devotion was selfless and emerged from the core of one's heart, and ego and pride were the greatest impediments on this path. It portrayed the true devotion of a hunter turned devotee named Kannappa and downfall of Ravana and Daksha due to their ego. Good costumes and make-up, excellent sets and beautiful dances of the students made it an impressive presentation.

Prize Distribution Ceremony

The Prize Distribution Ceremony of the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2017 for Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions was held on the auspicious day of Makara Sankranti, 14th January 2017 in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam.

The programme began after Veda chanting at 8.30 a.m. as the ceremonial procession of slow marching squad led by the Institute brass band and Veda chanting group of students entered Sai Kulwant Hall. In the introductory speech that followed, Sri G.S. Srirangarajan, Director, Brindavan Campus of the Institute observed that Bhagavan's purpose of starting educational institutions was the transformation of students' heart, and added that Sports Meet was a part of that transformation. Sri Srirangarajan also introduced the speakers who gave short



speeches after him. The first speaker was Dr. Subash Subramanian, a faculty member of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, who referred to the lessons learnt by the students and teachers in the Sports Meet and stated that this was a practical workshop for imbibing the virtues of unity, discipline and time management. Five students thereafter gave their reactions about the Sports Meet and offered gratitude to Bhagavan for this great opportunity. Four students were from one each of the four campuses of the Institute and one student was from Sri Sathya Sai Primary School. After these short speeches, prize distribution function was held, wherein trophies were awarded to all the educational institutions and prizes were presented to winners of individual and team events.

The programme concluded with the Benedictory Divine Message of the Revered Founder Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who exhorted the students to know the difference between matter and



Prize distribution ceremony.

mind. Mind, He said, is not matter; it is part of the Atma or Self. The students He said, should attain the knowledge of the Atma which would make them immortal. Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin". Bhajans followed this and came to a close with Arati at 10.30 a.m.

...continued from page 8

God who will not forsake you. At all times, He will be with you, around you, in you and will take care of you. The true path of devotion is to make friendship with God.

Bhakti (devotion) gives Shakti (power), Shakti begets Rakti and Anurakti (yearning and attachment to God), Anurakti bestows Virakti (detachment) and Virakti leads to Mukti (liberation). What is the meaning of Rakti? It means merger. Merger with whom? Merger with God. It is devotion that makes you merge with God. All spiritual practices like meditation, penance, etc., should be performed with devotion. True devotion is to love God wholeheartedly. We should acquire that love. Individuals

should develop love between them. When there is love between man and man, everything can be accomplished. If you have gold in hand, you can have all types of jewels. But you need a goldsmith who can make these jewels. There may be thread, needle and flowers. But there should be someone to make the garland. Here is a lamp, oil and wick. But can you get light? No. There should be someone who lights the lamp. He is God. You can achieve everything when you have God with you. Therefore, always think of God, serve Him and worship Him.

– Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruti, Kodaikanal on 25th April 1993.



SIVARATHRI IS THE AUSPICIOUS NIGHT FOR CONTEMPLATION ON GOD

ASCEND TOWARDS YOUR DIVINE DESTINY

Embodiments of Love!

EVERY HUMAN BEING SEEKS TO attain Ananda (bliss). He aspires for a blissful life. Whether he is a scholar or an artist, a wielder of power or a man of status, he yearns for bliss. Every man strives from dawn to dusk for acquiring bliss.

Considering the material world of physical objects as the only reality, man loses himself in the pursuit of material objects. But, if the truth about these material objects is fully explored, it will be found that they have no reality at all. They have only momentary and temporal reality. They do not have the stamp of permanent reality. They do not confer enduring bliss. To experience lasting bliss, man has to make the requisite effort.

The Quest for Bliss

S a t - C h i t - Ananda (Existence, Knowledge, Bliss) pervades the entire

universe. Every man should seek to know what Sat-Chit-Ananda means. Only then will he realise his own true self. Because of the delusion caused by the phenomenal world, man regards Sat-Chit-Ananda as distinct from himself. This feeling arises from his attachment to the body. Everyone should

find out "Who am I"? When he has found the answer to this question, there will be no need for him to understand what is Sat-Chit-Ananda. As long as man identifies himself with the body and his physical attributes, he will be in quest of Sat-Chit-Ananda. When a man has discovered the true nature of "I", he will not go after any other thing. He will realise that he is the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Aim at Achieving Oneness with God

It should be evident from this that humanness has been conferred on man



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Sharing is a Cosmic Joy

Kuppam Vijayamma

We strive very hard to put in all our efforts in every action of ours to make Swami happy, to please Him and win His grace. Eventually, the Creator's Joy brings Him so much pleasure that the 'special effect' of His happiness lies in instant oneness with the rest of His creation. The sharing of the Creator's Cosmic Joy is the 'special effect' that is felt throughout the whole cosmos. Living a life of compassion and love is the golden key to happiness.

“**S**HARING IS A COSMIC JOY.” This sterling statement, made in my presence, by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Master of Joy, captivated my tiny heart. Our Lord continued, “This is not ordinary joy, as it has a special effect”. Uttering this softly, He moved away into the hall. For days, the words ‘special effect’ tossed around in my head, without any outcome, with no satisfying conclusion as to what our Lord Sai really meant.

Learning to Live in Love

From time immemorial, God, the Creator, loves to create everything. From time to time, when saints and

sages plead to God to restore the glory of righteousness as it declines in the world, He takes a human form and descends as an Avatar. Our beloved Kali Yuga Avatar's mission is to restore righteousness and save the world. How often has Swami

said that ‘we’ are His ‘instruments’ to accomplish this goal! His method is to teach humanity how to live in love, for He is the sacred Embodiment of Love Himself. And He tells us that we also are embodiments of love. He has been reminding us that we are divine like gods, but we do not know it. How many times Swami has addressed us, Divyatma



Swarupulara” (Embodiments of Divine Atma)! Is this not the confirmed proof that we are all divine?

Our compassionate Lord is very graciously awakening the divine spirit that lies within each one of us. And He becomes the unseen divine hand of the Universal Master, the concrete example of God’s selfless love and affection, that is beyond human perception. How very fortunate we are to have had the gift of His physical presence during our lifetime!

Our Lord once said, “The mother, the mother earth and Nature are the first and foremost living examples of Cosmic Joy. They shower and pour with selfless love all the riches and resources without expecting anything in return, without an iota of ego or pride for having done such a tremendous task”. Our Lord continued, “If sages and seers had not shared their profound knowledge, if the fruits and flowers had not been shared, if the sweet waters of the rivers wished to be selfish, if the sun, the moon and the sky had not shared their lustre, what would have been our condition? Sharing is very vital in all the aspects of life and plays a gigantic role for granting Cosmic Joy”. Still the mystery of the words ‘special effect’, remained evasive.

Special Effect of Cosmic Joy

Our Lord, Love Incarnate, descended on the earth to teach and to be an example of the Creator’s Supreme Love for His children. One day, a group of fortunate devotees were privileged to witness the following Divine Leela, and I was one among them. Swami, with all His bewitching smile, came verily floating towards the devotees. His majestic looks made us feel that a lioness was approaching. When He came close to a

Swami said, “...This Cosmic Joy plays an important part to allow one and all to revel in the floods of joy”! The more generous humans are to one another, the more it enables the Creator to spread His joy, giving greater and greater Cosmic Joy to all humanity. Part of the Creator’s Being includes the things in Nature, like the sun, moon, stars, sky, rivers and streams, mountains and forests. They all serve humanity unselfishly, because it is their nature to do so.

particular lady, the tranquil silence in the hall was shattered. Some of us knew she was passing through a hard phase in her life. Alas! She broke down and lost control of herself. Her frustration erupted like a volcano from within. Her depression, tension and colossal pain shot out like hot lava. The merciful Lord, with a compassionate look, just touched her head and said, “Don’t worry”. A great relief descended upon her. Her wounded heart seemed to get a healing touch. Her burning body started to cool down, and her blood-shot, red eyes shed tears of joy. She looked at Sai Maa, with all gratitude, and with humility, she bowed down to His Divine Feet. Swami softly uttered, “Cosmic Joy” and moved to the other side.

What was considered as beyond comprehension got negated, for Swami had lifted the veil of Maya, and we felt the ‘special effect’ of joy in our hearts. What a beautiful way to make us realise, by feeling, this ‘special effect’ in such a wonderful manner! Just one touch, one look and a



few kind words brought so much joy to all. We who witnessed this will never forget this experience. Naughty Swami is used to this game of planting a hard puzzle and also of giving the solution later! But, one should be ever vigilant and attentive to catch the solution, as it will fall in the most unexpected manner and at the most unexpected time.

This was witnessed only by those seated near this lady in anguish. As soon as we reached our rooms, many eager devotees followed us to know what had actually happened. Here there is one interesting aspect to realise; without actually seeing the incident they had experienced the same cosmic joy that was felt by us. This did not stop here as the people who were not there in the hall then also felt the joy, and when the message was passed on to them, their joy knew no bounds. It is needless to say that all such incidents spread like wild fire in all directions, and same would be shared with all the family members and friends directly or by means of detailed letters. In those days, there were no mobile phones or internet. This incident happened many decades ago and the same was discussed and shared with innumerable groups at various places.

To this day, our most Beloved Lord Sai is an outstanding example to mankind, of how to live one's life in compassion and love. As Premavatar (Avatar of Love) in this age of Kali, His mission to save the world by restoring love in it, is accomplished by His example of sharing all His time and Himself with His beloved children. Everything spiritual is for free, with no hidden costs.

*Sharing is the spirit of Joy, the spring of Joy,
the endless source of Joy, the flood gates to Joy.*

The more you share – the more you grow. The more you grow – the more you develop.

The more you develop – the more you shine. The more you shine – the more you expand.

Here, I will be happy to share one incident in my life. This life is a bed of bugs, swirling with sorrows and sadness, creating havoc and making life miserable. Long back, my family faced countless calamities and chaos. We faced acute financial and mental torture. Buried in depression, I totally collapsed, cursing my very existence. In spite of all this, constant prayers and ardent petitions to the Lord continued.

Don't Worry!

In the most unexpected manner, my Beloved Sai Maa confronted me with a smile, filled with immense Love. He beckoned me to bring my husband, then took both of us to the nearby hall that was empty. His smiling face suddenly became stern and serious. He cajoled me, saying, "You silly woman! Are you not ashamed to cry for petty things in life? Even after receiving My constant concern and care all these years, how can you break down? Am I not standing by you all the time"? We were stunned and collapsed, totally helpless, at His Lotus Feet. Swami, in the most compassionate manner, held His Abhayahasta (blessing posture) sacred gesture above our heads and blessed us. We realised the sympathy behind those harsh words of Swami and were deeply moved. Swami only pretended to be harsh to ensure that the right things enter our brains. He affectionately wiped our tears and gave us the courage to face the calamities by giving us a deep look, a loving touch and words of concern. We enjoyed the sweetness of the 'Cosmic Joy' in our



own hearts, brought about by our Swami's simple loving and kind attention, which He gave, not just once, but many times, over the years.

When Swami says "Don't worry", we fail to understand the true meaning and misinterpret in the way suitable to us, as though all the hardships faced by us shall be eliminated in a few weeks or in a few months. But our presumption is very wrong. He did not mean this at all; He never even mentioned about the hardships. But His instruction is very clear: Do not worry! In our case, the hardships continued for seven years, known as the 'cycle of Saturn' (Shani Dasha). So, after seven years, a good period had to start, but it was the other way round. Swami suddenly addressed me, "Kumaramma, you got a promotion"! Before I could jump with joy, He continued, "Shani Dasha has descended"! Not able to cry or smile, as to what that meant, I remained silent and heard Him murmur, "Don't worry". Needless to say, though the tough period lasted for many more years, with "Sai Ram" on our lips and in our hearts, we could, at last, cross the ocean of life, without sinking. His games are beyond description and His 'special effect', really stunning.

The incidents I described above happened many decades ago, and to this day "Sharing is a Cosmic Joy" may go beyond my humble understanding, but the 'special effect' of feeling the Creator's Joy is most special to me, as it remains fresh in my mind. Every action of our Poornavatar of Love, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, is a teaching, a Divine Special Effect from the Creator Himself. Anyone who follows Swami's examples above can experience this for himself which can never be forgotten.

Our compassionate Lord is very graciously awakening the divine spirit that lies within each one of us. And He becomes the unseen divine hand of the Universal Master, the concrete example of God's selfless love and affection, that is beyond human perception. How very fortunate we are to have had the gift of His physical presence during our lifetime!

My humble thanks to all who read this, for allowing me to share this deeply personal experience of "Sharing is a Cosmic Joy". After so many decades, having contemplated upon these incidents so many times, having discussed with different people and groups, the actual depth is far beyond the realisation we had then. This is what Bhagavan tells us: "You, as an individual, can bring about an effect that affects the whole body of creation, by compassionately sharing another person's grief or sorrow, because what you do to that person is being done to God Himself. That is why it creates His Cosmic Joy, because each person that is being affected by it is affecting and soothing the entire body of the Divine Being! The simple understanding is that we are one".

Golden Key to Happiness

The Creator's games, played by our Beloved Avatar, are beyond description, and the Creator's Cosmic Joy, having been prompted by Swami's action of compassionately interacting with other humans in distress, is really stunning, for the Creator does not want joy for Himself.



His joy comes from sharing it with the rest of His body. He cannot keep the joy He feels. The Creator's great pleasure is sharing His Cosmic Joy with the whole of creation. This is the 'special effect' from which all the creation benefits.

Swami said, "...This Cosmic Joy plays an important part to allow one and all to revel in the floods of joy"! The more generous humans are to one another, the more it enables the Creator to spread His joy, giving greater and greater Cosmic Joy to all humanity. Part of the Creator's Being includes the things in Nature, like the sun, moon, stars, sky, rivers and streams, mountains and forests. They all serve humanity unselfishly, because it is their nature to do so. But human beings have a choice of exhibiting their divinity or not. As more and more humans choose to reflect their divine nature, the golden age will be upon us.

Your loving attention to another in pain calms that person, and your action affects the 'I am' presence, which gives great Cosmic Joy to the Creator Himself, who dwells in all hearts. The joy the Creator experiences is the Cosmic Joy which is felt in the heart of the afflicted person being helped. The 'special effect' of this joy is the Creator Himself sharing and spreading this Cosmic Joy, which is creation itself. We are all part of His creation. We are all one. When we humans, Children of God, love and care for each other, that brings Cosmic Joy to the Creator, the 'I am' in each person. What one part of the body feels is spread to the rest of the body. So, when we consider that all are divine, the same is shared by all. One touch, one look and a few kind words is Cosmic Joy. This, finally understood, is the elusive 'special effect' of Cosmic Joy.

Sharing of one's self, with a heart full of compassion, helping another human being who is suffering, creates Cosmic Joy, which the whole body of creation enjoys as a 'special effect' of a single act of compassion. As for worldly sorrows, "Don't Worry"! But in your everyday living, be kind, be gentle, be ready to share your compassionate and loving nature to lift the heart of one who is in sorrow and grief. Sharing of the spirit to uplift another is what gives Cosmic Joy to the Creator, when we comfort another as we would wish to be comforted. We strive very hard to put in all our efforts in every action of ours to make Swami happy, to please Him and win His grace. Eventually, the Creator's Joy brings Him so much pleasure that the 'special effect' of His happiness lies in instant oneness with the rest of His creation. The sharing of the Creator's Cosmic Joy is the 'special effect' that is felt throughout the whole cosmos. Living a life of compassion and love is the golden key to happiness.

Every word uttered by Swami, the Universal Teacher of humanity, has deep inner meaning and speaks volumes to be cherished forever and treasured like precious pearls. When righteousness declines, God incarnates to restore it through transformation of mankind. His Mission is accomplished when all humans choose to transform themselves and practise living the values taught by Him. If each word of the Poornavata is so valuable, how valuable it is to have seen Him in action! We shall ever remain grateful to the compassionate Lord for blessing us with such precious boons in abundance.

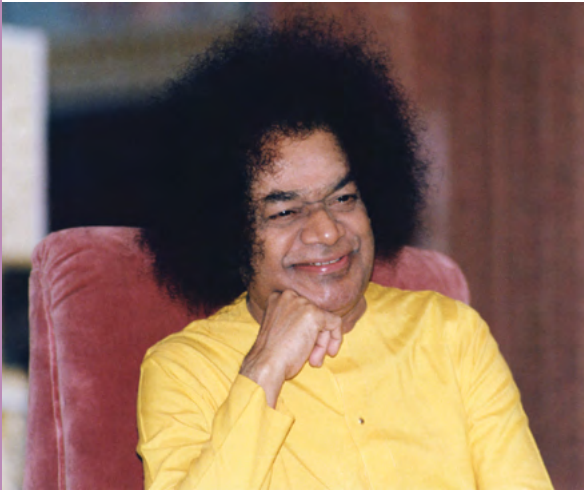
– **Smt. Kuppam Vijayamma is the author of the famous book "Anyatha Saranam Nasti" and many other books on Bhagavan Baba.**



**WHERE THERE IS SAI,
THERE IS LOVE, AND
WHERE THERE IS LOVE,
THERE IS A HIGHWAY!**

Saiusha Haridas

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



WE HAVE ALL HEARD THE SAYING, “where there is a will, there is a way”... Today, I would like to add and tweak a little from that saying, because I believe, where there is Sai, there is love, and where there is love, there is a highway!

Highways are traffic lights free, allowing us to cruise all the way to our destination. Highway journeys are so much easier than driving on inner roads, small lanes and we don't need to start and repeatedly pause or stop along the way.

Swami as a Caring Parent

Swami, Your presence transforms our journey of life into a journey on a highway. Your exuberant, most radiant, electrifying, loving presence is felt more strongly than ever before. Initially, as a younger youth I knew conceptually that You are always present, but now I can literally feel Your presence all the time. You truly see everything, You hear everything and You most definitely know everything. You are not just here or there, you are everywhere, at all times, in the presence of everyone – Every One. Swami's presence is the best way to progress. We are all on a highway of life, as His presence is constantly manifest as Love.

So, how can we be sure that the presence of Love is actually Swami's presence, or vice versa, the presence of Swami is manifest as Love? Swami has a unique, special way to show His presence. We all experience moments when we feel, “Who but Swami could possibly know what to do in this situation”? Swami's presence manifests through many roles in our lives.

Here is an incident revealing the presence of His Love as a parent. My parents sent me to UK for university, and there was that one month where I realised I was short of cash because it was all spent. With a little altar of Swami's in the centre of my room, this particular month, I said, “Swami, how nice it would be if I had just 220 more pounds, for the month to go by smoothly”. I did not want to ask my parents to send me more money, so I told Swami about this, and I left it at that.

I will never forget how on that day, on my way back from college the security guard at my halls of residence said, “Hey Sai, you have got mail”! In all my one-and-a-half years



of staying there, no mail, and mail today? So, I went to the mailbox and opened an envelope. Guess what it contained? There was a cheque of some 258 pounds, which happened to be the refund of a deposit from a something I paid for the previous year! How instant, how loving and how characteristic of My Beloved Swami!

In connecting with You and speaking to You, Swami, You find ways to show us that You hear us, You know our needs and wants, and You are here giving us what You know is right for us. Your sweetness and love shields us from obstacles, and You make us look good despite our shortcomings. We see how, despite operating grand schemes of all things in all the universe and all of existence, You also have time to look into my personal finances and pocket money! Where there is Sai, there is always so much love, and where there is love, there is a highway!

Swami as Best Friend

Here is another instance where Swami has been present, and this time as my closest friend and companion. When a girl gets married, she has to transform from being the “pampered with affection and love” princess in her parents’ house, to after marriage, woman responsible for her new home and family. This transformation into the role of a householder is a time when women grow in strength, maturity and courage. Draupadi, during these times of learning to become a homemaker, relied on Krishna as her sole confidant! When I got married and moved to Kuala Lumpur from my parent’s home in Hong Kong, I remember thinking every day, I needed to take things one day at a time, to get used to my new wonderful family, the new environment and adapt to these new roles as a wife and daughter-in-law, and Swami would always be my sole confidant.

Within the first few weeks of marriage, I will never forget the series of dreams I had of Swami. In the first dream, upon seeing Swami, I immediately said in a casual tone, speaking to my best friend, “Swami, do You know how long have I waited for You”? And even before I could complete my sentence, in His soft, loving voice, Swami replied, “And do You know how long I have waited for you...”? What a dream! I had two subsequent dreams after this in which Swami was just present and I received so much affection from Him in the dreams.

Who else but You, Swami, would know what I needed most to feel nurtured and comforted in my new environment? Who else gives courage and strength to go through phases of life with confidence and bravery? Where there is Sai there is love, and where there is love, there is a highway!

A Guru with so much Love

Swami’s presence is manifest as Guru. And my experience is that He is a Guru with so much love. I remember coming to Puttaparthi as a child in the days when we received Swami’s beautiful Darshan in the sand. Just outside this entrance on the ladies side, there was a Joy Ice Cream stall.

One day after Darshan, Swami asked all the children present to line up in rows near the ice cream stall, and Swami and some volunteers came with cartons full of vanilla ice cream. As this was being served to us by Swami, I remember Swami coming close and asking all of us, “What is Love? What is Love”? With a twinkle in His eyes and a huge smile, He emphatically said, “Love issss... Ice Cream! Love is pure white like ice cream, love is sweet like ice cream, love is cool like ice cream. Love melts the heart like ice cream”.



Not only is Your presence in our life truly sweet, pure and loving like ice cream, Swami, but with love and guidance, You teach and inspire in such beautiful ways showing why and how You want us, your children, to also practise purity, sweetness and love.

Swami, you are present all the time, through major life events and simple daily affairs, and your presence always, and in all ways, paves the way beautifully... Where there is Sai, there is love, and where there is love, there is a highway!! ☺

Swami as the Voice of Conscience

Swami, You are the voice of the conscience, You guide my actions and make me aware of my thoughts... There are so many things that I can only possibly achieve with Your presence. Without Your gentle nudging and sometimes in my case pushing, I would not become the person I am. Even then, when setting out to work, when I reach a hurdle, I still say, 'Swami, I don't know anything, You do this', and You do! You make things happen!

So, what are the perks of taking the highway? Swami, with Your Love, confidence grows in the self... with Your love, strength finds itself... resilience grows and dealing with situations becomes easier... with Your love, tasks that I have no clue how to execute become possible, because Your love somehow bestows the necessary knowledge and skill. With Your love, we learn to love everyone we interact with... our love grows and so does our ability to reach out to others.

With Your love, we find joy in communicating with others on the same journey as us. We find ease in

*You find ways to show us that
You hear us, You know our needs
and wants, and You are here
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highway!*

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communicating and language truly is not a barrier. I vouch for this especially since I can communicate perfectly with my Russian and Spanish brothers and sisters! With your love, there is constant, limitless potential...

Your presence as Eternal Witness in our lives teaches us to be witness to our own lives, our thoughts and life situations. When through these, we experience so much love, we desire to emulate the same, which is by nature expansive. Your love manifests through me, and Your presence is felt within my heart.

When we operate as being love, we uphold high ideals and an exemplary character, and then we truly live the highway, the SAI way. So, where there is Sai, there is love, and where there is love, there is a highway.

– The author is a Sai Youth from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Effulgence of Divine Glory

BECOMING AN INSTRUMENT OF GOD

IT WAS IN 1975 THAT I STARTED spending hours meditating – before work, during work, after work, in the middle of the night. It seemed



beyond my control. I would end each meditation with, “God, reveal Yourself to me”. Nothing seemed to satisfy me, not the touch of peace, neither the spurts of love, nor the images that came, for doubt was always rearing its disconcerting self. I felt unfulfilled.

How Baba Reached my Soul

I remember that night so well. My husband brought home a statue of Ganesh. The moment he showed it to me, I could feel an attraction. It was something I could not understand, but I felt a warmth creep into me. I felt a sense of energy hit me between the eyes as I touched it. After dinner when I went into the bedroom where we had left the statue, I noticed that Vibhuti had formed.

“Meditate, meditate,” my body cried. I picked up the statue, went into the Puja room and sat down in front of the altar. With Ganesh still in my hand, I repeated my Mantra and moved the beads of my rosary. I was filled with such a strong desire to know what the sages were telling, to experience the glory of which the saints spoke. I could feel every part of me crying out to understand, to be a child of God. I called every saint, every holy name, but never did I call on Sai Baba. I cannot tell you why, but I did not call His name.

And as I called and pleaded, I became plagued with doubts. Evil thoughts began to attack me – pricking my mind and body. “Fool, there is no God... You cannot trust them... Don’t you know it’s all a lie...” On and on it went, nasty ideas about God, about my path, about people I believed in, all coming at me. I knew not what it was all about, or how it came on. I was



an onlooker, observing a terrifying scene. I could sense fear growing, and then I saw myself stiffen and with great determination I heard myself say, "Get away. I don't want to hear you. Go away, I don't believe you. You don't know what you are talking about. I want God"! I remember that part. I remember the determination. I also know that something happened, that there was an unaccountable space of time and the next thing I could recall was an opening above me and I was propelled into a sea of expanse, a universe of stars, expanding, expanding... and ecstasy started pouring through me, washing me, loving me – that I heard a voice, somewhere far off in the distance, a voice that I recognised as being me but not me. I could hear it saying, "I give myself to thee, Sai Baba".

Sai Baba! Sai Baba, a name I had not even called! Sai Baba, God who had reached my soul!

Experience of Rebirth

That night I slept and dreamt. I dreamt that I was being buried in a grave, and all around me people were dancing merrily. I felt no fear or remorse. When I awoke the next morning, the dream was still vividly with me. I felt that it was connected to my meditation experience, that it marked the death of my old self and a rebirth. That summer I made plans for my first visit to India, to see Swami in His physical form.

I wish I could say that I had been truly reborn, and that my thoughts, words and deeds were always pure. No. Although I had been blessed by God, I had still to earn that kingdom, if it were to be mine forever!

My first visit to Swami was amazing on all accounts. I will not delve into all the

stories at this time, but by now you know all the layers which He had to uncover. There was an instant interview that resulted in great awe and pain. After that, in between a period of being totally ignored, there was the thrill of being in His presence at a wedding, and, finally, the bliss of another interview before leaving for home.

Still, much remained unanswered. I was so involved with my own advancement toward God that I did not see God in front of me, nor could I see my own God-self. Oh, I did see Baba's poetic step, His smile that brought warmth to all, the changes that He brought about in some of the handicapped people He had taken in for interviews – but these did not linger with me.

"Swami, talk to me, teach me directly, solve all my problems," were my cries, my worldly ego overtaking the glimpse of divinity I had been given.

Awareness to Serve as His Instrument

And so the years moved on. I returned to India, to His lotus feet, received the interviews, the blessings, the materialisations, and still I cried out. God always seemed one step beyond my reach. I was not a student of theosophy; my knowledge of the Bible and other holy books was negligible. I was not in touch with psychic phenomena, or third eye vision. However, my thoughts did start to change, for I began to say to myself, "Surely, somewhere on this path, I must be useful. In some way I might be of concrete service to the spirit of God".

The awareness of how I was to serve as His instrument also progressed slowly. At one point I read Swami's declaration, "The end of education is character". Here at last was my message! Was I not a teacher? Then why not put these ideas

into the classroom? I delved deeper into the Bal Vikas programme and how I might use it with my students in the public school system. The results were amazing. It could work! Where once I would go to sleep with the worry of how to face another day of classroom feuds, children's disrespect for one another, of their lack of self-worth, and would wake up with the same fears, I now began to feel a change, a glimmer of hope, a realisation that working with values would change the children. God was offering me another chance, a chance to rectify the mistakes I had made in bringing up my own children, a chance to be of use in this lifetime.

And changes did begin. The changes were not only occurring in the children, but I, too, was changing. I became lighter, freer, happier. That which had borne upon me so heavily began to wash away. I knew what my future would have to be. I had to explore what Swami was now calling Education in Human Values.

Education in Human Values

And so I applied for a sabbatical to write a values curriculum for use in my district public schools. Another great transformation was about to take place. I had always been worried about money; and now I was faced with a cut in salary and with many plans for travel, yet not at all concerned. I am not sure how there was enough money – but there we were that year, my husband and I, travelling to Canada, Israel, France and India. And as we travelled, I researched the many values programmes that were in existence.

In the summer of 1983, I once again arrived in India, this time to participate in the International Conference on Education

in Human Values (EHV). I knew my answer would be found here. Little did I know that I would find more than just my role in EHV.

Baba was as beautiful and gracious as ever. In the Darshan line, He would tell the New York participants, "Yes, yes. I will see you". He would often repeat this to my husband and others on the men's side. It never happened! It was the first time I had not had an interview. But I was not the same person either. I found myself listening to every word Baba was saying in His Discourses in Poornachandra Auditorium. Every sound that came from Him was a gem for me. He served us well, showering us with unconditional love and showing us His true form. For the first time, I came to realise that I was indeed in the presence of God. I knew what it meant.

He came to our small meetings promising, "No one shall leave without their questions answered". And so it came to be. We were permitted to submit written questions which He proceeded to answer. We were in His presence for hours. Invariably when a new problem crossed my mind, I would hear Him give me the solution, even as He spoke on another topic. This went on for days, and His magnanimity overwhelmed me. I had to begin thinking seriously about how I could serve.

Baba fed our minds, our hearts, our souls and even our bodies. When we were served lunch in the canteen, it was so beautiful to watch Him as He went down the aisles, asking if we had enough, if we were happy... ever giving, giving. "How much can one take," I thought, "without giving in return"?

This is my new birth, my new work. I have been granted faith and belief. I know what love can really be. As long as Baba lets me help in His task of Education in Human Values, I shall be there. I don't think He expects us to be specialists in teaching EHV, but rather to be specialists in life, meeting its challenges with equanimity and love.

As I conclude this story, I flash upon the day my mother died. I recall the pledge I made as a young 15-year-old confused by my loss. "When I grow up, I am going to do something for this world. I am going to help cure cancer".

It is now 45 years down the road, and God has granted me my wish. In my final surrender to Him, I have become His instrument. The cancer that is eating away at our character, the cancer that is wiping out righteousness in this world, the cancer that is shattering our peace and causing our physical cancer – that is the cancer

At one point I read Swami's declaration, "The end of education is character". Here at last was my message! Was I not a teacher? Then why not put these ideas into the classroom? I delved deeper into the Bal Vikas programme and how I might use it with my students in the public school system. The results were amazing. It could work!

which Sathya Sai Baba is now curing. Thus shall He bring to all mankind Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence?

– Excerpted from the article "Seeking Love" by Bea Flaig in the book "Transformation of the Heart" by Judy Warner.

If you must bring the power from the powerhouse to your house to illuminate your place, you have to put up poles at regular intervals and connect the house with the powerhouse with cables. So, too, if you must win the grace of God, do Sadhana at regular timings and connect yourself with God by the cable of Smarana (remembering the Lord).



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PREMA BANDHAM MEET 2017

A LARGE NUMBER OF ALUMNI of Bhagavan's educational institutions came to Prasanthi Nilayam from all parts of the world to offer their love and gratitude to their Beloved Mother Sai who nurtured and fostered them with motherly love during their student days. They presented music and cultural programmes as part of their annual alumni meet "Prema Bandham" (bond of love) on three days, 30th and 31st December 2016 and 1st January 2017.

Sangeeta Sangamam: A Devotional Music Presentation

The first programme was presented by the alumni of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music on 30th December 2016 who made a touching musical offering "Sangeeta Sangamam" at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan to express their joy of being with Him. The programme featured an assortment of



"Sangeeta Sangamam" by the alumni of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music.

Carnatic and Hindustani music compositions followed by a brilliant Tillana and evergreen songs like "O Maa O Maa O Maa Sai Maa", "Kaise Jiyun Main Yun Tere Bin" (how can I live without You).

Earlier, the session commenced with a talk by one of the alumni, Sri Gopalakrishna, who reminisced fond memories of his student days and described how Swami taught the nuances of singing and provided opportunities to him and other students to train them in the art of music.

Coming Home in Loving Remembrance: A Musical Dance Drama

The second programme was a musical dance drama "Coming Home in Loving Remembrance" presented by the alumni of Sri Sathya Sai Primary and Higher Secondary School on 31st December 2016. Opening with a scene of arrival of three former students at Sathya Sai Prasanthi Nilayam railway station to attend the alumni meet, the drama brought forth anecdotes galore of the students, both boys and girls, through dialogues with multimedia backdrop reminiscing the golden opportunity of their learning under the loving care of their Mother Sai. Excellent songs and dances of the alumni and their children enriched the drama all the more.

New Year 2017

On the New Year day, 1st January 2017, there were joyous and enrapturing programmes both in the morning and afternoon. The morning programme began at 8 a.m. with sacred Vedic chants. As the Veda chanting began, the procession of the youth and devotees who performed a nine-day journey on foot from Chennai to Prasanthi Nilayam came to Sai Kulwant Hall, where the pilgrims offered their

salutations at the Samadhi of Bhagavan. What followed next was a scintillating band music presentation by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning who welcomed the New Year with New Year melodies entitled “Rhythmic Energy”, offering an assortment of selected numbers that included the famous “Love Story”, “The Serenade” and a couple of Bhajans.

After this thrilling musical presentation, there was an illuminating talk by an alumnus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Sri P. Vijaya Bhaskar, presently Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Recounting his close and long association with Bhagavan, Sri Bhaskar exhorted the student fraternity to practise the teachings of Bhagavan diligently and imbibe the qualities of humility, self-confidence, selfless service and determination to shape their life on the ideals set by Bhagavan.

Collective recitation of Sri Sathya Sai Ashtottarashata Namavali followed next in which thousands of students and devotees took part, reverberating the entire hall with sacred chants. Bhajans followed and concluded with Arati.

Prema Sangamam: A Drama

The programme in the afternoon began at 4.30 p.m. with Veda chanting. Meanwhile, a flag bearing squad of alumni came

marching from Yajur Mandir to the Samadhi of Bhagavan and offered a reverential salute to Him. After this, the alumni band offered an array of devotional numbers and Bhajans at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan. The release of the new issue of the alumni magazine “Vidyullekha” and the latest audio CD of “A Bridge Across Time” followed next.

The grand finale of the three-day Alumni Meet was the drama “Prema Sangamam” (confluence of love) which showcased the uniqueness of the Sai University as it offered values-based education to the



The drama “Prema Sangamam” showcased the uniqueness of Sai University.

students and developed their character along with providing excellence in academic studies. The storyline involved the students, teachers, the hostel, the Institute and the Revered Chancellor Bhagavan Baba to convey the theme of the drama and depict the invaluable character building process. The dialogues of Lord Krishna, Arjuna and Uddhava gave a divine touch to the drama and illustrated its theme clearly. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati.

BAL VIKAS ALUMNI CONVENTION

The 7th National Convention of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Alumni and 4th Benediction



The alumni band offering sonorous notes at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan.

Ceremony of Bal Vikas Group III Students was held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 7th and 8th January 2017.

Morning Session

The morning session of the convention held on 7th January 2017 began with Veda chanting at 8.00 a.m. by the Bal Vikas children from Tamil Nadu. This was followed by an inspiring group song “Sathya Naam Sathya Naam Sathya Naam Bol” (chant the Name of God who is the embodiment of Truth) by the Bal Vikas alumni from Punjab. A short speech on the theme of the convention “Marching Forward with Sathya Sai Bal Vikas” by a Bal Vikas alumna Sister Melina followed next in which the speaker explained the theme of the convention and narrated how Bal Vikas introduced her to the life of humility and human values and made her understand the presence of divinity in all.

The final programme of the morning session was a valorous display of martial arts for self-defence entitled “Atma Raksha – Ek



Display of martial arts by the Bal Vikas alumni from Himachal Pradesh.

Kadi” (self-defence – a bonding) by the Bal Vikas alumni (girls) of Himachal Pradesh. Showcasing the various techniques of self-defence, the alumni explained how these skills imparted courage and confidence to the practitioners. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 9.30 a.m.

Afternoon Session

The afternoon session began at 4.30 p.m. with Veda chanting by the Bal Vikas children from Kerala. Brief speeches of two Bal Vikas alumni followed next, in which they narrated their personal experiences of Bhagavan’s Divinity and explained how He guided and helped them at every step of their life. After this, Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation addressed the gathering. Bal Vikas, the distinguished speaker said, had been marching forward for the last 50 years everywhere in all parts of the world. He exhorted the parents, alumni and Gurus to expand this movement further as this was the best means for the transformation of the world.

After this inspiring talk of Sri Pandya, the compendium “Marching Forward with Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas” was released. Presentation of achievement awards to alumni for their excellence in the work for Bal Vikas followed next. The awards were given away by Sri H. Deleep Singh, Commissioner, Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Manipur.

The last item of the afternoon session was a drama “Swami Vivekananda – the



A scene from the drama “Swami Vivekananda – the Patriot Saint of India”.

Patriot Saint of India” enacted by the Bal Vikas children from Delhi-NCR. The drama portrayed the illustrious life story of Swami Vivekananda, depicting his transformation from a sceptical youth to a spiritual leader by the grace of Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, his famous speech at the World Parliament of Religions in U.S.A. and his untiring efforts for the uplift of the downtrodden masses of India. Bhajans by Bal Vikas alumni followed next and concluded with Arati.

Final Session

The concluding session of the convention began with Vedic chants by the Bal Vikas alumni from Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh at 8.00 a.m. on 8th January 2017. The proceedings of the Benediction Ceremony of Group III Bal Vikas Students who successfully completed their nine-year course followed next. As the convocation procession led by the Bal Vikas band of Sri

group song “Sai Maa Sai Maa” rendered by the Bal Vikas alumni from West Bengal. A Bal Vikas alumnus, Sri Somendra Biswas, Joint Commissioner of Excise, West Bengal then gave an inspiring talk narrating how he faced a difficult situation in his office but no harm came to him because he never swerved from the righteous path learnt by him in the Bal Vikas class.

Benediction Ceremony was thereafter conducted. As the graduating Group III Bal Vikas Students stood up in the hall, the convocation pledge was administered to them by Smt. Sucharitra. K, a senior Bal



Convocation pledge to graduating students.

Vikas Guru from Karnataka. Benediction Ceremony was followed by presentation of achievement awards to selected Bal Vikas alumni for their meritorious services for Bal Vikas. The awards were given away by Sri H. Deleep Singh, Commissioner, Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Manipur. Three tiny tots thereafter gave their views on why they like Bal Vikas to the delight of the audience.

The grand finale of the convention was a fusion dance medley “Sambhavami Yuge Yuge” (I incarnate from Age to Age) presented by the Bal Vikas alumni from Karnataka. This beautiful cultural



The convocation procession entering Sai Kulwant Hall.

Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Visakhapatnam entered Sai Kulwant Hall, the alumni in the hall sang the theme song “Sarva Devata Gayatri”. What followed next was a beautiful



Yakshagana, a folk art form of Karnataka.

presentation comprised three folk dances of Karnataka, viz., Kolata, Karaga and Yakshagana. Bhajans led by Bal Vikas alumni followed next and concluded with Arati, thus bringing the grand function to a happy conclusion.

Bhakti Samrajyam: A Classical Music Concert

Devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall had a sumptuous feast of Carnatic classical music when teachers and students of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music presented a spellbinding concert for nearly one hour



A Carnatic classical music concert by Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music.

on 16th January 2017. Beginning their presentation entitled “Bhakti Samrajyam” (kingdom of devotion) with a prayer song to Lord Ganesh, the talented team of Music College rendered some of the choicest compositions of Thyagaraja including “Jagadananda Karaka” (the Creator of happiness in the world), “Saadhinchene O Manasa” (O mind! He has achieved his objective), “Endaro Mahanubhavulu” (salutations to all great men) and a couple of other classical numbers, saturating the entire milieu with devotional fervour.

...continued from page 16

so that he may ascend towards his divine destiny instead of wallowing in mundane pleasures and miseries. Thereby, he will demonstrate his superiority over beasts and birds.

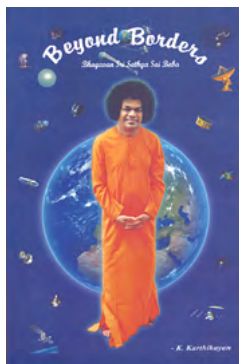
The vigil and fasting observed on Sivarathri night have become farcical. True vigil and fasting consist in concentrating all one's thoughts on God during the whole night. God's grace is a direct sequel to one's actions. Each one has to examine for himself in what spirit he is performing his worship. The Divine can be realised only through Sraddha (steadfastness) and Viswasa (faith). The Divine is within everyone. Once

man recognises this fact, he will give no room to bad qualities.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Dedicate yourselves to the performance of your duties. Do not waste your time or that of others in idle talk. Starting with the duties of the individual, man should aim at achieving oneness with the Divine as the ultimate goal. Sivarathri is an auspicious occasion for concentrating the mind on God. Devote at least this one night entirely to the contemplation of God, to the exclusion of all other thoughts and worries.

– **Excerpted from Bhagavan's Sivarathri Discourses.**

*Book Review***BEYOND BORDERS****BEYOND BORDERS**

K. Karthikayan

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POSITIVE TRANSFORMATION IN THE contemporary hearts and mindsets is the real foundation for the Golden Age of the future. Divine miracles had a key role in Bhagavan Baba's Mission of bringing out phenomenal transformation in spiritual as well as secular outlook of people across the world.

These narrations of direct witnesses compiled by K. Karthikayan of Malaysia are in a true spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (world as one family) as fostered by Bhagavan; because the citations cover many countries of all continents. The omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent aspects of Baba are highlighted through simple and sincere accounts of devotees.

One narration reveals how a father and his 12 years old son came to Bhagavan's Lotus Feet, considering Him as the Father who sent Jesus Christ to the earth; implying

that his wait for the second arrival of Christ had ended.

'Swami was the final hope. Formidable diseases were cured by Baba, and the recipients got to know of Baba's hand only through minute indications', narrates Nishikawa of Japan.

'Baba's Universal Love, like a guiding star, leading me to come back from wrong thinking and wrong doing like a steady, silent and peaceful flame, purifying me, giving me warmth, covered me with Love', says Li Xue, a student from China.

'I enrolled in the Course, and touched spiritual foundation of my life; I felt a veil was being lifted from my eyes,' says Samson of Russia.

Sri Hira from Japan says, 'Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the only Avatar in the history of mankind who has taken upon Himself the stupendous task of restoring and reestablishing all major religions of the world'.

'If there was no choice, you would be slaves, and I don't need slaves. You should find a spiritual path by yourself,' Baba tells 'M', a scientist from Moscow, revealing the profound truth about God's dispensation.

One of Bhagavan's clarion calls through these Divine miracles is that transactions between nations can be free from hindrance of discriminations such as language, custom, colour and habit, only when Love is used as the medium.

— P.P.S. Sarma

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For further details log on to www.wfd.sssihms.org.in

– *Director*

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– *Correspondent*

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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-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, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
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Devotees who performed a nine-day journey on foot from Chennai to Prasanthi Nilayam offering salutations at the Samadhi of Bhagavan.



A dance number in the drama "Coming Home in Loving Remembrance".



Institute brass band performing on New Year day.

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Beware of Self-conceit

A foolish person is carried away by the wealth and pomp of the outside world. The conceit that accompanies the fascination for these possessions is not recognised. Grief follows happiness like a shadow. Under the shadow of Adhikara (authority) flourishes the demon of Ahamkara (egoism). Do not be carried away by the lure of power. Self-conceit, which comes in its wake, will overpower you. Beware of its presence. Only then will you be well. Do not gloat over wealth and possessions. There is an ogress that will destroy them. That is Durabhimana (self-conceit). You must take note of such dangers.

– Baba



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