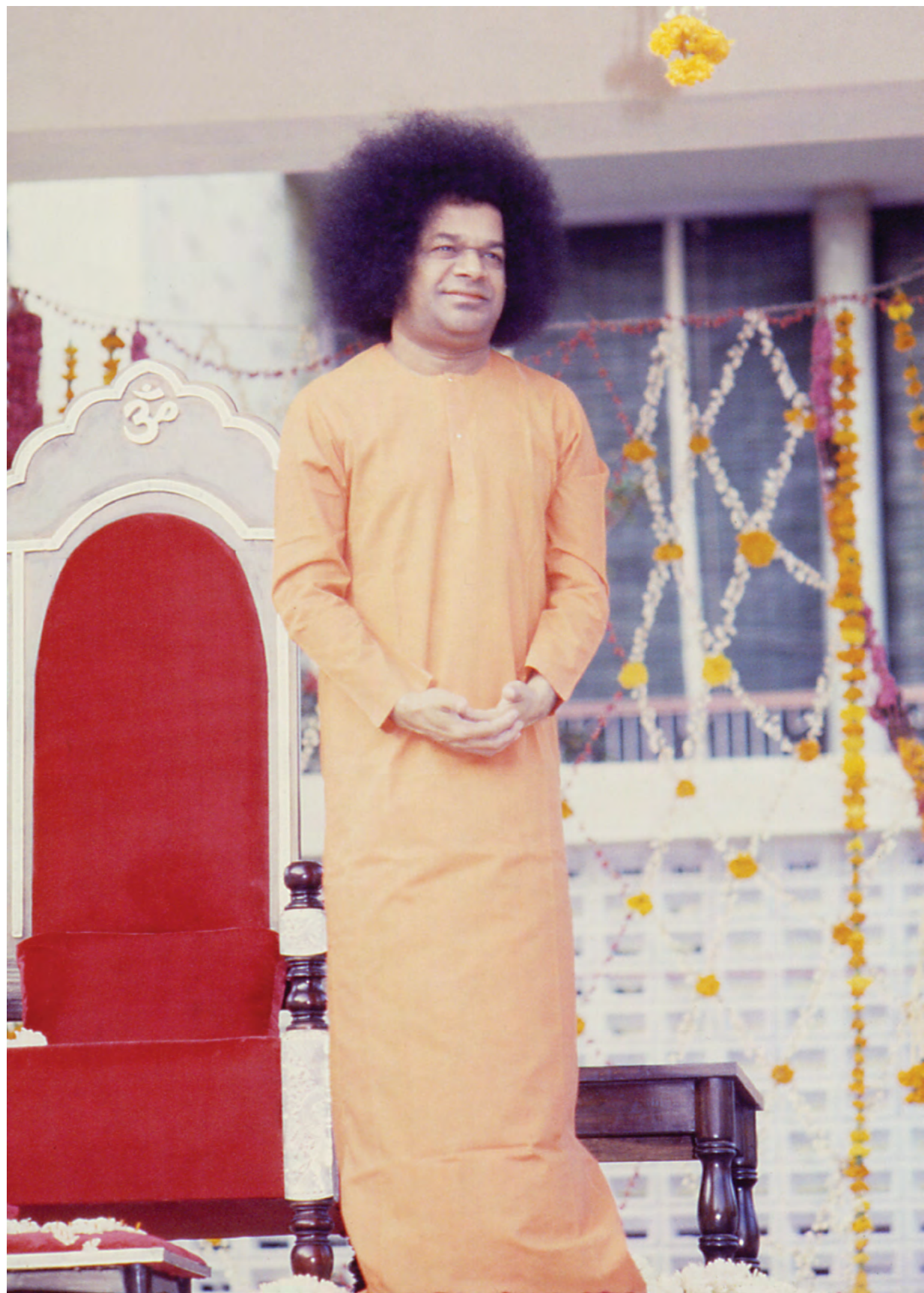


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Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

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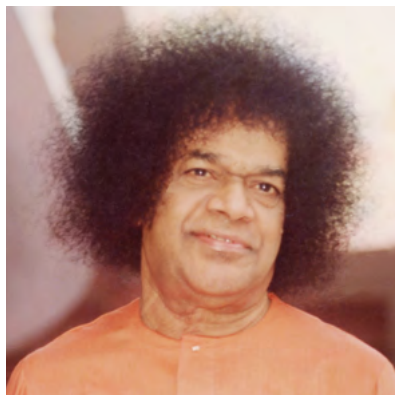
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*"You perform many spiritual practices,
study many sacred texts, go to many
noble souls to listen to their teachings.
But what is the use? The result of all
that you do is nothing because you do
not have inner vision. To have proper
results, take experience as the basis.
Experience comes out of the heart, not
from outside."*

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AVATAR VANI

REALISE GOD THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Pots are many, clay is one.

Jewels are many, gold is one.

Cows are many, milk is one.

Likewise, beings are many, but the Atmic principle is one.

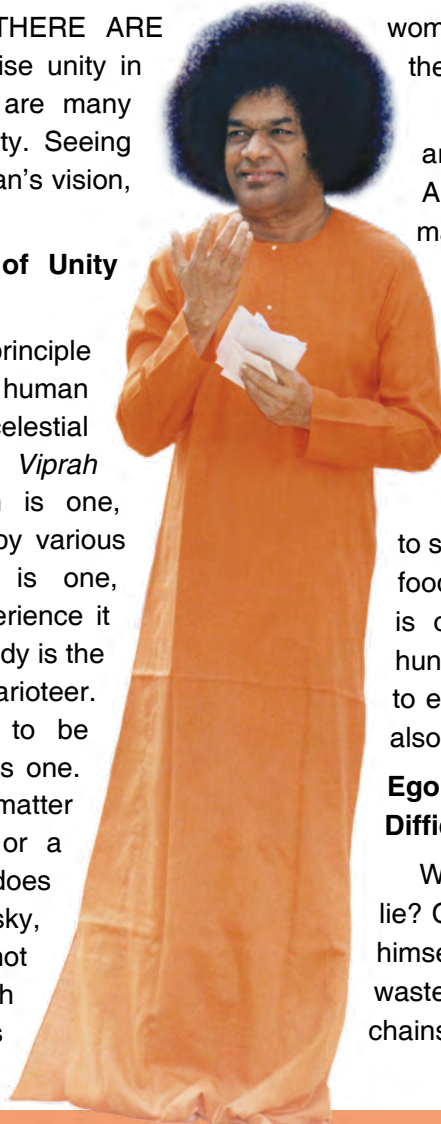
(Sanskrit Verse)

TRUE SPIRITUALITY LIES IN MAKING YOUR FEELINGS PURE

IN THIS WORLD, THERE ARE very few who visualise unity in diversity, but there are many who see diversity in unity. Seeing diversity is the fault of man's vision, not the creation.

Realise the Principle of Unity in Creation

The same Atmic principle is present in animals, human beings, demons and celestial beings. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). Though truth is one, people classify and experience it in many ways. Human body is the chariot, Atma is the charioteer. Chariots might appear to be different, but charioteer is one. The birth is the same, no matter if one is a millionaire or a pauper. The millionaire does not come down from sky, and the pauper does not come out of earth. Both come out of mother's



womb. Hence, birth and death are the same to all.

Similarly, thirst and hunger are the same to everybody. A rich man when he is thirsty may take costly cool drinks. A poor man may quench his thirst by drinking cold water.

A rich man or a man of high authority may eat delicious food to appease his hunger while a poor man may afford only parched rice to satiate his hunger. Varieties of food may be many, but hunger is one and the same. Hence, hunger and thirst are the same to everyone. Birth and death are also equal to everyone.

Ego is the Cause of Man's Difficulties

Where does the difference lie? Carried away by illusion, man himself creates differences and wastes his life. There are seven chains that bind man. They are:

body, desires, anger, ego, actions, ignorance and illusion. Ignorance is the main cause of man's illusion, and it is also the cause of man's ego. When he has both ignorance and ego, he develops attachment. They are followed by hatred. They altogether bind and imprison man. To attain freedom from this captivity, man has to make efforts to get rid of ego, attachment, hatred, illusion and ignorance. The cause of man's birth is his actions, and the actions are the result of his attachment. For attachment, ego is responsible. Hence, it is ego that creates all. In fact, there is no scope for ego at all. When we enquire, we will find that there is no basis for man's ego.

When we see the world map, Bharat appears to be very small in this vast world. In this country Bharat, the State of Tamil Nadu is all the more small. In the State of Tamil Nadu, Dindigul district is still smaller. In this district, Kodaikanal is a very, very small place. In Kodaikanal, our house is like a tiny spot. In our house we are still smaller. In this vast universe, what are we? Then, where is the scope for ego? If we have this broad vision, we will understand that there is no scope for ego.

If you enquire in another way, you will realise that the Atma is the same in everyone. When the Self is same in all, then where is the scope for ego? In you and Me, the Self is the same. There is no difference that one is big and the other is small. Then where is the scope for ego? If you consider you are a rich man, there are many more who are richer than you. If you think you are handsome, there are many others who are more handsome than you. If you think you are strong, there are so many people stronger than you. If you think you are educated, there are many more highly

The fire of divinity is present within you, but you have neglected it. Therefore, the ash of illusion has covered it. So, you are not able to visualise the divinity within you. You blow off the ash of illusion through renunciation, then you will see the fire of divinity. Fire has not come afresh from somewhere. It was already there within you. Similarly, there is divinity in the form of Atmic principle in everyone.

educated persons than you. If you think that you are an intellectual, there are many more intellectuals. So, there is no chance for ego to develop in man.

So long as there is ego in man, he cannot be free from troubles. Here is a small example. Students play football. The football is filled with air. So long as the football is filled with air it will receive kicks from the players of both the teams; it cannot escape the hits. The moment air is taken out of the football, students who kicked it with their feet will pick it up in their hands. It receives respect when air is taken out. So long as the football has air, it is not respected; it is kicked around.

Our body also is like a football. Our six inner enemies, Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya (desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy) are on one side and Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema, Ahimsa and Karuna (truth, righteousness, peace, love, non-violence and compassion) are on the other side. The players on both sides are hitting the football, the body. How long will they hit? So long as there is air of ego in it. The moment the air of ego is gone,

they will stop hitting it. So, ego is responsible for all our problems.

Hence, in the first instance, you have to subdue the ego. Your ego hurts and harms you only. The cause is ignorance. What is this ignorance? As knowledge is on the rise, ignorance is also increasing. There is enormous increase in the knowledge of science today, but along with that ignorance is also increasing proportionately.

Develop Inner Vision

What does knowledge signify? It signifies light. Where there is light, there can be no darkness. Today the whole world is full of darkness of ignorance in spite of all the progress of science. It is beset with difficulties, problems and unhappiness. Then what is the benefit of the knowledge of science? Science has grown but man's virtues have not. Science has gone up beyond limit, but sense has gone down. So, first and foremost, we should control our senses. Scientists travel lakhs of miles into space, but no one travels even half an inch inward. What is the use of travelling lakhs of miles outside? Man should make inner progress by developing inward vision.

Outer vision leads only to delusion. Inner vision confers bliss. To develop inner vision, we should get rid of ego. How do you do that? When you have Atmic vision, you can be away from body feeling. Body is ephemeral like a water bubble. No one can say how long it will last. We say tomorrow, but cannot be sure of that. May be, you can see tomorrow. You may also remember yesterday. But both are not permanent. Past is past, it is yesterday. Even if you spend lakhs of rupees, you cannot get it back. Future is not sure. We don't have surety that we will continue to live till tomorrow.

Present is very important. Don't take it as ordinary present. It is omnipresent. The present contains the results of the past and the future. So, take care of the present and make it sacred. Do not make plans for the future which cannot be executed.

Man today is beset with many difficulties and troubles. What is the reason? The reason is that he broods over the past, worries about the future and neglects the present. So, make the present sacred. When the present is sacred, the future is bound to be sacred. When we develop this outlook, we can reach great heights on the path of spirituality.

Know the Divinity Present in you

You perform many spiritual practices, study many sacred texts, go to many noble souls to listen to their teachings. But what is the use? The result of all that you do is nothing because you do not have inner vision. To have proper results, take experience as the basis. Experience comes out of the heart, not from outside. You don't need to struggle for experience. Don't do experiments. In the field of science, you can expect certain results by performing experiments. But in the spiritual field, there are no experiments, only experience.

How do you get experience? You carry sugar in your hand and put it in a tumbler of water. The sugar settles down at the bottom of the tumbler. When you stir it and mix it with water, you cannot see it with your eyes; you cannot catch it in your hand. How do you decide whether the sugar is present in water or not? You put a drop of water on your tongue and taste it. Then you come to know that sugar is present in water.

Similarly, body is a vessel; divinity is the sugar. It is not possible to see divinity with your eyes. You cannot catch or hold it. But



you can experience its bliss. Through this experience, you can know the presence of divinity within you.

Here is fire. It is covered by ash. Why has the ash covered the fire? It has covered the fire because we have neglected it. Wherefrom has the ash come? It has come from fire only. Ash that has come out of the fire has covered it. If you blow it off, the ash will go, and you will see the fire. Similarly, the fire of divinity is present within you, but you have neglected it. Therefore, the ash of illusion has covered it. So, you are not able to visualise the divinity within you. You blow off the ash of illusion through renunciation, then you will see the fire of divinity. Fire has not come afresh from somewhere. It was already there within you. Similarly, there is divinity in the form of Atmic principle in everyone.

Man today only protects and decorates the chariot of his body which is drawn by the horses of the senses. It is however necessary to control the horses. Keep the horses of senses under control. Who controls these horses? It is the mind of man that should control the senses. As the mind controls the Indriyas (senses), it is also called Indra. Basing on this, it has been said: *Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha* (yoga is control of mental modifications). Man controls other things. Government exercises control over property, food and, in fact, everything. But no heed is paid towards controlling the mind. For that reason, we face troubles. If the mind is under control, then there is no need to control other things; they get controlled on their own.

Observe Ceiling on Desires

For that reason, the Sai Organisation has devised the programme of Ceiling on Desires. Ceiling on what? Is it ceiling on

property or food? No, no! It means ceiling on the activities of daily life.

First and foremost, exercise control on food. Do not waste food. Food is responsible for sustaining the body. Eat moderately. Don't waste food. Food is God. There are many people who face problems for lack of food. If you waste food, you betray those people who are denied food. So, do not waste food.

Secondly, don't waste money. Misuse of money is evil. Do not waste money merely because you have excess of it. Health is wealth. If you waste money on eating immoderately, you will be spoiling your health. You should make use of money to the extent needed. If you misuse money, you may acquire bad habits, go over to wicked path, grow in ego, take to ostentation and develop bad qualities. So, make proper use of your money; spend it in a sacred way.

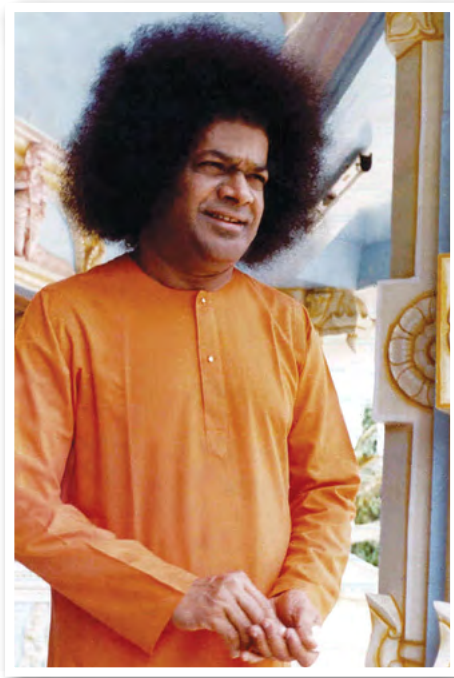
Thirdly, don't waste time. Time waste is life waste. When you talk unnecessarily, you not only waste time but lose your energy also. Talk to the extent necessary. Never waste time. Time is very important. Time is the very form of God. *Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah, Kalateetaya Namah, Kalaswarupaya Namah, Kalaniyamitaya Namah* (salutations to time, to the one who is beyond time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, to the one who is the embodiment of time, and to the one who ordains time). Everything is time.

Fourthly, don't waste energy. Energy is wasted in seeing, hearing, talking, thinking and doing what is not necessary. Be moderate in all these five activities. Spend the energy to the extent necessary. When you develop energy, you develop divinity. If



you waste energy, 'allergy' begins. Do not waste energy. See, listen and talk what is good. Talk less, talk sweetly.

We keep thinking until we go to bed, with no rest in thinking. We build castles in the air. So, reduce useless thinking. Think, but think usefully. Think of the Divine. Think of divinity. Do not have thoughts of others. "Who is to whom?" "What are these worldly relationships?" These are temporary like passing clouds that come and go. Before marriage who is husband and who is wife?



This spoils and pollutes the mind. Keep the mind pure, do not pollute it. Turn the mind towards the Divine, not the world. When you turn the mind towards the world, you develop animal qualities. In Vedanta, it is mentioned, *Pashyati Iti Pashuhu* (one who goes purely by external vision is an animal). He looks at everything with worldly outlook. *Pashyannapicha Na Pashyati Moodho* (he is a fool who sees, yet does not recognise the reality). Look at everything with divine feelings. Then only will you see divinity in everyone. But you see everything with worldly outlook.

Man today is beset with many difficulties and troubles. What is the reason? The reason is that he broods over the past, worries about the future and neglects the present. So, make the present sacred. When the present is sacred, the future is bound to be sacred. When we develop this outlook, we can reach great heights on the path of spirituality.

Before birth who is mother and who is son? No one knows. The son, the wife, the husband, the mother all come in between like passing clouds. In this world, no cloud is permanent; all come and pass on. Why should you worry about them? Do your duty to the extent necessary. But nobody has any relationship with anybody.

Use Discrimination to Know the Truth

But man cultivates worldly relations and thereby develops ego and attachment.

You see the rope and mistake it as serpent. Therefore, there is fear in you. It is necessary for you to use your discrimination to know whether it is a rope or a snake. You mistake the rope as snake due to your delusion. The moment there is delusion, there arises fear. Because of fear, you run away. When you see with the torch of discrimination, you will know it is not a snake, but a rope. When you come to know it is a rope, there is no more fear. Then you



go close to the rope. When did fear go? The moment you came to know that it was a rope, there was no fear. When the delusion goes, you have courage. Courage is fearlessness. Then you experience bliss. Similarly, you should enquire and know the reality of the world. Is it mundane or divine? This is called Mimamsa (critical investigation).

Suppose you have milk with you. You can convert the milk into curd. You can churn the curd and get butter. You can also heat the butter and get ghee (clarified butter). Then what do you do further to the ghee? Nothing, you can consume it. As the end of the milk is ghee, the end of knowledge is divinity. You have to experience divinity. It is not possible to investigate further. People want to investigate even the Divine. That is foolishness. That is ignorance. In spite of your investigation, ghee remains ghee; it does not change into something else. Ghee is the final state. After this, there is no scope for any further investigation. What for do you want to investigate divinity? Where are you, and where is God? What authority do you have to subject God to investigation? Your doing so is like an ant going into the sea to know its depth. One wave of the ocean is enough to throw it on the shore. It may even lose its life in the process. Those who want to subject God to investigation are also like an ant.

Purify your Feelings

But there is God in ant also. God is present both in ant and Brahman. He is present in everyone. Therefore, Thyagaraja sang:

Oh Rama! In Your pure and unsullied form of love, You indwell all beings from an ant to Brahma as also in Siva and Kesava. Please be my protector, too.

(Telugu Song)

It is not enough if you say that. These are mere words that you utter. If there is ant on your body and it bites you, you hit it. But if God appears in the form of Brahma, you do Namaskar (salutation). Why this difference? You say one thing and do something different. So, do what you say. When you say God is all-pervasive, see God in ant also. See divinity in both. That is real equanimity. *Samatvam Yogamuchyate* (equanimity is called true yoga).

Develop love towards everybody. Love gives, but it never takes. Love is a triangle. In this triangle, love gives, never receives. That is one angle. What is the second angle? Love is fearless. What is the third angle? Love is changeless. But our love changes moment to moment. It is not true love. It is only physical desire. It is delusion. Delusion is not love. So long as man has Bhrama (delusion), he is away from Brahma (God). It is only imagination. Imagination cannot give bliss. So, get away from delusion, have firm faith in Brahman. Enquire and experience God within and worship Him. Follow this sacred path.

Do not think, God is far away. As the Vedas say, "He is far and near". The one who considers that God is far off, He is really distant for him. The one who considers that God is near, for him He is near. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as are the feelings, so is the result). Being near or far is based on your feelings; God has nothing to do with it. So, make your feelings sacred. This is real spirituality. If your feelings are pure, everything will become pure.

Purity of feelings is natural to man. This is a handkerchief. White is its natural colour. But as you make use of it, it becomes black.

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CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

EASWARAMMA DAY

EASWARAMMA DAY WAS observed at Prasanthi Nilayam with great reverence and devotion on 6th May 2016 in the fond memory of Mother Easwaramma. The morning programme was organised at the Samadhi of the Divine

Parents, Sri Pedda Venkama Raju and Smt. Easwaramma. A large number of devotees thronged the premises of the Samadhi to offer their tributes to the Divine Parents. The Samadhi was exquisitely decorated for the important event and offerings were made at it by dignitaries and family members. Soulful Bhajans led by the students of Bhagavan followed this, which concluded with Arati. Narayana Seva was then performed and Prasadam of tamarind rice and sweet rice was served to a large number of people.



Easwaramma Day programme in the premises of the Samadhi of the Divine Parents.

In the evening programme held in Sai Kulwant Hall, the students of Bhagavan offered their musical tributes to the Divine Mother Easwaramma and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Beginning their offering with a song dedicated to Lord Ganesh, the students saturated the entire milieu with devotional fervour by their excellent



rendition of soul-stirring devotional songs which were accompanied by a meaningful commentary and video presentation of some incidents which showcased the glorious life of Mother Easwaramma. The devotees were then blessed with a Divine Discourse of Bhagavan which was aired on the public address system. In His Discourse, Bhagavan underlined the importance of Bhakti (devotion) as it was Bhakti which led man to Mukti (liberation). Man, He said, should therefore perform Bhakti with his body, mind and soul to achieve the goal of life. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin". A brief Bhajan session followed this which concluded with Arati.

BUDDHA PURNIMA

The sacred festival of Buddha Purnima, the day of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and Nirvana, was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great piety and solemnity. More than 300 devotees came from overseas countries, viz., Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Japan, Brunei and Taiwan to take part in these celebrations organised by Sathya Sai International Organisation of Zone 4 and 5 on 21st and 22nd May 2016. The theme of this year's Buddha Purnima celebrations was "Compassion – the Foundation of Ahimsa".

The programme on 21st May 2016 began with lighting of sacred lamp at 5.30 p.m. followed by chanting of traditional Buddhist Slokas by overseas devotees, both ladies and gents. The chairman of Zone 4, Dr. V.K. Ravindran, then delivered his introductory speech. Quoting from the teachings of Lord Buddha, the distinguished speaker observed that the world was full of suffering, which

could be overcome by following the path of truth and compassion shown by Buddha. Two speakers addressed the gathering after this. The first speaker was Sri Sampath from Sri Lanka. Dwelling on the theme of the celebrations, the learned speaker observed that compassion was the fundamental teaching of Buddhism and without suffusing one's heart with compassion, one could not become Buddha, the enlightened one. The second speaker emphasised the need to control the mind because it was the mind which created negative emotions and deluded man. Man, he said, could control the mind and become a mastermind as taught by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

What followed next was a garland of four colourful cultural dances of Nepal which were presented by Sai Spiritual Education



A folk dance by Nepalese children.

children, students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Pokkara and Sai Youth of Nepal. Starting with a dance dedicated to Lord Ganesh, the children followed it with two folk dances and concluded with a Maithili dance from Mithila, the birthplace of Sita, the consort of Lord Rama. The children not only gave a sterling performance in their glittering

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From our Archives

RECOGNISE YOUR INHERENT DIVINITY

THE ATMA SHINES ETERNALLY

Embodiments of Divine Love!

A S LONG AS A DREAM LASTS, all that is experienced, heard or seen in it appears as real.

Likewise, in Samsara (worldly existence), filled with likes and dislikes, everything seems real till the dawn of Jnana (wisdom). When one attains the state of Supreme Realisation, all that happens in the world appears as a dream.

Human body is composed of five basic elements – Prithvi, Aapa, Agni, Vayu and Akasa (earth, water, fire, air and space). These five are compounded together in an orderly way. The body is described as Bhautika Sarira (physical body). It establishes all types of relations with the world. This may be described as “Pancheekaranam” (the bonding together of the five components). In the body, in its waking state, all the sense organs are active.

The body is the abode of pleasure and pain. It has three forms: Sthula

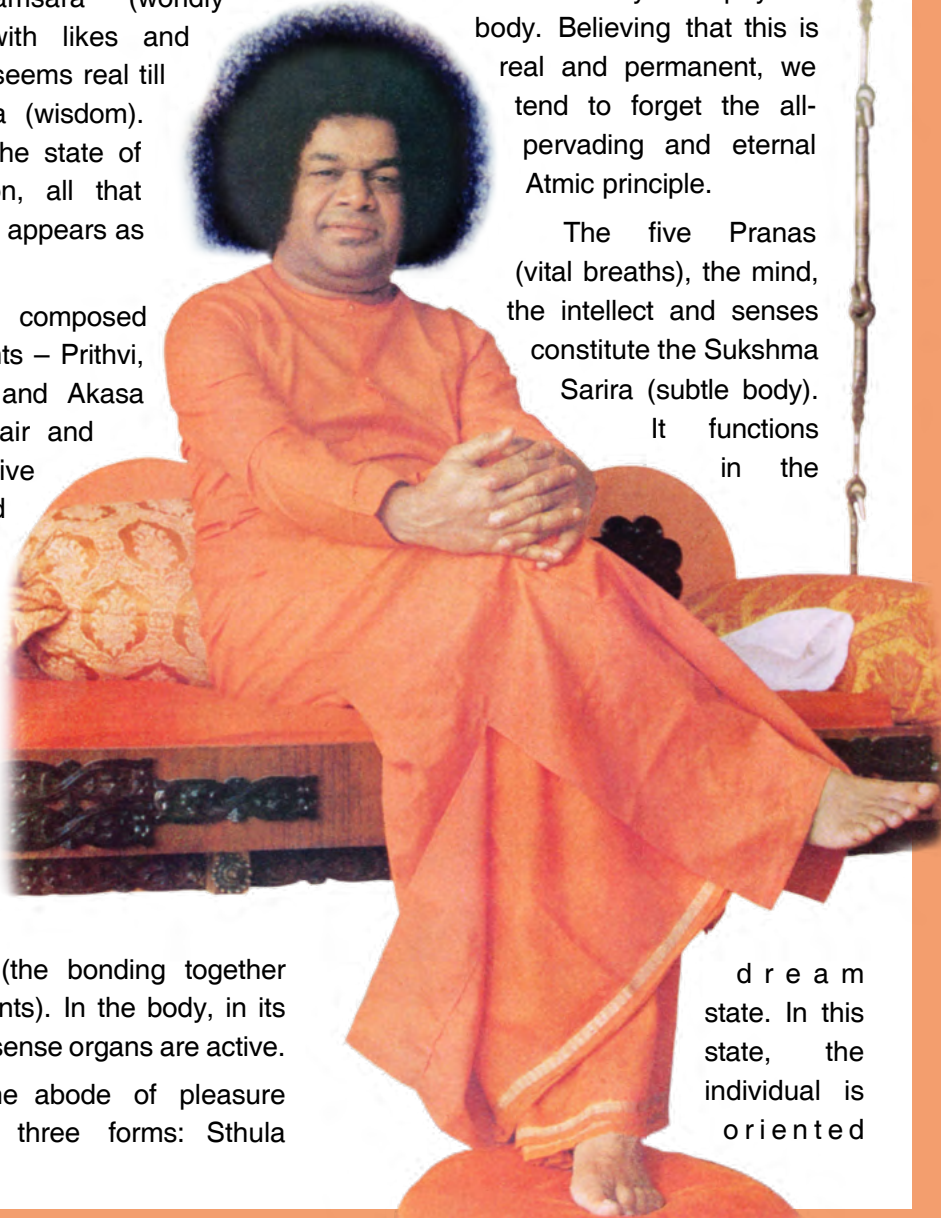
(gross), Sukshma (subtle) and Karana (causal). The gross physical body is Annamaya (permeated by food). It is inert. It is comparable to an instrument. What

we see is only the physical body. Believing that this is real and permanent, we tend to forget the all-pervading and eternal Atmic principle.

The five Pranas (vital breaths), the mind, the intellect and senses constitute the Sukshma Sarira (subtle body).

It functions in the

d r e a m state. In this state, the individual is oriented



inwards. In it, man creates for himself a new world. The dream is itself the proof of its reality. It is self-constituted with no external relations. In the dream state, everything is created by the mind-forms, sounds and taste, which are experienced without any physical basis for them. This entire experience is limited to the individual concerned. If, for instance, ten persons are sleeping in one room, each person's dream is unique to himself. Each one's actions in the dream are unique to himself.

Mind Creates both Waking and Dream States

There is no relationship between the dream and the waking state. One individual has a dream in which his friend harasses him in many ways. If after waking up in the morning he accosts his friend and asks the latter why he harassed him, the friend may reply: "You madcap! I have not seen you at all"! This means that the friend in the dream and the troubles he gave are all self-created by the dreamer. All other dream experiences are also self-created. Hence, all the experiences in dreams are confined to the individual concerned and have no connection with others in the real world. The joys and sorrows experienced in the dream are the stuff of the dream state. It is in the dream state that one goes through the consequences of good and bad actions in previous lives. This means that the experiences are related to the Sukshma Sarira. In this, the mind is the most important factor. It is the mind that creates everything.

Although the mind is one, according to the different functions performed by it, different names are given to it. When it is engaged in the thought process, it is called Manas. When it is engaged in discriminating

Guru Purnima is sacred for many reasons: this day, the seeker who suffers from identification with the false objective world is initiated into the reality of the 'unseen motivator' within him. This day, those who have no urge to tread the spiritual path are inspired to seek the bliss which that path will confer.

between what is permanent and what is transient, it is called Buddhi (intelligence). In its role as a reservoir of memory, it is called Chitta. When the mind identifies itself with the body, it is called Ahamkara (ego). The four names are related to the mind, and their combined aspect constitutes Antahkarana (the inner instrument). Thus, both the waking and dream states are creations of the mind.

Mind is the Cause of Bondage and Liberation

The third state is Sushupti. 'Su' means good. Shupti means sleep. Sushupti means sound sleep. In this state, the mind is absent. When the mind is not present, the world also is absent. In the absence of the world, there are no experiences of joy and sorrow. The world exists as long as the mind is present. Joy and sorrow are experienced through contact with the world. Hence, the world is associated with joy and sorrow. The mind is said to be the cause of both bondage and liberation.

There is, however, one other state which transcends these states: the Atmic state. It is because of his identification with the body in the first three states that man forgets his spiritual reality. But, for all experiences the

Atmic principle in everyone is the cause, though the physical forms are varied. Man is a prey to ignorance because, forgetting his Atmic reality, he identifies himself with the mind-body complex. The waves appearing in an ocean appear as different from each other. But they consist of the same water. Likewise, though man appears in innumerable forms, all these are like the waves appearing on the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Names and forms may be different but the basis is the same.

The Atma alone is Self-effulgent

The Atma, however, is covered in the human being by five Koshas (sheaths): Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya. As a result, the Atma is not easily cognisable. The physical body is the Annamaya Kosha (the sheath of food). The sheaths of Pranamaya (life-force), Manomaya (mental sheath) and Vijnanamaya (imbued with intelligence) form the Sukshma Sarira (subtle body). The Anandamaya Kosha is the Karana Sarira (causal or seed body). Although it has the name Anandamaya (blissful), it is not real bliss. It is the blissful state of the Atma that is reflected as an image in the sheath of bliss (the causal). The mind is like the moon, which is not self-luminous. The Atma alone is self-effulgent. It is this light which illumines the body, the mind, the Buddhi and the senses and invests them with consciousness.

It is this Chaitanya (Atmic consciousness) which makes the cosmos function. For the entire creation, consisting of animate and inanimate objects, this consciousness is the basis. All that is experienced by the body and the mind has no real connection

with the Atma. Relying on the light coming from the sun, many people perform different actions. Some may do good deeds and some others may be indulging in bad actions. The Atma is unaffected by the consequences of these actions, just as the sun is not affected by the activities done with the help of sunlight. The sun is a witness. Likewise, the Atma also is a witness to what is done by the body, mind and other organs.

But man, because of his identifying himself with the body and other organs, attributes all their activities to the power of the Atma. For all this, the mind is the root cause. It is the mind that assumes these multifarious forms. For instance, if a person builds a house, he erects within it a bedroom, a drawing room, a kitchen and so on. All these separate rooms are for his comfort. But if the separate walls are knocked down, only one hall remains. Likewise, if the walls created by the mind are removed, the Atma alone will be experienced.

Man can Experience his True Self

If man embarks on the process of casting off one by one the five sheaths which envelop the Atma, he will experience his true Self. This process consists in the practice of Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana (hearing, reflection in the mind, and meditation on the Divine). The body, the mind and the senses are merely like the husk which encases the grain. When the husk is removed, the rice alone remains. As long as man is enveloped in this husk, he cannot escape birth and death. When the husk (in the form of the five sheaths) is cast off, man is freed from rebirth, just as the rice without husk cannot sprout. Even as you do not need a lamp to see the sun, there is



no need to search for the Atma when it is omnipresent. The Atma shines eternally. No Sadhana is required to recognise it.

As long as man is not aware of his own true nature, he will be under the delusion that the Atma is somewhere else remote from him. Like the ash hiding the fire in burning charcoal, the delusion regarding the body is covering the Atma. Once the delusion goes, man will experience true bliss and understand the Cosmic Reality.

It is the agglomeration of the body, the mind and the senses which is preventing you from recognising your inherent divinity. You are covering yourself in this manner. You are the cause of your bondage through the body and the mind. When you understand the nature of the body-mind complex, you will realise your true essence. It is enough if you develop the conviction that you and the Divine are one – *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). Cultivate steadfast faith in this Divine oneness through love. That love will lead you to Self-realisation.

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When it is black, you give it to the washerman for washing. You say that washerman has turned it white. Washerman has not made it white; white is its natural colour. He has only removed the dirt. Similarly, our heart is pure, sacred and unsullied. The Vedas also describe the Atma as eternal, permanent, immortal and pure. It becomes dirty and dark due to the delusion of worldliness. The boy said, "With the water of love and soap of renunciation". It is a mistake. Love is water. Soap is not renunciation; it is steadfast faith; washing is renunciation. When you have all the three, dirt will leave.

Guru Purnima Signifies Illumination of Man's Mind

Guru Purnima is sacred for many reasons: this day, the seeker who suffers from identification with the false objective world is initiated into the reality of the 'unseen motivator' within him. This day, those who have no urge to tread the spiritual path are inspired to seek the bliss which that path will confer. This day, aspirants are helped to achieve the consciousness of the One, which is known by many names and through many forms, in various languages and lands. With the rise of the sun, the world is bathed in light and heat. So, too, with the oncoming of Guru Purnima the human heart is bathed in peace and security. Guru Purnima is not just one day in the year, marked out in the calendar. It is all days when the mind of man (whose presiding deity is the moon) becomes full of pleasant coolness, fully illumined with the light from the sun (intelligence, discrimination).

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Guru Purnima Discourses.

Steadfast faith and devotion are important. There is no gain without steadfast faith and devotion. Devotion is love, love is devotion. Wash in the water of love, applying the soap of steadfast faith, and wash it against the stone of renunciation. Then the true form of purity will come out. So, we should understand and recognise this truth. Therein lies wisdom. Truth is Brahman, wisdom is Brahman, infinity is Brahman. Everything is Brahman.

– Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 8th April 1993.



THE SILENT BUT STEADY PRESENCE OF SAI IN MY LIFE

Dr. Najma A. Heptulla

MY RESPECTS AND TRIBUTES TO Baba on His 90th Birthday. Let me share with you my experience of how I came in contact with Baba. This happened 50 years ago. My would-be husband wanted to marry me. But we belonged to two different sects of Muslims. In those days, this was difficult. So, our marriage was getting into a lot of problems. I was then living in Bhopal while he was in Mumbai. At this time, one of his south Indian friends one day told him about Sai Baba and took him to Puttaparthi. It was December 1965. Puttaparthi of course was not like how it is now.

Bound by Him for Him

Fortunately, Baba called him for an interview. Baba blessed him and said, "Coming December 1966, you will get married". And we got married exactly as Baba had foretold. In December 1966, I came to Mumbai with my husband. It was during this time that I noticed that many pockets of my husband's dress always had a peculiar ash. I wondered what it was (only later I knew that it was Vibhuti). So, one day I asked him, "What are these little packets that you always carry in your pocket"? He then told me the whole story of his meeting with Baba and how our marriage happened and so on. Until then I had no clue of all this. I had not even heard of Baba. But now I had a strong desire to go and see this Personage with whose blessings we were married. Meanwhile, I got elected to the Parliament in 1980.



Dr. Najma A. Heptulla (centre) with musicians of Global Sai Symphony Orchestra.

I used to tell my husband, "Let's go to Puttaparthi and pay our respects to Baba. I want to meet Him". But somehow this did not happen for quite some time. In the eighties, one day while travelling in the plane I met the pilot, Captain Sharma. While talking to him when I looked at the green ring on his finger I immediately exclaimed, "Oh, you're a devotee of Baba! I want to go there. But somehow it doesn't happen". Captain Sharma said, "I'm going there next week". I said, "Can you convey to Baba my respects and my desire to go over there, please"? Also I immediately wrote a letter to Baba and asked him to give it to Him on my behalf. The next week again I was on the flight from Mumbai to Delhi. Captain Sharma came to me, took out the letter I had given him and returned it to me. Surprised, I asked, "Why are you giving it back to me? You didn't give it to Baba"? He said, "I didn't have to give it to Him. I was sitting outside His room and He came straight to me. Even before I could say anything to Him, He said, "Tell that lady



to come. Baba's house is her house too. She is welcome any time". After this I told my husband, "Next week we must go. That's it"! And we were in Puttaparthi.

Before I proceed, let me tell you something interesting about my husband's first trip. He had then travelled from Mumbai to Puttaparthi in a car. It was a Morris Minor Tiger, a small black car. After the interview with Baba, when he was getting up, the key of this car fell down from his pocket. Baba instantly picked it up and gave it in my husband's hands and blessed him.

After our marriage, we travelled over 5,000 km in this car. We almost did a Bharat Yatra (a mini tour of India). We went all over Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and so on. During this entire trip, this car never stopped or had a flat tyre or gave any problem whatsoever. We never sold this car. By the blessings of Baba, even today this car is still with me!

The Rings of Blessings

Like this, many interesting things happened in our lives. When we went there as a couple for the first time, we were accommodated in the Round Guest House. There was a wish in my mind which I did not share with anyone, not even my husband. I thought, "If Baba calls me today I must get a green ring. I will not go from here till I receive Baba's green ring". In fact, I removed what I was wearing on the ring finger to keep it empty, waiting for the new gift.

As luck would have it, Baba called us for an interview. When we were inside, He gave us Vibhuti. Then Baba did create a green ring for me! Instantly, I gave my hand. But Baba said, "No no, give me the other hand. You have already removed the ring from there and kept it in the cupboard. Give me

He introduced me to some people over there and said, "She's a Member of Parliament. Her name is Najma Heptulla. She works with Shankar Dayal Sharma as his deputy". I thought "Perhaps Baba has forgotten that I am no more the Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha". But I decided to keep quiet. I thought "Why should I correct Him? He is always right". Interestingly, in the same year in December, I was re-elected as the Deputy Chairperson and I remained in that position till 2004 when I myself resigned.

that hand"! That is how He gifted me a green ring. I shared this only to tell you how He knows us through and through and how He cares for us.

Let me narrate another incident. On the occasion of Deepavali, Sri Kulwant Rai, a great devotee of Baba, came to my house. He was like a brother to me. I saw that on his finger was a multi-coloured nine-gemmed ring. "What happened to your green ring?" I asked him. He said, "Baba changed it". I again thought in my mind, "I too should get one like this". But I didn't tell anybody. When I went next time to Baba's presence, He said, "Give me the ring". So, I gave the green ring onto His palm and Baba instantly changed it into a multi-coloured Navaratna (nine-gemmed) ring! There is something more about this Navaratna ring. I used to wear it all the time. In it, there was a pearl too. One day I noticed that the pearl had fallen off. I was very dejected. I



took out the ring and kept it in the cupboard. Many years later, when I was looking at my rings I saw that the pearl was there in the Navaratna! It came back. It's amazing! I'm a scientist. I did my Ph.D. in science. I have no explanation for it. But I have experienced all this.

The Omniscient Lord

There is another episode. I resigned from the Deputy Chairmanship of Rajya Sabha to become the General Secretary of my Party. Later, I resigned from this position too and I was just a Member of Parliament. I remember in October 1988, Sri Shankar Dayal Sharma was the Vice President of India and the Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha. He was also a devotee of Baba. During this time, I went to see Baba in Whitefield. He introduced me to some people over there and said, "She's a Member of Parliament. Her name is Najma Heptulla. She works with Shankar Dayal Sharma as his deputy". I thought "Perhaps Baba has forgotten that I am no more the Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha". But I decided to keep quiet. I thought "Why should I correct Him? He is always right". Interestingly, in the same year in December, I was re-elected as the Deputy Chairperson and I remained in that position till 2004 when I myself resigned.

This is how I have experienced Baba in my life and I am sure all of you must have many more stories to talk about Him. He could read the mind. One day in His room, He suddenly told me, "See! So many Muslims are here"! We were eight of us. Apart from

my husband and I, there were two ladies and a child from Iran, and another couple with their son from Trinidad and Tobago. He knew everything.

To me, Baba's greatest contribution is in the fields of education and healthcare. Through His message 'Love All, Serve All', He gave us a path to follow.

Today I feel extremely humble standing before all of you. So many of you have devoted your lives for the service of the people in memory of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This is a grand finale of the year-long celebration of His 90th Birthday. Let's make a vow today. Let's make a pledge. From now onwards, each one of us will devote ourselves in the service of people, in the service of mankind, spreading love and affection.

I wish Baba was here today. But I am sure He is there; His spirit is there. I congratulate the 126 artistes and musicians from 16 countries who are here to pay their tributes in memory of Baba. I also congratulate all His hundreds and thousands of devotees all over the world who are working in His Name in the service of mankind with love. Thank you very much.

– From the talk of Dr. Najma A. Heptulla, India's Minister of Minority Affairs, on the occasion of performance of Global Sai Symphony Orchestra held in the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium, New Delhi on 28th November 2015 as part of 90th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Courtesy: Radio Sai

Prayer is the very breath of religion, for it brings man and God together, and with every sigh nearer and nearer.

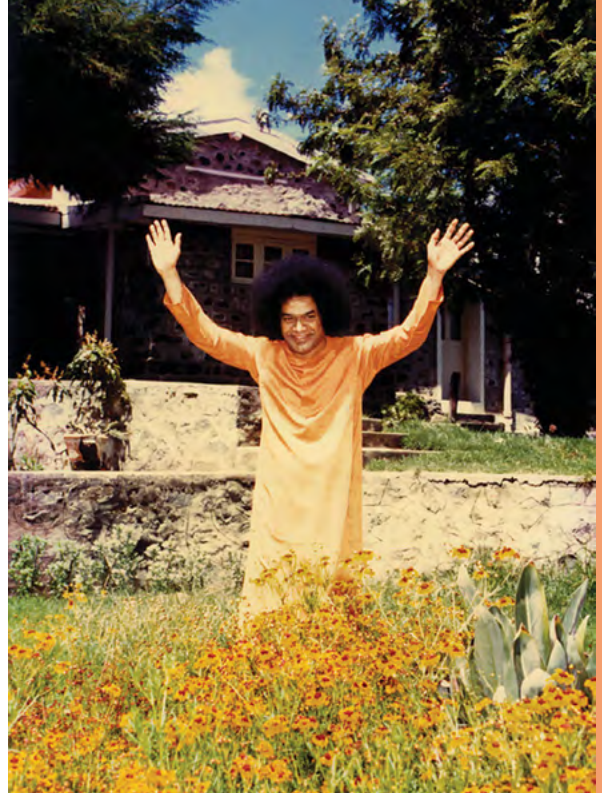
– Baba

Effulgence of Divine Glory

THE DIVINE SAVIOUR

ONCE BABA WAS CAMPING IN THE Engineering College at Anantapur. My mother had gone there at that time to have Darshan of Baba. My father and I were in the court, and were not in the house – only my wife was in the house. My wife was feeling sad that she was left alone at home without Darshan of Baba, and she was extremely sorry for that. Her silent prayer was heard by Baba, who was three or four miles away from our house. Then without informing anyone where He was going, He came straight to our home and surprised my wife. She was flabbergasted to see the Divine for whom she was praying in our own home. She fell immediately at His feet and gave Him Arati, but could not find anything worthwhile to offer to Baba. However in the offerings she made, there was a papaya fruit, which He took to the Engineering College. He showed this to my mother, saying that He had just visited our home and got the papaya fruit from there. This was cut into pieces and distributed to everyone as Prasadam.

On another occasion, my father was travelling from Madras (now Chennai) to Bombay (now Mumbai), leaving Chennai at 10p.m. He was in the first class compartment. Soon after the train left the platform at the Basin Bridge Station, there was a kind of a jolt. At that time, my father was returning from the toilet. The doors on either side were flung wide open. The force of the jolt was such that my father was thrown out of the compartment, and he fell out from the



running train. What happened to him when he fell from the moving train? He could have died on the spot, but nothing happened to him! His ticket, money and spectacles, all were on him – nothing was lost. Though he was forcibly thrown out of the compartment, for him it was a safe landing. In this dazed condition, he saw the train passing by and wondered why he was sitting on the ground outside. He wanted to catch the train and tried to get up. But he was unable to do so due to a hairline fracture of the hip. If he got up, his hip would have been crushed, but instead he was saved. In both cases, he was saved by Bhagavan Baba.

Then a police constable from Basin Bridge Police Station came to take him to the hospital. That police constable was Jagadeesan and that Jagadeesan was none other than our own Baba. My father was taken to the hospital, examined thoroughly, found to have no injuries, except the hairline fracture in the hip. The only treatment prescribed was stretching of the leg and rest. He recovered within a month. After the accident when my mother came to Puttaparthi, Baba told my mother the details of the accident. He told her, "Your husband did not suffer any injuries. He is alright now. I admitted him into the hospital. If the accident had happened a few yards ahead, he would have died, because he would have fallen off

the bridge". That is what Bhagavan Baba told my mother, and consoled her. Later, she went and saw my father and found that nothing had happened to him.

So, in that way Baba has been helping our family for nearly sixty years, right from the time He came to our home in 1941. Since then my mother has developed a deep devotion for Swami. Now we are five generations and the entire family is completely devoted to Baba. There are regular Bhajans, Pujas and the photographs of Baba in the home of every member of my family. The devotion that my mother developed is continuing till today.

– From the talk of Sri Sathyanarayana published in "Journey with Sai".

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costumes, they also presented a glimpse of rich cultural heritage of Nepal. International Bhajans led by overseas singers followed next which concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

The programme on 22nd May 2016 also began with sacred Buddhist chants. In his introductory talk which followed this, Sri Amar Karki, National Coordinator, Sathya Sai International Organisation of Nepal drew parallel between the teachings of Lord Buddha and Bhagavan Baba, and underscored the importance of compassion for spiritual evolution of man. This was followed by an erudite talk of Sri Billy Fong from Malaysia who explained the importance of the teachings of Lord Buddha and exhorted one and all to purify the speech by adhering to truth, purify the mind by eradicating negative thoughts and purify the body by dedicating it to the service of society.

The children of Nepal thereafter presented four more cultural dances of Nepal, namely,

Tharu Dance, Maha Manjushree Dance, Siva Dance and dance on National Song.



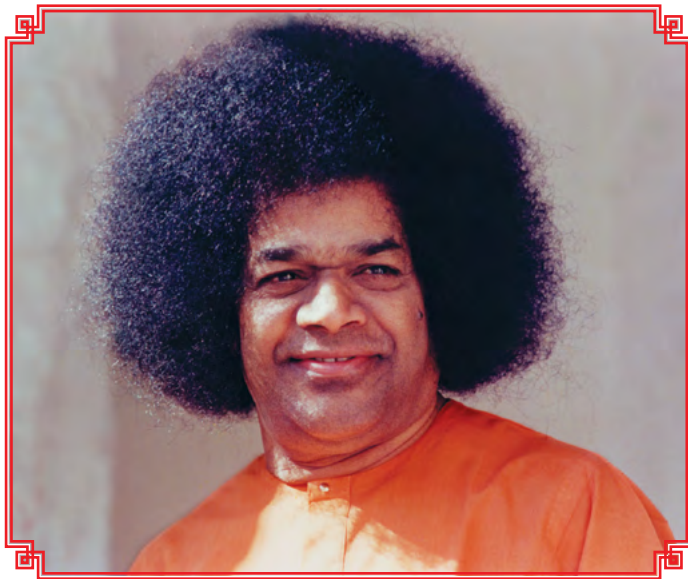
Siva Dance by the children of Nepal.

The talented performance of the children and sweet lyrics and music which accompanied the dances made the entire presentation a sumptuous musical feast. International Bhajans followed next which concluded with two Bhajans sung by Bhagavan "Subrahmanyam Subrahmanyam" and "Govinda Krishna Jai Gopala Krishna Jai". The programme came to a close with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

MY EXPERIENCES OF BHAGAVAN'S DIVINITY

Angela Loraine Burrows

At the end of the first day, all the delegates were seated in the front row of Poornachandra Hall and Swami was giving a Discourse. He said something that not only changed my life forever, but has been my main inspiration and guidance. He said: "If you are a teacher of Education in Human Values it is enough in your life, because you have to practise everything that you teach". To me there is no greater teaching than this.



CREATION CAN BE COMPARED TO A GIANT jigsaw puzzle with millions and millions of pieces and yet we can see only a fraction of it. The whole puzzle is in the hands of God who makes only a tiny piece visible to us! We do not know when and where we first came in contact with Him or which lifetime or century we had the grace to first know of the Divine; we

only know about this lifetime. Swami has told us many times that it is only through His infinite grace and our deep yearning for many lives that we have the opportunity to be at His Lotus Feet. I cannot claim any great insight as to how and why this happens; I can only relate my own humble story that brought me to the feet of our Beloved Lord and some of the great lessons I have learnt from it.

Swami's Visiting Card

My journey in this lifetime began in England. I was born in a traditional English family and led a very sheltered childhood. Even so there were pulls to go to the East from a very young age though I had no worldly knowledge or connection with it at all. Obviously, a piece of the unseen jigsaw! Many years later in an interview at Whitefield, Swami suddenly looked at me and said, "You...you were here last time. You are an old-timer come back". And He gently tapped me on the head. It was only then that I understood all those strange feelings I had as a child. He holds the pieces in His hands and He knows our past, present and future. However, we live in ignorance of our past or future and stumble on until we end up on the right path. In my early twenties, I was living in Singapore with my husband where we had been for two years and here my journey to



Sai began. I had persuaded my husband to travel to India on our way to Europe and the States. Being American, he wanted to go and stay there for a few years. I did not know why I had to go to India, I just knew that it was the most important move of my life. I had never heard of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and was more involved in the Buddhist path. I had been practising meditation for some time and was already a vegetarian. On the day before we left Singapore, a mutual friend knocked on our door and handed me Howard Murphet's book "Man of Miracles". This was the beginning of my journey to Sai.

Everyone who comes to Swami has a unique and special story to tell. Mine began on the day I was given this book. I read the book on our journey to India and the more I read it, the more I knew in my heart that this was what I had been looking and waiting for all my life. We travelled through Burma (now Myanmar) where we stayed for a week and then on to Calcutta (now Kolkata). It was in Myanmar that Swami left me His 'visiting card'. I had just completed the book and was very much excited. In my enthusiasm, I prayed to Sathya Sai Baba for His picture. I was reminded by my husband that this was not a logical request to expect to be given a photograph of an Indian Guru in a devoutly Buddhist country such as Myanmar. Besides, in 1975 there was no trading between Myanmar and other countries. However, we all know that Swami cannot refuse an earnest prayer. I suppose my prayer must have really come from my heart because later that day I found a small picture of Sai Baba in a dark, dingy shop. The shopkeeper gladly gave it to me and I handed him "Man of Miracles" in exchange. That night in the hotel, I placed Swami's photo on a small table on which I kept a

candle and a small Buddha image. In the morning when I went to sit for meditation and prayers, I was astounded to find a thick layer of yellow powder on the picture. In my excitement, I woke my husband and told him that there had been a miracle. Annoyed at being woken up so early, and having a more scientific mind than I do, he declared that it must be fungus and to my horror, he brushed it off! I no longer had the book to refer to; however I remembered Murphet talking often about Vibhuti (ash) that Swami materialised. In retrospect, I realise that it was probably sweet Haldi (turmeric) which in those days, Bhagavan sometimes materialised.

The next morning the same thing happened! My husband decided to stop my folly, by washing not only the picture of Swami but also the table. When the same thing happened a third day, he was down on his hands and knees with a magnifying glass! He noticed that ants were carrying the powder away, so, we knew that it was sweet. My husband could no longer argue that this was not a miracle. For me however the greatest miracle happened as soon as we arrived in Kolkata; he went to a bookshop and bought a book on Sri Sathya Sai Baba. We never did travel overland to Europe. We stayed in Whitefield and Puttaparthi for many months and then flew to Europe and later on to the States.

Memorable Christmas in the Divine Presence

Every moment we spend with Swami is unique, every word He speaks to us is sacred and every experience we have with Him is a spiritual lesson. It is hard to know which experience is more meaningful than another, but one day that can never be erased from my mind is the first Christmas



that I spent in our Lord's Divine Presence. It was in 1977 in Whitefield. It was one of the most special days of my life as we spent almost the entire day with our Beloved Lord. But to relate the story properly I have to go back a few months.

At the time I was living in the United States and I had come to India for a visit. Swami called me and a small group of Americans for an interview two days running in Whitefield. After the second day, Swami asked Dr. Hislop to come and talk to us about changes that were taking place in the Sai World Organisation. Dr. Hislop explained how things were changing globally and more and more people were learning about Sathya Sai Baba. He told us that Swami had asked devotees in all overseas countries to make their centres and practices more universal, more in accordance with the country in question. In other words Bhajans should be sung in local languages as well as Sanskrit and Hindi. A group of us who lived in the New York area got together and worked on making English Bhajans, mostly translating the original songs into English. One day I was driving my car and a song came into my head in its entirety. It was "You are Lord of the Universe". When I got home I sang it to my husband and he said it was okay but the last verse was wrong – "Mother of the Universe, Father of the Universe the Light of mankind Sai Baba". He explained that Sai Baba was a man; therefore it should be "Father of the Universe, Mother of the Universe..." So I changed it!

On Christmas Day 1977, Swami was to perform the marriage of one of my dearest friends Faith Hollander. The marriage took place in Swami's house in Brindavan. At the end of the beautiful ceremony, Swami said: "It is an Indian tradition – wedding

song". There was silence because no one knew any wedding songs. Then Swami said: "Happy song? English song"? Swami looked at Faith and she glanced over to me. Swami then looked at me, waiting for me to sing and at the same time someone nudged me and said: "Lorraine, you sing". I thought that this was my chance to sing this new song "Lord of the Universe", so I started to sing. It was a total disaster because no one had ever heard this song before and the rhythm was off and it sounded awful. Swami told everyone to be quiet and then he looked at me and said "sing", so I sang and Swami sang with me! We got to the last verse and I sang "Father of the Universe, Mother of the Universe" and Swami sang "Mother of the Universe, Father of the Universe". He looked at me as if to say – "you got it wrong"! He also said: "Mother always comes first"! Swami showed in a very wonderful way that He not only knows everything, but that he is the Doer. In the evening we all had the good fortune to be invited into the boys' hostel for the Christmas celebration. The college boys served us dinner and Swami gave us all sweets.

Lighthouses of Divine Glory

All of us who have been lucky enough to know about Bhagavan have had wonderful experiences either in His Divine Presence or away from it. In fact for most devotees it is not necessary to be physically with Swami to feel His omniscience and His Love. I remember once Swami telling us: 'Don't crave for interview, crave for inner view. Interview is 'Hello, hello. Goodbye, goodbye. Inner view is forever'. For me the greatest gift that Swami has bestowed upon me is to be able teach His children and to share His eternal message of Human Values with teachers and educators



around the world. Swami is no longer with us physically. However, He has left us with magnificent examples of service and unconditional love in the form of schools, hospitals and community service projects. These monuments of love are 'lighthouses' to inspire devotees in all parts of the world to dedicate themselves in selfless service and help create a more compassionate, harmonious and peaceful world.

The Sathya Sai School in Thailand is one such institution. Through Swami's infinite grace and guidance, the school opened its portals to 14 students in May 1992. There were at that time only six teachers, and the school being an unknown entity was regarded upon with great suspicion. It has been my greatest good fortune to watch His miracle unfold. From that humble beginning, the school now houses nearly 400 students from kindergarten to grade 12, fifty teachers and a large staff. It is now considered by the Government to be one of the main model schools for the country and has been a springboard to bring human values into the national curriculum. Apart from being considered a model school by the Ministry of Education, the Sathya Sai School has also been selected as a model school for the Ministry of Energy for its achievements in organic farming and alternative energy. The school produces all its own rice and most of its vegetables as well as energy from solar, wind and water. It makes its own bio-diesel and bio-gas. The long-term plan is to become totally self-sufficient. The entire school including all the students and teachers help plant and harvest rice! The school has received literally hundreds of awards over the last 20 odd years including the most prestigious awards from His Majesty the King of Thailand and

the Crown Princess. Many visitors from universities, schools, government offices and the private sector visit the school, the limit is 2,000 visitors a month. Almost 100% of the children coming to the school are not from Sai devotee families and mostly have never heard of Sai Baba before they come. However, by the time they leave they all love Swami and have faith in Him.

The greatest of all the gifts received through my experiences with Swami is that of being a teacher in His school. In 1983, I had the good fortune of attending the first conference for overseas teachers in Prasanthi Nilayam. At the end of the first day, all the delegates were seated in the front row of Poornachandra Hall and Swami was giving a Discourse. He said something that not only changed my life forever, but has been my main inspiration and guidance. He said: "If you are a teacher of Education in Human Values it is enough in your life, because you have to practise everything that you teach". To me there is no greater teaching than this. It is a privilege to watch His children grow into beautiful flowers and to help them discover their innate divine nature.

Each one of us is a tiny piece of the cosmic jigsaw, each one has a role to play however insignificant it may seem. We are all part of the Divine Plan. We must pray from the bottom of our hearts that He guides us to be useful pieces in this jigsaw. Let us have steady faith in His infinite Love and Grace and surrender to His Divine Will.

– The author Smt. Angela Loraine Burrows is in charge of foreign affairs at the Sathya Sai School, Thailand. She also teaches English and Human Values and is an international faculty member of the Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Thailand.





D.V. RAGHAVANAND

ENDLESS GRACE

SWAMI IS THE GREATEST AVATAR ever to walk on earth. His words, 'wherever you are, however you are, you are Mine; I would never forsake you' are really true. I can never stop wondering about His boundless grace. I had the great opportunity of being His student when I got into MBA in 1986 in the first batch. Of course, I still rue hard why I missed the earlier opportunity when I was offered a seat in Intermediate (+2) Class in 1980.

Grant me Last Seat at Least

When I heard that Swami was starting MBA course in May 1986, I knew I had to join it. This time, I won't let it go. So, I started praying hard, besides preparing for the course. I needed Him and only He could give me seat. Both written test and interview went on smoothly, raising my hopes of admission. But admission eluded me in the first list of selects. I raised my pitch of prayer and started praying to the Lord, 'please give me last seat at least'. As the days passed, tension mounted and nothing happened. My father asked me to move ahead with other things. I didn't let it go. I kept my focus and finally on 25th August 1986, my prayers were answered. A telegram from the Registrar asked me to join the course on 28th. On Sri Krishna Janmashtami day, I reached Puttaparthi and reported to the Dean. That evening, I had the great privilege of having Darshan of Swami from the verandah of the Mandir. I was sitting

in fourth row from the front. Swami came out and walked straight towards students.

He came to me and asked, "MBA"? I said, "Yes, Swami"! "Where are you from?" "Vijayawada, Swami." "Good." And he left. When He asked me where I was from, I smiled wryly inside my heart. After all the tension I went through, He couldn't be more mischievous. And it turned out that I was the



last to be admitted to the course. Nobody was taken further even though two more seats were vacant.

From then on, it was the most beautiful period of my life. It was a jolly holy day everyday what with Swami spending most of His Darshan and Bhajan time with us students. And every minute we spend with Him is truly yoga (union with God) as they say it; no other Sadhana matches it. His love, playfulness, jokes, knowledge, care,



divinity, miracles are all there on display. This is the best food for senses.

Gayatri Mantra

I learnt from Swami the right way to chant Gayatri Mantra. It was during those days when we were in the first batch of MBA in 1986. After college, we used to rush to the Mandir for Darshan. While waiting for Darshan, I used to make it a point to chant Gayatri 108 times before Swami arrived for Darshan, so that I was in the right devotional mood to receive Him. In the first few days itself, during Darshan, Swami once came to me and told me that Gayatri should be chanted in a particular rhythm and intonation. Otherwise, Hridaykamal (lotus of the heart) would close instead of opening up on account of chanting the Mantra incorrectly. This was so useful, and I realised the significance of chanting the Mantra in the right way and in the right rhythm.

Power of Darshan

As soon as the college was over, after a brief break, all the students rushed to the Mandir for Darshan and returned after Bhajan. Darshan would be for a very brief period and thereafter we sat for almost two hours, waiting for Bhajans to start. I was never used to sit quiet for two hours. This used to be really difficult in first few months. To add to my woes, all kinds of thoughts would occur to me during that period. I used to shudder at the occurrence of ungodly thoughts at God's place. But since nothing could be done about it, I resigned to the fate. But as the time progressed, I started enjoying it and my mind became sharper and more controlled because of it. And believe me, I got addicted to it so much that I still yearn for a regular chance to spend time like that in the evening. What happened to me to warrant such a transition? Well, for one,

the period helped to purge out all negative thoughts from my mind; so, I became more controlled. And it helped me to unwind and plan for next few days; so, I became more sharpened. What a wonderful thing to happen! Here I must remind you of Swami's saying, "Don't underestimate the power of Darshan".

An Elixir Called Student's Way of Life

The life at Puttaparthi is completely a new experience for a student. It is busy with different set of activities than what a college student is used to. There is personal care, yet there is much discipline. It is busy schedule, yet no tough academic exercises. It is hectic and yet enjoyable. Results-wise it was the best period for me. I played my best cricket, studied my best and was my best self during those days and many days after. Well, how was it possible? I don't know how it happened. Let me try to explain it. May be, it was because of leading a Sattwic life. May be because of all those restrictions or may be it was because of Swami's grace. Whatever it was, it made me my best. This realisation came to me only a few years ago. From then on, I made it a point to think like a student, do the things I did and follow the discipline like getting up early, do Suprabhatam, eat moderately and see, hear, speak and do only good things. You may not believe it! I am getting exactly the same results out of my life now. I am able to perform better at my job, look younger than my age, be a good father, feel healthier and contribute my best. So, Swami makes us our best. I wish everyone had an opportunity to become Swami's student.

Swami, the Saviour

A few years back my life took a turn for the worse and it coincided with a career



change. From then on, it was a hell of time. Nothing worked at all. I lost heavily, became weak, inefficient, and worst of all, I was unable to keep up with my job. At such a time, I felt nothing could save me and so I came back into Swami's fold, mentally. I started doing what He liked, behaved the way He appreciated and did regular prayers. I had to summon all my courage to stick to Swami's path in spite of bad period. Swami pulled me out of those deep dark pits and put me back on the road. He saved me from a health ailment just in time before it became serious, saved my daughter from a bad accident, saved my son from a very critical stage and guided our family through financial and mental trauma. Swami did all this and much more out of His limitless compassion to show that He cares when we seek Him. Today, when I look back I cannot but believe that only Swami's grace pulled me out of that period and made me mentally stronger. He is the most compassionate God who walks with us, listens to what we say, shares our troubles and lifts us with His hands just when we need Him, unfailingly at every point of our life.

Corporate Excellence

Almost all the organisations are built on long years of continuous striving for excellence. Some organisations burst on to the corporate scene with one big product or idea but need mountainous effort to keep their pioneer or leadership tag intact. Some others see gradual progress over many

years and reach the leadership position. Whatever may be the industry, the success is not a flash in a pan or the one obtained by one shortcut method. It is one of disciplined effort by many individuals towards the common goal. All the long-term effort by a group of individuals has to be according to prescribed rules and regulations.

Ethics form an integral part of every company's guidelines. This is where Sai student's upbringing would keep him in good stead. Be it in sincere effort to the duty or accepting the results and going beyond the limitations, he'll be up to it. Also the trick in success of any job is to own it up and do what it takes. This comes naturally to a Sai student. As the responsibility goes up, there is tremendous amount of trust placed on the employee. For some people, it goes to their head; they behave independently, suffer downfall in their careers and stunt the progress of their organisation, whereas, as Sai students, we are trained to think it is a group effort that leads us to success, and we try committing more to group effort.

My experience and my message to all my brothers is: believe and behave that Swami is with you physically as He was when you were a student; carry on your duty accordingly, and no harm can befall you.

– The author is a first batch (1986-88) MBA student of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam.

*To protect a country it is not so important to have arms, missiles and atom bombs.
It is most essential to have men and women of great virtue.*

– Baba

Students Corner

BAL VIKAS: A WAY OF LIFE

Aiswarya Ajith

ONCE SWAMI ASKED THE students, "What is the rarest of the rare in this universe"? None of them could give a sound answer. Then Bhagavan gave the answer. "The rarest of the rare is getting human birth." *Jantunam Nara Janma Durlabham* (of all living beings, human birth is the rarest). The Vedas and Upanishads proclaim that the purpose of human life is the attainment of God. So, having been blessed with a human form we are duty bound to lead a worthy life. Bal Vikas helps us not only to lead a meaningful life, but also to realise the purpose of life. Today, we find indiscipline and dearth of values in society, the sole reason being the devaluation of the system of education. As Swami rightly said, "Now learning is for earning". According to Swami, the seeds of duty, discipline and devotion have to be sown at a tender age which is why our Gurus catch us young.

I am really blessed that I have been a Bal Vikas student since the age of five. Ten years of Bal Vikas have brought a sea change in my attitude towards life. When the fellow children learnt only worldly lessons at school, I learnt godly lessons in Bal Vikas class. When they learnt how to compete with each other, I learnt how to compete with myself and how to love each other. I realised that it was my duty to respect and care for my parents, teachers and elders. Through Bal Vikas I learnt to love and respect all religions and to recognise each religion as a pathway to God. Had it not been for Bal



Vikas, I would never have known about the rich cultural heritage and spiritual status of Bharat. Through Bal Vikas, I became aware of the rich lineage of saints and seers of both ancient and recent times, who blessed us with the Vedas, Sastras, Puranas and the Prasthanathraya (the Upanishad, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavadgita). These sacred texts are the backbone of Indian spirituality attracting the entire world towards the holy land. It was from my Bal Vikas Guru that I learnt that food, money, energy and time were God's gifts and should be put to best use. It was Bal Vikas which introduced Swami to me, who entered



my life and became my God and Guide. I consider this as the greatest blessing in my life.

Bal Vikas helped me to nurture self-confidence and self-reliance, and for me, Bal Vikas is not just a training in human values, but a way of life. Bal Vikas leads the students to Bhakti Marga (path of devotion) through silent sitting, chanting Slokas, singing Bhajans, daily prayers and moral stories; into Jnana Marga through study of Vedas and epics, and into Karma Marga (path of action) through love and

selfless service. Thus, Bal Vikas verily is the Bhagavadgita of the age.

Before I cap my pen, I express my deep sense of gratitude to my beloved Bal Vikas Gurus who helped me in treading this Divine Path. As a Bal Vikas student, my ambition in life is to become an ideal Sai student, by putting into practice whatever I have learnt through Bal Vikas. It is my promise to Swami that I will remain ever grateful to Him and that I will never deviate from this Path Divine.

– From “Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas: The Path Divine”.

Valuable Maxims

Given below are three valuable maxims of Bhagavan. Contemplate on them and search the following words in the given word maze:

God, love, certainly, people, evident, intensely, transform, service, worship, Sadhana, effort, grace, reinforce, individual, gain, enough, ready.

1. Love is God. God is love. Where there is love, there God is certainly evident. Love more and more people, love them more and more intensely. Transform this love into service; transform the service into worship. This is the highest Sadhana.

2. When you have done your best and that is not found enough, then call on Me. I am ever ready to reinforce your effort with My grace.

3. Individual effort and Divine grace are both interdependent. Without effort, there will be no conferment of grace; without grace, there can be no gain from the effort.

W	R	E	I	N	F	O	R	C	E	G	W
I	L	F	W	O	R	S	H	I	P	E	H
I	S	F	I	N	T	E	N	S	E	L	Y
P	E	O	P	L	E	G	A	I	N	C	E
G	R	R	G	O	D	E	N	O	U	G	H
R	V	T	E	V	I	D	E	N	T	E	L
A	I	S	C	E	R	T	A	I	N	L	Y
C	C	E	T	R	A	N	S	F	O	R	M
E	E	S	A	D	H	A	N	A	A	C	E
I	N	D	I	V	I	D	U	A	L	E	T
R	E	A	D	Y	E	N	O	U	G	H	Y

As long as the mind exists, desires will persist. When desires are present, attachment and possessiveness cannot be got rid of. And these sustain the ego. While the ego lasts, the Atma cannot be experienced. Atmic knowledge, Atmic bliss and Atmic vision cannot be had till the ego is eliminated.

– Baba



Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam.

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENTS OF SAI SCHOOLS

Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam

In the 12th Standard examination conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), all the students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam passed in first division, 133 of them got 'O' grade distinction and 44 students secured more than 90% marks, the highest marks 96% having been secured by its student Kumari Sai Shruti Dubey. The students of this school equally performed well in the 10th Standard examination also.

Smt. Easwaramma English Medium School, Prasanthi Nilayam

The first batch of 48 students from Srimati Easwaramma English Medium School who appeared this year in the 10th Standard examination performed exceedingly well. While 10 students secured a CGPA score of 10 out of 10, 29 of them secured a score of 9 and above.

Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam English Medium School, Rajamahendravaram

In the 10th Standard examination conducted by ICSE Board, all the students of Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam English Medium School passed in 1st Division, 90% of them secured distinction, with the school topper Sri Shashank Kumar setting a benchmark by securing 95.7% marks.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

HUNGARY

THE SATHYA SAI CENTRE OF Budapest organised a colourful Easter programme on 23rd March 2016 for people with physical and mental challenges residing at a home in Perbál, in the countryside. The event, held in cooperation with the management of the



Colourful Easter in Hungary.

home, came alive with music, dancing and display of arts. A dedicated, professional husband and wife team from the Sathya Sai Centre of Budapest took a one-hour trip to present a short Latin dance at Perbál, and returned to Budapest immediately for another performance. Sathya Sai volunteers entertained the guests by singing traditional Hungarian songs, inviting the audience to participate, amidst cheer and laughter. Earlier, the ladies had painted the Easter eggs artistically, in preparation for the ceremony, which is dear to Hungarians.

ITALY

On 12th March 2016, 47 people, including 30 children, attended an educational programme at the Sathya Sai Centre of Faenza (Ravenna) in Italy as part of the



An educational programme "Serve the Planet" in Italy.

"Serve the Planet" initiative. The event attracted various ethnic groups, including disadvantaged people of African origin. The initiative was organised by the Educational Wing of the Emilia Romagna-Marche-Toscana region in order to meet the children and their parents who were receiving social services from the municipality of Faenza. In addition, resident families of foreigners who faced local challenges were invited to spend a relaxing afternoon, filled with love and joy. During the afternoon event, 18 members of the local Sathya Sai Centres and Groups led different activities, including group singing and skits. Children were presented with T-shirts with the logo of the initiative and an uplifting quote by Sathya Sai Baba. Clothes were distributed to the parents of the needy children. The guests sang inspiring hymns from their native cultures, bringing the event to a close in an atmosphere of unity and joy.

PERU

On the morning of Sunday, 13th March 2016, 19 Sathya Sai devotees from Lima, along with their friends, journeyed to San



Serving the underprivileged in Lima, Peru.

Francisco Hill, in the southern outskirts of Lima, to serve underprivileged people. The volunteers offered healthcare services, distributed food and clothes and held classes in education in human values for children at four homeless shelters: Casuarinas, Villa Sol, Japon and San Francisco. Two dentists examined 31 patients, while a psychotherapist attended to 8 children with learning disorders and 85 prescribed medicines were distributed. Clothes and shoes were offered to the elderly as well as children, who also received toys. Sathya Sai volunteers, in cooperation with community members, prepared and served a delicious lunch to 250 people. Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) classes were held for children, which included silent sitting, meditation, breathing exercises, group activities, art work and story-telling. The children were also given lessons on values like optimism, self-confidence and seeing good in everything.

KUWAIT

On 25th March 2016, 36 Sathya Sai volunteers, 20 SSE teachers and 71 SSE children enthusiastically organised a beach clean-up project near the Kuwait

Tower, as part of public outreach. The event was inaugurated by the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, Sri Sunil Jain, along with representatives from the Ministry of Environment Public Authority and the Kuwait Diving Team. The Ambassador applauded the SSIO's initiative for encouraging young children to participate in public service programmes to heighten their awareness of environmental issues and develop good



Beach clean-up in Kuwait.

habits. The Kuwaiti representatives shared practical safety tips with the children on how to avoid injuries for the planned activities, including the use of appropriate personal protective equipment. The children were then divided into groups of 4-5 each, and combed the beach, collecting garbage, broken glass, plastic items, tin cans and marine debris. The children learned through their experience how the lack of awareness and the failure to practise human values polluted Mother Earth, which ultimately affected mankind. The Kuwait Danish Dairy, who volunteered for this campaign, provided water, ice cream and snacks to all the participants. The SSIO of Kuwait thanked the guests for collaboration and distributed T-shirts, caps and mementos to commemorate the meaningful day.



NEPAL

A tube well was successfully drilled in Baluwa village, which had no access to water



Providing water to the residents of a village.

previously. No trace of water was detected in the first attempt to drill, even to a depth of 140 metres. Later, a hydro-geologist stated that the geological characteristics of the area did not support tube wells. A final, desperate attempt to drill was made at another spot, along with prayers offered to Bhagavan Baba. This time water was found, and on the same day, streaks of Vibhuti and yellow Kumkum appeared on a photograph of Sathya Sai Baba. In gratitude, the ecstatic villagers started singing Bhajans daily and greeting Sathya Sai volunteers with "Sai Ram". An SSIO volunteer was assigned the work of leading Bhajan singing to villagers.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

On 19th March 2016, a beautiful programme was held for needy villagers who lived along abandoned railway lines in St. Augustine, North Trinidad. About 40 volunteers from 14 Sathya Sai Centres in Trinidad and Tobago organised the event at St. Augustine Community Centre on Freeman Road for the benefit of about 80 villagers and their young children. Earlier, in January 2016, a few Sathya Sai volunteers visited every home in the area to ascertain the needs of the villagers so that services could be appropriately structured.

The programme started with four songs representing different faiths. The volunteers served sumptuous meals to all participants. In addition, food bags, stationery, school books, uniforms, shoes, toiletries, mattresses and clothing were distributed to all. Talks were given on Sathya Sai Baba and the SSIO, prevention of diseases, SSEHV and service activities. During the event, the villagers made a request for holding SSEHV classes in the community. In response, Sathya Sai youth volunteers started offering classes every other Saturday, starting in April 2016, for the benefit of about 25 children.

– **Sathya Sai International Organisation**

BHARAT

Gujarat: A two-day Bhajan workshop named 'Bhakti Pravah' (flow of devotion) was held at Vadodara on 2nd and 3rd April 2016 by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat. About 400 devotees across Gujarat attended the workshop. Explaining the theme of the workshop, State President Sri Manohar Trikanad spoke about the importance of Nama Sankirtan giving



example of Mirabai, Thyagaraja, Kanakadas etc. Nama Sankirtan is the only means to attain the Lord in this Kali Yuga, he added. The guests from Puttaparthi Sri Ravi Kumar, Sri Amey Deshpande and Sri Siddharth Raju shared some wonderful memories about Bhajan singing and how beautifully Swami used to emphasise upon the importance of practising Nama Sankirtan daily. All religions, they said, lay importance on music to connect man to the Lord. The second day session was between 7.30 a.m. to 10.15 a.m. It was completely based on technicalities of singing Bhajans and mainly for Samithi Bhajan singers.

A Disaster Management Training Workshop was organised on 9th and 10th April 2016 at Gandeve, Navsari, in which 80



Disaster Management Training Workshop.

participants were trained in water rescue, fire rescue, first aid, rope knots, team building, etc.

Himachal Pradesh: A two-day Retreat was organised at Anand Vilas, Shimla on 14th and 15th April 2016 to commemorate Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's visit on these dates six years ago.

The Retreat started with a visit to an adopted orphanage at Mashobra, an erstwhile British town near Shimla. The orphanage was an example of service being done by devotees of Shimla. An



Visit to an orphanage.

announcement for extension of a library block of the orphanage was made by Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. The formal inauguration of the Retreat was done in the afternoon. After the welcome address of Sri Shyam Sunder, State President, the All India President delivered his keynote address and all dignitaries spoke words of wisdom from the podium. State Coordinators and District Presidents then presented the yearly reports of their areas. Audiovisual presentation of



Participants in the Retreat.

the reports drew attention of the participants and appreciation of the national team. The evening was made colourful with children of Sri Sathya Sai School, Shimla presenting a cultural programme which regaled one and all. As the second day's deliberations continued, National Bal Vikas Coordinator Smt. Kamla Pandya shared her experiences and blessed Bal Vikas children with further guidelines. A highlight of the conference was the launching of Sri Sathya Sai Website for Himachal Pradesh. It was welcomed by one

and all. The evening became lively with an interaction between the All India President and the children of Sri Sathya Sai School. The Retreat concluded with Arati.

It was not the end. On the way back, the national team surveyed the work of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in district Solan. A school in village Basal has been



Students of a village school making a presentation on Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Jyoti.

selected under Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Jyoti Programme. All walked up the village hill path of about one kilometre. 140 children welcomed them and thanked Bhagavan for sending the Vidya Jyoti Team.

More than 1,000 devotees from across the State participated in the Retreat. The atmosphere was full of divine vibrations and Presence of Bhagavan was felt by one and all.

Maharashtra and Goa: Every summer, Sai devotees of village Karmali in Goa offer Shramdan (voluntary social service) to protect the houses of needy from the incoming incessant monsoon rains which last for five months. For the last 18 years, the Sai devotees of this village pool in their resources, money and manpower to rebuild dilapidated houses or repair them. This yearly activity has been the mainstay to transform Karmali into a Sai village. The entire skill and manpower is offered voluntarily and the process of building turns Sadhana with



Repairing houses for the needy villagers.

singing of Bhajans. The energy of chanting Sai's Name is so powerful that the work is executed in record time. Today this Sai village can boast of being the most active Samithi of Goa.

Tamil Nadu: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Tamil Nadu organised Easwaramma Day in the memory of Mother Easwaramma on 6th May 2016 at Sai Sruthi, the summer abode of Bhagavan Sri Sathya



Narayana Seva at Kodaikanal on Easwaramma Day.

Sai Baba at Kodaikanal. The programme began at 8.30 a.m. with chanting of Omkar three times followed by a captivating cultural programme by the children of Dindigul district. Narayana Seva was thereafter performed, wherein around 2,300 persons were served food and offered clothes and blankets.

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On 1st January, 2009, Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust (SSSST) commenced operations with four divisions; the Bhakta Sahayak divisions (one in Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi and another in Brindavan, Bangalore), the Publications division, and the Media division.

The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

- 1) The publication and distribution of spiritual, religious, and educational Sai Literature and the production and distribution of audio and visual multimedia, photographs, calendars, and diaries, educational software etc for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- 2) The publication and distribution of 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, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
- 4) Organising and conducting seminars and conferences on spirituality, religion, education, and human values.
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Editor: G.L. ANAND

Blossoming of Human Personality

In swimming, you have to push the water back so that you may move forward. Likewise, renouncing material things is the way to spiritual progress. But, what you have to renounce is not wealth alone. You have to get rid of all your bad qualities. That is true sacrifice. Giving up hearth and home is not a big sacrifice. It is the giving up of all vices that is true renunciation. That alone can result in the blossoming of the human personality.

– Baba