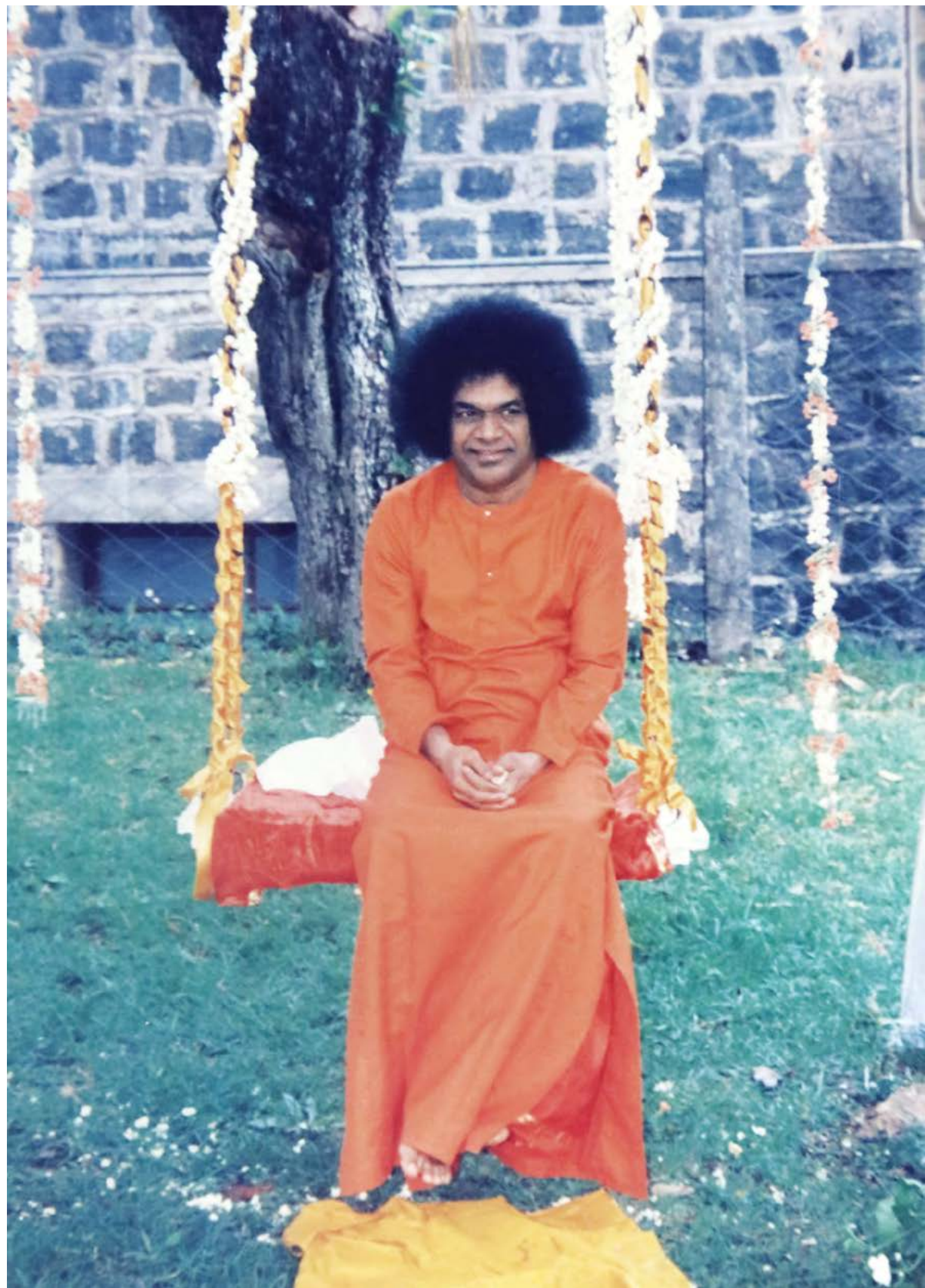


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*"What are your ornaments for? Do
they enhance your beauty? It is not
the bangles which make your hands
beautiful. It is charity which makes
them beautiful. Similarly, listening to
the sacred texts is the beauty of the ears.
Does a necklace add to the beauty of
your neck? No, it is truth that makes
it beautiful."*



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*"Sanathana Sarathi" wishes
devotees a holy and prosperous New Year*

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AVATAR VANI

DEVELOP ONE-POINTED LOVE FOR GOD

MAN IS THE FORM OF GOD

Embodiments of Love!

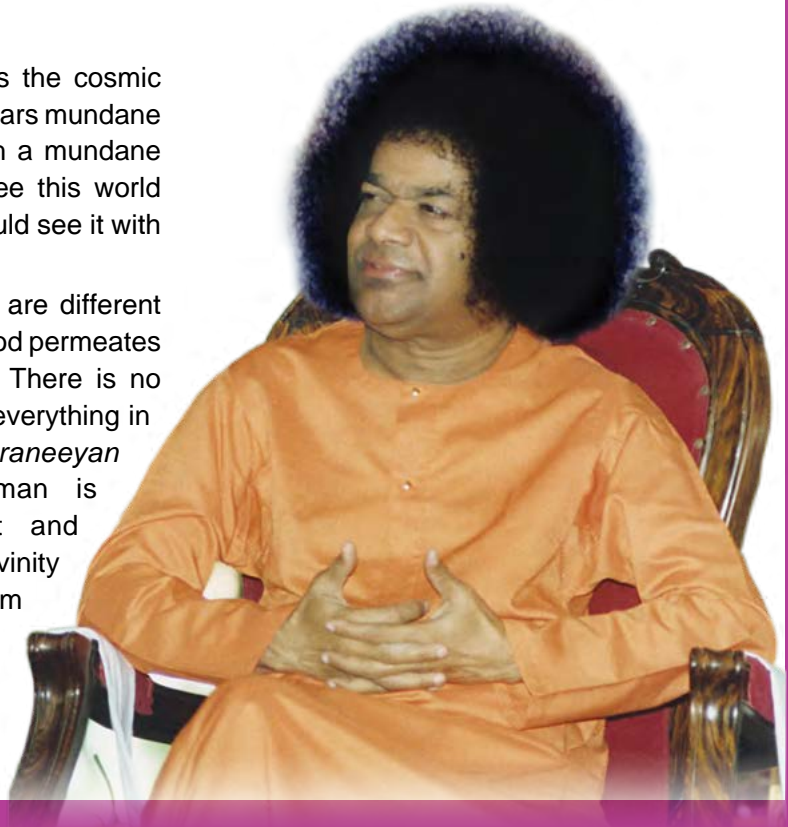
THE WORLD WE SEE IS transitory and full of troubles and travails. Man cannot get lasting happiness from this ephemeral world. Worldly happiness is temporary and fleeting; permanent and eternal Ananda (bliss) lies in the realisation that the world is the form of the Divine. But man looks at it as mere material world due to his ignorance. The mistake lies in his vision and not in God's creation.

Develop Divine Vision

The wide world we see is the cosmic divine form of God. But it appears mundane to us because we see it with a mundane vision. So, we should not see this world with mundane vision; we should see it with a divine vision.

All things in this universe are different combinations of atoms and God permeates every atom of the universe. There is no universe without atoms. So, everything in this universe is divine. *Anoraneeyan Mahato Maheeyan* (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest). Divinity permeates everything, from microcosm to macrocosm. But we can see divinity in the entire creation only when we develop divine vision.

Different heads have different thoughts, but the truth is one. Here is a small story to illustrate it. Once four students visited a temple. Seeing the idol of Krishna in the temple, they started discussing what the idol was made of. One student said that it was made of white marble. The second student differed from him and said, "No, it is made of red stone". The third student gave the verdict that it was not red stone but blue stone which is very rare. The fourth student



commented, "It is neither white nor red nor blue. The idol is made of green stone". Each one started arguing to prove his point of view as it is common with modern students to indulge in argumentation. When their arguments became loud, the priest of the temple came there and asked the students not to disturb the peace of the temple by making noise. One of the students then asked the priest, "Panditji, what is the colour of the idol in the temple"? The priest replied, "The colour of the idol is black. I worship it, do Abhishekam (ceremonial

In modern times, science and technology have made great progress. Man today has learnt to travel to the moon which is lakhs of miles away. But he does not travel even one inch within himself. He wants to explore the moon which is far away, but he does not look into his mind that is within him. With worldly education, man develops outward vision; he does not nurture inward vision. He travels to the moon at great expense and brings back a handful of dust. What is the use when



bath) and offer Arati to it daily". But the students were not convinced and started arguing with the priest also. The priest then took them to sanctum sanctorum and removed the glasses they were wearing to enable them to see the actual colour of the idol. Then only could they realise the truth that the colour of the idol was indeed black. Similarly, man sees the world with his distorted vision. Naturally, he cannot perceive the truth.

Modern man prides over his inventions. He makes countless weapons by his new inventions and uses them to kill his own fellow beings. We read in newspapers about the killing of man by man. Oh mad man! Is your intelligence meant only to invent weapons to kill others? You have so many enemies within you, viz., ego, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy, but you do not kill them. Instead, you go on killing outer enemies. First kill your deadly inner enemies.

truckloads of dust are available free on earth? Instead of exploring the outer world, man should turn his vision inward and try to know his real nature. *Chandrama Manaso Jataha Chaksho Suryo Ajayata* (the moon was born out of the mind and the sun out of the eyes of the Supreme Being), say the Upanishads. In fact, the reflection of the effulgent divine principle on the mind is the real moon which man should explore

instead of going to the far away moon and bringing back a handful of dust. Man does not see God who is close to him because of his defective vision, but he makes incessant efforts to see what is far away. When you see a mountain from a distance, it appears to be smooth and beautiful. But when you go near it, you see only a heap of rough stones. Therefore, man should remove his illusion, go within and know the divine principle inherent in him instead of exploring the outer world.

Kill your Inner Enemies

The main cause of man's outward vision is modern education. It teaches him to build castles in the air. The knowledge that he gains by his outward vision is as small as a mustard seed but he considers it big like a pumpkin. Modern man prides over his inventions. He makes countless weapons by his new inventions and uses them to kill his own fellow beings. We read in newspapers about the killing of man by man. Oh mad man! Is your intelligence meant only to invent weapons to kill others? You have so many enemies within you, viz., ego, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy, but you do not kill them. Instead, you go on killing outer enemies. First kill your deadly inner enemies. When you have so many enemies within you, it is foolish to think of those who are outside as your enemies. You are slave of your internal enemies and you want to kill the external enemies! This is not humanness. One who is a slave of inner enemies does not know what human qualities are. If you have bravery and courage, kill your inner enemies. Look at the external world with love and develop one-pointed love for God. Then only will you be embellished with human qualities.

Realise that you are the Atma

What are the ornaments you require to decorate yourself?

*Hastasya Bhushanam Danam,
Sathyam Kanthasya Bhushanam,
Srotrasya Bhushanam Sastram,
Bhushanaih Kim Prayojanam?*

(Sanskrit Verse)

(Charity is the true ornament for the hand. Truth is the true necklace and listening to sacred texts is the true ornament for the ears. What is the use of other ornaments?)

What are your ornaments for? Do they enhance your beauty? It is not the bangles which make your hands beautiful. It is charity which makes them beautiful. Similarly, listening to the sacred texts is the beauty of the ears. Does a necklace add to the beauty of your neck? No, it is truth that makes it beautiful.

Embodiments of Love!

Man should try to understand the difference between truth and untruth. Due to lack of his power of discrimination man today considers truth as untruth and untruth as truth. Divinity pervades the entire universe. There is no other cosmic form separate from the universe. This universe itself is the cosmic form and man is a form of God. When you realise this truth, human shortcomings will not arise in you. Then there will be no feelings of high and low. Each person is divine. You are not the body; you are the Atma which means you are ancient and eternal. So, have the firm conviction, "I am God". When you realise this truth, everything in the world will appear to you pure and sacred.

(To be continued in the next issue...)

– Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai
Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 18th April 1996.



BHAGAVAN'S SANKRANTI MESSAGE

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FESTIVALS

Man's vision should not be confined solely to the external objects and worldly things... which are transient and perishable. Man has been given the vision so that he may see the pure, sacred divine consciousness abiding in his heart. The northward motion of the sun – Uttarayana is the appropriate occasion for developing this inward vision. This is the royal road for the spiritual aspirant to realise the Supreme, said Bhagavan in His Discourse in January 1994.

DIRECT YOUR VISION INWARD

Embodiments of Divine Love!

MAN ENGAGES HIMSELF IN many exercises in his life.

No single achievement satisfies man or society. Man constantly strives to accomplish more things. Today men seem to revel in dissatisfaction.

Youth today do not appear to be seriously concerned about how to face a rapidly changing world. The preparedness to sacrifice everything for achieving a noble objective is hardly present among the young.

Success in life consists in recognising the truth of one's being. But youth today do not make any effort to find the Truth that is the Eternal Reality. They are prepared to go through any amount of trouble to acquire knowledge that is related to the physical and the transient. They do not make the slightest effort to comprehend the Divine that is all-pervading, that will confer enduring bliss and make one's life meaningful and worthwhile.



Festivals in Bharat have been designed to promote awareness of this truth. Their inner significance as well as their scientific basis have to be understood.

Four Important Transits of the Sun in a Year

Every month the sun moves into a new house in the zodiac. This movement is called Sankramana. In a year, the sun transits twelve houses of the zodiac. Of these movements, four are important. Makara Sankramana is the first one. It relates to the entry of the sun into Makara (Capricorn) from Dhanus (Sagittarius). The second one is Thula Sankramana, the entry of the sun into the zodiacal sign Thula (Libra). The third is Mesha Sankramana – moving into the sign Mesha (Aries). The fourth one is Shashi Sankramana – entry into the moon sign (Cancer). Of the four, the most important and sacred is Makara Sankramana. This marks the apparent movement of the sun from the south to the north. The northward movement of the sun is considered highly significant, both spiritually and scientifically. It has immense spiritual meaning.

The inner meaning of the sun's northward journey has to be properly understood. The north is represented by Himachala. Hima means snow. It is pure, untainted and extremely cool. All these endow it with the quality of Prasanthi (perfect peace). Achala means that which is steady and unshakeable. Himachala does not refer to the physical Himalayan region. It represents that which is cool, peaceful and steady. From today, the sun is said to move towards such a state. The sun symbolises the vision of man.

The northward movement of the sun is a call to human beings to turn their vision towards that which is cool, peaceful and unchanging. This means that men should direct their vision inwards. This is the lesson taught by the sun.

Uttarayana is an Occasion to Develop Inward Vision

Man's vision should not be confined solely to the external objects and worldly things which are transient and perishable. Man has been given the vision so that he may see the pure, sacred divine consciousness abiding in his heart. The northward motion of the sun – Uttarayana is the appropriate occasion for developing this inward vision. This is the royal road for the spiritual aspirant to realise the Supreme.

It is not enough, therefore, merely to recognise the northward movement of the sun in this period. Every effort should be made to direct the vision inwards towards the pure, sacred Indwelling Self. This is the period for cherishing sacred thoughts and performing holy deeds.

For mankind, the sun is the most important entity in creation. When the sun itself is proceeding northwards, why should not humanity direct its vision Godward? Men today are a prey to many troubles because their vision is diverted towards ungodly objects. Man should abide by the laws of the Creator. Otherwise, humanity is doomed. Religious festivals are observed all over the world for the purpose of raising humanity to a higher level of consciousness and conduct.

– Excerpted from **Bhagavan's Discourse on 14th January 1994 in Poornachandra Auditorium.**



BAL VIKAS GURUS MEET

AS PART OF GOLDEN JUBILEE celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Andhra Pradesh organised a two-day Bal Vikas Gurus Meet named “Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Swarnotsava Guru Sankalpa Yatra” at Prasanthi Nilayam on 27th and 28th December 2019, in which about 2,000 Bal Vikas Gurus came to participate.

The programme on 27th December 2019 comprised two erudite talks. The first talk was delivered by Dr. L. Sasi Bala, National Coordinator (Education Wing), Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Speaking

a prize distribution ceremony was held, wherein prizes were given to State-level winners of competitions for essay writing, elocution, Bhajan singing, Veda chanting, etc.

After the conclusion of the programme in Sai Kulwant Hall, the proceedings of the Bal Vikas Gurus Meet were held in Poornachandra Auditorium, where Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Chief, Sri Mohan Bhagwat addressed the Gurus. Hailing the great good fortune of the Gurus that they had the rare privilege of having Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as their Supreme Guru, Sri Bhagwat urged



A view of the gathering of Bal Vikas Gurus in Poornachandra Auditorium.

on the topic “Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas – Blossoming of Human Excellence”, the learned speaker observed that Bal Vikas was not a mere educational programme for children; it was a spiritual movement which imbued them with all spiritual knowledge to bring about their total transformation. The second talk was delivered by Prof. V. Sakuntala, State Coordinator (Education Wing), Andhra Pradesh who enumerated the various activities and new initiatives of the Bal Vikas in the State. After these talks,



RSS Chief, Sri Mohan Bhagwat addresses Bal Vikas Gurus in Poornachandra Auditorium.

them to shun selfishness and follow the path of Dharma. He observed that Sanathana Dharma should be understood in the right perspective. He further elaborated that as the sun gives heat and light, fire burns and water flows, man should perform his Dharma of helping and serving others. Commending the Bal Vikas movement started by Bhagavan Baba, Sri Bhagwat expressed optimism in its grand success as it was promoted by the Avatar Himself. Terming Bal Vikas as a great movement



for nation building, he hoped that Bal Vikas children being nurtured with human values would turn out to be ideal citizens.

The programme in the evening began with an impressive rally of Bal Vikas

enrapturing dance which was performed by the Bal Vikas children of Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. The second presentation was a dance drama entitled “Sathya Darshanam” (revelation of truth) which was



Bal Vikas Rally in Sai Kulwant Hall.

children which entered Sai Kulwant Hall at 4.40 p.m. After this, Prof. Nirupa Rani, former Vice Chancellor of Adikavi Nannaya University, Rajamahendravaram addressed the gathering. Commending the Gurus for their yeoman service to the divine movement of Bal Vikas, the learned speaker stated that it was their great good fortune that Bhagavan had chosen them as part of His Mission. Reminding them about their great responsibility, she said that Bal Vikas Gurus had to refine and transform generations.

Two cultural presentations followed next. The first presentation was an



A scene from the drama “Sathya Darshanam”.

enacted by Bal Vikas Gurus from Kadapa and Anantapur districts. Embellished with beautiful dances of children, the drama depicted how Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba gave the divine gift of Bal Vikas to children to lead them to a noble path in life. Knowing this truth was indeed Sathya Darshan, the drama showcased.

On 28th December 2019, the programme began with felicitation ceremony, wherein senior Bal Vikas Gurus were honoured and felicitated. This was followed by an inspiring talk by Prof. Vengamma, Director and Vice Chancellor of Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences, Tirupati.

Commending Bal Vikas as a great movement for the transformation of children, the distinguished speaker stated that it not only inculcated human values in children, it put them on the path of selfless service so that they could realise the principle ‘service to man is service to God’ in their formative years.

Oath taking ceremony for the Bal Vikas Gurus followed this. As the



A dance number by Bal Vikas children of Kurnool district.





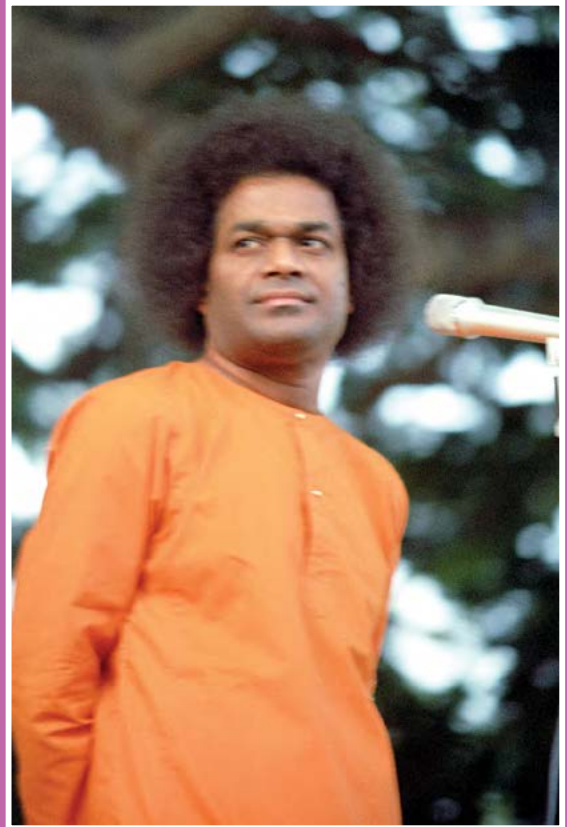
Oath taking ceremony of Bal Vikas Gurus.

Gurus stood up in the hall with folded hands in great humility, Prof. V. Sakuntala,

State Coordinator (Education Wing) administered the oath to them.

The final item of the programme was a devotional music presentation "Sai Gana Madhuri" (sweet devotional songs dedicated to Sai) which was offered by the Mahila (women) Vikas Gurus, who rendered four group songs with great devotion which included "Jai Jai Jai Ho Sai Mahesha" (hail Sai Siva), "Jai Jai Sai Ram Jai Jai Sai Ram", "Sai Charanam Pavanam Sri Sai Charanam Pavanam" (sacred are the Lotus Feet of Sai).

Instruct the children of the Bal Vikas to revere their parents. This is the first thing to do. It is a simple act of gratitude, for those who endowed them with the material instrument of life. But, mere possession of the human body, however wonderful it may be, is not enough for one's peace and joy. One must know how to unravel its mysteries and how to regulate one's own impulses and hungers. This process is accomplished by the Guru, and so the pupils must be instructed and encouraged to revere the Guru, in gratitude for the service he renders.



— Baba



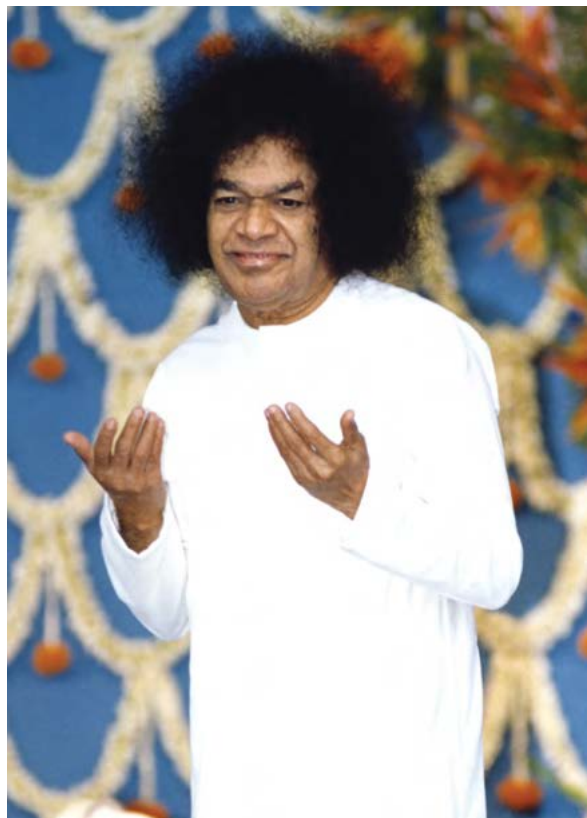
Living with God is True Education

Prof. Madhu Kapani

Teaching should not be just a transmission of facts and figures by communication, but transformation through assimilation and accommodation so that there is blossoming of human excellence. Unless the teachers transform the knowledge into wisdom and help the wisdom to express itself in character, the educational process would be an utter waste.

WE ARE MOST BLESSED THAT we were born at the same time as the Avatar, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Being His contemporaries, we were fortunate to imbibe the true essence of education from God Himself.

I recollect that in 2004, our Institute was made the Regional Resource Centre for Value Education, for training of in-service teachers under a scheme evolved by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and National Council for Educational Research and Training, New Delhi. A six-day orientation course on “Value Education” was conducted both at Anantapur for lady teachers and at Prasanthi Nilayam for men teachers, drawn from different States of India. I was blessed by Bhagavan to address the teachers at Prasanthi Nilayam campus on the topic “Teachers as Role Models”. After the talk was over, I went for evening Darshan and Bhagavan’s first question was whether I had spoken about Educare. Initially, Bhagavan emphasised on Human Values. Many national level seminars and workshops were conducted on five human values and blossoming of human excellence. Then, Swami named it as 3HV, i.e. education of the Head, Heart



and Hands, and then it was Educare – drawing out the best from the spring of knowledge that is within each and every one of us – divinity, sublimity and infinity. The process of making them surface from within is Educare.



My Grooming by Bhagavan for His Education Mission

How I came into this all compassionate boundless ocean of Supreme Love called Bhagavan Baba is a story in itself. I came to know about Bhagavan through my elder sister way back in 1969-70 through Bhajan sessions that were held in a devotee's house nearby. I would accompany her specially on Thursdays and enjoy the devotional singing which had a deep impact on me.

After my schooling in 1972, our family decided to go on a trip to South India. Bangalore (now Bengaluru) and Whitefield were top in our itinerary list because we all wanted to have Bhagavan's Darshan. When we reached Whitefield Ashram, we were told that Bhagavan had left for Ooty as Summer Course that year was held there. It was disappointing but then there was the hope that visit to Ooty was also in our plan. In Ooty, the place was overcrowded due to Summer Course. When we reached, Bhagavan's Discourse was going on in the hall and I managed to have His Darshan through a window. At one point, I felt our eyes met. That was my first Darshan of Bhagavan.

During the 1979 Summer Course held in Brindavan, youth from all States participated. My sister, an active member of the Sai Organisation, had come with a group of students from Odisha to attend as a Guru. Swami used to take group photographs with the teachers and students. During one of the photo sessions, my sister got the opportunity to ask Bhagavan about my joining the Anantapur campus as lecturer in the Department of English as I had completed my postgraduation. To this Bhagavan replied, "Not now, not now".

In the 80's, I appeared for the IAS preliminary exam and came to seek Bhagavan's blessings with my parents. In the Darshan line, I sat holding a sheet of paper with IAS written on it. He took the paper from my hand and asked, "What is it"? I said, "Swami, blessings for IAS". He turned the paper and said 'SAI', smiled and glided away. I did not understand what Swami was trying to convey and continued to pray for interview. Within a week of our stay, Bhagavan called us for an interview and I had the opportunity to ask Bhagavan for His blessing for IAS. Swami very compassionately looked into my eyes and said, "See, it is not good for ladies. No IAS but SAI". Saying so, He turned towards my parents to discuss about some family issues.

The thought of joining Bhagavan's Institute never occurred to me as I had no desire of becoming a teacher, though it was my sister's wish that I do so. I continued to pursue my higher studies, but reluctantly applied for B.Ed. programme as my elder sister wanted me to do so, and I could not refuse her. Once admitted to the course, I put in my 100% efforts and stood first with distinction in the university. I was awarded Merit National Scholarship, which I would get if only I continued the M.Ed. programme. To receive it, I joined the same. I was the first member in the Kapani family to receive scholarship for higher studies.

I realised that Swami was grooming me for the part that He had blessed me to play in His great educational mission.

As Part of His Divine Mission

After I completed my studies, I was appointed in Kendriya Vidyalaya as Postgraduate Teacher (English) in a leave



vacancy. I had taught there for four months when I got appointment letter from the Government G.M. College, Sambalpur to join on 31st March 1982 as lecturer in the Department of Education.

In 1986, during Guru Purnima, my sister who was doing Seva in Poornachandra Auditorium heard the then Vice Chancellor Dr. Saraf announcing that the Institute is opening two new courses – B.Ed. for girls and M.B.A. for boys. After the programme, she met the V.C. in his office to find if I could apply for any post as I was qualified as lecturer for the B.Ed. programme.

Dr. Saraf was very happy because during one of his visits to Odisha, he had seen me and my sister actively involved in the Sathya Sai Organisation. He had interacted with us as we had conducted a few workshops on Human Values for in-service teachers of Odisha. He asked my sister to send my resume at the earliest. So, she booked a trunk call and asked me to send my details, which I did.

I received a telegram from Sri Chakravarthi, the then Registrar, to attend the interview scheduled for 4th September 1986. I was happy to come, not so much for the interview but for the fact that I could have Darshan and blessings of Bhagavan on my birthday, 6th September.

I attended the interview and at the end of it, Dr. Saraf asked me when I could join. To this question, my spontaneous reply was “I will join only if Bhagavan tells me as I am already in government job”. He was taken aback with this response, thought for a second and said, “I will try to put in a word to Swami, but it’s difficult. Let me see”. Then he asked me to sit near his wife for the next morning Darshan so that it was

easier for him to locate me if there was any indication from Bhagavan. 5th September was Teachers Day. As Swami came to the verandah for morning Darshan, Dr. Saraf got up from his place and spoke to Swami. I could make out that he was mentioning about me. Swami said something and V.C. beckoned me to come. I walked diagonally to the verandah on the sand. It was open space for Darshan with small porticoes and coconut trees in between which is now converted into the beautiful Sai Kulwant Hall. Swami asked me to go inside the interview room along with V.C., Registrar, Controller of Examinations and Prof. Sethi. That morning, Swami did not go out for the regular round of giving Darshan to the devotees. It was one and a half hours long interview. I was sitting at the Lotus Feet, holding and pressing Bhagavan’s feet while He was talking to me. Other members were sitting against the wall. I was the only lady inside. It was one to one communication with God.

When V.C. tried to introduce me by saying, “She is Madhu Kapani”, Bhagavan stopped him half way and said, “I know, I know; she is My summer course student”. Here I would like to mention that I had not attended any summer course. When I said, “No, Swami, I have not attended summer course”, He silenced me by repeating again, “I know, I know, you are My summer course student”. There was so much force and power in His voice that I just kept quiet. It then dawned on me that I had the first Darshan of Bhagavan in Ooty through the window during the summer course that was held there in 1972. I have mentioned earlier, that at one point when I was stretching my neck to have a glimpse of Bhagavan, our eyes met. I was happy



to know that Swami had seen me, and for Bhagavan, I had become His student from that very day.

In that interview, Swami asked me if I would join the Institute, to which I replied, "I will do what Bhagavan tells me". He was very happy with my response and placing His hands on His chest said, "Go, resign and come; I need you". There was no looking back since then, as the Lord of the Universe needed me.

Lessons Learnt at Bhagavan's Lotus Feet

During the course of this interview, He taught me many lessons. He asked if I would take up the responsibility of wardenship, to which I immediately said, "No Swami, I have applied for lectureship and not warden's post". Swami sweetly smiled and said, "You will be lecturer and along with it I am asking you to take this additional responsibility". I spontaneously responded, "Swami, I don't know anything. They are big girls; how will I manage". He moved forward a little from His chair and said, "Don't worry, I will teach you everything". Then He spoke to me at length how to take care of the students. He suddenly asked if I knew what a snake gourd was? He described it saying, "It belongs to the gourd family, thin and long vegetable which looks like a snake". Since I had not come across it before, He explained it so vividly that I could picture it in my mind's eye. Bhagavan said, "When the gardener grows it, he ties a small piece of stone at the end so that it grows straight due to its weight and not crooked". Then, He questioned me, "What will happen if the stone is very big? It will snap the gourd. And if it is too small, then it will be ineffective. Similarly, exercise discipline.

Don't be too harsh nor too soft; give them correct reinforcement. Stone here is the discipline that you need to exercise with your B.Ed. students".

Then He started with food and said, "Serve them vegetables; these Andhra girls love only pickle and rice, which is not good for health. You should serve them vegetables and other items so that diet is balanced. Give them Ragi Ganji (gruel) early morning instead of tea and coffee". Since I am fond of tea, I asked, "Swami, some may be used to tea, shall I give them tea also"? He smiled mischievously and said, "You can give them if they are not feeling well and want a hot drink, but Ragi Ganji is very good for health. I too take it everyday".

Then, He shifted to health issues and said, "I will speak to Dr. Rajeshwari and Dr. Savitri (lady doctors in Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Whitefield). They will visit the hostel to see the girls". A small dispensary was set up with common medicines and both the doctors explained to me what medicines to be given in emergency. The names of the medicines were written in paper along with the symptoms for which it was to be given, and very soon I too was half doctor!! They visited hostel every evening and did regular check-ups.

As the B.Ed. programme was to start at Brindavan campus because the second building at Anantapur was under construction, temporary arrangements of starting the course there were made. From 1986-88, two batches of B.Ed. programme were held in the building adjacent to the boys hostel in Brindavan which was vacant then.

Swami arranged for a van and sent me along with a few students to Whitefield and



said, "Go and set up, start the course; soon I will come to settle you all. Be careful, it's a boy's campus. Don't allow girls to come out of the building. I will make all arrangements for all items inside, so that you are self-sufficient". He asked me to convert one of the rooms as general store. Items of daily use like toiletries, stationery, etc., were kept in this mini store. Swami's clear instructions were that we should not come out of the building; we can come out only when Bhagavan comes to Brindavan and sends word for us.

This highlights the importance He gives to girls, the necessity of their maintaining modesty, dignity and simplicity. He says, "Girls should be like roses. Silent, soft, gentle, spreading the fragrance of love, compassion and sacrifice". In several interviews to the B.Ed. staff and students, He categorically advised the girls to change their idea and attitude of mother-in-law into mother-in-love through their sweet nature and in this way bring a good name to Swami and the Institution.

Moulding the Students to be Inspiring Teachers

Bhagavan proudly introduced me to the Rajmata of Nawanagar and other VIP's in Trayee Brindavan, saying, "She is my B.Ed. Principal". During His stay in Trayee Brindavan, He would call us on all the days for the evening sessions.

On many occasions while discussing the lessons in the class, girls would invariably raise doubts and issues like "Bhagavan says no attachment, two legs, four legs, six legs, then why does he ask us to get married? Why does He contradict His own statements"? I was teaching educational philosophy and educational psychology as general papers. In these

classes, girls would ask too many Why's and But's. I would try my best to satisfy them with whatever knowledge I had and finally would say, "Let us leave this doubt to Bhagavan to clarify and not deviate from the main topic. He will answer". It is really surprising that the same evening in the Trayee sessions, He would put a few questions to those seated around and answer them Himself. It would be like a Discourse in which He would clear all the doubts that girls had and also those points which were discussed in my class. On two-three such occasions after the Trayee sessions, back to our hostel, girls would ask me, "Madam, when did you send the questions to Bhagavan, when did you tell Him of our doubts since you were all the time with us"? I would then get a chance to tell them, "He is God, Omnipresent, Omniscient. He knows everything what is going on in the class. I need not send any slips with questions to Him. Be careful, don't doubt, He is all knowing". This is how Bhagavan used to pick up the string of discussion from the class and clear the doubts of students, and while retiring to His room after Arati, He would smile and give a meaningful look to me as if asking, "Have I answered the queries"? It was direct heart-to-heart communion with Him.

In the course of this blessed B.Ed. programme, wherein hundreds of young, aspiring girls got trained to become teachers, Baba blessed us with several interviews. He would advise the girls and give them divine instructions. He always aspired that all His students should become 'inspiring teachers' who are the best of the three types of teachers – worst being the 'complaining teachers' and a little better 'explaining teachers'. After



practise-teaching classes in the school, during evening Darshans, He would come to me and ask, "How did the girls teach"? And then would say, "Tell the girls to come down to the level of the students, to be able to reach out to them and mould them. Just as the mother bends down to pick up the child, similarly the teacher should come down to the level of the child". He also mentioned, "Learning becomes more effective when it is punctuated with concrete but simple examples". He quoted Himself, "See, I give the examples of silver tumbler, handkerchief, bulb, etc., to drive home My point. Tell the girls to give simple examples and anecdotes while teaching". Teaching should not be just a transmission of facts and figures by communication, but transformation through assimilation and accommodation so that there is blossoming of human excellence. Unless the teachers transform the knowledge into wisdom and help the wisdom to express itself in character, the educational process would be an utter waste. Hence, they should be inspiring teachers. All this He would tell me in front of the students in Darshan lines while taking letters, blessing a few and would move on to give Darshan to others. The Master of the Universe, at whose command the planets rotate and revolve, comes down to this very level, just to mould and shape us into His fine instruments. Thus, he expects teachers to

play the role in moulding the future of the country. Teachers reveal the direction and the goal whereas students lay the road and journey into the future.

On many other occasions, Swami would tell us, "As the water in the tank, so is the tap water". He further likens the teacher to the overhead tank and the students to the taps. "As is the teacher so are the students, as are the students so are the citizens, as are the citizens so is the nation and as is the nation so is the world." The great oak is in the acorn, the entire gamut of this great learning process is to see the patent in the latent, the immaterial in the material, the essence in the apparent. There have been many many more lessons learnt, not possible to mention all of them here.

By a mere flip of His Omni Will, our most compassionate Bhagavan could have created the University, Super Speciality Hospitals, etc., but in His infinite mercy and grace, He bestowed on us a chance to be a part of His mighty mission, carrying forward His legacy of love. I am eternally grateful and beholden to the Lord for this golden opportunity given to me.

– The author, a former Director, Anantapur Campus and Dean of Humanities and Economics, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, is presently an honorary professor in the Department of Education, Anantapur Campus.

Teacher should practise before they preach. Be good, do good, see good and tell good. Practice speaks louder than precept. Modern students are highly intelligent. They observe the actions and behaviour of their teachers. They respect and follow their teacher only when they see harmony in their thoughts, words and deeds.

– Baba

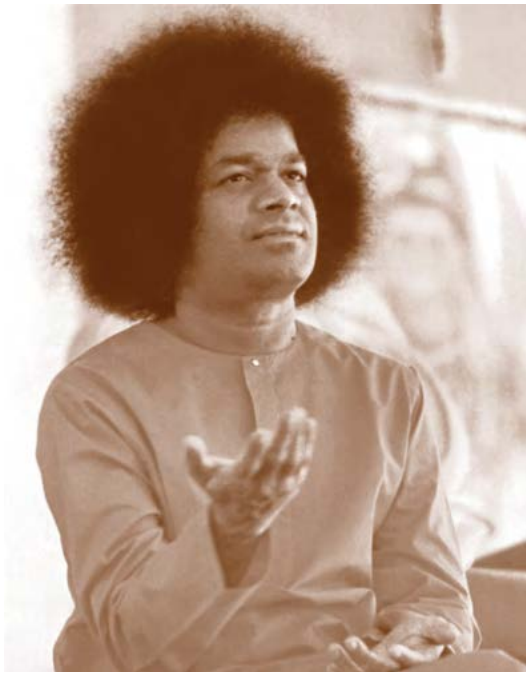


Effulgence of Divine Glory

SWAMI GRANTS LIBERATION TO THE MAHARAJA OF NAWANAGAR

Shakuntala Balu

THE LATE MAHARAJA JAM Saheb of Nawanagar and the Maharani of Nawanagar were beloved of their subjects in western India for the good that they had done them.



After India attained Independence, the Maharaja was Rajpramukh of Saurashtra for a few years and was the cornerstone in the authentic reconstruction of the historic Siva temple in Somnath.

They first heard of Sri Sathya Sai Baba from a friend in 1958. At the time, the Maharaja was a sick man. And they had their own Guru, a great and realised soul, without whose counsel they never took

a spiritual step. The friend told them that Sri Sathya Sai Baba had granted him a vision of Lord Krishna, something he had longed for. He gave them a book, a copy of volume I of Sathyam Sivam Sundaram. The Maharani read it but was not very impressed by it. It read to her like publicity, eulogising Sri Sathya Sai Baba for certain extraordinary powers, but she could not connect them with divinity.

Some years went by and the Maharaja's health deteriorated. The Maharani wished to comfort him. A gentleman called Sri Chudasama mentioned to her that a Dr. Gadhia was a Sai devotee and would be able to arrange Sai Bhajans for her if she thought this would comfort the Jam Saheb. Dr. Gadhia was duly contacted and he arranged a Bhajan evening which both the Maharaja and the Maharani appreciated very much. Then a second Bhajan evening was arranged for the following week, on Tuesday evening, the 1st of February 1965, after Dr. Gadhia finished his lectures at the Medical School. But this was not to be, for Dr. Gadhia was summoned away to Puttaparthi by an urgent message from Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Three days later, the Jam Saheb became critically ill: a gall bladder stone gave him intense and constant pain. The doctors could not ease the pain with any kind of medication and reluctantly suggested surgery. He was terribly frail

and the Maharani considered it unwise to move him to Bombay (now Mumbai) where the operation would have to take place. So, she sent for her Guru Maharaj but, alas, he was away. The Maharaja went through three more days and nights of agony. The Maharani could only watch and suffer with him. She felt helpless. The Maharaja's suffering was so unbearable that he said, despairingly and repeatedly, that he would rather die than endure the pain. He pleaded with the doctors that, if they could do nothing else, they could give him death.

On the fourth day, Guru Maharaj returned to Jamnagar from a trip around some villages. The car the Maharani had sent brought him to the palace. He went first to the Maharani and asked for details about her husband's illness. He asked her for milk and fruit and it became clear to her that he was marking time. It seemed that he had a purpose in mind for the delay and that he was waiting for the right moment to do something significant.

Guru Maharaj unexpectedly put his hand under the cushion on which he was seated and brought out a rolled sheet of paper which he opened. It was a photograph of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He asked the Maharani to place it beside the Maharaja's bed and said that he must pray to it and offer it flowers. But, she asked Guru Maharaj to speak to the Jam Saheb himself and to give him the photograph personally. The Maharaja was very relieved to see Guru Maharaj and glad to receive the photograph of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He put it on his bedside table for worship, meditation and floral offerings as instructed by Guru Maharaj.

The next evening, the post brought another surprise. In it was a letter from a Sri

Dixit, written at the personal instruction of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, asking the Maharani not to worry about her husband's illness and apply everyday on the area of the pain the contents of the enclosed packet of Vibhuti. The letter told her that he would be well again very soon.

The Maharani marvelled at the series of events. First of all, when Guru Maharaj had come to see her, he had had nothing on him and yet he had produced a photograph from under a cushion – and that a photograph of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Then he told the Maharaja to pray to it. And never before had he mentioned Sri Sathya Sai Baba. And then, strangest of all, the next day the letter arrived from Sri Dixit. They had never been in touch with anyone in Puttaparthi. How did this Baba know all this?

When the Maharani told her Guru about the letter, he was very pleased, as if in fact he had been expecting it. At her request, he came to see the Maharaja every morning and applied the Sai Vibhuti to his stomach. Within twenty-four hours of the first Vibhuti application, there was great improvement. The pain subsided quickly after that and, in a week, the Maharaja was free of all pain.

"My husband was a changed man after that. He lived for exactly a year after this crisis and it was a peaceful period granted to him by Baba. He became completely religious and spiritual during that one year. It was a change that altered him so completely that he was altogether a different man. It was a change I had never been able to bring about, even with all I did to persuade him," said the Rajmata, as she was since the Maharaja's death.

As the Maharaja recovered, the Maharani was happy to arrange for

scriptures to be read to him. Slowly, he became a calmer and happier person and longed to meet Sri Sathya Sai Baba. So, efforts were made to arrange a meeting when Sri Sathya Sai Baba was to be in Pune and then in Mumbai, but in vain.

Meanwhile, war broke out between India and Pakistan and Jamnagar was badly bombed. Radio Pakistan announced that the Jam Saheb's palace in Jamnagar had been razed to the ground and that there were no survivors of the royal family. But the truth was very different, for another miracle had happened: several unexploded shells were found within the immediate grounds of the palace. Amazingly, not a single bomb or shell had hit the palace despite three consecutive air raids on it and a shower of shells aimed directly at it.

After the war, the Jam Saheb's eagerness to meet Sri Sathya Sai Baba knew no bounds and he resolved to take a trip to Puttaparthi and there take his chances. His eyesight was bad and he felt weak. Puttaparthi in those days, 1965, barely had any accommodation or any other facilities, but nothing could deter the old Maharaja from making the journey. And so he reached Puttaparthi and waited a long time before he was called to an interview with Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He asked one of His devotees to bring a chair for the Jam Saheb who could not sit on the floor, although he tried hard. An old cane chair was brought from somewhere and the Jam Saheb was made to sit on it while Sri Sathya Sai Baba talked to him, and showered on him so much love that the old and sick Maharaja was happy as he had never been happy before.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba told him, "Our connection has existed for very long. I

know you since the work of rebuilding the Somnath temple began. You have been good, a good king to your subjects". The Maharaja asked to have his eyesight restored so that he could see the Lord. "I know well your love for Dwarakadish and Somnath and that you want your eyes back for their Darshan. But, why do you worry about outer vision? It is inner vision that is important. You will have the Darshan. That is My responsibility," Sri Sathya Sai Baba reassured the Jam Saheb.

The Jam Saheb invited Sri Sathya Sai Baba to Jamnagar. "I will be with you in your palace at the right time," replied Sri Sathya Sai Baba and sent him home. The Maharaja was so completely transformed after this meeting that he accepted everything without anger or revulsion. He had achieved the ideal equilibrium. Yet before this, even a small change in diet or routine would upset him. But now he was totally composed and he spent his time listening to readings from scriptures.

At two o'clock in the morning of the 3rd of February 1966, the Jam Saheb began to cough and said that he could not sleep. The Maharani tried to put him to bed again, but he simply refused to lie down. Slowly, he walked to an armchair and there he sat quite contentedly talking of this and that. After a while, the Maharani felt his pulse and found none. Doctors were summoned immediately and they, too, found no pulse and no sign of life in the Jam Saheb's limbs except directly above the chest where life was tenaciously clinging on. They told the Maharani that her husband had suffered a massive and fatal heart attack and that he should be made to lie down. But he would simply not lie down.

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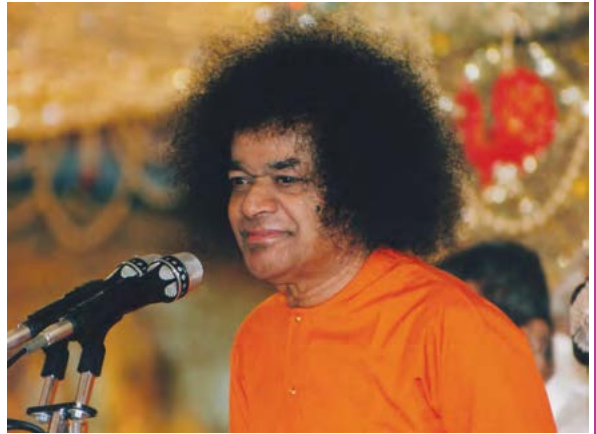
Geetha Mohanram

BHAGAVAN'S UNIQUE BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

I SPENT ALL MY BIRTHDAYS IN Brindavan or Prasanthi Nilayam when I was a child. I used to take roses for Swami for my birthday. When I turned twenty, Swami asked me, "How old are you today"? I replied, "Swami, I am twenty". He asked me, "What are the two numbers in twenty"? I said, "Two and zero". Swami again asked, "What does the two stand for"? I replied, "Swami, I don't know". He said, "Sraddha and Bhakti (steadfast faith and devotion). At the age of twenty, you must develop Sraddha and Bhakti. Go and practise". My practice of going to Swami for my birthday continued. Ten years passed. On my thirtieth birthday, He again asked me, "How old are you today"? I replied, "Thirty, Swami". He continued, "O, thirty. What numbers"? I said, "Three and zero". Swami then asked, "What does thirty mean"? I was unaware and responded, "Swami, I don't know". Swami said, "Trikarana Shuddhi (purity of thought, word and deed). When you were twenty, I gave you time to practise Sraddha and Bhakti. If you have been practising Sraddha and Bhakti for ten years, then by the age of thirty you should be able to practise purity of thought, word and deed. Go practise".

Again, years went by. I went for my fortieth birthday. He again asked, "How old"? I replied, "Forty, Swami". Swami responded to my answer, "O, getting on in age". The same conversation ensued. He asked me, "What numbers in forty"? I was ready and said, "Four and zero". He queried, "What does four and zero mean"? I said, "I don't know. I know what is

twenty and thirty". He asked, "Tell me the meaning of twenty and thirty". I responded, "Steadfast faith and devotion, and purity of thought, word and deed". Then He said, four of the forty stands for the four Purusharthas – Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire) and Moksha (liberation). Earn your wealth by righteous



means. Have the desire for liberation. Go practise".

Years went by and Swami never asked me again. It was my father's eightieth birthday. We were all in the interview room. Swami had a beautiful celebration for my father. He said, "Padmanabh, you came to Me at the age of twenty-one. You are eighty today. You were twenty-one and I was eighteen then. Today you are eighty. You are my Hanuman". He gave a Hanuman pendant to my father and hugged him, saying, "I don't like to be without you. Why don't you come and be with Me all the time"?

Swami then sat down and asked my father, "Padmanabh, how old are you"? My father replied, "Eighty". Swami then asked, "What does eighty mean"? My father replied, "I don't know, Swami". Swami then turned to me, "What is eighty"? I responded, "Eight and zero". The next

question was the same, “What does it mean”? I said, “Swami, you jumped from forty to eighty. What happened to fifty, sixty and seventy”? He asked me to explain to others what I meant. I narrated the concept of twenty as steadfast faith and devotion, thirty as purity of thought, word and deed, and forty as living a life imbued with righteousness, wealth, desire and liberation. I added that I did not know the meaning of fifty. He immediately said, “Fifty is very easy. Five and zero. Five stands for the five senses. Control the five senses. If you have reduced your desires and you only desire liberation, and you are leading a righteous life, then it is easy to control the five senses. As the body is made of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether) you have to control the five senses (sound, sight, taste, smell and touch). Then what is sixty? The six enemies – Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (attachment), Mada (pride) and Matsarya (jealousy). I am giving you ten years to control these tendencies. If you have

controlled the tendencies, then at the age of seventy you would have become like the Sapta Rishis – the seven sages – Rishis who can live on earth and in heaven. And at the age of eighty, you should become like the Ashta Dikpalakas – the eight deities who look after the eight directions, serving the Lord. If you do this, at the age of ninety, you will become like the Navagrahas – the nine planets. The Navagrahas do nothing but revolve around sun and that serving the Lord is their only focus. At the age of hundred, you become one with the Lord. What is hundred? One zero zero. There is only One. You and I are one. You are back to One”.

In this way, Swami explained the goal of human life.

– The author is the daughter of Dr. Padmanabhan and is settled in U.S.A. She had many interactions with Bhagavan from her childhood which she regularly narrates to Sai devotees in her enlightening talks.

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The Maharani and the doctors realised that something strange was happening. The Jam Saheb appeared to be caught up in an extraordinary force which was allowing him to move and speak. He appeared content and it seemed to those with him that since there was no blood pressure or pulse in his body, that indeed a miracle was taking place and the Jam Saheb's soul was waiting to be taken. He was completely unaware of the heart attack or of any pain.

At half past four, during Brahma Muhurtam (the sacred hour of the Lord) the Jam Saheb left this earth. His face in death was supremely peaceful.

The Maharani, now the Rajmata, will always remember, “I felt Baba had come

as promised to take him away. Truly, it was a beautiful way of reaching his destination. His body and face were in a perfect state of serenity. It was Baba who was with him at that time, who else? It was God who came to him at the right time to give him divine Darshan,” said the Rajmata who remembers that Sri Sathya Sai Baba had told the Maharaja, ‘I will come and cure you of all disease and take you for Darshan of Somnath and Dwarakadish’. “And so, He came to give him Moksha, to liberate his soul. The people in the room, all of us, sensed a superhuman presence there”.

– Excerpted from “Living Divinity” by Shakuntala Balu.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM SRIKAKULAM



SOULFUL DEVOTIONAL music presentation entitled “Sri Sathya Sai Swara Sudha” (nectar of Sai songs) was made by a noted musician Sri Bharati Ramesh and



Devotional music presentation by Sri Bharati Ramesh and his team of musicians.

his team of fellow musicians on 15th December 2019 as part of 18th Parthi Yatra (pilgrimage to Puttaparthi) of the devotees from Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh, in which more than 2,300 devotees came to participate. Beginning their programme at 5.15 p.m., the singers enthralled the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall for more than one hour by their melodious songs which included “Enta Bhagyamo Entadi Sowbhagyamo” (how fortunate we are), “Sadananda Nilaya Sadaa Divya Hrudaya” (oh, the embodiment of divine bliss), “Narayana Sai Narayana”. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati.

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM CHHATTISGARH

More than 1,200 devotees came on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from the

State of Chhattisgarh on 21st and 22nd December 2019 and presented music and cultural programmes on both the days of their pilgrimage. On 21st December, a devotional music concert was presented by a renowned musician Dr. Bharti Bandhu and his team of musicians which kept



A soul-stirring concert by Dr. Bharti Bandhu and his team of musicians.

the audience spellbound for nearly 40 minutes with the melody and music of their numbers which included a Kabir Bhajan “Mana Lago Mero Yaar Fakiri Mein” (my mind relishes adversity), a Mira Bhajan “Ye Mayi Ree Maine Govind Leeno Mol” (I have bought Lord Govinda), a Qawali “Mohe Pyaari Lage Yaaro Deewangi” (I love this madness).

On 22nd December 2019, folk dancers of Chhattisgarh showcased the rich cultural heritage of Chhattisgarh through scintillating folk dances. The first dance was a Bastar folk dance which was presented by the folk dancers from the Kanker district of Chhattisgarh. While the musicians provided instrumental support to the dancers on their traditional instruments, the dancers showed their





Folk dance by the folk dancers of Durg district of Chhattisgarh.

talent and skill by their excellent footwork and expressive gestures. The second dance was a folk dance presented by Sri Dilip Banjare and his team of folk dancers from the Durg district of Chhattisgarh who cast a spellbinding impact on the viewers by their scintillating dance and wonderful formations in their traditional dress.

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

The joyous festival of Christmas was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great piety and devotion. The theme of this year's Christmas celebrations was "The Power of Love". The entire Prasanthi Nilayam premises was bedecked with Christmas decorations and illumination.

The first programme of celebrations was the International Adults Choir which was presented by more than 300 singers and musicians, both ladies and gents, on 24th December 2019. Beginning with



Adults Christmas Choir.

excellent rendition of Ganesh Pancharatna Stotram in Sanskrit, the singers presented in all 18 heart-touching devotional numbers and Christmas carols some of which were: "Wonderful Merciful Saviour", "He will Carry you", "He Hideth my Soul", "Holy Night Silent Night", "Hallelujah to the Lord", "Sai will Make a Way". The entire programme was well directed and well presented which brought forth the merry spirit of Christmas.

The celebration on the Christmas day, 25th December 2019, had an auspicious start with early morning rendition of Christmas carols by overseas devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall from 6.30 a.m. to 7.00 a.m. which surcharged the entire milieu with sacred Christmas spirit. Some of the songs rendered by the singers were "O Come All ye Faithful", "Silent Night", "The First Noel", "Joy to the World", "I am Dreaming of a Sai Christmas".

The next programme began at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting by the Mandir



Violin recital by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School.

Veda Group. What followed next was a brilliant rendition of Christmas carols and Bhajans on violin by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School and Higher Secondary School. Brass band display by the Institute band troupe that followed next was also as magnificent as the violin recitals that preceded it. The exuberant





A magnificent band display by the Institute students.

Christmas spirit came alive after this when the students of the Institute presented a beautiful mix of elevating dialogues and Christmas carols to the delight of one and all. The songs presented by them included



Christmas carols by Institute students.

"We Wish you all a Merry Christmas", "What can I Give... What can I Bring", "There is a Song in the Air", "God is Good, All the Time". Excitement in the hall ran high when a host of Santa Clauses, both boys and girls, went hopping and dancing in the hall, distributing chocolates to the devotees while the singers sang "Jingle Bells".

The evening programme began with the entry of Nativity Procession of overseas children in Sai Kulwant Hall, where they offered their salutations at the Samadhi of Bhagavan. This was followed by an illuminating talk by Sri George Bebedelis, Director, Institute of Sathya Sai Education, South Europe. Quoting from the Bible "blessed are the pure of heart because

they will see God", the distinguished speaker observed that man should develop Trikarana Shuddhi (purity of thought, word and deed) as taught by Bhagavan Baba to attain divinity. God can be experienced, he added, with purity of heart only.

Children's Christmas Choir was the next item of the programme which was presented by 78 children from 15 countries. The children sang in all 11 devotional songs and Christmas carols on the theme of the Christmas celebrations "The Power of Love" and to celebrate the advent of



Christmas carols by overseas children.

Jesus Christ. The songs rendered by the children included "The Silver Stars in the Sky", "Shine your Light", "Hold my Hand", "Conquest of Paradise". All the songs were preceded by excellent commentary through which they narrated the Christmas story. The entire presentation was simply excellent which earned a prolonged applause of the devotees.

The devotees were then blessed with the Discourse of Bhagavan. Man, Bhagavan said, becomes true messenger of God when he serves his fellow beings and realises his oneness with God. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the song "Love is My Form".

The programme on 26th December 2019 began with a talk by Sri Jan Floris from



the Netherlands, Chairman, International Christmas Committee which organised the grand Christmas celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam. The distinguished speaker spoke about the power of love which Lord Jesus and Bhagavan Baba came to bless the world with. Narrating an incident when Bhagavan taught to His students to accord first place to God in their life, he called upon the devotees to develop love for God. In conclusion, he thanked the Central Trust, the Ashram staff, the Seva Dal team and devotees who helped to make the Christmas celebrations a grand success. He then introduced the next speaker, Ms. Katarzyna Andersson, a member of Christmas Committee and Educational Coordinator in Poland. Ms. Andersson narrated her experiences of Bhagavan's divine love, which she said she could not find anywhere else. She observed that it was the unconditional love which could take away man's ego and this divine love could be developed by selfless service to mankind.

The last item of the programme was the Christmas drama "The Messenger of God"



The Christmas drama "The Messenger of God" portrayed the illustrious life story of Lord Jesus.

which was performed by Young Adults and children from seven countries of the world. The drama described the story of Jesus through an elderly Sai devotee who narrated it to two youngsters while they were all engaged in the work of decorations in Sai Kulwant Hall during Christmas celebrations. All the scenes were shown as flashbacks of the extraordinary dreams which this elderly devotee was blessed to receive by the grace of Bhagavan. The drama depicted through the words and actions of Jesus that all were born in love and man's actions and words should be filled with love so that love prevails in the world.

In spite of his precious birth as a human being, man leads a life worse than that of animals. Animals are not consumed by envy. They do not take pride in their possessions. They have no bank balances and they have no monthly salaries. They live happily from moment to moment, content with whatever food and shelter they can get. As man's knowledge and skills have increased, his moral calibre has declined. Man has to discover the secret of good life. He has to realise that he has taken birth not for enjoyment of worldly pleasures but to realise his divine destiny by the cultivation of good qualities and by performing good actions. To indulge in demoniac actions while having the human form means degrading human nature.

— Baba



SRI SATHYA SAI VEDA SASTRA PATHASHALA, RISHIKESH

Subramanyam Gorti

A NEW DIMENSION WAS ADDED to fostering of the Vedas and the Vedic lore when Sri Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala was inaugurated at Rishikesh on 12th October 2019.

The genesis of Sri Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala goes back to the Divine visit of Bhagavan to Rishikesh when He blessed the Bhumi Puja of the Veda Pathashala on 9th April 1982. He later called a meeting of some dignitaries and trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Trust and gave guidelines to them about the Pathashala. By His Divine grace, it is envisaged to promote this centre which would be scaled up to a Centre of Excellence in Vedic Education and Research at Rishikesh over the years. The launch of Veda Sastra Pathashala is a pioneering step towards this objective.

The inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala took place at Uttar Prasanthi, Rishikesh, a place surrounded by the lush green natural beauty and serenity of mountains. It was a unique two-day celebration, with the theme “Aapah” (water – being the lifeline of all the living beings). The devotees were blessed with a rare opportunity to participate in a host of spiritual activities and basked in the Divine glory of Bhagavan on the bank of the river Ganga.

Day 1: 12th October 2019

The morning session on 12th October 2019 commenced with invocation of Lord

Varuna and Chandika Parameshwari Mata the combined form of goddesses Kali, Lakshmi and Saraswati. This form of Devi worship is explained in Markandeya Purana and prevalently called as Chandi Paath, Devi Mahatmyam and Durga Saptashati. It comprises 700 Slokas segregated into three sections., viz., – Prathama Charitram, Madhyama Charitram and Uthama Charitram. The Durga Saptashati or Devi Mahatmyam or Chandi Paath describe the supernatural powers of the Holy Mother of the universe, singing her glory and valour



Chandi Paath: Worship of the Divine Mother.

in her victory over all evil powers, which in turn is considered as the victory of Sathya and Dharma over all bad qualities induced by Shadripus (Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya.) present in all in this universe. Goddess Chandika Parameshwari was invoked in the main Kalasha and 16 forms of Upachara were performed to the goddess. The Mahila chanters recited the Lalitha Sahasranama



in perfect pronunciation and unison while doing the Archana using Kumkum.

A Homa was performed with love and devotion reciting Mantras in praise of the goddess. When such a Homa is performed reciting Durga Saptashati to please the Holy Mother, it is called Chandi Homa. Poornahuti symbolising total surrender to Bhagavan Baba was then performed followed by Bhajans and Arati to Bhagavan.

Subsequently, amidst the recitation of Vedic hymns, Sri Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala was officially inaugurated by the Chief Guest (one

the Prayogashala (Computer Lab) of Sri Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala by Sri Sundar Swaminathan, Director of Radio Sai.



Proceedings of the symposium in the auditorium.



Inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala.

of the officials of the accreditation body for Veda Pathashalas under the HRD Ministry, Government of India), Dr. B.G. Pitre, former Director of EHV and Subramanyam Gorti, National Veda Coordinator, SSSSO, India. It was immediately followed by the inauguration of Digital Library as well as

In the afternoon, Auditorium of Sri Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala was inaugurated by the All India President, Sri Nimish Pandya amidst Vedic chants. A symposium was organised at the auditorium which was preceded by a beautiful theme song on Mother Ganga in the form of an audiovisual (produced by Radiosai in association with SSSSO, Maharashtra).

The theme for the symposium was Aapah (Water) because water is at the core of the sustainable development, and critical for socio-economic development, food production and survival of human beings.

It is the urgent need of the hour to address this global crisis caused by either insufficient water or excess of flooding water. The planet earth has finite resources and the planet needs to be managed properly to pass on the legacy to the future generations. Ancient India had used the Vedic prescriptions that date thousands



of years back, for sustainable planet and balanced ecology. Reference to taking a leaf out of Vedic insight, panel discussion was on ways to meet the needs of the modern society,

The topic of the symposium was “Contemporary Challenges of Environment, Ecology and Agriculture – Vedic Ways to Address these Challenges”. Each guest scholar delivered a talk on the topic. The guest scholars who delivered talks on the above topic included the Chief Guest (former professor of Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupathi), Prof. Chandrashekhar Mattur (former professor of Sri Sathya Sai College, Seshadripuram, Bengaluru) and Dr. Anuradha Choudry (Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur). Subsequently, a documentary film produced by Radiosai on Bhagavan Baba's Divine visit to Rishikesh was played. The symposium concluded with Arati to Bhagavan.

The evening session commenced with Vedic recitation followed by a scintillating music programme titled ‘Raaga Sudha’ rendered by the singers from SSSSO, West Bengal. After that, a ballet on ‘Dashaavatara’ was presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Rishikesh followed by heart soothing songs titled ‘Bhaava Sudha’ sung by a group of singers of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations from various States of the country. The programme concluded with Ganga Arati followed by Arati to Bhagavan Baba.

Day 2: 13th October 2019

The morning session of 13th October 2019 witnessed planting of Vata Vriksha

(banyan tree) titled Tapo Vriksha (tree of spiritual austerities) at Uttar Prasanthi which is verily the inspiration received from Bhagavan Baba. Sixty years ago, on 29 June 1959 and that too on Purnima day, (full moon day of the month) Bhagavan had blessed a similar Tapo Vriksha at Prasanthi Nilayam. Before the plantation of Vata Vriksha, Dakshinamurthy Homa was performed to please Lord Dakshinamurthy. It is none other than our loving Lord Bhagavan Baba Himself. The installation of Dakshinamurthy Yantra as well as planting of Vata Vriksha sapling was done by Smt. and Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President as well as Smt. and Sri Ravish Khanna, Convener of Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand along with the office bearers of SSSSO, India.

After the banyan tree was planted over spiritually charged Dakshinamurthy Yantra, Samuhika Ahuti was performed for Sri Sathya Sai Gayatri Homa. It was followed by mass recitation of Gayatri (as demonstrated by Bhagavan) and Sri Sathya Sai Ashtottarashata Namavali. Over the years, this tree will grow into a mighty Dhyana Vriksha, the Tree of Meditation at Uttar Prasanthi and emerge as a great spiritual centre.

The two-day Veda retreat eventually came to an end after Bhajans and Arati. The devotees had the bond of love with Bhagavan Baba and their parched souls experienced torrential downpour of Ananda in the profusion of His glory on this historic occasion.

– The author Sri Subramanyam Gorti is National Veda Coordinator, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, India.



NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

RUSSIA

“WE ARE ONE FAMILY” WAS the theme of a Family Camp organised on the shore of the Caspian Sea in late August 2019. More than 55 people including about 40 persons from Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Central and North-Western regions of Russia participated in



Family Camp on the shore of the Caspian Sea.

the camp. The participants were divided into five family groups representing the five values, viz., Love, Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Non-violence; and each family came up with inspiring family mottos, songs and words. Each morning began with an uplifting meditation session and the group activity was focused on one of the five values chosen for the day. Everyday, one of the Unity Flower Petals was revealed. In order to open the petal by the end of the day, the participants had to perform good deeds during the day. The camp included creative workshops for children, including one in which the children created a new cartoon, “Book Monster”, which emphasised the importance of reading books. At the end of each day, there were

theatrical performances, videos on how to create goodness in life, poems and dance performances. On the last day, all shared their impressions of the camp around a wonderful, warm campfire.

THAILAND

Scholars representing Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity and Buddhism participated in a “Power of Faith” Conference on 21st September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The programme, attended by over 130 people, began with a video on prayers from various religions. Dr. Artong Jumsai, CEO of the Sathya



Conference on “Power of Faith”, Bangkok, Thailand.

Sai School in Thailand, welcomed the audience. Dr. Teerakiat Jareonsettasin, former Education Minister of Thailand, spoke about the importance of this event, followed by Sri Manoj Kumar, Chair of Zone 4B of the SSIO, who gave an overview of the Sai Organisation. After these introductions, the SSE children performed a musical programme based on the Unity of Faiths. The National Council President encouraged greater participation in such events in her closing remarks.



HUNGARY

The Angel Garden, a campsite known for its calm and tranquil surroundings in the picturesque Cserhat region in Northern Hungary, was the venue for the annual Sai Family Retreat in June 2019. The event was attended by over 40 enthusiastic people. Each day started off with Veda chanting, followed by various exercises, including yoga. A talent show allowed the participants to showcase their skills in poetry, storytelling and dancing. Sprinkled throughout this retreat were educational lectures on how to regain control over our thoughts and feelings. The retreat ended with a session called "Heart to Hearth", wherein participants exchanged uplifting spiritual experiences in their lives. The participation in the retreat was so rewarding that everyone looked forward to the next annual Sai Family Retreat.

SURINAME

As part of Id-ul-Adha festival service activity, volunteers from the Sathya Sai Centre Bhavan in Suriname lovingly packed food packages and distributed to the needy on 9th August 2019. Each package consisted of milk, oil, brown sugar, flour, yellow peas, garlic, peanut butter, kidney beans, spaghetti, chickpeas and syrup, along with toothpaste and bath soap.

ZAMBIA

The Sathya Sai school, located in Ndola's Pamodzi township was established in 1992. Two students from the school recently won the National Spelling Bee competition in the Junior Secondary and Primary categories. These students represented Zambia at the Africa Spelling



Spelling Bee competition, Zambia.

Bee competition held in Kampala, Uganda in October 2019, bringing great joy to everyone at the school. In recognising the incredible achievement of the students who came from underprivileged backgrounds, Sri Felix Ngoma, the Provincial Education Officer, said, "We are proud as a province that out of the three provinces that participated in the National Spelling Bee Competition, Sathya Sai School came first, and we wish you well as you go to represent Zambia in Uganda". He also congratulated the school for delivering excellent academic results.

BHARAT

Kerala: With Swami's immense grace, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Kerala celebrated "94 Years of Pure Love" with participations at family, Samithi and district levels.

Across the State, all the district and Samithi units organised Bhajans, Nagar Sankirtan, cultural programmes, processions, Satsangs, hospital and street Narayana Seva, kit distribution, music programmes and Bal Vikas programmes.

A total of 1,937 families participated and 31,433 people benefited from Narayana Seva including 677 from old age home and orphanage. About 2,500 students and



Bhagavan's 94th Birthday celebrations.

teachers participated from educational institutions. Major activities undertaken across the State were: distribution of kits for newborn babies, wheelchairs for patients and needy, installation of water purifiers in public places for safe and pure drinking water, food and dress distribution in orphanages and schools. Pension was given to patients (₹1000 for five members) and ₹1,000 for 10 members) and people who are alone and elderly.

Sri Sathya Sai Village Integrated Programme (SSSVIP) Wing of Kerala Sai Organisation organised one-day Grama



Grama Seva in 54 villages.

Seva across the State in 54 villages of 14 districts on 17th November 2019. The total number of beneficiaries was 2,542. The activities covered were: house / colony visits, distribution of food packets

and clothes, awareness camps on health and hygiene, classes on parenting, spiritual sessions, camp on Disaster Management, medical camps, planting of saplings, cleaning of premises, Bhajans and Satsang, veterinary camp, organic farming, Narayana Seva and Prem Dhara (water purifier installation).

Rajasthan: A State Youth Conference was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Rajasthan at Sri Sathya Sai PG College for Women, Jaipur on 19th and 20th October 2019. The theme of the conference was "Let's Follow our Master". In the various sessions of the conference, topics discussed included "Message of Sathya Sai to the Youth", "Spirituality for the Youth", "Music for Self-transformation", "Disaster Management", "Availability and Ability", etc. There were several interactive sessions in which value-oriented games were played. Youth keenly took part in all



State Youth Conference, Rajasthan.

these activities. The proceedings of the first day concluded with the presentation of a devotional music programme by the youth of Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Jaipur. On the next day of the conference, 20th October 2019, a yoga session was organised which was followed by Walk for Values, in which youth moved through the streets of the nearby area to spread the message of Swami while singing Bhajans.



Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

Prasanthi Nilayam, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh - 515134

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Experience on Construction Projects and maintenance of buildings and sewage systems, etc.

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– Human Resources Consultant

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Admission criteria for class I**

Age Limit: 5 ½ years to 6 ½ years as on 30th September 2020.

The Date of Birth should be between 30th March 2014 to 30th March 2015.

**** Note:** Admissions for class I will be under Random method.

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Only English Medium students are eligible to apply.

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The last date for submission of filled in application form will be 20th February 2020.

– Principal





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- 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.
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– Baba

