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"There is a vast difference between Anuraga (passion) and Prema (love). Most of the worldly relationships fall under the category of Anuraga. Passion is attachment to worldly relationships, materials and objects. It is not love in true sense. There is selfishness in a husband's love towards his wife. A wife loves her husband out of selfishness. In everyone, there is selfishness to some degree or the other. People are mostly full of passion, not love. Love towards God is true love."

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AVATAR VANI

ONLY TRUE LOVE EARNS GOD'S GRACE

THE BHAGAVATA GLORIFIES DIVINE LOVE

THE BHAGAVADGITA GAVE TO THE world a unique universal message of oneness. It became popular all over the world. It is revered not only by the Bharatiyas but by western countries also. Many people have adopted into their lives the injunctions of the Gita and derived immense benefit.

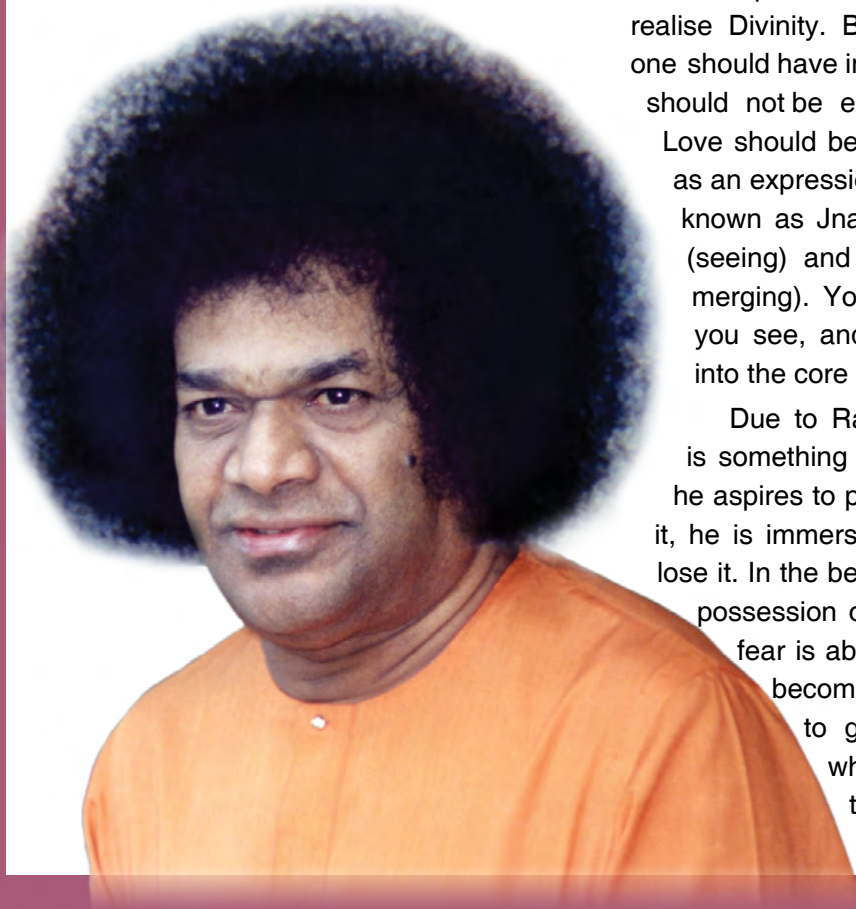
Get Rid of Attachment, Fear and Anger

The message of the Gita is not confined to a particular country, community or religion.

It propagates a philosophy that is universal and is pertinent to every human being. Life culminates in victory when lived on the path of righteousness, as propounded in the Gita. The seeker is required to stick to certain principles for his own benefit as well as that of society. The Gita insists that a seeker must give up Raga, Bhaya and Krodha (Veeta Raga Bhaya Krodha). Raga means attachment, Bhaya means fear and Krodha means anger. Only a person who conquers these three enemies can realise Divinity. Besides controlling them, one should have intense love for God. Love should not be expressed as a formality.

Love should be an experience as much as an expression. There are three steps known as Jnatum (knowing), Drastum (seeing) and Pravestum (entering or merging). You must experience what you see, and absorb the experience into the core of your being.

Due to Raga one feels that there is something different from him which he aspires to possess; and after getting it, he is immersed in fear that he might lose it. In the beginning, the fear is about possession of a thing and thereafter, fear is about retaining it. A person becomes angry when he fails to get the desired thing or when it is lost. Therefore, there is an inseparable



connection between Raga, Bhaya and Krodha. They are intertwined. Attachment leads to fear and fear leads to frustration. One should have only fear of sin and not of the world.

Once a Gopika named Niraja told her other Gopika friends, “Chase the devil of fear out. One should be afraid of sin. Why are you afraid of the world? God entered into Nature as Jiva (living being) and is manifesting Divinity on earth. People of the world may cry like crows. Will the cuckoo care when crows make noise? So, friends, do not be afraid of the world. We are following the royal path of aspiring for bliss of Krishna’s proximity. We need not be afraid of what people say”. You should be afraid of Papa (sin), but not Loka (world). You should always observe two things – fear of sin and love for God.

Love for God only is True Love

Mother stands for patience and forbearance. She bears the child in the womb for nine months. She is prepared to sacrifice her life for the sake of the child. In Sanskrit, woman is called Stree. This word has three letters in it – Sa, Ta, Ra. Sa denotes the quality of Sattwa or piety, Ta stands for Tamas or passiveness, and Ra denotes Rajas, indicating passionate care. All these three qualities are in balance in Stree (woman). Even Avatars take birth from the womb of their mother. Could Rama come to earth without Kausalya? Could Krishna take birth without Devaki? Only mother’s love is true and pure. Worldly love cannot be called Prema; it is Anuraga.

There is a vast difference between Anuraga (passion) and Prema (love). Most of the worldly relationships fall under the category of Anuraga. Anuraga is attachment to worldly relationships, materials and

Gopikas were always filled with sacred, loving thoughts of Krishna. They never had any desire other than Krishna. But, unfortunately, some scholars belittle this Divine love, calling it mundane and sensual. The Bhagavata expatiates on oneness of Jiva (individual soul) and Deva (Supreme Being). The essence of Gopika’s life is Divine love. They are shining examples of unsullied yearning for proximity and mergence with God.

objects. It is not love in true sense. There is selfishness in a husband’s love towards his wife. Similarly, there is some amount of selfishness in the love of a wife for her husband. In everyone, there is selfishness to some degree or the other. People are mostly full of passion, not love. Love towards God is true love. Passion is related to worldly objects, whereas love is related to God. The former is Padartha (materialistic) and the latter is Parartha (spiritualistic). The entire life of man is based on this two-lettered word, Prema (love). Gopikas were perfect examples of true love, because their hearts were totally dedicated to Lord Krishna. They never cared for anybody or anything other than Krishna. They spent every moment of their life in the thoughts of Krishna, and reached supreme state of bliss. The Gopikas indeed craved to see Krishna and yearned to see His beautiful form.

People travel long distances to go to a temple. But when they stand face to face with the idol in the temple, they are prone to close their eyes. What does it imply? A devotee must see God with the eyes of

wisdom, not the physical eyes. Just when the Gopikas closed their eyes, Krishna disappeared. They started searching for Him in the garden, in the forest and everywhere. One Gopika stood in front of a tree and asked, "Oh tree! Have you seen Krishna passing this way"? This is an indication of Gopika's concept of God. The Gopikas knew that God is present in a rock and a tree as well as a human being. They believed that Lord Krishna is perceptible to all beings.

Another Gopika sought to know from a jasmine creeper: "Oh jasmine! Please tell me if Krishna, the dark-complexioned one, the lotus-eyed one, the one who showers nectar of compassion through His looks, with a bewitching smile on His face, is hiding in your shrubs"! You see, the trees and shrubs are also sentient objects. Everything is brimming with life. The Gopikas were always lost in the thoughts of Krishna just as the Chakora bird always looks at the moon only; it never cares to look at any other light.

Some students asked Me about the significance of Krishna stealing butter. Just as we obtain butter after a long churning of curd, one can obtain the butter of love after churning the heart. This kind of butter is what pleases Krishna. One day, a big group of Gopikas went to Yashoda and complained that Krishna was stealing butter from their houses. Yashoda held Krishna by hand and sternly asked, "When I give You plateful of butter, You will not touch it; but You go to every house to steal butter. Why are You causing trouble in the village"? Looking like a most innocent lad, Krishna said, "Mother! Why do you chide Me? Those Gopikas wanted to offer butter to God, and God took the offering. Why should I be punished for this"? It was indeed an indication that

Krishna was none other than their object of worship.

One day, Radha went to the Yamuna river to fetch water. Even while collecting water, she was lost in loving thoughts of Krishna. Krishna saw her and laughed spontaneously. Krishna's bliss (Aahladam) turned into a flame of light and entered Radha's heart. That is the reason why Radha is known by the epithet 'Aahladini'. Krishna was intensely pleased with her devotion and love. From that moment till this day, people look at Radha as always associated with Krishna, and Krishna associated with Radha. They became inseparable. Because of this sacred quality of love, woman's name always precedes when we talk of couples such as Radha-Krishna, Sita-Rama, and Parvati-Parameswara. Woman stands as an ideal of devotion. Many husbands become devotees by the influence of their wives.

Woman represents Bhakti (devotion), while man represents Jnana (wisdom). However, man can reach only the audience hall of God's palace, whereas woman has direct access into the inner chambers of His abode. Jnana can take you only up to the doorstep of God. There were however many pious people, such as Surdas, Tulsidas, Kabir and Ramdas, who could attain mergence with God through the path of devotion. Their names are etched in letters of gold in the annals of history because of their one-pointed devotion to God. Educated people these days strive to acquire material knowledge, forgetting the real knowledge, that of God.

Never Use your Knowledge to Deceive others

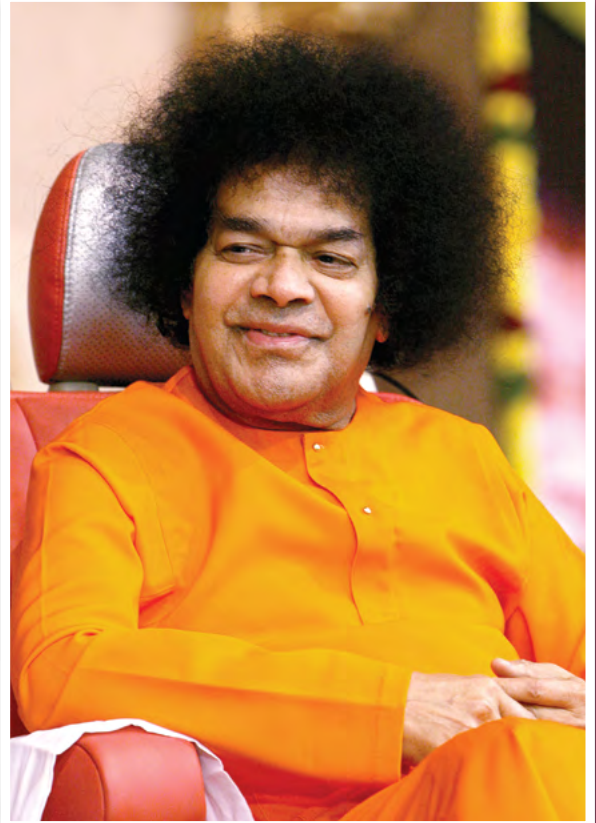
One day, a Gopala (cowherd boy) was grazing his cows, sheep and goats near the Govardhan mountain. Suddenly, there



came a downpour of rain. So, he took shelter in a small cave. There he found a beautiful shining white stone. Its beauty filled him with great joy. He thought, "This shiny white stone will look brighter if it is tied to the neck of my calf which has a beautiful black colour. One day Krishna will certainly notice this, and thus I can please Him". He then picked up the stone and tied it around the neck of his beautiful black calf. Looking

a diamond of high value. So, he asked the Gopala, "Why don't you sell this stone to me! I will give you a good price". The Gopala felt that he would be able to buy with this money many more stones of this kind, and adorn the necks of all his calves. Thus, the jeweller got the valuable diamond from the Gopala for a pittance. On the way, the jeweller was looking at the diamond, feeling proud that somehow he could trick the cowherd and

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at his beautiful calf and the shining diamond on its neck, the Gopala was lost in joy and started singing: "Beauty is joy, joy is nectar of life..." One day, a jeweller passed by the Govardhan mountain area, where the Gopala was grazing his cattle. The jeweller was attracted by the brilliance of the stone. He went near the calf and examined the stone closely. Instantly, he knew that it was

obtain a diamond worth lakhs of rupees. He was shocked when the diamond broke into pieces. The broken diamond spoke to him, "You have tricked the guileless Gopala who loved my beauty. He is the one who knows the real worth of a diamond. You are only a selfish and deceitful man. You have used your knowledge in trickery. So, my heart



is broken". You see, sincere devotion is superior to worldly love.

Gopikas are True Examples of Love for God

Once Krishna sent Uddhava to Brindavan with His letter addressed to Gopikas. He called all Gopikas and asked them to read the message of Krishna. But not even one Gopika looked at Uddhava. The very mention of Krishna's name sent all of them into an ecstatic joy. The Gopikas spotted a bee on a flower and talked to Uddhava addressing the bee. Uddhava pleaded with them to read Krishna's letter. Without looking at Uddhava, the Gopikas started talking to the bee. One Gopika said, "O bee! I have little education. I cannot read. So, you read yourself". Another Gopika said, "Seeing the beautiful writing of Krishna, my eyes may shed tears and spoil the letter. Therefore, I do not want to read". The third Gopika said, "O bee! My entire body is seething with heat due to pangs of separation from Krishna. The heat may scorch the letter. Tell Krishna to come here in person and pacify our burning hearts". Shedding tears, she started singing:

O bee! Go and tell dearest Krishna to come here just once and shower His Divine nectar of love on us. Let Him come closer and glance at us.

(Telugu Song)

Another Gopika said:

O bee! Tell dearest Krishna to come once and irrigate our parched hearts with the water of His love.

(Telugu Song)

Radha said:

O bee, won't you tell Him that our garland of hearts is in shambles and ask Him to set it right and wear on His chest.

We cannot sustain our lives any longer.

(Telugu Song)

This garland of messages from Gopikas became highly popular by the name "Bhramara Geet" (song of bees).

Gopikas were always filled with sacred, loving thoughts of Krishna. They never had any desire other than for Krishna. But, unfortunately, some scholars belittle this Divine love, calling it mundane and sensual. The Bhagavata expatiates on oneness of Jiva (individual soul) and Deva (Supreme Being). The essence of Gopikas' life is Divine love. They are shining examples of unsullied yearning for proximity and mergence with God.

This is how a Gopika expressed her intense longing for Krishna:

*Were You a tree, growing upwards,
I would cling to You like a creeper;
Were You a blossoming flower,
I would hover over You like a bee;
Were You the mountain Meru,
I would cascade like a waterfall;
Were You the boundless sky,
I would be in You like a star;
Were You the bottomless deep ocean,
I would merge in You like a river;
Where are You, Oh Krishna?
Whither have You gone, Krishna!
Have You no pity, Krishna! Krishna!*

(Telugu Poem)

One day, a Gopika complained to Yashoda, "O Yashoda! Whenever we Gopikas step out to sell milk, your Krishna asks us to pay tax. He throws stones on our milk filled pots and makes holes in them". Yashoda held Krishna by hand and sternly asked, "Why should You demand tax from these Gopikas? Stop this mischief". Krishna



replied, "Mother, I do not know anything. God gave them milk, and He is demanding tax". Thus, in every act and speech of Krishna, there was proof of His Divinity.

In the Gita, Krishna told Arjuna:

Man-mana Bhava Mad-bhakto

Mad-yaji Maam Namaskuru.

(Always think of Me and become My devotee. Worship Me and offer your homage unto Me.)

Sarva-dharmaan Parityajya

Maam Ekam Saranam Vraja

Aham Tvaa Sarva-paapebhyo

Mokshayishyaami Maa Shuchah.

(Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins. Have no fear.)

The Lord assured Arjuna that He would save him from all sins when he took refuge only in Him. Gopikas of the Bhagavata are also true examples of total surrender and selfless love. They never desired any worldly things. Theirs was true love that never expected any return. The entire Bhagavata is about Divine Love only.

Radha's end was nearing. One day, she sat on the bank of the Yamuna with her heart filled with melancholy. She cried, "O Krishna! For whose sake am I living? There is no meaning to life without You. There is no refuge other than You. I live for Your sake only. My mind is ever transfixed on Your form. Won't You come to see me? Appear to me at least in dream once". This is eternal love. This cannot be termed Raga or Anuraga. True love follows only one path; there is no other path.

One day, Yashoda was very angry with Krishna. She wanted to tie Him to a grain-pounder with a rope. Krishna started

running. Looking at it, one Gopika said, "Krishna, You cannot run like this for long. Your mother will catch You somehow. I can show You a place where You can hide safely. Look, your complexion is dark, and the inner chamber of my heart is also dark. Hide yourself in it. Yashoda cannot find you, and at the same time, my heart will get filled with happiness".

At the time when Krishna was dancing on the hoods of the dreadful snake Kaaliya, one Gopika prayed to Him, "Krishna, this snake Kaaliya is dark, this river Yamuna is dark, Your complexion is dark and the sky is getting dark. Please do not fill our hearts with darkness. I pray that You brighten the lakes of our hearts with the flame of Your love. I wish that You project brightness on the background of darkness". There was not an iota of selfishness in Gopikas. The sweetness of the Bhagavata can be explained and experienced for ages. Purity of the characters of the Bhagavata will turn readers' hearts pure. Bhagavata is an ocean of devotion. Vyasa, the great sage of wisdom, became restless after writing the magnum opus the Mahabharata. He could regain peace only after writing Srimad Bhagavata.

You should rise from the level of worldly attachments to the level of selfless love for God. Worldly attainments have no reality. All the worldly attachments are temporary; they are not permanent. You should realise that there is a spark of Divinity in every being. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names).

– **Bhagavan's Divine Discourse at Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 29th April 1992.**



SUMMER COURSE IN INDIAN CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY 2018

A SUMMER COURSE in Indian Culture and Spirituality organised by Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning from 8th to 10th June 2018 at Prasanthi Nilayam marked the beginning of the academic year 2018 for students and teachers of all the four campuses of the university, as well as Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music, Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam (Class XI and Class XII) and Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam English Medium School, Rajamahendravam. It was meant to expose the students, especially the newcomers, to the rich cultural heritage of Bharat and orient them to Bhagavan's Integral System of Education. The morning sessions of the Summer Course were held in Poornachandra Auditorium while the evening sessions were conducted in Sai Kulwant Hall. Over 2,500 students and 200 teachers participated in the Summer Course.

Day 1 – 8th June 2018

The first session of the Summer Course began with invocatory Veda chanting by students of the Muddenahalli Campus at 8.30 a.m. in Poornachandra Auditorium. It was followed by a welcome address by Sri Ruchir Desai, Associate Professor, Department of Management and Commerce, SSSIHL who traced the evolution of the Summer Course from its inception, way back in 1972 and expressed the hope that the Summer Course would provide to participants new insights into rich cultural heritage of India.



A section of the participants in the Summer Course in Poornachandra Auditorium.

In his Inaugural Address, Prof. K.B.R. Varma, Vice Chancellor of the Institute highlighted the importance of spirituality in education and reiterated the necessity for the right kind of education to build the character of students besides academic excellence. He also spoke at great length about the role of culture in benefiting both, the individual and society.

A brief video of Bhagavan Baba's Divine Discourse was then broadcast in which He emphasised the nobility and glory of Indian culture that was characterised by sacred thoughts and feelings, not narrow-mindedness. The essence of Bharatiya culture was universal happiness, He said. Real culture, He said, was that which transformed man by removing his bad qualities and inculcating good qualities.

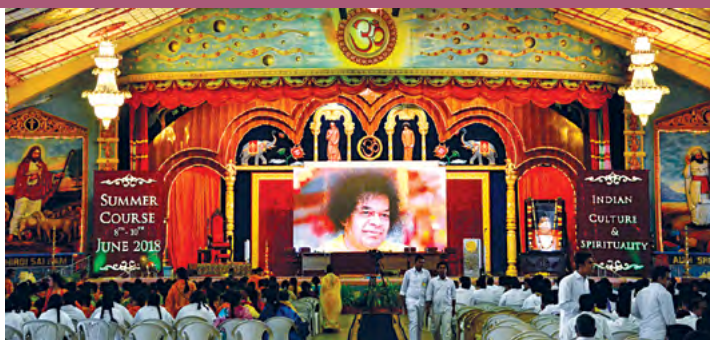
This was followed by a panel discussion, titled, *Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti, Sangha Neeti* (Love for God, Fear of Sin, Morality in Society). The panelists comprising teachers from the university shared myriad experiences and narrated how people who carried out good and moral acts in society



were led to God and developed love for the Almighty.

The morning session was drawn to a close by soulful rendition of various Hindustani and Carnatic songs presented by the singers and musicians from the Department of Music, SSSIHL. A cascade of devotional songs interspersed with insightful commentary extolled the beauty and importance of Nama Sankirtana and Namasmarana (singing and recollecting the Divine name of the Lord) in the programme aptly titled, "Naam Ratan Dhana Payo".

The evening session of the first day of the event commenced in Sai Kulwant Hall with a summary presentation of the morning programme followed by three speeches by students and faculty of the university. The first speaker, Kumari Kanchan Kumar, a student of Anantapur Campus spoke on the glory of Bharatiya culture, the entire edifice of which was based on the interconnectedness of man with Nature. Speaking on the oneness of man and Nature, she urged one and all to realise this unity and attain Divinity. The next speaker, Sri Suvam Gurung, a student of Muddenahalli Campus, spoke on the topic "Significance of Prayer". Defining prayer as communion with God, the speaker said it should come from the depth of the heart. Love, faith and surrender, he added, were the essential components of prayer. Lastly, Sri Darshan Gera, Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science spoke on the topic "Sai Vibhuti". He said, Vibhuti or holy ash signified desirelessness and auspiciousness and could lead man to liberation. He narrated examples of the power of Vibhuti how it



An interactive session of the Summer Course.

healed diseases, taught spiritual lessons and created faith in the Divinity of Bhagavan Baba.

Day 2 – 9th June 2018

Following the invocatory Veda chanting by the students of Brindavan Campus, the second day of the Summer Course commenced at 8.30 a.m. in Poornachandra Auditorium with a talk by Ms. Rani Java, Management Consultant, Bengaluru. True to the title of her talk – "Living with Divinity is True Education" – the distinguished speaker shared several personal experiences she had with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba which brought to the fore several important insights, the most significant and recurring one being the need to have faith in Bhagavan Baba with complete surrender. She also narrated several instances of how Baba helped her in times of need and shared numerous experiences of her journey of devotional evolution and how she grew to love and revere Bhagavan Baba as God.

Following this, a quiz on Bhagavan Baba's Life and Teachings: Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan, saw participation from students of the university and school. The three areas of focus on the quiz were: His Divinity, His Message and His Life. The last item of the morning session was a delightful drama by teachers, doctoral research scholars and students of the university. Titled



“Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitaha” (Dharma protects those who protect Dharma), it gave instances from the Mahabharata, portraying the timeless war between good and evil and how God always stood by the good.

The evening session commenced in Sai Kulwant Hall with a summary presentation of the morning session followed by three speeches by students and faculty of the university. The topic of the first speaker, Sri Ujjwal Priyadarshi, a student of Brindavan Campus, was “Gratitude to my Master”. Citing several instances of his interactions with Bhagavan Baba, right from his time at Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, he focused on the love of Sai for all His children and urged them to leave the future to the Lord as He knows what is best for them. The next speaker was Sri Rinil Khatri, a student of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. His talk, “White and Orange”, underlined the story of the relationship between God and His devotee: an unending saga of pure love, as he called it. The metaphor of orange (God) and white (man) was well depicted by examples of how the orange influences the white, once we attach ourselves to it with faith and surrender. The last speaker, Sri G. Aditya, Doctoral Research Scholar, Department of Management and Commerce acknowledged his indebtedness to Bhagavan Baba in his talk, “Guru Seva”. He spoke about how Sai Himself lovingly taught Him lessons in service, such as perfection in performance. He emphasised that the Guru looked at one’s availability and not ability.

Day 3 – 10th June 2018

The proceedings of the final day of the Summer Course began with Veda chanting by the students of the Anantapur Campus in Poornachandra Auditorium at 8.30 a.m. After this, Swami Atmashradhdhananda, Ramakrishna Math, Belur, Howrah gave a

wonderful talk on “Atmano Mokshartham Jagat Hitaya Cha” (striving for one’s emancipation and welfare of the world). He traced the evolution of man’s journey in life through the four Purusharthas of Kama, Artha, Moksha to Dharma in a practical manner. Referring to the Kathopanishad, he explained the nature of heaven and hell being non-eternal and how each individual’s period of stay there depended on his / her Karma. He ended his talk by reiterating the need for Sraddha (steadfast faith) to tread the path of self-emancipation and world-welfare.

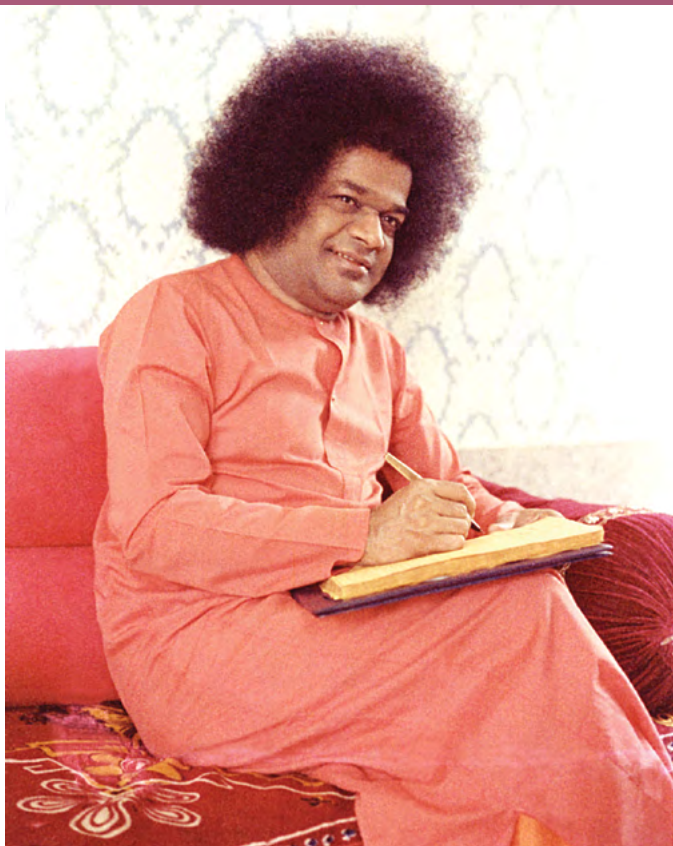
Next up was a Panel Discussion, “Self-confidence to Self-realisation”. References were made to Bhagavan Baba’s illustration of how self-confidence was the foundation, self-satisfaction was the wall, self-sacrifice, the roof and Self-realisation, the life lived in this mansion. The entire discussion was replete with profound insights, shared through personal experiences, short video clips, and a comprehensive discussion on every step of the journey from self-confidence to Self-realisation.

As per the tradition, new faculty that joined the Institute were welcomed and those who retired were felicitated and honoured for their outstanding service and contribution to the Institute.

Delivering the valedictory address, Prof. (Miss) Rajeshwari C. Patel, Director, Anantapur Campus summed up the lessons learnt during the three days of the Summer Course and emphasised the principles of unity and togetherness.

Following the vote of thanks, Arati to Bhagavan at 12.45 p.m. marked the conclusion of the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality 2018.





BHAGAVAN WRITES FOR SANATHANA SARATHI

WHEN BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA STARTED SANATHANA SARATHI in February 1958, He also began writing an article for it every month from its very first issue and continued writing without any break up to October 1984. All these articles were written in perfect sequence as these were meant to be compiled in the form of books which were called Vahini series. To acquaint our readers how these articles were written by Bhagavan, we reproduce Bhagavan's handwritten articles along with their translation that formed the 16th and final book of Vahini series named "Leela Kaivalya Vahini" (Stream of Cosmic Consciousness Divine). Expounding the profound knowledge of the Vedas in question-answer form, these articles are little gems of spiritual wisdom. We start with first part of the first article which is in the form of introduction of "Leela Kaivalya Vahini" and states its significance. This article was written by Bhagavan for March 1984 issue of Sanathana Sarathi. (Please see the second part of this article in the next issue of Sanathana Sarathi.)



[illegible]

వీలాకైవల్య వాహిని

పారమార్థిక సాధనలు, భక్తి ప్రేరిత కార్యములు. అనగా పూజ, భజన, ధ్యానము మున్నగునవి. వీనినిగూర్చి వాదము లాడరాదు. వాటియొక్క లోతుపాతులు తెలియక వాదము లాడుటకంటే సాధనచేసి చూచుట మంచిది. పారమార్థిక జీవన భావము తాత్వికముగను, రసానుభూతి యోగ్యముగను, సాధకులను ఆకర్షించును. కేవలము ఆకర్షించినంతమాత్రమున ఆనందము చేకూరదు. సాధనను ఆరంభించుట మంచిది. అయితే, అట్లు సాధనను ఆరంభించక పూర్వమే తమ స్థితి విశదముగా నిర్వహించవలెను.

ప్రస్తుతకాలమున నుండు మతములన్నియు నేటి యువకులకు అసంతృప్తికరములు. కొన్ని కాలానుగుణ్యముకాక మిక్కిలి పాతపడ్డవిగను, కొన్ని దేశానుగుణ్యములుకాక విదేశీయరూపమైనవిగను, మరికొన్ని కేవలము అసభ్యతాదూషితములైనవిగను వుండుటచేత, తమ మిత్రులచే పరిహసింప బడుదుమేమో అని, ఈనాటి యువకులకు అమిత భీతి. అట్టివారు కేవలము మాటలతోనే కాలయాపన చేతురు. వేలవేలు గ్రంథములు చదువుచు సాధనరూపమైనదియేదియు చేయక పూరకుందురు. అట్టివారే వాదములాడుటకు వత్తురు ముందుకు.

కోటి గ్రంథముల పఠనముకంటే ఎక్కువ విలువగలది, అదే యధార్థ జ్ఞానము. లేశమైనను సాధనవలన సాధించుట, ప్రత్యక్షానుభూతివలన మాత్రమే అట్టిది ప్రాప్తించును. ఈ జ్ఞానము అభివృద్ధి అగుకొలదీ ఇతరులతో వాదములాడక తనతో తాను వాదములాడి వాస్తవ తత్త్వమును గుర్తించును.

(సశేషం)



LEELA KAIVALYA VAHINI

(Stream of Cosmic Sport Divine)

Spiritual practices like Puja (worship), Bhajan (adoration) and Dhyana (meditation) are activities prompted by Bhakti (devotion) to higher powers. Controversy about their efficacy should not be indulged in by those, who are unaware of the depths and heights to which they can lead. These can be gained and judged only through actual practice. The proof lies in one's personal experience only.

The longing for the supersensory, Paramarthika Jivan (spiritual life) is aroused in the seeker, either by a quest for fundamental principles, or by the felt need for lasting joy. Mere longing will not grant success. Sadhana (spiritual practice) has to be undertaken. It is important also to examine oneself and assess in detail one's aspirations and attitudes, before embarking on the process. For, contemporary religions, which profess to guide seekers in this task, do not infuse confidence in the youth. They feel that some of these have been shaped by the conditions of the era, in which they emerged. Many have become outdated. Some are specifically linked with regions or states. Some have been imposed and moulded by foreign people. And some strike them as indecent and injurious. Young aspirants for higher life feel they will be ridiculed, if they practise them. So, they indulge in incessant talk and turning over the pages of thousands of books! They stay away even from the first step of Sadhana as prescribed in any of the many religions. Such are the critics and controversialists, who relish the confusion they create.

Far more valuable than the scholarship gathered from a million books is the grain of wisdom, gained through a session of meditation. That Jnana (wisdom), however slight, is a precious acquisition. It is the product of personal Sadhana and indisputable, authentic experience. As one cultivates and develops this grain of wisdom, controversy and criticism will cease. All arguments will be with one's lower self only, until the Truth stands revealed. Self-confidence is essential for a person to enter on this path of spiritual practice.

– To be continued...



MY EXPERIENCES OF BHAGAVAN'S DIVINITY

V.S.R.K. Prasad

MY MOTHER HAD SWAMI'S Darshan for the first time at a devotee's house in the year 1949, while we were residing in Madras (Chennai). Upon Swami's command, the entire family went to Puttaparthi. The Prasanthi Nilayam Mandir was under construction at that time. Swami used to go in a car along with a devotee called Krishna to supervise construction work. During the Mandir inauguration on 23rd November 1950, I remember well that when Swami sprinkled coconut water on devotees with His own hand out of a silver bucket, the drops of coconut water which fell on the ground turned into rings and lockets, with Swami's face embossed on them.

Prasanthi Nilayam in Early Days

In those days, facilities at Prasanthi Nilayam were meagre. The devotees had to make their own arrangements for accommodation and cooking. So, we used to carry with us heavy luggage as and when we visited. We used to stay in a tent along with Sri Venkatamuni's family from Chennai. As there was no electricity at Puttaparthi in those days, petromax lights were used. We would walk to Chitravathi before dawn for our ablutions. There used to be a small number of devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam, and so we had the chance of moving close with Swami. We were permitted even to go to Swami's room without any restriction.

There were two sessions of highly inspiring and blissful Bhajans everyday. Chennai used to lead Bhajans from the



from 11 to 12 (or 9 to 10 during summer) in the daytime, and from 6 to 7 in the evening. Wonderful songs such as, "Sri Ganesha, Sivuni Kumara, Sritajana Vinutha Prabho", "Sri Sai Jaya Jaya Sai Parthi Nilaya", "Oh Bhagavan..." were rendered in a blissful atmosphere. As far as my memory goes, the first song from ladies' side was always led by Sri Kasturi's wife, followed by Smt. Krishnamma, Smt. Venkamma (the elder sister of Swami) and Kuppam family. Two brothers Raman and Lakshman from



men's side. Raja Reddy had not come to Swami's fold by then. He came in the year 1956. Sri Seshagiri Rao used to offer Arati at the end of the Bhajans. We used to follow Swami to Chitravathi on some evenings. We would lose our sense of time while Swami engaged us in spiritual discussions.

We used to visit Puttaparthi during summer holidays every year. "This is your home. You may come here any time you wish," Swami used to write to us in His letters. We would spend one or two months with Swami during each visit. Whenever we, the children resorted to mischief or indiscipline, Swami would correct us through a mild reprimand. Srimati Easwaramma and Sri Pedda Venkama Raju, the parents of Swami, were very pious and noble-hearted. They treated all the visiting devotees with great love and affection. Sri Pedda Venkama Raju would even go to the weekly market of either Bukkapatnam or Kothacheruvu to fetch groceries for devotees.

While the number of devotees was small on normal days, the Bhajan Hall would become full during festivals such as Dasara and Swami's Birthday. Highly accomplished musicians then performed before Swami. There used to be Narayana Seva, as also Bhajan competitions during these festivals. Swami would distribute prizes to all participants, without making any distinction of winner or loser. This was indeed a great message that one should regard victory and defeat with an equal mind.

Every evening, the devotees would water the plants and trees at the Nilayam. There was a well at the place where the Naga statues are located at present, that is, in front of the Ganesh Mandir. Physically strong young men would operate the bucket

system and others would fill water into pots for watering the plants. In the afternoon at about 3 o'clock, Swami would distribute fruits like mangoes, apples and oranges to all devotees. Sometimes, He would throw the fruits from the first floor right into the hands of each devotee who stood on the open ground. I have not seen any of these fruits missing the target.

The room located on the right side in the Mandir was called Korikala Gadi (room of wishes), and the opposite room on the other side of the verandah was called Pada Puja Gadi (feet worshipping room). The small and simple room above the Korikala Gadi was Swami's living-cum-bedroom. The room above the Pada Puja Gadi was Swami's dining room. Each time when Swami walked in the verandah of the first floor from one room to the other, all devotees would rush and lift their heads up in salutation and have His Darshan from the ground.

There was some construction or the other going on at Prasanthi Nilayam all the time. Sri Kistappa, a paternal cousin of Swami, supervised these construction activities. Devotees would voluntarily lend their hands in lifting sand, bricks, etc., along with the paid labourers. A small building with four rooms and a common verandah was first built at the place where East Prasanthi is now situated. The first room was allotted to Srimati Venkataratnamma of Rajahmundry (now Rajamahendravaram), along with our family. The Sanathana Sarathi Press was located in the fourth room. Every evening, after we finished watering plants, Swami would come to our room, and engage us in discussions on spiritual and transcendental matters. Sri Ramarao, who was one of our group members, used to smoke cigarettes heavily. Swami never asked him to stop



smoking. On the other hand, He used to praise him saying, "My dear Ramarao is Bangaru (gold)" and Ramarao soon stopped smoking by the effect of showers of love from Swami.

At the time of our departure to our homes, Swami used to give us lots of presents. We never felt like leaving Puttaparthi. My elder brother would even weep while leaving. So strong was our bondage with Swami.

Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital was inaugurated in October 1956. I think, during that time, one day Swami was going along with my father and Raja Reddy to supervise the hospital work. My brother and I were walking behind them. Suddenly, Swami bent down and picked up a pebble. Looking at me, He said, "Hey, open your mouth". I did not open my mouth. In fact, I held my lips tight. Swami had a laugh. He then asked my father, "Choudhry! Open your mouth". My father immediately opened his mouth. "Raja! Open your mouth," and Raja Reddy opened his mouth wide. My brother also opened his mouth. Swami then asked me, "All of them opened their mouths, why don't you too open your mouth"? I kept my mouth shut tightly. Just as we were looking on, the pebble turned itself into a Laddu (a sweet item). Swami lovingly asked me, "Hey! Will you open your mouth now"? I shyly opened my mouth. Swami slipped the sweet into my mouth saying, "Do you think Swami would fill your mouth with a stone? It never happens". That was the first lesson I learnt from Swami. The Avatar had come only to uplift us! But then, we should develop unshakeable faith in Him. Sometimes,



The author in his childhood in the Divine Presence.

Swami's words were not easily grasped; the message became clear only at a later time.

To Horsley Hills with Swami

In the year 1958, Swami took us all with Him to the Horsley Hills resort. Sri Ramanatha Reddy, the Executive Engineer, arranged our accommodation in the Government Guest House. We all stayed there for a week. One morning after the breakfast, Swami was conversing with us in the garden. Suddenly, He looked at Ramanatha Reddy's daughter and asked her, "You may ask whatever you wish, I shall grant it". She instantly said, "Swami, I want devotion". Swami was pleased with her wish. He then looked at me and asked, "What do you want"? I said, "Swami! Let my life be spent in Swami's service". Swami then asked an elderly gentleman, "What is your wish"? He replied, "Swami, I want to go to heaven with this body". Thereafter, a lively spiritual discussion went on for half an hour. To the extent I remember, Swami's exhortation was, "You are the embodiment of Atma (individual soul). You should aspire to merge in the Supreme Soul. It is sheer foolishness to think of going to heaven with this physical body".



One day at Horsley Hills, even while He was describing to us some incidents from His previous Avatar, Swami instantly created a photograph of Shirdi Baba. In the photo, Shirdi Baba was sitting in the middle, and around Him, there were eight large circles, in each of which He was seen in a different posture. Swami then gave it to my mother.

Thereafter, we all went and sat in the dining hall. A separate chair and table were arranged for Swami. All of us were seated on the floor on all three sides in front of Him. Swami finished His meal in just two minutes. Even while we were eating food, Swami suddenly got up, went into the adjacent room and fell flat on the ground. We got up in panic. Sri Venkataraman and his cousin hurriedly wiped their hands to their dhoti and rushed towards Him. It was clear that Swami had gone into a trance. There came a fountain-like gush of Vibhuti from His mouth. Swami opened His eyes after a lapse of fifteen minutes, and said, "She called out for My Darshan in her last moments, and so I went". He did not mention her name, but I was given to understand that Swami later informed her name to Sri Kasturi. The ejection of Vibhuti from Swami's mouth was an indication that she had merged with Him.

Swami's Visits to Chennai

In those days, whenever Swami visited Chennai, He used to stay at the Transport Commissioner Sri V. Hanumantha Rao's house. We would reach there by 10 in the morning and stay till 8 in the evening. Music programmes were often conducted during His stay, wherein Raman and Lakshman, along with Swami would render Thyagaraja's compositions. The trio used to break themselves into duos and deliver highly melodious renditions.

One day, all of us visited Poondi Reservoir along with Swami. Nagaratna Mudaliar, Partha Sarathi Mudaliar, Hanumantha Rao and some others were present in the group. It seems Sri Nagaratna Mudaliar used to provide Vibhuti as medicine for all those who sought his help. Here, Swami created a small jar of everlasting (Akshara) Vibhuti out of the sand where He was sitting and gifted it to Mudaliar. He then created a small garland of glass beads, gave it to him and said, "The patients would get instant relief when you make them wear it". Swami then created a Rudraksha (a sacred hard nut having several facets) and gave it to my mother, saying, "Take this. You will be able to cure any patient with this Rudraksha water". All our family members started using it as a panacea for all ills. It gave us great strength to face all problems with a conviction that Swami was always there with us. After giving Rudraksha to my mother, Swami suddenly asked for a tumbler to be brought. As soon as He placed it near His lips, the tumbler got itself filled with nectar-like liquid. And it was distributed to all of us present there.

As and when we accompanied Swami to any place, we always carried with us a jug with a screw cap, a tumbler and a small silver box containing betel leaves which Swami always liked to chew. We, the young children, would carry His slippers.

During His trip to Chennai in 1952, Swami visited our house also. My brother and I had gone through the ritualistic celebration of 'ear-piercing' (a sacred ritual meant for male children of a certain age) in the presence of Swami. We always considered Swami as the head of our family. For each and every function, our family always sought Swami's permission and advice. We strictly followed



Swami's directions. That day, Swami materialised two sets of gold earrings and He Himself pierced them into our ears. "Did you experience any pain?" He asked. There was no pain at all. He then walked into the shrine room and talked to my parents. After this, He turned to us and asked, "Now, what is up"? We brought in the carrom board. Two teams were formed, Swami and I as one team, and my brother and Krishna as our opponents. In the middle of the game, Swami diverted my brother's attention saying, "Hey Nagesh, look up. What is it"? and slyly moved out a piece. Looking at it, I cried out, "Cheating, cheating". Swami laughed off and said, "You are right. One should never resort to cheating in life". I realised Swami gave us a practical lesson. The incident has remained in my memory until now, as it was imprinted in my heart.

Grace Unbounded

I wish to share with you an incident which occurred on the day before Deepavali of that year. The day being Naraka Chaturdasi, we all had head bath early in the morning, wore new clothes and fired crackers. After finishing breakfast, our little brains came up with an idea. We the children went around the nearby streets and collected all those crackers lying on the roads unexploded. We tore open all those pieces, collected the powder stuff and heaped on a newspaper. Our idea was to create a big fountain-like flame out of the incendiary powder. My brother struck a matchstick and tried to light the heap. As he was stretching his hand, the fire burned his arm badly. My father rushed him to our family doctor. The doctor did some emergency dressing and told my

father, "Choudhry! Let us take him to the Government Hospital on Monday, as the forearm is severely burnt and may need amputation".

Our entire festival mood turned into gloom, like a deflated tyre. We were greeted by surprise on the dawn of the next day, when my brother told my mother, "Swami had come, sprinkled some Vibhuti on my hand and said it would become alright". Swami appeared again before dawn on Sunday. This time He appeared to my mother too. He told her, "Do not worry. I shall look after everything". On Monday, the family doctor opened the bandage, and everyone including the doctor was surprised to find 90 per cent of the burns got healed up. The doctor dropped the idea of taking Nagesh for operation. Within a month, the wound healed itself without leaving a trace!

It is interesting to note that a couple of days after the accident, we received a letter from Swami dated 10.11.1952 confirming the Divine intervention. The relevant portion of the letter and the Divine declaration along with its translation is as follows:

"...The other day, when Nagesh's hand was burnt, I visited that night and gave him Vibhuti. The next day, I also gave Darshan to your wife, Vijayalakshmi. Your happiness is My food. Your bliss is My comfort. Your welfare is My everything...This is how I spend My time...What other work do I have except taking care of My devotees, going through their good and bad times? Show this letter to Vijayamma. It seemed children were not in good condition. How do they feel now? With blessings."





Bhagawan

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam

PUTTAPARTHI POST

(PENUKONDA TALUK—ANANTAPUR DIST.) 10. 11. 52.

శ్రీమదా.

హరి వ్రాసిన పత్రములని గ్రహించి సంతోషమును వ్యక్తం చేసిరి.

వెళ్ళినా గానీ సంతోషమును వ్యక్తం చేసిరి. వీరిని అందరినీ సంతోషమును వ్యక్తం చేసిరి. వీరిని అందరినీ సంతోషమును వ్యక్తం చేసిరి. వీరిని అందరినీ సంతోషమును వ్యక్తం చేసిరి.

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వీరిని అందరినీ సంతోషమును వ్యక్తం చేసిరి.

In the year 1953, Swami visited Chennai on the eve of Deepavali. All of us went to Sri Hanumantha Rao's house to have Swami's Darshan. Just like in Puttaparthi, Swami watched while we burst firecrackers. He even lighted some sparklers and handed to us. After bursting of crackers was over, Swami sat for dinner. All of us sat on the floor around Him. Swami finished after eating very little food. After chit-chatting for a few minutes jovially, He suddenly picked up a boiled grain of rice and commanded, "Krishna! Bring the magnifying glass". Through the magnifying glass, we could see on the grain, Vatapatra Sai, Little Krishna, reclining on the banyan leaf. Sri Hanumantha Rao's wife Smt. Parvathamma appealed to Swami that it be bestowed to her. Swami crushed the grain and threw it

హరి వ్రాసిన పత్రములని గ్రహించి సంతోషమును వ్యక్తం చేసిరి.

into the plate, saying, "This is not a thing to be gifted".

That night, Swami was talking to our group including Sri Hanumantha Rao's family. All of a sudden, Swami got up, held His hands up and said, "Look, they are coming". There came a glass bowl, nearly two feet in diameter, into His hands. It contained 32 varieties of sweets. Swami distributed them to all of us, saying, "These have come from Mathura". For us, that Deepavali was unforgettable indeed.

— The author is an ardent devotee of Bhagawan from Hyderabad.

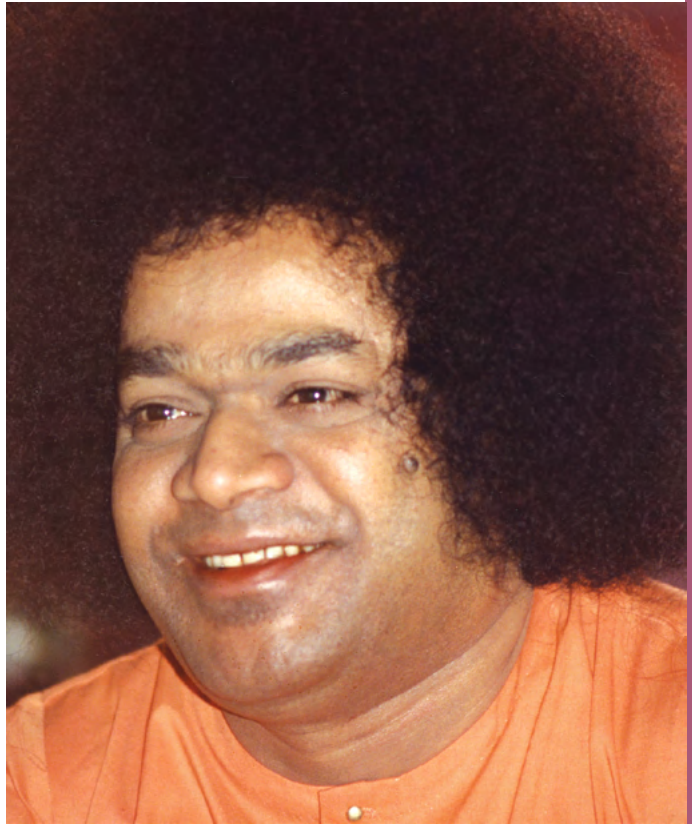


Effulgence of Divine Glory

BE HAPPY

James Sinclair

I AM A PILOT. MY WIFE HAS often suggested that I not fly anymore because Swami is busy taking care of other people and keeping them alive and I should not take up all His time. As a pilot alone, after having flown a helicopter for only five and half hours, I was crazy enough to put the aircraft into the air, hoping it would come down. I was flying across the top of the mountains, about a foot and a half above the trees, going as fast as I possibly could, when all of a sudden all the controls froze and the hydraulic system disintegrated. Now, this was as serious a problem as I could get because I could not fly the craft anymore. It was amazing the way my life slowed down. The first thought that came to my mind was clearly that I was going to die. The second thought that came to my mind was that this was a very stupid way to die. The third thought that came to my mind was that if I died, my wife was going to kill me. Then the important thought came, let me die with the Lord's name on my lips and let me say it loudly because Swami is listening. Well, I can tell you that Swami did not have to be omnipresent to hear how loud I cried His name. Also, Sathya Sai Baba is an excellent helicopter pilot. At the moment that I cried Swami's name, the helicopter was going at full speed, absolutely out of control, whirling across the



sky; I was about to become a detail, either on a piece of granite or on the pine trees. Everything got black; I have absolutely no memory of that part of it. The next thing I knew, the aircraft was in an absolute perfect emergency condition operation control landing – one of the hardest ways it can be done. When it touched the ground, I fell out of the door hyperventilating. I did not fly that aircraft. I did not pilot that landing. The next day my instructor duplicated that problem. I could not land the helicopter anyway, anywhere on that duplication. It was Swami,



to whom I called out, who took control of the aircraft.

One more small story. A young lady sitting in the audience here is my eldest daughter. Her name is Marlene Sinclair, and she has distinguished herself in equestrian sports – horse training and riding. She has been given a very special talent: the ability to communicate with animals. Once she had taken a horse, a youngster with great talent, and given it training. At an invitational tournament of jumping horses, when she came at a full gallop to jump the horse over a barrier that was the size of a wall, the young horse tripped, sending her over the fence head first. She landed on her head, and the eighteen hundred-pound animal followed over the wall and landed on top of her. It took forty-five minutes for the emergency medical squad to get her out. I received an emergency phone call that Marlene had been seriously injured and that I should get to her immediately. When I arrived at the hospital, she looked like a woman who had been taken out of a battle. I had a packet of Vibhuti with me and explained to my daughter that this was similar to Christian holy water. Her face was terribly wounded. I put Vibhuti on the wounds on her face and gave her some on her tongue. I came back the next morning and, there was not a wound on her face. Three months later, she was competing again and riding horses with a brace, but that is not the end of the story.

In an interview, Swami said to my daughter, “I saved you from paralysis”. Marlene said, “Yes”. I had never heard this before. When the interview was over, I asked Marlene, “What is it that Swami was saying that you said yes to”? She told me that from the moment she had had the accident, she

had become blind and paralysed. But in that blindness and paralysis, she always felt somebody very close to her, standing in the rain, in the ambulance, in the emergency room, in the hospital, all night – and her sight came back to her and the paralysis left her before I arrived at the hospital. Swami had saved her from blindness and paralysis. I only knew this years later.

Swami sent a message to me at home through another devotee saying, “Tell Sinclair not to make any further charitable contributions because he has a business problem that he does not know about”. And Swami certainly was telling the truth. I was soon tired to the core – physically, financially, educationally, emotionally – in solving that problem. But I am equally grateful, if not more grateful, for the gifts Swami has given me. In the difficulties that occurred, I was never far from His hand, always had courage, was always able to rely on His presence – that silent sense of being, that knowledge that Swami was always there, as He always is for all of us, as He always will be for everything. How can we for a moment lack the clear and deep understanding, the profound knowledge that Swami is doing everything for us? When in history has the Avatar (divine incarnation, Sai Baba) had such a significant interest in the silly little thing we call life? He turns even the most difficult experience into an example of His caring for us, caring for children, caring for education, caring for health, caring for comfort.

Every single aspect, every breath, we take, He is there and will always be there. You are ever with us, Swami. He has made it so simple, so easy for us. Swami simplifies,

continued on page 27...



LIFE IS A HOLY PILGRIMAGE!
Make it sacred. Make it sanctum sanctorum! It is the most valuable gift presented by God to man with plenty of grace and mercy. So, play a pivotal role. Draw the mind towards spirituality. Make life worthy. Do not get drowned in worldly pleasures and enjoyments. This is not the purpose of life. To sanctify it with goodness and godliness is the aim of the holy pilgrimage.

Life is a most valuable jewel that should dazzle with self-discipline, self-sacrifice and self-management to achieve the main goal of the holy pilgrimage. Do not sell it for cheap achievements. Do not spoil it with senseless activities. Make this holy pilgrimage whole, not a hole, said Bhagavan so beautifully. Wow! What a wonderful message!

Our Most Beloved Master graciously defined this word "Pilgrimage": Pil + gr + image. It means a spiritual pill that grants knowledge to see your own image inside the

knock at every door. Lack of team spirit is the main cause of all this damage and destruction, chaos and conflicts. If all hands join together, in no time the life will blossom and bloom and bring broad smiles all over. Team spirit means togetherness; with togetherness one can create wonders, miracles and bring back the lost glory of our motherland, the main purpose of holy pilgrimage, declared our Lord so nicely.

The purpose of travelling and visiting pilgrim centres, temples, etc., is to bring and place the deity in the abode of your heart permanently. This will fill your heart with divine sparks of bliss and drive away the vicious Vasanas (innate tendencies) that vitiate it! Make the holy pilgrimage bright and brilliant. Bhagavan said, "You are going for Yatra (pilgrimage) not to sound Patra (vessels)". That means, you are more concerned about food and comforts than the sanctity of the pilgrimage. What a waste of precious time and energy! Make life a holy

Kuppam Vijayamma

LIFE – A HOLY PILGRIMAGE

cave of your heart, the seat of your Divine Master! Fulfil His wish and fill this cave with His grace and mercy in plenty, the main aim of holy pilgrimage.

One who does not treat life as most valuable, he is lost forever. He becomes last in the divine list to lose the golden opportunity. To achieve success in life, team spirit is very very important and most beneficial. Delusion, depression, distraction and disruption are leading man to disaster. It is a worst period when horror and terror

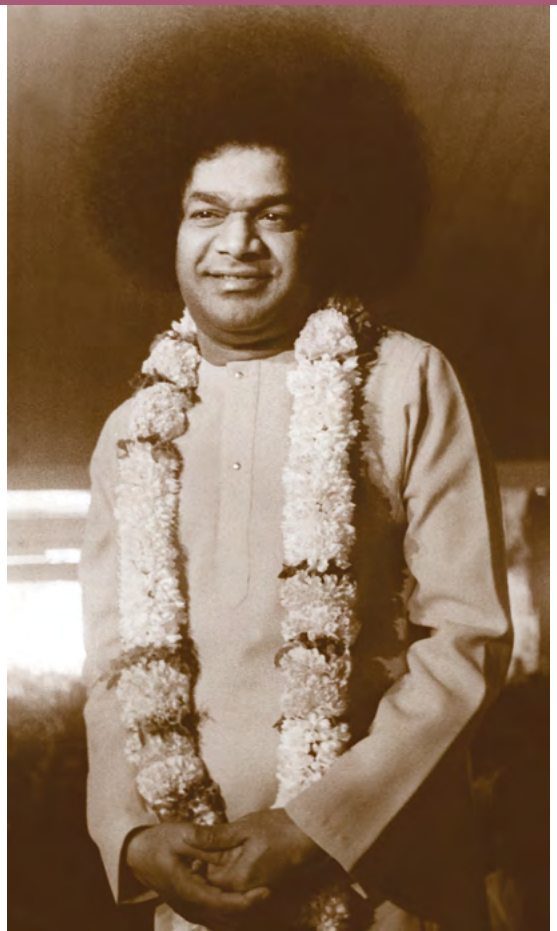
pilgrimage with devotion and dedication. Our Lord cited a very simple example with deep meaning behind it. He said, "On a goods train one can see some carriages, it is written, No Return. It teaches a wonderful lesson. It warns man not to come and go, come and go too often. Make this journey final by becoming one with God". What a deep and insightful message! One should undertake a pilgrimage to transform oneself.

What is the use of a pilgrimage if there is no transformation in you? Swami narrates



the story of bitter cucumbers to bring home this important message. Once when a group of villagers decided to go on a pilgrimage, Saint Tukaram gave them a bag of bitter cucumbers and asked them to bathe them in sacred rivers during their pilgrimage. They visited many temples and bathed in sacred rivers and also immersed the bag of cucumbers in them as ordered by Saint Tukaram. On their return, the sage prepared a meal from these cucumbers and served them to taste it. The villagers found that the cucumbers were as bitter as they were before with no change in them. The sage then told the villagers that it was the inner transformation that was important, outer rituals do not bring any change. They should leave their bad qualities and acquire good qualities while performing sacred acts like pilgrimages, he said. I am very happy to say that Bhagavan made my life a sacred pilgrimage.

My Lord called me to His proximity when I was so young, only thirteen years old. He was living in the Old Mandir at that time – 1945. As soon as I saw Him, I found my most beloved, most affectionate Mother in Him for whom I was crying and waiting for a long time. On seeing Him, my painful tears became tears of endless joy! He sweetly took me into His warm fold. I was strongly stimulated and captivated by His Pure Love and glued to Him like a baby. I was baffled, perplexed at His profound beauty. No hustle and bustle! He graciously took me by hand, and silently taught me the enticing power of love, which I was totally unaware. Every drop of His unconditional, uncontaminated love, filled every cavity of my body, deep into the root, which I realised after a long time. Then I was not mature enough to grasp the power of His love. But I was so immersed in His love that He became part and parcel of my life.



The Old Mandir was a holy pilgrimage centre, which attracted a few chosen souls, where the Loving God verily drowned them in the cool water of spotless love, trained and led them to the right path silently. No demand, no command! During my stay in the Old Mandir, this mischievous Bala Gopala once dropped a piece of paper in my hand and ran away. When I read it, I found a beautiful poem revealing my inborn aspirations and yearnings:

I did not crave for mansions or golden mountains

I did not crave for enormous power or prosperity

I did not crave for wealth or worldly pleasures

But, I craved, prayed Thee humbly



*To stay in my heart for ever
 Never to forget Thee in my life.
 Give me strength to run the family in the
 right path,
 Who else can ever grant all these except
 Thee?
 How can I ever praise Thee and pay my
 gratitude
 With heart and soul, I am surrendering
 at Thy Lotus Feet.
 Shower Thy grace and confer peace for
 ever and ever.*

My Beloved Lord tore open my heart, revealed my inner feelings. Every letter and every word of it was soaked with my spontaneous flow of tears of joy. I was totally tranquillised. What else do I need in my life? He made my life – a Holy Pilgrimage! A Happy Pilgrimage! In His proximity, I learnt to live with less attachment and more

detachment. I was made to stand on my feet courageously and face any problem, always smiling. No castor oil face!

As Personification of Pure Love, He showered cascades of pure love on me. Now I am a fully grown tree, every stem, every branch, every leaf of which is saturated with His pure love. Love! Love! Nothing but Love. I have made a long journey of 87 years (2018) along with my family, leading a simple life under the golden canopy of My Lord's Perennial Love. It has been a holy pilgrimage! With millions and trillions of salutations, I have surrendered at His Divine Feet! My life – A Holy Pilgrimage for ever and ever!

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

...continued from page 24

we complicate. Swami makes it easy, we make it difficult. Swami says, “Accept all events as gifts from Me. Do not judge them in human terms”. What does accept mean? Whenever Swami uses a word and it has a different definition from the accepted definition, He defines it. Accept is simple: Do not resist. Accept. Do not resist any event. Stop the judging. Accept the event. It is the most powerful teaching. We don't need to split hair. We don't need to be spiritual scientists. Swami tells us to watch. What does watch mean? Observe, see our own words, our actions, our thoughts, our character, our hearts. This is Swami's show. For fifty-two years, I tried to change, and the only peace I have received is in the realisation that I am exactly what I was when I started. Swami will change us. He

will do what is necessary. We only need to watch. Swami said, “Be happy” – the most powerful teaching. What does happy mean? To be happy is to have unity with the divinity. Swami gives us a very important teaching that is the ultimate knowledge: Be Good, See Good, Do Good. This teaching is an absolute necessity for taking what Swami is giving to everyone of us here; we cannot escape it if we try.

Why try to conceptualise the non-conceptual? It is not possible. Keep it simple. “Baba, I love You completely, I trust You implicitly, and I will do everything to obey You”.

– From the article of James Sinclair, a businessman from Connecticut (U.S.A.), in “Encounters with Divinity”.



BHAGAVAN'S GURU PURNIMA MESSAGE

STRIVE TO ATTAIN GOD'S GRACE

In His Guru Purnima message on 21st July 2005, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to perform only good deeds. "You may think that you can commit a mistake surreptitiously and feel that no one has seen you. But you cannot hide your actions from God. The consequences of your actions will haunt you wherever you go," cautioned Bhagavan.

MAKE PROPER USE OF YOUR SENSES

PEOPLE MAY ACT AS THEY please, but they cannot escape from the consequences of their actions. Whether he is a Pamara (simpleton) or a Mahaneeya (noble soul), he has to face the results of his actions. Let no one be under the illusion that one can commit sin and still go scot-free. Hence, one should enquire

before undertaking any activity whether it is good or bad. Wherever you go, the results of your actions will follow you like your shadow. However, it is possible to escape from the consequences of actions by the grace of God. God is always by your side saying, "Tathastu"! "Tathastu"! (so may it be!). Man is not taking cognisance of this truth and is indulging in wicked deeds. He knows pretty well what is good and what is bad, yet, he is unable to give up his evil ways. One's experiences in life, good and bad, depend on one's actions. You may think that you can commit a mistake surreptitiously and feel that no one has seen you. But you cannot hide your actions from God. The consequences of your actions will haunt you wherever you go.

One should not be judged by his external appearance. One may look noble and speak in a pleasing manner, but his actions may not be in consonance with his words. We may undertake a number of good activities, yet we cannot escape from the consequences of our past deeds. We have to bear this truth always in mind.

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SRI SATHYA SAI BAL VIKAS – AN INSPIRATION FROM WITHIN

Samhita Nehru

SRI SATHYA SAI BAL VIKAS IS A programme gifted to humanity by Bhagavan for self-transformation and world transformation. It is a process akin to watering the roots of the plant ... nourishing, moulding, cultivating, perfecting. It is a process of polishing the personality at the most vulnerable and impressionable stages of development. In later years, when the mind and habits have taken root and hardened into an inflexible nature, it is far more difficult to change attitudes and behaviour!

Sadhana for a Bal Vikas Guru

Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas is a wondrous journey for both the teacher and taught, inviting the grace and blessings of the Supreme. As Swami says, "This is not an imposition from above but an inspiration from within". And that is what makes all the difference.

This spiritual Sadhana is undertaken willingly by the Bal Vikas Gurus, and often the egoistic self tempts one to believe that it is service offered to society or humanity until the realisation dawns that it is service to none other than one's own self!

Quite unconsciously, the habits of self-observation, self-control, self-awareness and self-correction become a way of life... for the preceptor has to practise what he or she preaches in order to breathe life into the spoken word, to provide the ring of truth which strikes a chord in the hearts of the listeners. This is how the whole programme



becomes one of self-transformation through personal Sadhana.

In Bhagavan's words:

"Unless teachers follow this, their teaching will not be effective, and they cannot influence the children in a beneficial way."

"Teachers have to primarily practise proper Sadhana. How can you otherwise rise to the status of a Guru and inspire and guide your students on the sacred spiritual path?"

"What you are expected to do is called Tapas (penance). Tapas is none other than



the harmony between thoughts, words and deeds, all of which should be noble and pure."

"It is only when Gurus adhere to an ideal life, practise what they preach that they can inspire the children to take to the right course."

"Make yourselves holy by this consecrated service. This will bring you saving grace."

"The act of running a Bal Vikas class is a means of attaining purity of mind. You should regard the teaching of children as an act of Sadhana by which you will be able to understand and have a vision of divinity."

"This service is like the food you eat for your own good."

"Whatever successes you may achieve are due to God's grace alone and are a divine gift to you. Do not become conceited and egotistical."

Become a Worthy Divine Instrument

An indescribable, unsurpassed joy and feeling of elation is experienced by the Bal Vikas Guru on conducting a successful session with the students. This is an intensely personal experience shared only with the Indweller – the Divine Guide, when there is no observer, no audience present other than the Eternal Witness. There is a sense of exultation and fulfilment when the teacher and taught merge blissfully with the ocean of Divinity. All else is forgotten, the self is lost in the sheer joy of being the instrument of the Divine.

Time and again one experiences the inexplicable wonder of being able to share thoughts with students, through words which emerge from a deeper and unknown source. Surely, this is a glimpse of the Divine

power within which inspires. How many lifetimes were we being prepared for this? How deep was the yearning to become an instrument in the Divine hand? Was it mere chance or undeserved grace that flowed from the Unlimited to the limited? We only know this: the opportunity to be part of this Divine drama is surely the greatest blessing that could ever be had ...the deepest sense of gratitude engulfs one.

According to Bhagavan, the most vital component of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas programme is the heart-to-heart connection between the student and the teacher. It is an inexplicable bond that develops over a period of time. The unconditional love that the child receives is the precious gift which actually is responsible for bringing a transformation in him/her.

In schools, due to a variety of reasons, teachers are mostly unable to give the kind of warm and loving attention that the Bal Vikas Guru is able to give in the class. Swami has through His own example shown how transformation can be brought about with this tool called Unconditional Love.

Swami says, "It is only when there is a close relationship of selfless love between the teacher and the students that whatever is taught to them will take the shape of spiritual knowledge".

He further says, "All the teachers should shape themselves into becoming like alarm clocks. Those students who are sleeping in their ignorance should be woken up, cautioned and made to open their eyes to become Prajnanas (aware)".

What a unique responsibility is this that the Lord has placed on the fragile shoulders of the Bal Vikas Gurus! How can this lofty end be achieved without His grace? Only



Divinity can awaken Divinity! Only the Supreme Power can accomplish this!

Therefore, it is the bounden duty of every Bal Vikas Guru to make himself worthy of His grace. Lifelong Sadhana and not just superficial and intermittent effort is what is required to achieve this. It is nothing less than a commitment for life – sincerity is the key.

Swami guides the Gurus thus, "March on without fear but with enthusiasm, yearning and love for God and purity in your conduct. Then you get divine protection and strength. You have got immense and infinite strength behind you and in you – remember this".

These words of Swami assure and reassure, they encourage and inspire. They remind us that it is He and His strength

alone that enables and empowers all noble actions that are undertaken according to His guidance and for His happiness. The famous Sloka spoken in the Bhagavadgita by Sri Krishna to Arjuna regarding the performance of action removes any doubt that the doer, the action, the recipient are all one, namely, Brahman. Therefore, by dedicating all actions to Bhagavan in a spirit of humility and devotion one moves closer and closer to Him.

– The author has been a Bal Vikas Guru for almost 30 years. She has been a resource person and trainer and has held the post of State Coordinator of the Education Wing (Delhi NCR) from 2006 to 2012. Her family has had the grace of being connected with Swami since 1957.

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Embodiments of Love!

You may undertake any number of spiritual practices, but never forget God's name even for a moment. Only then will you be protected. Never do anything that will take you away from God. You can achieve anything through prayer. If you aspire to attain His grace, you have to contemplate on Him incessantly. Worldly difficulties come and go. One should not attach much importance to them. However, through prayer one can overcome any difficulties.

Chant any Name, I Shall Respond

Chant the name of God day in and day out. That alone will protect you at all times. You should be in constant communion with Divinity. You need not perform any rituals in order to win the grace of God. It is enough if you do Namasmarana (chanting the Divine Name) from the depth of your heart.

First of all, control your vision and tongue. You are incurring a lot of sin because of evil vision, and you are bound to face its consequences. When you make use of your senses for evil purposes, the children born to you will also be evil-minded. So, see no evil, hear no evil and talk no evil.

God is watching all that you do. You may think that others do not know what you are up to. You may hoodwink others, but can you ever hoodwink God? He knows everything. So, always do good. All your sins will be atoned when you make proper use of your senses. When you become angry, you lose all your power of discrimination and behave in an inhuman manner. So, whenever you are angry, leave the place immediately. It is better to be away from sin rather than commit sin and repent later.

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Guru Purnima Discourses.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM ERODE DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

MORE THAN 1,000 DEVOTEES came from Erode district of Tamil Nadu on a three-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from 15th to 17th June 2018 and presented cultural programmes on 16th and 17th June 2018. Besides, Veda and Bhajan groups of these devotees conducted morning and evening Veda chanting and Bhajan sessions in Sai Kulwant Hall during the course of their stay at Prasanthi Nilayam.

On 16th June 2018, Bal Vikas children and Sai Youth of Erode district presented a beautiful drama "Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam". Beginning with Bhagavan



Young Sathya after declaring His Avatarhood singing the Bhajan "Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam".

Baba singing this Bhajan after declaring His Avatarhood at the young age of 14 years, the drama went on to depict the spiritual truths taught by great spiritual master like Adi Sankara and Ashtavakra. Noble theme, excellent make-up and

costumes and good direction made the drama an impressive presentation.

The second cultural presentation entitled, "Stree Dharma Bodhini" (woman



A scene from the drama "Stree Dharma Bodhini".

shows the path of Dharma), offered on 17th June 2018 by the Institute alumni, Bal Vikas alumni and Sai Youth (girls) from Erode district showcased the glory of motherhood through songs and dramatisation. It depicted how Bhagavan set up a university, a super speciality hospital and a huge water project to fulfil the three noble wishes of Mother Easwaramma.

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM KANCHIPURAM NORTH, TAMIL NADU

More than 2,000 devotees including 400 Bal Vikas children came from Kanchipuram North, Tamil Nadu on their two-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam and presented magnificent music and cultural programmes on 23rd June 2018.



The programme started at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting by Bal Vikas children from Kanchipuram North. While the Veda chanting continued with great devotional fervour, a grand procession of Bal Vikas children entered Sai Kulwant Hall led by musicians and children dressed as various deities. The morning programme concluded with Bhajans which were led by Bal Vikas students, both boys and girls, from Kanchipuram North.

The programme in the evening commenced with chanting of Vedic



A colourful dance by Bal Vikas children of Kanchipuram North.

hymns by Bal Vikas students at 4.30 p.m. Melodious and elevating devotional songs by Bal Vikas children followed this, the melody and music of which surcharged the entire milieu with piety and devotion. An array of colourful and thrilling dances by Bal Vikas children, both boys and girls, thereafter, produced an mesmerising effect on the audience. Bhajans led by ladies and gents devotees of Kanchipuram North marked the conclusion of this grand cultural presentation.



A dance number dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya by Bal Vikas children.

REQUEST TO DEVOTEES

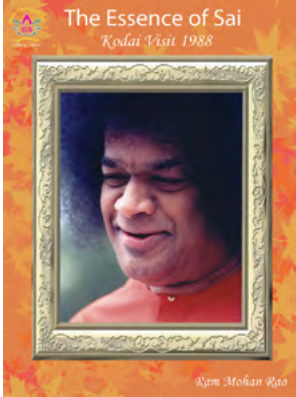
As devotees may have noticed, we have been serialising Bhagavan's Discourses delivered by Him during His visits to Kodaikanal in 1992 and 1993, the audio copy of which was very kindly provided by a devotee from Denmark. We propose to continue serialising Swami's other Kodaikanal Discourses and need audio or video copy of these. We shall be grateful if any devotee / devotees help us in this regard.

– Editor

Email: editor@sssbpt.org



THE ESSENCE OF SAI Kodai Visit 1988



THE ESSENCE OF SAI
Kodai Visit 1988

Ram Mohan Rao

₹ 45.00 shipping charges extra,
Code No. 10363, pp. 226

BHAGAVAN BABA BESTOWED special privilege of His Divine physical proximity to some of His devotees in various ways on different occasions. However, the bliss of closeness enjoyed by Sathya Sai students who were fortunate to accompany Bhagavan during His visits to Kodaikanal could only be experienced and not explained sufficiently.

This book 'The Essence of Sai – Kodai Visit 1988' is a first-hand narration by Sri Ram Mohan Rao about the wonderful experiences of a group of MBA students and some teachers during their 25 days' stay at Kodaikanal in the proximity of Bhagavan. Apart from narrating wondrous experiences gained, the book presents a rich banquet of answers provided directly by Bhagavan to a maze of doubts and questions posed by

these 'Students of Higher Learning' during this sojourn. The range of topics included spiritual, theological, social, scientific, economic, managerial and even mundane matters. The gamut of replies and positing of hidden meanings carry with them a sense of humour, a cajoling balm, a matter of fact lesson in wisdom, a stern warning or a flash of revelation. All these messages were meant for the entire humanity, propagated through the medium of students' interactions. Where else, other than these exclusive retreats, one could witness multiple facets of Swami?

Saying that man is afflicted by 4'A's – Anumana (doubt), Aviswasa (non-belief), Asuya (envy) and Ahamkara (egoism) – Swami provides practical solutions to overcome these evils. Speaking of evolution of species, Swami explains how basic cells break and reunite to form complex substances. He also explains about poisonous rays of radiation emanated at certain times during the revolutions of planets. The narration about a rich but blind man, to whom Bhagavan bestowed eye-sight, is a valuable lesson on repentance. There is Ramayana in every man's life, says Bhagavan. His brief explanations contain deep connotations to all humanity.

The author has commendably provided, at the end of the book, a long set of 'Points to Ponder', culled from these Kodai exhortations. They are like pithy sayings.

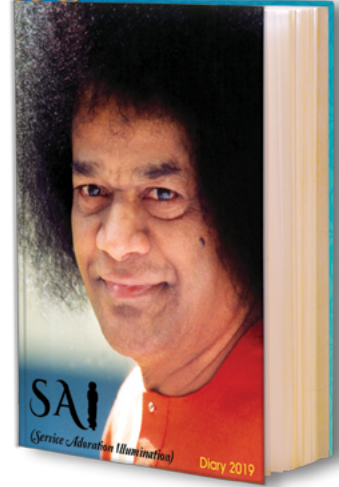
– P.P.S. Sarma



DIARY 2019

Bhagavan's diary for 2019, **SAI – Service, Adoration, Illumination** is available. The theme of the diary is significance of service, devotion and knowledge of the 'Self'. **Specifications:** size 14.7 x 20.6 cms, shrink-wrapped, multicolour cover with gold foiling, artwork, spot lamination, knurling and curved stitch-binding. Total pages: 418; 24 pages are in imported art paper with beautiful photographs of Bhagavan. It has over 300 divine sayings of Bhagavan. **Price Rs.130/- (Packing + postage extra).** (Minimum order 5 units for single address.)

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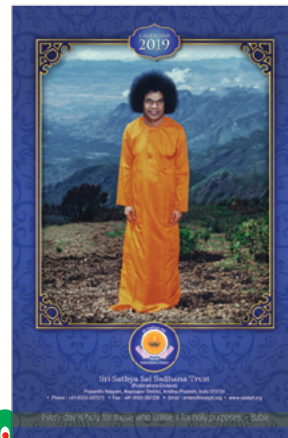
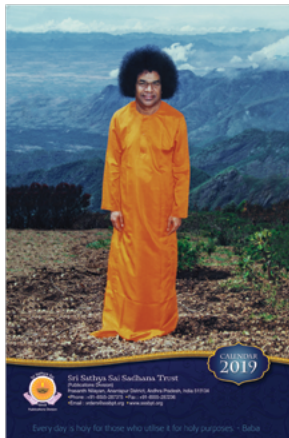


SAI Diary 2019 (15893)	5 units	6 units	7 units	8 units	9 units	10 units
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Multicolour Calendars 2019 with beautiful pictures of Bhagavan is available for sale.

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15898	Table Calendar 6.5"x8.75" 13 sheets @ Rs.60/	5	Rs.380	10	Rs.685



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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 for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- 2) The publication and distribution of Bhagawan Baba's monthly spiritual journal - Sanathana Sarathi - in English and Telugu languages. Since 2011, e-version of the magazine is also released simultaneously and is available in the popular Interactive PDF format on www.sanathanasarathi.org.
- 3) Maintaining a reporting channel www.theprasanthireporter.org, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
- 4) Providing library and Reading room for visiting devotees, with a very large collection of books written by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and books on Bhagawan besides various spiritual and religious books.

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Other Books By SSSSTPD (In English)

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3. Satyopanisad I
4. Satyopanisad II
5. Gurudev
6. Namasmarana
7. Bhakthi And Health
8. Life Is Love, Enjoy It!
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Procession of Bal Vikas children and Gurus entering Sai Kulwant Hall.



Bhajan session by Bal Vikas children of Kanchipuram North.

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Focus your Vision on God

It is not difficult to have the vision of God if your heart is pure. In fact, it is very easy to have the vision of God. You are unable to attain God because you lack purity. You have to open your eyes to see the resplendent sun. Even if the sun is there in the sky, how can you see it if you close your eyes? Similarly, you should purify your inner vision. Then you will see God everywhere. But man's heart is thickly covered with the dirt of evil thoughts. His mind is filled with worldly, physical and ephemeral desires. It is essential to purify your heart to see God who is eternal and ever true.

– Baba



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