

Sanathana Sarathi

JULY 2021



Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

Vol.: 64 Issue No. 7 Date of Publication: 1st July

July

2021

© Sri Sathya Sai
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division
Prasanthi Nilayam

Printed by **K.S. RAJAN**
Published by **K.S. RAJAN**

On behalf of the owner, Sri Sathya Sai
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi
Nilayam 515134, Anantapur District (A.P.)
And Printed at Sri Sathya Sai Press,
Prasanthi Nilayam
And Published at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust,
Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam
515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

Editor **G.L. ANAND**
Assistant Editor **P. RAJESH**

The views and opinions expressed in
the articles are solely the expressions
of the authors; the editor or the
publisher is not responsible for them.

E-mail: subscriptions@sssbpt.org
editor@sssbpt.org
For Audio Visual /

Book Orders: orders@sssbpt.org
ISD Code : 0091
STD Code : 08555
Telephone : 287375

Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust Telefax : 287390
Sri Sathya Sai University -
Administrative Office : 287191 / 287239
Sri Sathya Sai Higher
Secondary School : 289289
Sri Sathya Sai
Primary School : 287237
SSSIHMS, Prasanthigram,
Puttaparthi : 287388
SSSIHMS, Whitefield,
Bengaluru : 080 28411500

Annual Subscription
acceptable for 1, 2 or 3 years.
English India: (12 issues) ₹ 120
Other Countries: ₹ 1200
or US \$22, UK £17, €19,
CAN \$29, AUS \$31

Telugu India: ₹ 90 (12 issues)
Other Countries: ₹ 900, US \$18,
UK £13, €14

Note: Please do not send currency notes
in postal covers. **For the Attention of**
“Sanathana Sarathi” **Subscribers.**

Three asterisk marks (***) appearing
after your subscription number on
the mailing wrapper indicate that
you should renew your subscription
immediately. Please quote your present
subscription number while renewing the
subscription. All subscriptions and other
correspondence should be addressed to
The Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana
Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi
Nilayam 515 134, Anantapur district,
Andhra Pradesh, India.



*"Human body is like a house in
which the senses are the windows and
mouth, the main door. Keep this
house clean. Do not allow animal
qualities to enter this house through
the windows or the main door. Do
not follow those who indulge in
sensual pleasures and harbour bad
qualities. Follow God and treasure
divine qualities."*

CONTENTS

- 4 **Divine Proximity is the Source of True Happiness**
Bhagavan's Discourse: 5th April 1996
- 7 **Seek the Guru within you**
Bhagavan's Guru Purnima Message
- 10 **Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba**
- 12 **The Most Effective Method of Meditation**
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
- 14 **Mesmerising Moments with the Divine Master**
Rani Subramanian
- 21 **The Joy of Travelling with Bhagavan**
Brahmananda Panda
- 24 **Vidura's Renunciation and Wise Counsel**
Bhagavatha Vahini
- 29 **The Story of Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium**
Symbols of Divinity

Official Websites of Prasanthi Nilayam

Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division: <https://www.srisathyasaipublications.com>
Bhagavan's Photographs Online: <https://www.saireflections.org>
Reporting Website from Prasanthi Nilayam: www.theprasanthireporter.org
Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust: <https://www.srisathyasai.org/pages>
Sri Sathya Sai Media Centre: <https://www.sssmediacentre.org>
Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini: <https://www.srisathyasaividyaahini.org>
Sri Sathya Sai Easwaramma Women's Welfare Trust: www.ewwt.org.in
Bal Vikas Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, India: <https://sssbalvikas.in>

For Renewals / New Subscriptions / Electronic Editions, please visit us @
www.sanathanasarathi.org

AVATAR VANI

DIVINE PROXIMITY IS THE SOURCE OF TRUE HAPPINESS*

KINDNESS SHOULD BLOSSOM IN HUMAN HEART

WORLDLY HAPPINESS IS termed Santosha which means temporary happiness. For example, when you are hungry, you eat two Chapatis and satisfy your hunger. But after two hours, you are hungry again. So, the happiness you derived from eating was only temporary. This was not permanent happiness.

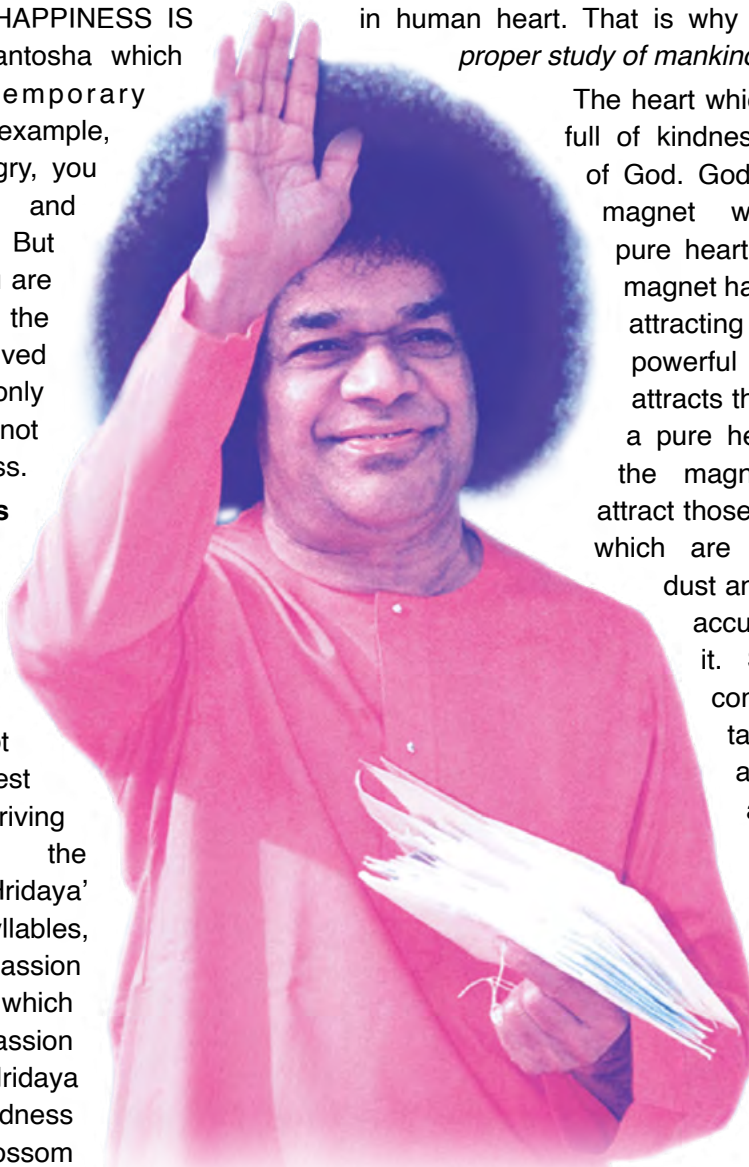
Consider Tests in Life as Opportunities for Transformation

Permanent happiness comes from the heart, not head. The highest goal of life lies in deriving happiness from the heart. The word 'Hridaya' consists of two syllables, Hri and Daya (compassion or kindness). That which is full of compassion and kindness is Hridaya (spiritual heart). Kindness should grow and blossom

in human heart. That is why it is said, *the proper study of mankind is man.*

The heart which is pure and full of kindness is the altar of God. God is the Divine magnet which attracts pure hearts. Just as the magnet has the power of attracting iron, God is the powerful magnet which attracts those who have a pure heart. However, the magnet does not attract those pieces of iron which are covered with dust and rust that get accumulated on it. Similarly, bad company, bad talk, bad deeds are like dust and rust on the heart which does not attract God's grace.

G o d gives tests to man to reform and promote him.



* Continued from June 2021 issue.

We, therefore, should welcome tests because they are the means of our promotion. In order to go to the next class, a student has to pass the examination. Even if one applies for the job of a clerk, one has to pass the test. So, tests of life are the opportunities for our transformation and progress. Therefore, man should face all tests and challenges with fortitude.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is a game, play it.

Life is a dream, realise it.

Life is joy, share it.

Birth as a human being is a rare opportunity. We are lucky to have this life as a human being. So, it is very necessary that we make use of our life in a sacred way by purifying our heart and eradicating anger. Man commits many wrongs due to lack of control over anger. Anger is an animal quality, not a human quality. When anger overwhelms you, go to a quiet place and repeat ten times, "I am not a dog, I am a man". When confusion overtakes you, repeat, "I am a man, not a monkey". If you indulge in cheating, repeat, "I am a man, not a jackal". The foreigners who have come here are good devotees. But they have some weaknesses. They waste their money on unnecessary things. They have too many associations and keep on going from house to house.

Follow God and Treasure Divine Qualities

Human body is like a house in which the senses are the windows and mouth, the main door. Keep this house clean. Do not allow animal qualities to enter this house through the windows or the main door. Do not follow those who indulge in sensual pleasures and harbour bad qualities. Follow God and treasure divine qualities. But, unfortunately, man today welcomes bad qualities and ignores God's command. Chant the sacred Name of Rama. When you chant Rama, you open your mouth

while saying 'Ra'. Then all bad qualities should go out. When you say 'Ma' and shut your mouth, God should enter and stay in your heart permanently. Install God in the altar of your heart and develop love for God. Worldly love is not true love; it is attachment. For example, love between husband and wife is attachment. Worldly love comes and goes but spiritual love comes and grows. Follow the command of God up to your last breath.

True Devotion Earns God's Grace

Once there was a cowherd named Madhukar. One day, when he was grazing his cows near a river, he saw a Brahmin repeating the Mantra "Om Namo Narayanaya". The cowherd watched the Brahmin but could not understand what he was doing. After some time, the boy went near the Brahmin and asked what he was doing. The Brahmin told him that he was worshipping Lord Narayana because he wanted to please Him and have His Darshan. The boy wondered, "How does God look like? In paintings, I have seen Lord Siva on a bull and Lord Vishnu on Garuda (eagle)".

The innocent boy believed the words of the Brahmin and wanted to see God. So, he started repeating that Mantra with full faith in order to see God. Where there is steady faith, there is success. Seeing the firm faith of the innocent boy, Lord Narayana appeared before him. The boy asked Him, "Who are You"? The Lord replied, "I am Narayana". The boy said, "I am not sure as I have never seen You before. I will call the Brahmin to identify you". He tied Lord Narayana to a tree so that He may not run away and went to call the Brahmin. The Lord was very much pleased with the innocence and devotion of the boy. However, when the boy told the Brahmin, he did not believe the boy's story. The Brahmin's faith was artificial

and the faith of the boy was heartfelt. As the boy was adamant, the Brahmin went with him to the place where the boy had tied the Lord. Pointing towards the Lord, the boy told the Brahmin, "See, there He is". But the Brahmin could not see the Lord. When the Brahmin did not believe the boy, the boy asked the Lord, "Why can't the Brahmin see You"? The Lord replied that the faith of the Brahmin was not firm. The boy then requested the Lord, "At

Pray to God wherever you are by chanting His Name. God is present in all beings as Sat, Chit, Ananda (Being, Awareness, Bliss). You sit alone and say, Sai Ram, Sai Ram. But your mind goes to Dhobi (washerman) as you are not sure whether he will bring your clothes today. Japa and Dhyana with uncontrolled mind is sheer waste of time. Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Auspiciousness, Beauty) are the three attributes of God which are

God gives tests to man to reform and promote him. We, therefore, should welcome tests because they are the means of our promotion. In order to go to the next class, a student has to pass the examination. Even if one applies for the job of a clerk, one has to pass the test. So, tests of life are the opportunities for our transformation and progress. Therefore, man should face all tests and challenges with fortitude.



least for my sake appear to the Brahmin". As Lord Narayana was pleased with the devotion of the boy, He manifested before the Brahmin also. This story illustrates that God is pleased with purity of devotion and firmness of faith.

Develop Love and Compassion in your Heart

Please God by performing all actions for Him. Dedicate your body, mind, senses and intellect to Him. If your faith is true, God will manifest in front of you.

present in your heart. Pray wholeheartedly from the depth of your heart. Develop love and compassion in your heart. If you pray with love but do not have compassion, it is useless. Have both love and compassion in your heart. Think of God constantly, speak softly and avoid bad company and all other disturbances.

(Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...")

– **From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 5th April 1996.**

BHAGAVAN'S GURU PURNIMA MESSAGE

SEEK THE GURU WITHIN YOU

*The stars are Brahman, the sun is Brahman,
The moon is Brahman, water is Brahman,
Heaven is Brahman, Vaikuntha is Brahman,
Mother is Brahman, father is Brahman,
All wealth is Brahman, Love is Brahman,
Living beings are Brahman, individual soul is Brahman,
Creator is Brahman, Protector is Brahman,
Destroyer is Brahman, housewife is Brahman,
Karma is Brahman, Kayam (physical body) is Brahman,
Prakriti (Nature) is Brahman, Prana (life principle) is Brahman,
Everything is Brahman, this assembly is Brahman,
Sai who is declaring this truth is also Brahman.*

(Telugu Poem)

DEVELOP THE SENSE OF SPIRITUAL ONENESS

Embodiments of Brahman!

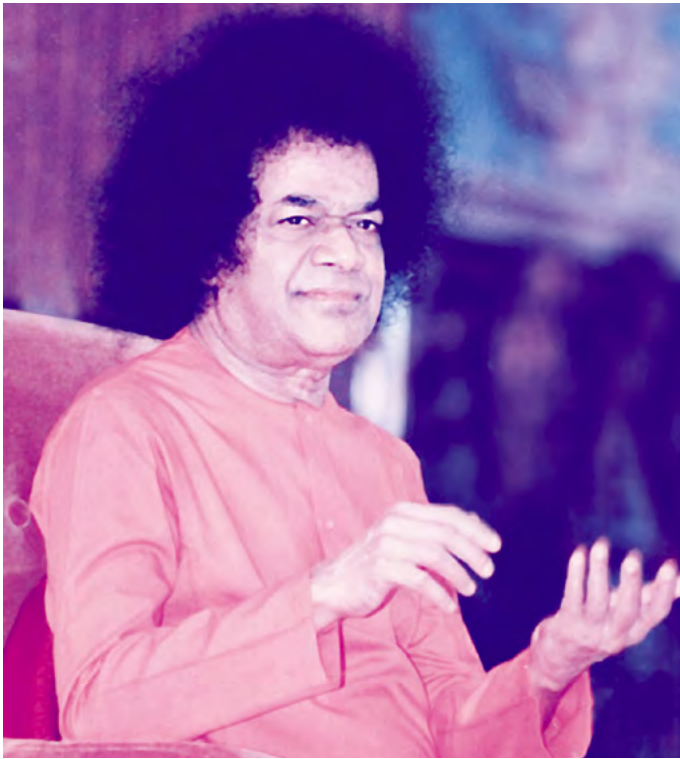
WHEN A SEED IS SOWN IN THE earth, it sprouts as a sapling and grows in due course into a big tree. In the tree, the branches, the leaves, the flowers and the fruits all appear as distinct from each other. Moreover, each of them is used for a specific purpose. But all of them are different forms of the mud from which they have originated.

Seeing a rope at a distance, suspecting that it may be a snake, a man develops fear. Soon another person arrives and assures him that it is not a snake but a rope. The moment he realises that what he feared as a snake was only a rope, he gets rid of his fear. During all the stages, the rope was only a rope.

Likewise, the ignorant man mistakes the phenomenal world for Nature, till a Jnani reveals

to him that what he thought was Nature is in reality Brahman. All that one sees in the entire universe is a manifestation of Brahman. Some people doubt: "Where is Brahman and what are we, petty human beings? How can we be equal to the all-encompassing Brahman"? This is not correct. You are that omnipotent, all-pervading Brahman. Because of your worldly attitude, you are not recognising the Reality. You are separating yourself from the Divine. All that you see is Brahman. To search for God as something different from you is a delusion. But this truth is not easily recognised by man.

When you look at the ocean, its endless series of waves and the foam from the waves, they all appear separate from each other. But the truth is they are all one. The water in the waves and in the foam comes from the same



ocean and has the same qualities. Likewise, from the infinite ocean of Sath-Chit-Ananda (Being, Awareness, Bliss), innumerable living creatures emerge like waves. While the Divine is in the state of Sathyam-Jnanam-Anantam (Truth-Wisdom-Infinity), man is in the state of Sath-Chit-Ananda.

Fill your Vision with Love

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

When you fill your vision with love, the whole creation will appear divine to you. The cosmos appears to you as a manifestation of diversity, but in reality there is no diversity. No one makes any effort to discover the unity that underlies the diversity. In every human being, both Divinity and the Maya principle are immanent. How is this to be comprehended? Sath-Chit-Ananda represent the Divine in man. The names and forms which man perceives are expressions of the Maya principle.

On the ocean, the wind is the cause of waves; on the ocean of Sath-Chit-Ananda,

the wind of Maya gives rise to innumerable living creatures. Therefore, the individuals who have emerged from the ocean of Sath-Chit-Ananda are manifestations of the Divine. Divinity is everywhere. But because of man's ignorance, he is a prey to numerous troubles. Here is an example:

Today is described as Guru Purnima day. This is not quite correct. The day got its name because of some Gurus who wanted to have an occasion for receiving offerings from their disciples. The right name for this day is Vyasa Purnima. Vyasa was born on this full-moon day. He completed the codification of the writing of the eighteen Puranas on this day. With the passage of time, Vyasa Purnima came to be called Guru Purnima.

The Trinity and the three Gunas

The true meaning of Guru is "one who dispels the darkness of ignorance". Another meaning of the word is "one who is beyond attributes and forms, namely, the Supreme Self (Brahman)". When this Self is within you, where is the need to search for someone to teach you? A teacher who teaches others has had a teacher himself. The one who has no Guru above him is the true Guru. The Sanskrit stanza which hails the Guru as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara and as Parabrahman is misinterpreted. The right approach is to consider Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara as the Guru. These three are symbolised by the three Gunas: Brahma is Rajas, Vishnu is Sattwa and Siva is Tamas. The whole cosmos is constituted by the three Gunas. The three Gunas are present in man. The Trinity is present in the form of the three Gunas in every human heart.

Hence, you are your own Guru. You need not seek him elsewhere. The so-called Gurus of today seek to impart some Mantras and

receive fee offerings as Guru Dakshina on Guru Purnima day. The Mantra is whispered in the ear and the palm is stretched for an offering. This is what happens today. It is not the proper sign of a Guru. You are the Guru unto yourself. All potencies are within you. This is indicated by the Gayatri Mantra.

You have to feel at all times your inherent divinity, which is also present in everyone. When you help or feed someone, you must feel that the Divine in you is feeding the Divine in others.

Recognise God as your Preceptor

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

You pursue wrong paths because of the feeling of separateness. The truth is that you are a part of Samashti (society). This society is a part of Srishti (creation). Transcending that is Parameshti (Creator). You are all these as an embodiment of the Divine. You have to proceed from the individual to the realisation of the Divine.

All are the manifestations of the Divine. You may ask whether you can ever acquire the power possessed by Swami. Follow me. You are bound to get that power. That power is latent in you. But you are not aware of it. You want to experience bliss. If you truly follow Swami, you will discover that bliss within you. Nor is that all. You will find that bliss all around you, wherever you go. You cannot find that bliss in the physical world. It is wholly within you. Consider yourself as Brahman (Divine) at all times and in all situations. You will thereby become one with the Divine.

Turn your mind Godward and you will experience the bliss of the Divine. It is for this reason that Swami gives you advice from time to time as to what you should do and what you should avoid. All this is not for My sake but for your own good, to make you take to the path of God realisation, to teach you

the Supreme Truth about the Brahman and to make your sacred life an ideal one.

Every man should strive to become an ideal human being. This means that everyone should testify to his Divinity. Imagine how happy everyone would be if the entire world was filled with this pure, sublime and sacred ideal.

Recognise that God is your preceptor. He is the Preceptor of preceptors. When you have such an all-pervading Guru, why should you hanker after Gurus of lesser breed?

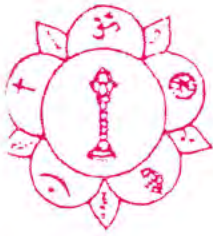
Students should learn a lesson from musical instruments like the Veena. It has different strings producing different vibrations. But if the vibrations are discordant, the music jars the ears. Just as there should be harmony in playing on the Veena, there should be harmony among people in a country professing different faiths.

Sraddha and Bhakti

Shirdi Baba used to ask for two rupees from devotees who came to him. The two rupees symbolised Sraddha (steadfast faith) and Bhakti (devotion). These are the two qualities he expected from the devotees. The combination of the two is essential for spiritual progress. Only then will bliss emerge like a plant from a seed.

From this day onwards, give up all differences and concentrate on the realisation of Brahman. All are the embodiments of Brahman. In due course, all will realise this truth by eschewing narrow-minded differences. Develop the sense of spiritual oneness by continuous practice. This sense is bound to grow if you act upon Swami's injunctions. The primary requisite is love for God.

— **From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall on 30th July 1996.**



Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

PRASANTHI NILAYAM P.O.
ANANTPUR DT. (A.P.)
PHONE NO : 30.

30-8-75

After long searches here and there, in temples and in churches, in earth and in heavens, at last you come back, completing the circle from where you started, to your own soul and find that He, for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for whom you have been weeping and praying in churches and temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries shrouded in the clouds is nearest of the near, is your own self. The reality of your life, body and soul. That is your own nature. Assert it, manifest it. It is truth and truth alone, that is one's real friend, relative. Abide by truth, tread the path of righteousness and not an hair of your body will ever be injured. Meditation is nothing else but rising above desires. Renunciation is the power of battling against evil forces and holding the mind in check.

With Love and Blessings
Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam P.O.

Anantapur Dt. (A.P.)

Phone No.: 30

30 - 8 - 75

After long searches here and there, in temples and in churches, in earths and in heavens, at last you come back, completing the circle from where you started, to your own soul and find that He, for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for whom you have been weeping and praying in churches and temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries shrouded in the clouds is nearest of the near, is your own self, the reality of your life, body and soul. That is your own nature. Assert it, manifest it. It is Truth and Truth alone, that is one's real friend, relative. Abide by Truth, tread the path of righteousness and not an hair of your body will ever be injured.

Meditation is nothing else but rising above desires. Renunciation is the power of battling against evil forces and holding the mind in check.

With Love and Blessings
Sri Sathya Sai Baba

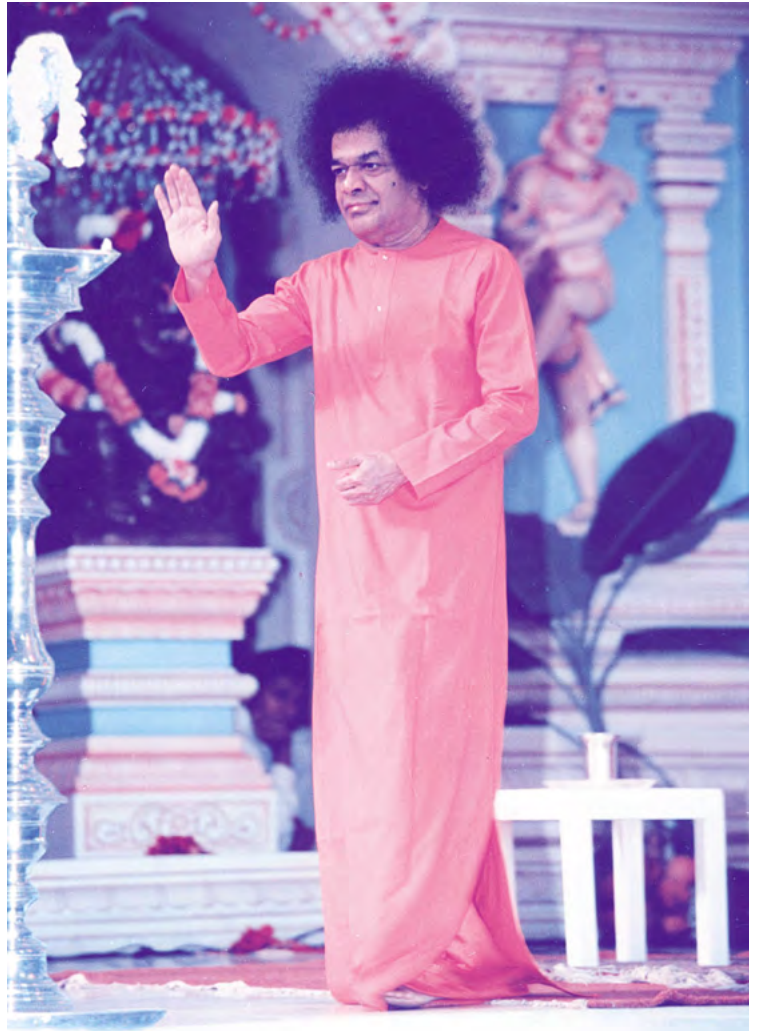
THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD OF MEDITATION

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

MAN IS DIVINE: HE CAN purify himself into perfect Divinity by the process of Dhyana (meditation), taken up with eagerness and followed with faith, by virtuous individuals. As regards the technique of Dhyana, different teachers and guides have different methods. I shall give you now the most universal and the most effective.

Set aside a few minutes, every day, in the beginning for this; later, you are sure to extend the period, when you experience the thrill of peace. Let it be the hours before dawn. This is preferable because the body is refreshed by sleep and the peregrinations of daytime have yet to impinge on the senses and distract physical and mental energy. Have a lamp, with a bright little flame, steady and straight, or a candle, before you. The flame does not diminish in lustre, however many lamps may be lit therefrom. So, the flame is the most appropriate symbol of the Eternal Absolute.

Sit in Padmasana (lotus posture) or any comfortable Asana in front of the flame. Look at the flame steadily and closing your eyes, try to feel it inside you, between your eyebrows. From there, let it descend down into the lotus of your heart, illumining the path. When it enters the heart, in the centre of the chest, imagine that the



petals of the lotus bud open out, one by one, bathing every thought, feeling, emotion and impulse in the Light and removing darkness.

There is no space now for darkness to take refuge; it has to flee before the flame. Imagine that the Light becomes wider, bigger, brighter. It pervades the limbs; they can no

more busy themselves in dark, wicked, suspicious activities. They have become, you are conscious of it, instruments of Light, that is to say, of Love. The Light reaches the tongue. Falsehood, slander, bragging, spite vanish from it. It reaches the eyes and the ears. All dark desires that infest and infect them are destroyed by the brilliant Light of Wisdom and Virtue. No more puerility, no more poisoning of the ear. Let your head be charged with Light; all wicked, vicious thoughts disappear, for, these are denizens of darkness. Imagine that Light in you more and more intensely – and it will be so. Let it shine all around you, enveloping you in the brilliance of Love; let it spread from you, in ever widening circles, taking into its fold your kith and kin, the loved ones, friends, companions – nay, strangers, foes, rivals, enemies – all men all over the world, all living beings – all creation.

When Light Meets Light, it is all Light

Do this everyday, without break; for as long as you enjoy it; do this deeply and systematically; a time will certainly come when you can no more relish dark and evil thoughts, no more yearn for dark and sinister books, no more crave for toxic food and drinks, no more handle ugly demeaning things, no more suffer infliction of infamy or injury, no more formulate

evil designs. You are then in the realm of the Divine, of Peace beyond words.

Stay on in that thrill, witnessing Light, being Light, everywhere, for all. If you are used to adoring God in any form, visualise that Form in that Light. For, Light is God; God is Light. When light meets light, it is all Light. There is no boundary between your light and His light. They merge, they fulfil.

In this Asanthi (peacelessness), that is confounding the world, you must seek Prasanthi (the higher spiritual peace); in that Prasanthi, you can visualise Prakanthi (supreme splendour) and in that Prakanthi, the all-embracing Paramjyoti (immanent and transcendent splendour, boundless, benign) is experienced; in that Paramjyoti, the Universal Eternal Absolute, Paramatma is experienced. When the individual meets the Universal, it becomes Universal. I and I become we; we and he become only we. Practise this meditation, regularly everyday. At other times, repeat the Name of God (any Name that arouses in you the spirit of adoration and devotion), always taking care to be intensely conscious of His Might, Mercy and Munificence.

– **Excerpted from Bhagavan's Discourse in Kampala, Uganda (East Africa) on 8th July 1968.**

I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added lustre. I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular Dharma, like Hindu Dharma. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause, nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this universal unitary faith, this Atmic principle, this path of love, this Dharma of Prema, this duty of love, this obligation to love.

– *Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

Mesmerising Moments with the Divine Master^{*}

Rani Subramanian

ONCE AFTER MANY YEARS HAD passed, Swami called my sister and me for an interview. He said: “You see, you people have done a lot of Sadhana (spiritual practice). And for all the Sadhana that you have done, you must have reached a very high stage! Your days were packed with spiritual activities – chanting, doing Bhajans and reading. But, in spite of all that, you have not reached the stage that you should have reached. Why? Do you know?” We said: “No, Swami. We thought that Sadhana would take us there”.

Combine Sadhana with Self-analysis

He said: “Sadhana by itself cannot take you there. It should be a combination of self-analysis and Sadhana – spiritual practices must be combined with self-analysis; because only self-analysis will tell you, as a human being, where you are going wrong. You are not acting from the Atmic level (the level of the spirit); you are acting at worldly level. You are acting in the world as a human being – I am somebody’s mother, somebody’s wife, somebody’s sister, etc”.

He said: “Self-analysis will help you to point out your mistakes and will tell you where you have failed spiritually. Unless you do self-analysis, you will not be able to progress. Now, you must cut your Sadhana down to one-fourth; your self-analysis should be three-fourths. Then, your progress will be very fast. How you talk, what you hear, what you do, what you eat, you must analyse everything –



every walk of life: Am I doing the right thing? Is it spiritually alright? Am I thinking the right way? Am I talking the right way? Am I doing the right thing?

Even regarding the possessions, He told me and my sister: “Simplicity is a must for this path. Make your journey comfortable with light luggage. Too many possessions are not needed; make them minimum. Don’t

^{*} Continued from June 2021 issue.

add more and more to your life because it is an obstacle to your spiritual path. Keep it to minimum so that you don't give your mind to various things". So, after that, we started doing more self-analysis; earlier, we used to have many sittings and spent time to do Japa, meditation, Bhajans, etc.

Finding the Right Priority

Then, another incident happened when I was staying here in Prasanthi Nilayam, which is very interesting. One day, He sent for me in the morning at 7 o'clock. My younger sister was doing Seva (service) during those days – she is a Brahmacharini (celibate). He sent word through her: "Go and get Rani Maa". She came down and said: "Swami wants you to come up". I went upstairs. He welcomed me very nicely. "Please sit down!" He said. I was wondering why He sent for me and was feeling nervous. I thought maybe I made a mistake and maybe He was going to chastise and correct me.

He said: "Rani Maa, I have to tell you something about a gentleman, who is a businessman". I was wondering why He should tell me about some businessman. But I did not ask Him anything. He said: "One businessman came to Me and I gave him an interview. In the interview, he told Me he had a lot of problems and was under great tension and stress because of those business problems. I told him I would give him some spiritual practices to do and asked him to come and see Me after some time. He came after some time, and again I called him for an interview. I asked him how his business problems were: 'It must be less, isn't it?' 'No Swami! It is just the same'. I asked him, 'How can it be just the same? No! It cannot be. Did you do what I had asked you to do?' I had given him some instructions...'do this in the morning and that in the evening'...etc.

"He said: 'Swami! What can I say? I was so busy and so caught up in my own problems, I could hardly find time to do the practice that You advised.'" Then I asked him a question: "Okay, you were very busy and did not have time to do your spiritual practices. But at that time, when you were so busy, did you give up your morning coffee"? He said: "No, I didn't". "What about your breakfast? Did you give that up? Even if you didn't have it at the right time, you must have had it later? Is it not?" He said: "Yes, Swami. I didn't miss my breakfast". "Did you miss your lunch?" He said: "No". "Your tea?" "No." "Your dinner?" He said: "No".

Then I told him: "How many sittings you had for Deha (the body); Sarira Ahara (food for the body) – coffee, breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner? Five sittings for the body, which you have to drop any day! But, your Atma (spirit), which is your true nature, which is really going to bless you, and keep you peaceful and happy – Atmic level alone can give you that; Sarira (body) level will not give you that – but for that you did not give even one sitting? And you want My grace? How can I give you grace"?

Swami told me: "See, people want My grace, but they don't obey My instructions". Atma Ahara is more important than Sarira Ahara (food for the body)". I don't know what He told him to do, but if He told him to do Gayatri for an hour, then he should have given that a priority. That is what Swami told me: "You people should give priority to My instructions and not to what you want to do".

He said: "Give up Sarira Ahara; but not Atma Ahara – unless you feed the Atma (spirit), it will not awaken. That is your spirit; which is God, which will not be available if you are feeding your Sarira all the time, when your Atma has been starving"! He told the businessman: "By not following Swami's instructions,

your Atma will starve. You have given priority to food for the body and no importance to the soul; how can I help you? If you want My help, you have to do what I tell you. That should be your priority”.

You see, in a way, it was a general thing; but He also wanted me to realise that. Instead of calling me and telling me directly to do this and do that regularly, He quoted that gentleman like an example. That’s all. I told my sister it was a teaching for all of us.

Suppose a Guru told you to read the Bhagavadgita; or to do Japa or to meditate, then what if you say: ‘I have got too much work today, so I will not read the Bhagavadgita’? If you did not have time to read the Bhagavadgita in the morning, do it in the evening! God does not say ‘Do it at this time’! If it elevates you, why are you not reading it? That is giving you help. Are other people giving you help? Going shopping or going to see someone here and there – that is not going to help you.

Divine Personal Prescriptions

Swami has said: “Those who obey My instructions, I bless them”. But to each one of us, Swami gives different instructions. For instance, I wanted to do Namasmara with Japamala (chanting with the aid of the rosary). And Swami told me: “No! No Japamala for you; Do only breath”. But, when my sister said, “Swami, I want Japamala”, He said, “Yes, you can do that”! And later when I wanted to get into some kind of an activity, He said, “No need. You meditate”.

During those days – most of the time – the devotees had to do a lot of cooking during Dasara as there were no cooks then. Swami would feed hundreds of poor people during the festival, and devotees from Madras (Chennai) and Bangalore (Bengaluru) would also help in cooking. The elderly ladies, who were well-versed in handling such situations, would

dig pits like a trench in the Ashram and burn firewood as there was no proper kitchen then.

Devotees from Bengaluru would bring huge vessels because we needed big vessels to prepare food for hundreds of people. So, this way all these devotees would participate and each one would help according to his/her capability. While devotees in the age group of 50-60 would mostly be in charge of the real cooking, others would assist in activities such as cutting vegetables, providing spices, etc. And this was all done under bright sun as there was no roof.

On one such occasion, I had just come to the Ashram. My younger sister was already there. Swami used to call her Lilly. Swami came to my sister and said, “Hey, Lilly! Go and help Savitri Amma; she is cooking for the poor feeding; go and assist her”. I was also standing there, next to my sister. Then, my sister looked at Swami and asked, “Swami, what about her? Can she also come with me to help”? He said, “No. Rani Maa will be here only”. My sister then asked, “Swami! Why do you always send me for work but don’t send Rani Maa? Please let her come, Swami”.

For this, Swami replied by saying, “No, I am not sending her”! Puzzled by Swami’s response, my sister asked, “Why”? Swami then replied, “You are a Brahmacharini; you need to work. Rani Maa is a Grihasta (householder); she has already done a lot of work in her house. She has been looking after her children and husband and all that. She comes here for Sadhana because she cannot do much there. She wants to meditate here, and evolve spiritually. She is seeking that from Puttaparthi and from Me. So, Rani Maa will be in the room and she will meditate”. Swami made the decision for me and told her: “I am not sending her”. It was the same with whatever activity I wanted to participate in. Whenever I talked

about any activity, Swami always said, “No, not for you”.

Now what I want to convey here is that Swami is a very individual Guru. He does not say, ‘Always worship Me!’ Whatever you are doing in the house, do it as if you are serving God. For a householder, that is what He says, “Look upon the husband as God; don’t shout at the children; don’t get upset, talk nicely; whatever they say, take it with that awareness that they are gods”. That is the Sadhana He put us on.

Speaking up in the Family

But once Swami told me quite a different thing. I used to put up with whatever my husband used to say for coming to Puttaparthi. My husband was not against Baba but he could not understand my frequent visits to see Baba. So, once, when he was dropping me at the train station as I was coming to Puttaparthi, he asked me: “When are you going to come back”? I said, “I don’t know”. He said, “What do you mean by you don’t know! Who will know? You should know your own programme”. I said, “I am sorry to tell you that we do not make any programme of when to leave Puttaparthi because it is Swami who will decide that”.

That used to be the pattern in those days – always. We could not buy tickets in advance. If, for example, we bought a ticket for the 24th, Swami would say, “Go on the 1st of next month”. Who would be able to come and cancel the ticket? So, I told my husband, “I cannot make any programme because it is subject to Swami’s decision. So, when it is time for me to go, He will tell me. I cannot decide”.

He said, “I don’t understand why you should be like that”. I said, “Swami is our Guru. I have to obey Him”. After this, when I reached Puttaparthi, Swami sent for me. I went upstairs. What followed then was another proof of

Swami’s omnipresence. Swami said, “Subramanian said like this in the car...and you replied like this...” and He repeated the exact dialogue we had! He said, “Look! You are keeping too quiet. It is high time you started telling Subramanian certain things about spiritual life and what is Dharma (righteousness) and what is not Dharma. You must talk. Why are you being quiet”?

I said, “Swami, I don’t want any disputes – I don’t like picking up a quarrel”. He said, “No! You have to do Dharma Yuddha (fight for righteousness)! You are not fighting for any selfish reason. This is for your Guru – obedience to your Guru. You must tell him and educate him, because he does not know; he does not have a Guru. So, don’t keep quiet. When it involves Dharma, please talk. By being quiet, in a way, you are being selfish because you don’t want to start a quarrel; you want your peace at any cost. That is wrong. Why was the Gita preached? For Dharma Yuddha! You are not preaching to him but when he accuses you, you have to tell him what Dharma is. You don’t have to lecture. But you must educate when you are attacked”.

Several times in my life this has happened – even with my mother-in-law before that. So, soon after this, I started explaining things to my husband too. He did not know why Swami wrote letters and why I replied. He would ask: “What do you write”? He had no Guru-disciple concept at all. So, Swami said: “You have to educate him. That is your duty. You are not doing anything wrong; you are doing what is right. If you do wrong, then of course you have to keep quiet”.

Receiving His Tender Care in Whitefield

Once I suffered from Tetanus. After I had recovered, I went to see Swami when He had

come to Chennai. Swami spoke at length to my husband about my other Janma (birth). He also spoke about His Andhra Pradesh trip. Swami even told him that once some naxalites wanted to harm Him and they were all sitting on treetops to attack. Swami said, "I went on a tour... the naxalites were there... perched on trees... nothing happened"...

Then, after He said all that, Swami came up to me and said, "Rani Maa, after that illness, you are in a very weak condition. Come to Whitefield and stay for some time. You have to pick yourself up. So, don't go back yet, come to Whitefield and stay in Brindavan Ashram".

So, I decided to go to stay in Brindavan Ashram and also informed Swami about my tentative date of arrival. But, even before I reached the Ashram, Swami had instructed the lady volunteers: "One person, Rani Maa will come and she will be sitting in the crowd. You will have to go and ask: 'Who is Rani Maa here? Swami wants you to come inside'".

Can you believe it? Swami had made such arrangements! So, they came and asked, "Who is Rani Maa"? But I had not reached there yet. I came a little later. Meanwhile, the Seva Dal went back and told Swami, "Swami, we checked, but no Rani Maa has come". Swami replied, "No! She is coming. Go back. She is a little late. Go and try again". He sent them back and by that time I had already come.

When I reached the Ashram, one Seva Dal lady was asking in the crowd, "Is anybody called Rani Maa here? Please get up. Swami wants you to come in immediately". So, I went with her to Swami. Swami gave me a room to stay, but since I had also brought my daughter along I wanted to take His permission. So, I asked, "Swami, I have brought my daughter with me. Should I ask her to go back or should I keep her with me"? Swami replied, "Yes, you

can keep Sheela with you; she will be helpful. You can bring her with you". Only then I took my daughter inside because without Swami's permission, you cannot take anybody inside.

The Ideal Devotee

Then, one morning, during my stay there, Swami came to my room at around 7 o'clock and said: "Come with Me". My room was downstairs; it was like a suite, with a living room, a bedroom, an attached bathroom and a balcony. Swami's room was upstairs. He came down and saw that my daughter was sleeping in the other room, and did not want to disturb her.

So, He took me to the balcony and asked, "What do you want? You ask Me and I will give it to you"! I wondered why Swami had suddenly asked me this question again! I said, "Swami, I want to be an ideal devotee". He said, "Do you know what you have to do"? I said, "No, Swami. You please tell me what I have to do".

Then He said, "Obedience. One day, when you will come to see Me, I will receive you very nicely and talk to you; another day when you come, I might ask you, 'Who asked you to come? Please go'. I may be very curt and rude. You must treat both evenly. There should be no difference. There must be equanimity for both the treatments. You should not react. When I am kind, you are happy; and when I am not kind, you are unhappy. That is not the Lakshana (characteristic) of a devotee". He then said, "Sometime back, you used to come here, to Whitefield, to teach somebody Bhajans. Is it not"? I said, "Yes, Swami". I used to be with my sister in Bengaluru, and would come to Whitefield to teach a foreigner a few Bhajans. This lady was staying in Whitefield. But after Swami went to Chennai, she asked me if I could teach her a few Bhajans. I happily obliged and used to

come from Bengaluru to teach her Bhajans everyday.

This was the routine for quite some time till Swami returned one day from Chennai. As usual, I had gone to Whitefield to teach her, but she said, “Swami has come back. Today is my birthday; I am so lucky that He has returned from Chennai. Today I can’t learn Bhajan”. That meant I had to return, and sensing that she said, “But how can I send you back like that? I will go inside and ask Swami if you can come inside”. No one was allowed inside without Swami’s permission; so she went inside and asked Swami: “Swami, Rani Maa has come; she has been coming regularly to teach me Bhajans. But today, I don’t want to learn. Since she has come all the way from Bengaluru, can I bring her inside”? Swami replied, “No! Ask her to go back”.

Not expecting this response from Swami, she further quizzed, “Why, Swami? Why can’t she come”? She tried to argue with Swami. Another foreigner lady, whom I knew and who was also present there at that time inside, asked Swami, “She is Your devotee too! Why don’t You give her Your Darshan, Swami? Please let her come”! But Swami was firm. He said, “Nothing doing. I don’t want that Rani Maa inside. Ask her to go back”.

So, the lady whom I had taught Bhajans came out looking very sad. She told me, “Rani Maa, you will have to go back; we tried to tell Swami that we would like to have you inside, but He said no. So, you will have to go back”.

I used to catch a train to return and then some other transport from there to my house. So, when I was going back, I thought in the train: ‘Why did Swami do this? Does He have no love? He has no kindness? Swami should not do this. After all, what does He lose by giving me Darshan? I would have been so happy, but

He has denied me that. How can He do this’? This was only a thought and I did not mention it to anyone because I was travelling alone in the train. But immediately a next thought followed: ‘No! I can’t question Swami. After all, He is my Guru. And Swami says we should not question our Guru. So, whatever He says, I should accept that’. Saying this, I consoled myself because I really did not understand why Swami had not let me in.

I could not believe it when Swami quoted this incident to me when I told Him that I wanted to be an ideal devotee. This had happened a few months ago. Swami said, “You came and when you went back, in the train, you were thinking: ‘How can Swami do this? Where is His love? There is no love’! That is how you were thinking in your mind; that was your first thought. And your second thought was: ‘Oh! He knows best. He knows what to do; how can I question Him’? You consoled yourself; but there was no understanding. You consoled yourself without understanding; but you were sad”.

Swami then said, “Today I have come to tell you; your first thought should not have been there. Your second thought about: ‘Swami knows everything!’ should have been first. Your first thought about questioning Me: ‘Why is He doing that’, should have been cancelled. The ideal devotee should not ask. Your second thought, ‘Swami knows everything’ is right. Then your work is finished; you are an ideal devotee! So, to be an ideal devotee – no questioning the Guru”!

This may explain why many devotees who kept coming here for years suddenly left Swami. They were all educated and people in good positions. But they did not understand Swami. Swami has been constantly telling us in His lectures and in His interviews too: “Don’t

try to understand Me! It is a useless and futile effort”!

I remember an example Swami had given years ago to make us understand why it is difficult to understand Him. He had said, “It is like counting the grains of sand on the beach”! Can we count the grains of sand on the beach? It is an impossible task. And this is why we will never understand Him because it is a revelation and it does not come with an understanding. Who Swami is can never be known with our intellect, reasoning, questioning or reading or Sadhana. Nothing will take us there. When He is pleased and happy with you, He will reveal Himself to you!

So, even if we try now and say that He is Paramatma (Supreme Being), we tend to forget it later and do many things that are not in harmony with His teachings. In this way, we fail Him as Paramatma! This is what Swami has been stressing here.

(To be continued ...)

Courtesy: Sri Sathya Sai Media Centre

– **The author, a devout and dedicated devotee for nearly sixty years, came to Bhagavan Baba as early as 1950. She was called ‘Rani Maa’ by Bhagavan. Her life was a treasure-chest of scintillating experiences of Swami's Divinity.**

What is devotion? Who are devotees? Devotion is faith, steadiness, virtue, fearlessness, surrender and absence of egoism. Worship done, however elaborately and purposely, is sheer waste of time and energy. Why pluck flowers and hasten their death? Some of you go around this Nilayam and satisfy yourselves that you have done so many circumambulations, but they can be called so only when your mind circles this place along with your feet. I notice that while your feet are taking you round by force of habit, your tongue blabbers about the faults of others, or the price of vegetables, or dishes you propose to cook for lunch. Before you start on your rounds, which you call Pradakshina (circumambulation), give your mind as Dakshina (thanksgiving) to the Resident of the temple, the Lord. That is the first thing to do, and perhaps the only thing to do.

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Effulgence of Divine Glory

The Joy of Travelling with Bhagavan

Brahmananda Panda

IN THE YEAR 1976, GURU Purnima was celebrated on 11th July. I arrived in Prasanthi Nilayam on 10th afternoon. At 5.00 p.m., Dr. Bhagavantam presided over a meeting of State Presidents and members of the Central Trust. Planning was finalised for expanding service activities. Baba walked in while our discussions were going on, and blessed us. Next day, Baba inaugurated the Easwaramma High School, and Sai Nagar, a colony for Harijans, which was built by the Central Trust with the blessings of Baba. Baba distributed to each family, with His own hands, clothes and some essential utensils. On 12th Baba allowed me Padanamaskar, and on 13th created Vibhuti for me in the Bhajan hall verandah. He called me in for a few minutes, and asked, "When are you leaving"? "Lord, whenever You permit." "Come, let us go to Brindavan. From there, you go back to Delhi. Tomorrow early morning I am starting. You come behind Me." "Yes, Lord," I said with a bubbling heart, offered Padanamaskar and came out.

Kutumba Rao came to me at 9.30 in the night and told me I was coming to Brindavan with Baba. I should be ready with clothes for



three days and stand in front of the Mandir by Suprabhatam time. My mind was in a state of indescribable joy and anxiety. The night before, I did not have a wink of sleep due to high blood pressure. If tonight sleep overcame me, and I could not get up at 3 o'clock, then I would not get ready in time. Baba's car would not wait for me even for a second. Whom could I trust

to wake me up at 3.00 a.m.? What if he was in deep sleep at 3.00 a.m.? So I decided, one night I could not sleep, this night also I would keep awake, walking up and down the corridor. If I touch the bed, then there is a great risk. By the time “Om” started in the Bhajan hall, I had finished bath and with a small briefcase was standing before the temple. Mind was very fresh, but both eyes were burning as if someone had thrown chilli powder in them. In the cool morning breeze, I felt if I just lie down somewhere, I would fall ‘dead asleep’.

Baba came out by the end of Omkar, and stood in the verandah in the subdued light for a minute or two. In the morning quiet and the dim light, He was looking just heavenly. I prayed in the mind.

Baba sat on the back seat. Next to Him I sat and next to me Bhagavantam. In the front seat, beside the driver, sat Chakravarthi, the Collector of Anantapur. The car started moving. If at that moment, the deity of sleep would have come and offered me all the wealth of heaven, I would have refused without a thought. The one for whom man spends life after life in Tapas, was sitting close to me! The more I was afraid of touching Him, the more He was rubbing Himself against me! Sometimes, in the pretext of telling something to Bhagavantam, He bent across me so much that my face was completely covered by His hair. That body would put even rose petals to shame, in fragrance and softness. I had used in my youth quite a number of French perfumes. But the perfume of this body can be described in one word, joy.

At about seven in the morning, our car took a diversion and stopped in an open area of the roadside jungle. The vehicle behind us also stopped there. I understood Baba indicated to me in the interview the day before to come in

that vehicle. Breakfast was taken out of that vehicle. Puri, Idli, Vada, curry and Chutni; coffee in a big flask. He took just a little, and fed us till our stomachs were full. In the car, He was talking about spiritual as well as worldly matters. Now and then, He made us laugh with His inimitable humour. If you ask me to do the most difficult job of summarising all that He said in a sentence or two, I would only say, “He said that deep faith in God alone gives man peace and joy, and one who is really a Deena, friendless, receives the grace of the Lord”. We arrived in Brindavan at 8 o’clock. Baba walked upstairs, and the rest of us stayed down. The students of Baba’s college served the guests. By the time I returned from the bathroom, one boy was waiting for me with a cup of coffee. He told me, “You must be tired. I have made the bed, you may take rest”. To tell the truth, I was forcing myself to keep my eyelids open at that time. As soon as I lay down on the bed, I fell asleep. When the call for lunch came, I was in deep slumber. Baba said, “He was sleepless for two nights. Don’t wake him. Let him sleep”. I got up at four in the afternoon, and then the call for coffee came. I walked up. He asked me, “What, slept enough”!

“Lord, I did not know such deep sleep for many days.” Baba said, “One night your blood pressure denied you sleep, and next night, my car. So, I did not wake you up for lunch”. I came down after tiffin and coffee. The same evening, Baba inaugurated the new hostel for students. We all ate our dinner there with Him.

On 15th morning before I got up from my bed, a boy was ready with coffee. It was not yet six. I hurried through washing and brushing, and had coffee. Call for breakfast came at about eight in the morning. Students were serving. Baba probably took only one Idli and one Vada. Bhagavantam could not go too

far. But Chakravarthi, Swami Karunyananda and me did not stop at anything! Baba sat by us and praising the culinary skills of the cook, forced us to eat more and more. What motherly affection! The memory of the taste of that Sambar and Chutni even now makes my mouth water. After nine, He went out to give Darshan to devotees sitting in the Bhajan hall. We followed Him up to a distance. He called some people for interview, took Arati and returned. There was not any work on hand. So, I walked around for some time, and then went in. Lunch was at 1 o'clock. Baba sat at a special table; we sat at another. Rice, curry and all else put together He might have eaten three tablespoonsful. Then He came to us to force us like a mother to eat more and more. He pointed out a curry to me and said, "Eat this, Rajmata has sent". By that time I had already taken second helping of that curry.

The lunch concluded. The Lord took one Pan from His box, and gave it to me. I touched it with my head and ate. "Not like what you eat, perhaps," He said.

After breakfast on 17th, Baba told us to get ready to leave after lunch. Students were pleading with Him to stay on that day at least. Baba was explaining to them how much work He had in Prasanthi Nilayam. After lunch Baba said, "I will take a photograph with you. If you stand very close, touching Me, the photo would come very nicely". After the picture-leela, I came down. We left Brindavan at about two in the afternoon. In the back seat two boys sat near the two doors, in between Baba and I. Chakravarthi in front, near the driver. Boys were standing on both sides of the road, with tearful eyes. Very sweet was that relation, the parting heart-breaking. After journey for half an hour, Baba asked us to sing Bhajans. One of the boys sang a very heart-rending Bhajan.

Then He asked me, "Do you sing Bhajans"? I said, "Not regularly, but when I feel inspired while speaking about You I break into a song or two". I sang Chal Re Man... Bhajan. After the first line the Lord joined 'Sai Sankar Narayan, Bolo Sai Sankar Narayan...' I was singing and jumping on my seat.

After the songs, He opened different bags, took out oranges, bananas, sweets, Vada and savoury mixture and passed on to each of us. While He was serving us, crumbs of the sweets fell on his robe. I took out my handkerchief and dusted His robe. When I was eating, some crumbs fell on my Kurta. Then He took out His handkerchief and dusted it. I was so much lost in this heavenly joy that I had forgotten that I was sitting beside God. We were, as it were, two friends, two bodies with a single heart. After eating, He passed on to me His Pan-box. I hesitated, and said, "You make it for me". "No, you make it for yourself. I don't have your Zarda, but you will like it". I took the box from His hand and said, "Lord, whatever you give with Your hands is Amrit".

My purpose of writing all this is to tell the reader the endless depth of Avatar's Leela. When the Nameless and Formless assumes a name and a form, and comes down amongst us, He comes down to the human level in such a way that the sweetness of His intimate love creates an insatiable thirst in the human heart. The Lord of sweetness (Rasa) fills the yearning heart (Rasika) with incomparable sweetness. He takes all care of the devotee, gives him the rare joy of personal contact, and gradually makes him desireless. When He comes near the devotee, He is no more the Lord of Kailash or Vaikuntha or Parabrahma. He is his own, his mother, father, friend, companion.

– Excerpted from "Raso Vai Sah" by Brahmananda Panda.

Chapters 6 and 7

VIDURA'S RENUNCIATION AND WISE COUNSEL

*I*NSIDE THE PALACE, VIDURA enquired about the welfare of every one of his kinsmen. Then Kunti Devi, the queen-mother, came in and casting her endearing looks at him, said, "At last, we have been able to see you, oh Vidura"! She could not say more.

After some time she resumed, "How could you stay away so long, ignoring the very children whom you reared with so much love and myself and others who revere you so much? It is through your grace that my children are today rulers of this land. Where would they be today if you had not saved them on many a critical occasion? We were the target for many a disaster; but the greatest one was your being away from us. That affected us most. Even the hope of seeing you again was extinguished in us. Now our hearts have sprouted again. Aspirations scattered by despair have come together. Today, our joy has attained fullness. Oh, what a happy day"! Kunti sat for a while wiping her tears.

Vidura held her hands, but could not resist his own tears. He was recapitulating the varied events of the past, in the Pandava and Kaurava groups. He said, "Mother Kunti Devi! Who can overcome the decrees of fate? What must happen, happens. The good and the evil that men do have to result in good and evil. How can man be called free, when he is bound by this law of cause and effect? He is a puppet in the hands of this law, it pulls the strings and he makes the movements. Our likes and dislikes are of no consequence. Everything is His Will, His

grace". When Vidura was thus expounding the fundamental spiritual truths that govern human affairs, the brothers Dharmaraja, Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva were sitting near, wrapped in close attention.

Kunti raised her head at last and said, "Through your blessings, we won the war; but we were powerless to save the lives of the sons of Draupadi and the son of Subhadra. Misfortune haunted us so strongly. Of course, as you said, no one can escape one's destiny. Well, let the past be forgotten. It is meaningless to worry over what cannot be set right. I must say, my thirst has now been considerably relieved; I could meet you at last. Where were you all this time? Tell us".

At this, Vidura replied that he had been on a pilgrimage to a number of holy places. The brothers listened with rapt attention to his story, prodding him with questions. Dharmaraja said that he was waiting the day when he too could go through all those holy experiences. He folded his palms in reverence whenever a holy shrine was mentioned and with closed eyes, he pictured to himself the sacred spot. Meanwhile, Bhima interjected, "Did you proceed to Dwaraka? Please tell us your experiences there". Dharmaraja too added, "You must have met Lord Krishna there, isn't it? Tell us all that happened, in full detail". Kunti Devi too became eager to hear his description; for, she said, "Tell us, tell us. My son is there now. You must have met him too. How are they all? I hope the old parents, Nanda and Yashoda are well, and, Devaki and Vasudeva". A shower

of questions fell on Vidura, even before he started talking.

Vidura was not overeager to answer. He talked as if he was anxious to avoid being drawn into the topic, for he had learnt from Uddhava while on the way to Dwaraka that the Yadava clan had perished and Krishna had closed His human career. He had no desire to plunge the Pandavas into grief, when they were elated at meeting him after a long time. "Why should I, who have given them so much joy, be myself the cause for wiping off that joy?" he argued. "They are sure to know about it from Arjuna who will be returning from Dwaraka with the sorrowful news." So, he swallowed the news that popped up quite often into his mouth. He satisfied himself and them by describing the glory of Krishna. He said, "I did not like to visit kith and kin with these ascetic robes on; so, I did not meet any of the Yadava leaders or Nanda, Yashoda and others", and kept quiet. He did not dilate further on Dwaraka and his own pilgrimage.

"I came to you, because I heard that you have won the war and are peacefully engaged at last in ruling over the kingdom which was rightfully yours. I felt drawn towards these children whom I had fostered from a tender age. It was affection towards them that drew me here. Among my kith and kin, I was tempted to visit only you. I did not desire to meet any others," he said and turned towards the Vedantic teachings which he wanted to impart. When the conversation ended, Dharmaraja prayed that Vidura might take residence at the quarters specially arranged for him, and himself accompanied him to the mansion.

There, he appointed certain persons to serve Vidura and requested him to take rest at that place. Vidura did not relish the idea of spending his time in that seat of luxury; but he entered the mansion lest Dharmaraja be displeased. He lay on his bed, reviewing the past. He

sighed when he realised that the stratagems which the blind Dhritarashtra, his own brother, employed to destroy the Pandavas, the children of his other brother Pandu, recoiled on him and caused the destruction of his own clan. He admired Dharmaraja for the magnanimity he was showing towards Dhritarashtra, in spite of the fact that he had tortured the Pandavas in various ways. Dharmaraja was revering him with great faith and devotion and attending to his comforts. He felt the utmost disgust when he recapitulated the wickedness of Dhritarashtra's heart. He was ashamed that the old man was coolly wallowing in the luxury of the palace, instead of cultivating detachment from the flimsy pleasures of the senses and attempting to realise the goal of human life, namely, liberation, from the cycle of birth and death. He experienced an uncontrollable agony that his brother was wasting the few remaining years of life on earth.

His yogic vision told him that the Pandavas too will soon disappear; that the same Krishna who guarded them here will look after their best interest in the hereafter too. But he surmised that the blind king will suffer more, after the departure of the Pandavas. He resolved to send that unfortunate brother out into pilgrimage and the ultimate realisation of his destiny. He did not want any delay to intervene. So, he slipped out in the darkness, without being noticed by anyone, and walked straight into the residence of Dhritarashtra.

The blind king and his queen, Gandhari, were of course expecting Vidura to call upon them, for they had learnt that he had come to town. So, when Vidura stepped in, he embraced him and shed tears of joy. He could not contain himself. He listed one by one the calamities that overtook him and his children and lamented over his fate. Vidura tried to console him with the profound teachings of the scriptures, but he soon discovered that the petrified heart of the old man will not melt at the application of

cold advice; he knew that his stupidity can be overcome only by hard blows.

So, he changed the tune and resorted to blame and abuse. Hearing this, Dhritarashtra was alarmed. He expostulated, "Brother! We are burning in agony at the loss of our hundred sons; and, you prick the wound with the sharp needles of your angry abuse. Even before we taste the joy of meeting you after so long a time, why do you try to plunge us deeper into distress? Alas! Why should I blame you for hard-heartedness? I am laughed at by all, blamed by all. I have no right to find fault with you". With head bent and resting on his palms, Dhritarashtra sat in silence.

Vidura recognised this as the opportune moment for instilling the lesson of renunciation, which alone could save him from perdition. He knew that his purpose was beyond reproach; for, he wanted them to undertake pilgrimage to holy places and fill themselves with sanctity, and meet great and good men and recognise the Lord within and thus save themselves. So, he decided to use even stronger words with a view to transform him and the queen. Though filled with pity at their forlorn condition, Vidura had in mind the dire days when they will need all the courage that Jnana alone can give them; so, he was determined to wound them into action. He said, "Oh foolish king! Have you no shame? Do you still find joy in earthly pleasures? Of what avail is it if you wallow in the mire until you die? I thought you had enough of it and more. Time is a cobra that lies in wait to sting you to death. You dare hope that you can escape it and live forever. No one, however great, has escaped the sting. You run after happiness in this temporary world and you seek to fulfil your desires in order to get some paltry satisfaction. You are wasting precious years. Make your life worthwhile. It is not yet too late to begin the effort. Give up this cage called home. Dismiss from your mind the paltry pleasures of this world. Remember the joy that awaits you, the world

that is welcoming you, the end of this journey. Save yourself. Avoid the foolish fate of giving up this life in the agony of separation from kith and kin. Learn to die with the thought of the Lord uppermost in the mind at the moment of departure. It is better far to die in joy in the thick of the blackest forest than die in distress in the palace of this capital city. Go, go and do Tapas. Get away from this place, this prison which you call home".

Vidura continued his admonition of Dhritarashtra: "You have reached this advanced age; but still, without any shame or hesitation, you are leading a dog's life. You may not be ashamed of it, but I am. Fie upon you! Your method of spending your days is worse than that of a crow".

Dhritarashtra could not hear more. He cried, "O! enough, enough. Please stop. You are torturing me to death. These are not the words that one brother should address another. Hearing you, I feel you are not Vidura, my brother. He would not have reprimanded me so cruelly. For, is Dharmaraja, with whom I now am, a stranger? Have I taken refuge with an alien? What is this that you are saying? Why these harsh words? Dharmaraja is fostering me with great love and care. How can you declare that I am leading a dog's life or a crow's? It is a sin – if you entertain such ideas. This is just my fate, and nothing else". Dhritarashtra bent his head and moaned.

Vidura laughed in derision. He said, "Have you no sense of shame that you should talk thus? Dharmaraja might, out of his goodness, care for you more than his own father. He might look after you with a love greater than your own sons. This is but the reflection of his character. That is but the amplification of the significance of his name. But should you not plan for your own future? One leg of yours is already in the grave and you are blindly filling your stomach in comfort and rolling in luxury. Reflect for a moment how you tortured Dharmaraja and his

brothers, to fulfil the wicked intentions of your vile sons, how you devised stratagems for their extinction. You put them in a wax house and set fire to it. You attempted to poison them. You insulted their queen in the most humiliating manner before a vast assembly. You and your abominable brood piled grief over grief on the sons of Pandu, your own brother. Blind, senile, thick-skinned elephant, you sat on the throne, perpetually asking those beside you, 'What is happening now? What is happening now'? How can you stay in this place enjoying Dharmaraja's hospitality, rolling over your mind the iniquities perpetrated by you, for his destruction? When you were devising their end, did they cease to be your cousins? Or, did the cousinship emerge now, when you came to them for stay? You tell me so proudly that they are treating you well, without a shred of shame!

"Why speak so much? The disastrous game of dice took place at your initiative, isn't it? Do you deny it? No. I was the witness of that game. I advised you against it then, did you take it to heart? What happened then to the love and sympathy which you are now freely pouring forth? Today, like a dog you are gulping the food the Pandavas are placing before you and leading this despicable life."

Hearing these words of Vidura which pained him like hammer strokes, Dhritarashtra developed a distaste for his style of living. Vidura's intention was to prod him into the life of a recluse and the life of Sadhana (spiritual discipline), so that he might realise his Self before it was too late. At last, he felt that Vidura was speaking the truth and giving him a true picture of his low nature. He said, "Brother! Yes, all that you have said is true, I admit. I have realised it now. But what am I to do? I am blind and therefore, I cannot go into the forests for Sadhana, alone. I must have a companion. What shall I do? For fear that I may suffer without food, Gandhari never leaves me even for a moment".

Vidura saw that he had modified his attitude and had seen light. He emphasised his original advice. He said, "You have become blind due primarily to this attachment to the body. How long can you be burdened with it? It has to be dropped by the wayside some day, some place. Know that 'you' are not this body, this package of nauseating things. To identify yourselves with the physical frame is the sign of extreme foolishness. The body is being besieged perpetually by death with His army of diseases. But you are unaware of it; you do not care for the pros and the cons; you snooze your fill and snore. This drama has an end, remember. The curtain has to come down. So, hie towards some holy place without delay, meditate on God and save yourself. Let death come and carry away your body there. That is the most excellent end. Do not die like a dog or fox, somewhere, somehow. Arise and go; develop detachment. Give up this delusion, escape from this house".

Thus were planted in the heart the seeds of renunciation. Dhritarashtra pondered long, and broke into tears. His lips quivered. He moved his hands from side to side to contact Vidura. At last, he held his hands and said, "Vidura! What can I say to you who gave this most valuable advice, that is certain to promote my best interests? Though you are younger in age, your Jnana makes you senior to all of us. You have full authority to speak as you like. Do not consider me as someone outside your circle. Hear me with patience. I shall certainly follow your advice". He then began to describe his condition to his brother.

"Vidura," he began, "How can I leave from here, without informing Dharmaraja who is looking after me, with more care than even a son? It won't be proper to do so. Then, he might insist on coming along with us; his nature is such. You must save me from this dilemma. Take me to a place where I can engage myself in Sadhana".

When he pleaded thus, Vidura replied, "Your words sound strange. You are not going into the forest to eat banquets, to witness carnivals, or to enjoy the beauty of the scenery. You are giving up everything with a full sense of detachment. You are taking up a life of austerity and spiritual discipline. And in the same breath, you are talking of 'taking leave' of kith and kin! This is odd. You resolve to lay down the body in the pursuit of the Ideal, but you are considering how to get the permission of men who are related to you through the body. These bonds cannot help Sadhana. They can never liberate you. Bundle them up and sink them deep. Move out of this place with just the clothes you wear. Do not waste a single moment of your life".

Thus, Vidura advised him without mercy. He did not change the tune of his song. He emphasised the importance of immediate renunciation. Dhritarashtra was on his bed, listening intently and ruminating on the next step. He said, "Vidura, what you say is quite true. I need not describe to you my special difficulties. This body is decrepit; these eyes are blind. I must have someone at least to guide my steps, isn't it? Your sister-in-law has blinded her eyes by a bandage in order that she can share my handicap, and suffer similarly. How can we two blind persons move about in the forest? We have to be dependent on others all our lives".

Vidura saw the tears rolling down the cheeks of the old man. He pitied his plight, but he never revealed his pity. He said assuringly, "Well, I am prepared to take you to the forest. I am ready. What greater pleasure have I than releasing you from here for this sacred purpose? Come, arise, start". Vidura stood up. Dhritarashtra too rose from his bed and stood on the floor. Gandhari too stood by his side, with a hand on his shoulder. She pleaded, "Lord, I am also coming with you, ready for anything".

But Dhritarashtra said, "Oh, it is very hard to guard women in the jungle. The place is infested

by wild beasts and life there is bound to be full of privations". He spoke in this strain for a long time. But she argued that she could not desert her lord, that she could stand the privations as much as he, that it was her duty to continue serving him until her death, that she was only following the tradition set up by the gems of Indian womanhood, that it is not Dharma to prevent her from observing her Dharma, that life in the zenana without him would be unbearable for her, that she would welcome instead, life in the jungle with her lord. She fell at the feet of her lord and demanded permission to accompany him.

Dhritarashtra was silent, he did not know what to say. It was Vidura who spoke. "This is not the time to discuss niceties of Dharma. How can this lady who never stayed away from you a single moment, suddenly leave your company and live apart? It is not proper. Let her also come; we shall take her. For those who march forward to do austerities, there should be no fear or delusion, no hunger or thirst, no grief or suffering. It is not Tapas (asceticism) to complain of these or anticipate these. When the body itself is being disowned, what can privations do? Come, there is no justification for delay". Vidura moved forward, leading Dhritarashtra silently followed by Gandhari who had her hand on his shoulder. The saintly votary of God, Vidura, took the pair, unnoticed by the guards and the citizens through the side streets and out beyond the city limits. He hurried them on so that they may reach the forest before dawn. But the Ganga had to be crossed in a boat and no boatman was there to take them across before sunrise. So, they had perforce to wait on the bank of that holy river. Vidura made them rest for a while in a bower and himself arranged for a boat to take them all to the other bank in the dark.

THE STORY OF SRI SATHYA SAI HILL VIEW STADIUM*

Bishu Prusty

AS THE ENGINEERS AND THE sculptor got to work, Bhagavan left for Chennai. But from Chennai came His message to the Ashram secretary: "If Subramanyam has finished the drawing, ask him to bring it to Chennai. I want to see it". So, the sculptor took the overnight bus and was ready with the designs to present to Bhagavan who was then residing in the house of a senior devotee. The sculptor tried to enter that premises but in vain. However, in a few minutes, Bhagavan emerged from that house in His car. As He moved out of the gate, He spotted Subramanyam standing there with folded palms, beckoned him near and said, "Go inside and sit. I will come back soon". Now he was royally welcomed inside. When Bhagavan examined the drawings, He complimented the sculptor for his work and also suggested certain ornamentations in the design saying, "Only if you do this, it will be nice", and then gave the final go-ahead: "Now you go to Puttaparthi and commence the work".

The work progressed in good speed even though there were many parallel activities going on in Puttaparthi then for Bhagavan's 60th Birthday, like the construction of Sri Sathya Sai Space Theatre, building of scores of new flats, overhead tanks, floral arches, sprucing up the canteens and painting of all the structures.

Santhi Vedika

Swami would visit the site every other day charging the work atmosphere with new



Santhi Vedika, the imposing stage in the stadium.

energy. Even as the Mandapam was getting ready, an ardent devotee from Chennai sent to Puttaparthi big statues of Lord Kartikeya, Lord Chandra, Lord Surya, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, Mother Parvati and Lord Ganesh. When these arrived, the embodiment of humility that Bhagavan is, He called the sculptor and asked, "Are they good? Shall we keep them here"? When the sculptor in utter supplication said, "Whatever is Your command, Swami"! Bhagavan directed that the statue of Mother Parvati be placed in the rear ground of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, while the one of Lord Ganesh should be installed in front of the Higher Secondary School. The other statues were aesthetically placed on either side of the Mandapam. These lovely deities instantly lifted the grandeur of the place.

Once this was done, in a simple ceremony, Bhagavan cut the ribbon and opened this imposing stage-cum-dais which He had

* Continued from June 2021 issue.

aptly christened as ‘Santhi Vedika’ (forum of peace) on the morning of 14th November 1985. However, the story of the Santhi Vedika does not end there. When just four days were left for His Birthday festivities, looking at this Mandapam from inside His car, Bhagavan called the sculptor and expressed, “The wall of the Santhi Vedika looks plain. Paint something there”. The sculptor in all humility submitted, “Swami, if You give me a picture, I can see it and paint”. In the next instant, Bhagavan rubbed His palms together and there appeared an envelope! Inside it was a picture of the Gitopadesham – the glorious scene of Lord Krishna imparting the Bhagavadgita to Arjuna. The stunned sculptor accepted that gift with joy and excitement, and began the work in right earnest. On the third day of the painting, Bhagavan came again, and immensely pleased with the work, He told an Ashram official, “See, how beautifully he has done”. The sculptor right then and there fell at His feet saying, “I did not do it, Swami. You alone did it”. Swami blessed him profusely and for the next few days, every time He visited the stadium, He had a guest with Him to whom He specially showed this painting. Recalling those sweet moments, Shilpi Subramanyam, with tears in his eyes, says, “I do not know what merit I had done in my previous lives to be granted such an opportunity”.

That timeless scene from the Mahabharata in the Santhi Vedika in fact served as the perfect backdrop for the World Conference proceedings and Birthday celebrations that were held for eight days from 17th to 24th November 1985. It was from this sacred pulpit that Bhagavan granted Darshan and delivered His landmark 60th Birthday Discourse.

While the Santhi Vedika was complete for the 60th Birthday, the Hill View Stadium was not. In a way, the story of the Stadium had

just begun. After the spectacular 60th Birthday celebrations, the sculptor had a brief period of illness which Bhagavan cured by creating Vibhuti and smearing it all over his body. For his health and protection, Bhagavan also materialised a bracelet, tied it on his wrist, and then assured him saying, “I will not allow anything to affect your health. Be courageous”. He immediately created a ring too for him and recharged him physically and mentally.

For a month after this, every single day Bhagavan would ask him, “How are you”? One of these days, the sculptor said, “Now I have no work, Swami”. Bhagavan retorted, “Who says there is no work? Go to the Hill View Stadium and wait there. I will come”.

Promptly, Shilpi Subramanyam presented himself there. Bhagavan drove in after the morning Bhajans. As He alighted from His car,



Statue of Lord Krishna in Hill View Stadium.

He pointed to the hill and told Shilpi Subramanyam, "I am giving you this entire hill. You can do what you want. First, make a statue of Lord Krishna". Bhagavan then indicated to him the spot for the construction. However, there was no proper path to reach that place. When Bhagavan returned to the Mandir, He told the Ashram Secretary, "I have asked Subramanyam to make a Krishna statue. You prepare a way for him to reach there".

That evening itself, a tree was planted there to mark the area, and the sculptor requested Bhagavan to come and confirm the location. The next morning, He did come around 10 a.m., and not only did He approve the site but also blessed the sculptor to begin the work. In a day, a rough road was made so that Bhagavan's jeep could reach that spot any time. Bhagavan used this path the very next day and when He came there, the sculptor sought more clarification, "What should be the height of the statue, Swami"? "Do it as big as you can," came His direction. "20 feet, Swami?" asked the sculptor. "Yes, do it!" was the divine command. That evening itself, Shilpi Subramanyam prepared a sketch on paper and showed it to Bhagavan who liked it and told him to go ahead. From then on, Bhagavan would often see the progress of the statue from the bottom of the hill but never came on top till the shape was complete. Once the statue was almost ready, He started coming near it and congratulating the sculptor, He would say, "It is very good. Continue". Subsequently, He



Statues of Divinities in Hill View Stadium.

started bringing guests along with Him and to them He would proudly show this beautiful blue masterpiece which along with the base was 23 feet in height.

Once this was complete, the sculptor asked, "What should I do next, Swami"? Swami mischievously smiled and said, "I told you I have given you the entire hill. Do whatever you want"! When the sculptor suggested that he could make a statue of Siva, Bhagavan instantly agreed. "Shall I make a statue of Lord Siva standing?" queried the sculptor. "No, He should be sitting," came the Divine instruction. Not only this, Bhagavan indeed Himself enacted the actual posture of Lord Siva, wherein he was meditating with his palms folded on his lap. He further guided, "No need to do four hands. Have only two hands". "The Krishna statue is 23 feet. Should I make this 25 feet, Swami?" The sculptor wanted to be clear. "Yes, go ahead!" The divine permission was granted. Bhagavan indeed was so happy with how this statue was taking shape that one day He had brought a westerner with Him and showing him the statue, He said, "This is

Siva". And then He sweetly smiled and added, "Do you know who is making it? It is My son, Subramanyam"! (Subramanyam is the son of Lord Siva as per Indian tradition). Once again Subramanyam was left speechless at Bhagavan's unbounded mercy.

After these two statues were completed, Bhagavan Himself directed the sculptor to create the statues of Lord Zoroaster (21 feet) and Lord Jesus (27 feet) with specific instructions about their form and features.

Even as these gigantic forms of the gods filled up the facade of the hill, sometime in 1987, Swami told Shilpi Subramanyam, "On the top of the hill I want a Hanuman statue. You do it; He is your friend". When the sculptor asked as to when he should start the work, Bhagavan directed, "Do the Bhumi Puja tomorrow". As per Bhagavan's instruction, the sculptor did the ground-breaking ceremony the next day; however, Bhagavan did not come for the occasion. When the sculptor requested Him again to come and bless the spot, Bhagavan said, "I will come, wait".

That waiting found fulfilment after three years in February 1990, when out of the blue, Bhagavan called Shilpi Subramanyam and said, "You remember that day when I told you to work for the Hanuman statue? Now you go and begin the work. It should be 65 feet tall".

The story of how the majestic Hanuman magnificently stands there ruling that sacred hill and reminding everyone of the heightened glory of one-pointed devotion is a saga by itself. Bhagavan Himself created a little silver Hanuman to show the engineers the exact shape and dimensions of this huge

statue. This in fact was one of the highlights of Bhagavan's 65th Birthday celebration in 1990.

But Swami had more plans for the Hill View Stadium. In 1993, He asked Shilpi Subramanyam to make a statue of Lord Buddha. A cave for Buddha also was to be made and He said, "Make that look like the Mandapam in Gaya (the place where Buddha attained enlightenment)". The sculptor started making this statue based on a photograph sent by devotees from Japan. When the statue was almost done, Bhagavan came but He was disappointed. Seemingly annoyed, He told the sculptor, "Will anyone bless with the left hand? They bless with their right hand only". The sculptor immediately sought His forgiveness and overnight he altered the statue such that Lord Buddha (27 feet) was now seen blessing with his right hand. The next morning when Bhagavan saw the modified version, He was immensely pleased with the sculptor's timely work and dedication. With this, the face of this chosen hill was an elevating panorama of Divinities from several faiths. There could not have been a grander illustration of Bhagavan's constant insistence on 'Unity of Divinity'.



The Stadium with galleries.

Sri Sathya Sai Unity Cup Cricket Match

The 70th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan in 1995 saw this ground swelling with countless people longing to treasure in their heart one glimpse of that Bright Orange from afar. One felt now this stadium was perfect for all large Sai events. But in 1997, Bhagavan redefined a 'Sai event' in devotees' minds, by deciding to hold an International Cricket Match in this very stadium! This decision of Bhagavan catapulted the ground to now become a world-class stadium comparable with any such facility in India or the world.

The construction wing of Larsen & Toubro was entrusted with this work and in 8 months, the ground was completely transformed. It was no more Upper Ground and Lower Ground. The lower ground was brought to the level of the upper ground, tonnes of red soil from Bengaluru were laid to a thickness of three inches all over the field, four pitches were created with north-south alignment, and when a senior devotee requested Bhagavan to sanctify the pitch by the touch of His Lotus Feet, He did readily agree.

Thus, the International Stadium for the Sri Sathya Sai Unity Cup was ready by 18th November 1997. It was slightly oval and measured 80 metres north-south and 75 metres east-west. Simultaneously, Bhagavan also built ten-tier galleries on the eastern side and a pavilion with a floor area of 4,000 square feet making it bigger than in most international pavilions.

The historic match between India XI and World XI on the morning of 30th December 1997 was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister of India, Sri I.K. Gujral by unfurling the Sri Sathya Sai Unity Flag which had the Sarva Dharma emblem surrounded by miniature flags of 124 countries. The World XI consisted of top players from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and England.

What is immensely significant here is what Bhagavan had once told students way back in the mid-eighties. One evening in January 1985, after watching a cricket match by the students, He started talking about how profound spiritual lessons of life can be learnt from the game of cricket, and after a while, paused and looking mercifully at the boys He said, "You all are lucky to play in this stadium which you have named but remember, one day, great cricket players from all over the world will play here and Swami will watch... you will see 'big' players come to Prasanthi Nilayam"! That penultimate day of the year 1997 did witness how celebrated cricketers from India lifted the 20-kg pure gold 'Sri Sathya Sai Unity Cup' from the Divine Hands.

As the '90s decade concluded, one could only look at the stadium in awe and marvel at how Bhagavan had so beautifully synthesised sports and spirituality, unravelling new dimensions for both and granting everyone a glimpse into what He means when He says, "Life is a game, play it"!

As a grand finale to the 20th Century which was blessed to bask in the ever-expanding enigmatic glory of Sri Sathya Sai Avatar, and as a dedication to Him on His 75th Birthday, senior devotees of the Sai Mission prayed to Bhagavan that a commemorative monument be built to document the splendid Sri Sathya Sai Saga. Thus, on 18th November 2000, Bhagavan gifted to humanity 'Chaitanya Jyoti', the majestic museum on the north-western corner of the hill, the architecture of which is a confluence of many cultures.

It is indeed striking that until this edifice emerged, the Hill View Stadium had tall figures of the Divine Masters from various eras but when it came to the Kali Yuga, it was not an image of the Master but a stellar monument of His message and mission. No wonder,

Bhagavan always stressed, "My life is My message".

While the Hill View Stadium now looked full with statues on one side with the towering Hanuman on top, huge galleries on three sides and the imposing stage of the Santhi Vedika in the south, still some senior devotees felt, "How could the panoramic spectacle of Divinities in the Hill View Stadium be complete without the presence of the previous incarnation of Bhagavan"?

Thus, yielding to their prayers, on the morning of 15th October 2002, Bhagavan unveiled a giant statue of Shirdi Sai, next to the statue of Lord Siva. With this installation, now the Hill View Stadium was indeed perfect and whole.

It is this Divine amphitheatre, which, for more than thirty-five years now, has been the chosen arena for all His magnificent Birthday celebrations as well as when His students



Statue of Shirdi Sai Baba.

of this hill, exemplified".

This is the transformative power of this sacred place – it stands forever in the skyscape of the sacred hamlet of Puttaparthi as a soaring testament of Swami's Message of Love.

display their skill, acumen and character every year in the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet on 11th January. This Stadium has indeed become synonymous with the grandeur and glory of Sai celebrations.

Once you enter this holy place, you are filled with awe and humility. As you raise your eyes and behold these gods, your hearts bow down in reverence and obedience, and you begin to pray, "Oh Lord, let me too rise to that height of servitude and sacrifice that Your beloved Hanuman, whom You placed at the summit

Why did sage Vasishtha come to Emperor Dasaratha? He was not interested in wealth or pomp. He wanted to be there when the Lord incarnates as Rama. Sita esteemed Hanuman in the same manner. She said that even if she were to offer him lordship of the three worlds, she would not be discharging her debt to him. Sita said in praise of Hanuman, "You are the embodiment of sacrifice. You exemplify pure devotion. Because of these two qualities, you are entitled to move freely in all the three worlds. All the three worlds will experience prosperity through your presence."

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

About Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust Publications Division

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 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 Bhagavan 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 Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and books on Bhagavan besides various spiritual and religious books.

Get Sanathana Sarathi

On Sanathana Sarathi official website – www.sanathanasarathi.org – subscribe for paperback and e-versions. Single monthly editions are also downloadable in English and Telugu languages at <http://bit.ly/sarathienglish> and <http://bit.ly/sarathitelugu>.

Other Books By Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division (In English)

1. Sai Sathya Sakha
2. Summer Showers In Brindavan, 1972
3. Satyopanisad I
4. Satyopanisad II
5. Gurudev
6. Namasmarana
7. Bhakthi And Health
8. Life Is Love, Enjoy It!
9. Life Is A Challenge, Meet It!
10. Life Is A Dream, Realize It!
11. Bhagawan And Bhakta
12. Body And Mind
13. My Dear Ones
14. Sevadal
15. Silence
16. Suffering
17. Surrender
18. Atma
19. Do You Know
20. Gopikas Of Brindavan
21. Gratitude
22. My Beloved Ones
23. Only Love
24. Purity
25. Memoirs Of A Sai Student
26. A Journey To Self-Peace
27. Dharma
28. Guru
29. Karma

30. Life
31. Meditation
32. Peace
33. Simple Truths
34. Nama Mahima
35. Divine Vibrations
36. Guidelines To Active Workers
37. Sri Sathya Sai Anandadayi
38. Truth, Auspiciousness, Beauty
39. Sai Baba's Mahavakya On Leadership
40. Path To Peace - Prayers for Daily Life
41. Sathya Sai Speaks Vol-1
42. Summer Showers In Brindavan, 1973
43. Summer Showers In Brindavan, 1974
44. Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Vol – 1
45. Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Vol – 2
46. Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Vol – 3
47. Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Vol – 4
48. Life is a Game, Play it
49. Divine Inspirations Vol-1
50. Divine Inspirations Vol-2
51. Divine Inspirations Vol-3
52. Divine Inspirations Vol-4
53. Divine Inspirations Vol-5
54. The Light of Love
55. Bhagavatha Vahini
56. Dharma Vahini
57. Dhyana Vahini
58. Gnyana Vahini
59. Geetha Vahini
60. Prema Vahini
61. Prashnottara Vahini
62. Leela Kaivalya Vahini
63. Vidya Vahini
64. Prasanthi Vahini
65. Sathya Sai Vahini
66. Eashwaramma: The Chosen Mother
67. Loving God
68. Love and Suffering, My Road to Liberty

69. Chinna Katha Book-1
70. Chinna Katha Book-2
71. Chinna Katha Book-3
72. Living with God
73. Capturing Divinity
74. Full Flame 2 unconditional Love
75. Fragrance, A Tale of Love
76. Sai Nandana: 60th Birthday
77. Sai Nandana: 75th Birthday

Telugu Books Available As eBook

1. Vidya Vahini
2. Upanishad Vahini
3. Dharma Vahini
4. Dhyana Vahini
5. Gnyana Vahini
6. Sandeha Nivarani
7. Leela Kaivalya Vahini
8. Prasnottara Vahini
9. Sutra Vahini
10. Geetha Vahini
11. Prasanthi Vahini
12. Sathya Sai Vahini



LOVE ALL - SERVE ALL



REGD. WITH REGISTRAR OF NEWSPAPERS R.NO.10774/1958 REGN.NO. HDP/002/2021-2023
LICENCED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT No.PMGK/RNP/WPP-02/2021-2023

Date of Publication: 1st July 2021



Fix your Mind in Meditation

From the tree of your life, to pick out such fruits which you have protected and which you have grown in the form of good qualities and offering them to God, there is some distinctiveness in that. In order to promote good qualities, you have to undergo several troubles. So, it is through these good qualities that your mind can also acquire a divine concentration. Without good qualities and without good thoughts, how can you fix your mind in meditation?

— *Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

Annual Subscription English (12 issues)
India ₹120. Other Countries ₹1200 or US \$22 or UK £17 or €19,
CAN \$29, AUS \$31. Acceptable for 1, 2 or 3 years.

Payment for print and electronic editions can be made online through our website: www.sanathanasarathi.org
or through conventional methods such as M.O. or D.D. or Personal Cheque in favour of **Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division.**

