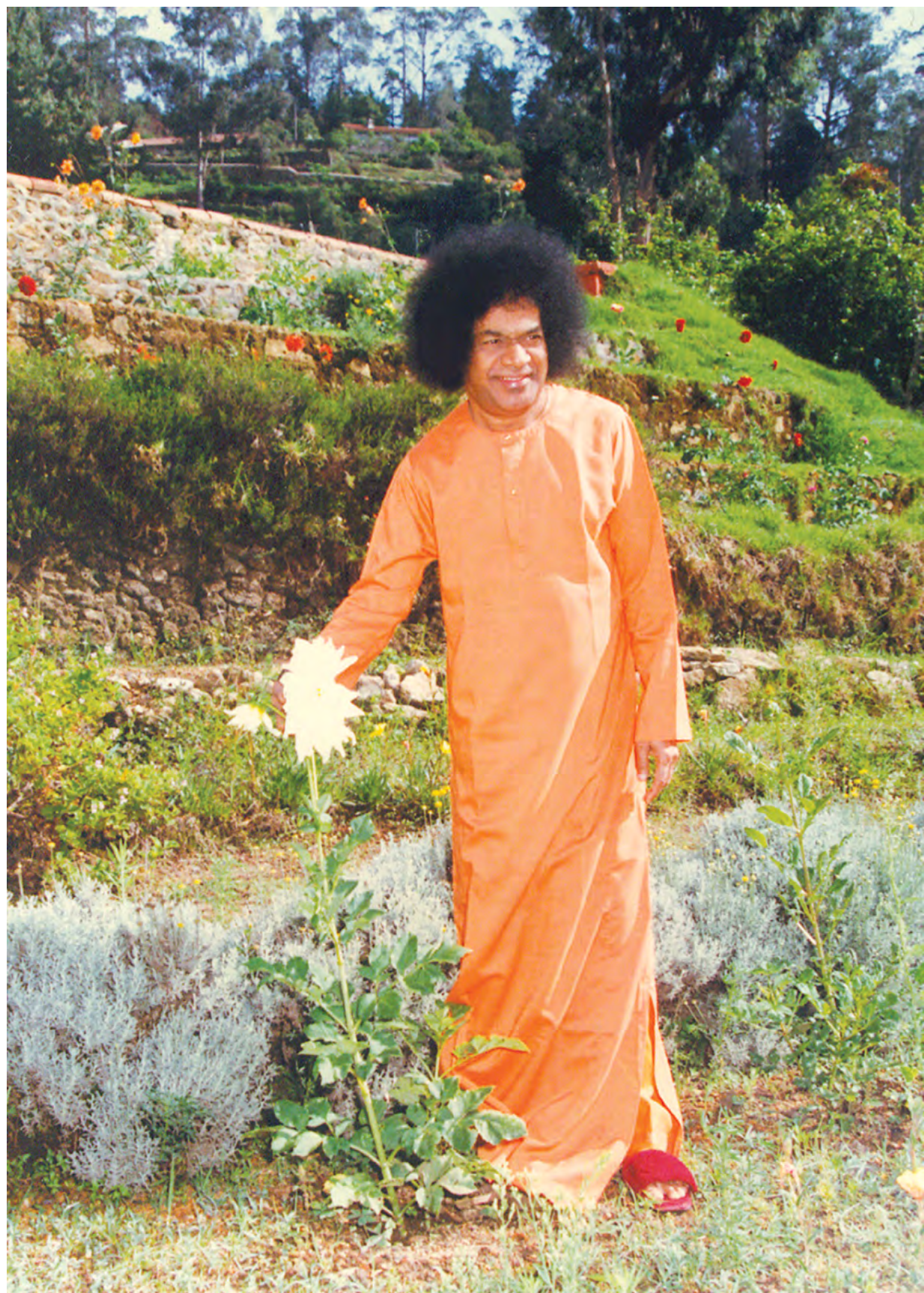




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"If you try to make the coal white by washing it with milk, will it turn white? On the other hand, the milk will become black. Only when coal is completely subsumed in fire, it becomes one with fire. One becomes Divine by totally surrendering to Divinity. Mere proximity will not help unless unity or oneness with Divinity is realised. That is the real purport of Satsang."

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AVATAR VANI

BLISS IS WITHIN YOU

*Asthiram Jivanam Loke,
Asthiram Yauvanam Dhanam,
Asthiram Dara Putradi,
Dharmam Kirti Dwayam Sthiram.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

(Life in the world is impermanent. So are youth and wealth. Wife and children are also not permanent. Only righteousness and good name are permanent).

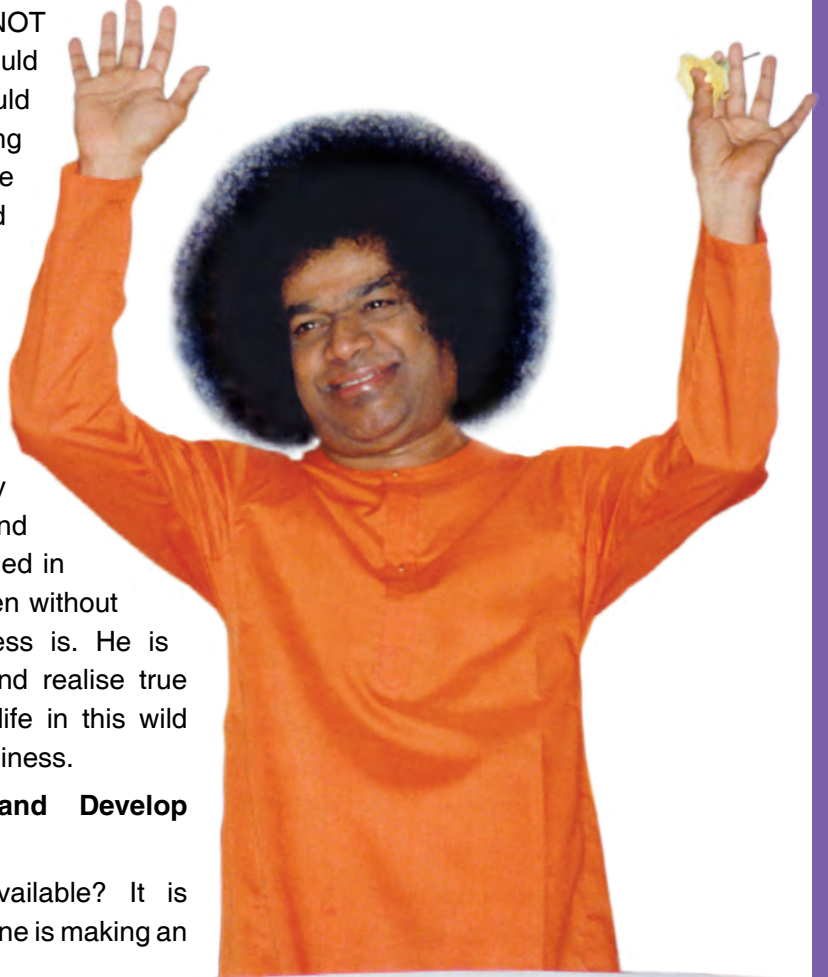
DEVOTION IS THE EASIEST PATH TO ATTAIN GOD

STUDENTS! IT IS NOT long life that man should aspire for. Man should strive for Divine life. Eking out your livelihood is not the purpose of life. Life should be filled with happiness. Man seeks happiness in education, avocation and marriage. Right from a child to an aged person, all are seeking happiness out of this world, which is temporary and filled with sorrows and troubles. Man is ever engaged in the pursuit of happiness even without knowing what real happiness is. He is not caring to understand and realise true happiness, and is wasting life in this wild goose chase of worldly happiness.

Control your Senses and Develop Prudence

Where is happiness available? It is available within you. But no one is making an effort to search within.

Happiness derived



from worldly objects is transient. The source or spring of bliss lies within one's own being. The happiness that you derive from external sources is in reality a reflection of your inner feelings. You yourself are the source of bliss. Try to know who you are. But people search in the outer world to know who they are. To search yourself in the external world is nothing but a sign of ignorance. If you keep on asking people, "Where am I? Who am I?" can anyone answer? Is it not foolishness to do so?

In order to know about himself, man must endeavour to know his Atmic principle that is everlasting. However, one has to face obstacles and challenges in this process of Self-realisation and knowledge. Here is a small example. There is a mansion belonging to a wealthy person. The mansion is protected by a strong wall, and is guarded by watchmen. When someone wishes to meet the owner of the mansion, he must make friendship with the watchmen and get their permission.

In the same manner, there are four watchmen who guard the mansion of bliss. It is impossible to get into the mansion without seeking their permission. The first one is known as Sama. Sama denotes the control of senses of perception. When you achieve Sama, you can control the sense of action also, which is called Dama.

The second watchman is Vicharana (prudence). It means discrimination between what is good and what is bad, what is evanescent and what is permanent, etc. It is by Vicharana that you can understand the difference between these dualities. In the Bhagavadgita, you will find chapters with titles such as *Daiva Asura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga*; *Kshetra Kshetrajna Vibhaga*

There is no need for fear when your thoughts, words and deeds are in harmony. When your purse is not full of currency notes, you don't have to fear about theft. One can easily overcome fear with faith in God. Faith in yourself and faith in God – this is the secret of greatness. Always have good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Know that you are ever surrounded by Divinity. Develop this strong faith. Then only will you have peace.

Yoga, Guna Traya Vibhaga Yoga, etc. One must analyse and discern what is Atma and what is Anatma, what is good and what is bad, what is desirable and what is not. Then only can one know the truth. It is possible to know the truth by means of dispassionate discernment. Philosophy means realisation of truth or the means to find the truth. It is a great irony that even though truth pervades all over, man is unable to realise it. It is said, *Sathya Darshanam Jnanam* (realisation of truth is true knowledge).

Contentment Bestows Peace of Mind

The third watchman is Trupti (contentment). Even after earning a lot of wealth and attaining high position, comforts, name and fame, man is not able to derive happiness. One without contentment stands to lose both ways. Such a one cannot remain happy either in this life or in the next. Undue desires are the cause of dissatisfaction. Due to dissatisfaction, you are unable to enjoy the fruits that are available before you. People crave for more and more, losing sight of what is already available. Thinking

of the future, people are getting nightmarish. Why should you worry about future which is uncertain? Also, you should not brood over the past, because past is past! It will never come back. One should endeavour to make good use of the present. Results of the past and the forebodings of the future are both available in the present. Therefore, present is omnipresent. Seeds of the past and the fruits of the future are both contained in the sapling of the present. You will reap in future what you sow in present. You will have the belch of what you have eaten.

Therefore, cultivate the virtue of contentment. You can get peace of mind only through the quality of contentment. When Swami asks, "What do you want"? people say, "I want peace". 'I' stands for ego, and 'want' stands for desire. When you remove these two, peace stands by itself in its pristine form. Suppose Swami sends you a book by registered parcel. Before seeing the book, you will have to remove the wrapper first. Ego and desire are like the wrapper to the book of peace. Develop the discrimination to get rid of ego and desire to attain peace.

You are the embodiment of love. You are the embodiment of Divinity. There are three facets of your identity. You are not one person but three, the one you think you are – the body, the one others think you are – the mind and the one you really are – the Atma.

Looking at a tumbler that is half filled with water, an optimist says that the tumbler is half filled, while a pessimist says that the tumbler is half empty. Your understanding depends upon your vision. Good and bad exist in the world. One must use proper discrimination between good and bad, and between right and wrong. Dualities are

inescapable in this world. There is a thorn attached to a rose. *Pleasure is an interval between two pains.* One must develop the quality of contentment by using proper discrimination.

Understand the True Meaning of Unity

The fourth watchman which guards the mansion of bliss is Satsang (good company). While travelling in the darkness of night, a lantern can show you the right path. A log of wood also becomes fire when it comes in contact with fire. However, a partial contact may result in the formation of coal; and it remains as coal until it is burnt in fire. If you try to make the coal white by washing it with milk, will it turn white? On the other hand, the milk will become black. Only when coal is completely subsumed in fire, it becomes one with fire. One becomes Divine by totally surrendering to Divinity. Mere proximity will not help unless unity or oneness with Divinity is realised. That is the real purport of Satsang.

It is said, *Ekatma Sarva Bhutantaratma* (one Atma dwells in all beings). One must realise oneness in the creation. Then only can one realise Divinity. *Jewels are many, gold is one. Beings are many, breath is one. Nations are many, earth is one. Stars are many, sky is one. Bulbs are many, current is one. Sweets are many, sugar is one.* One can realise Divinity through proper understanding of the meaning of unity. The effect of Satsang can never be overstated. It is said in this context, *Tell me your company I shall tell you what you are.* Sugar and water have different qualities; but when mixed together, they produce syrup. Sharing of good thoughts with good people brings about your transformation. Therefore, Satsang is very essential to attain the goal of life.



*Satsangatwe Nissangatwam,
Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam,
Nirmohatwe Nischalatattwam,
Nischalatattwe Jivanmukti.*

(Sanskrit Sloka)

(Good company leads to detachment; detachment makes one free from delusion; freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind; steadiness of mind confers liberation.)

Through Satsang, one progresses to a state of detachment. Through practice of detachment, one overcomes ignorance. One can attain unwavering mind when ignorance is destroyed. Liberation can be attained only by a person whose mind remains unagitated under all circumstances.

When you wrap an eatable in a paper, the paper acquires the smell of the eatable. If you wrap fish in it, the wrapper also smells like fish. If you put jasmine flowers in it, the wrapper also smells like jasmine. You acquire qualities in accordance with the company you associate with. Satsang has a great impact especially on young people. Is the transformation entirely due to Satsang? No. But Satsang has greater impact when it combines with your innate goodness. While the company impacts from outside, goodness of heart impacts from within. Both are necessary for a person to get transformed into an ideal being.

We use an air conditioner in a warm room and a heater in a chilly room on a hill station. But we use the same current to run both of them. Good or bad perceptions depend on the conditioning of the mind. The Upanishads say, *Manah Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandhamokshayo* (mind is the cause of bondage and liberation of man).

Colour of the world changes in accordance with the colour of the glasses you put on. The world looks sacred when you look at it with sacred feelings.

At one place, the Upanishad says, *Brahma Sathyam Jagan-mithya* (Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal). In another context, the Upanishad says, *Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat* (Vishnu pervades the entire universe). Vedanta promotes both these concepts. People who go to a cinema hall to see a movie are not bothered about the screen. But, in fact, there can be no picture without a screen. The scenes keep moving in and out, while the screen remains static all the time. That which comes and goes, and is impermanent is called Mithya (Illusion) in Vedanta philosophy; while the fundamental or the basic core of the cosmos is the Truth called Brahman. This is the real purport of the dictum, *Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat*. Viswam (universe) is the effect, while Vishnu (God) is the cause. Our life is the result of these two aspects; the result of their unification. Good and bad are also the result of association of different aspects. To achieve anything, sustained efforts are necessary. Even walking, talking, driving, etc., require proper practice. Mother at home and teacher at school strive to impart proper knowledge to children. The Bhagavadgita says,

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

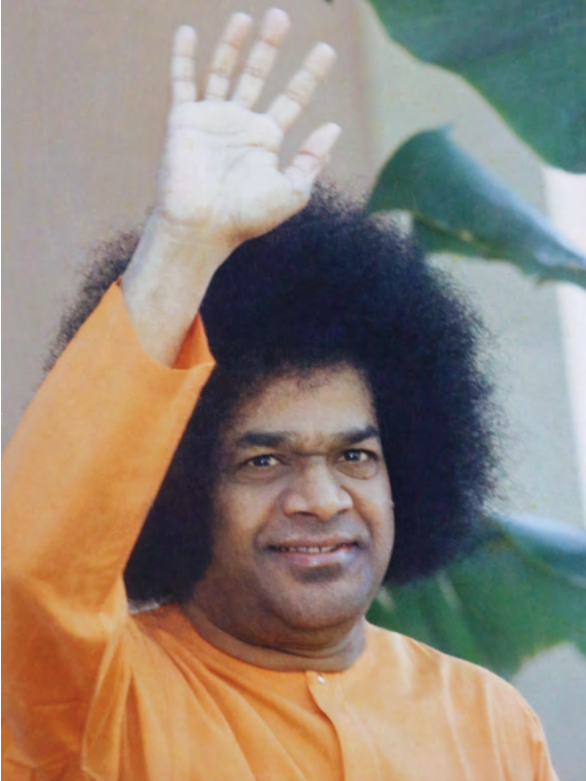
(Sanskrit Verse)

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



Our life starts in society, grows in society and ends in society. It is our duty to join a good society, as also to make society good. When one bad person joins 10 good people, he too becomes good. When one good person joins 10 bad people, he too becomes bad. When one cup of water is added to 10 cups of milk, the water becomes a part of the milk. When one cup of milk is added to

meet the pilot, you have to buy a ticket and fly with him. If you wish to enter a house that is guarded by a dog, either you should befriend the dog or shout the name of the owner until he listens. Friendship with dog denotes Karma Marga (path of action); calling the name of the friend is Bhakti Marga (path of devotion). In fact, the path of devotion is the easiest path to attain Divinity. Practices like Japa and Dhyana (chanting



You acquire qualities in accordance with the company you associate with. Satsang has a great impact especially on young people. Is the transformation entirely due to Satsang? No. But Satsang has greater impact when it combines with your innate goodness. While the company impacts from outside, goodness of heart impacts from within. Both are necessary for a person to get transformed into an ideal being.

10 cups of water, the milk loses its value. Therefore, in order to make life happy, quality and quantity are required to be balanced properly.

Faith is the Basis of Love

One can enter the mansion of bliss only after befriending these four watchmen. Man is unable to enjoy bliss because of this lacuna. When a plane is flying, you cannot see its pilot from the ground. If you want to

and meditation) are meant for your mental satisfaction.

Love is God, God is Love; Live in Love. *Start the day with love, fill the day with love, spend the day with love and end the day with love. This is the way to God.* But how can you imbibe love? First you should have faith. Before marriage, you had no special relationship with your wife as she was a stranger. But after marriage, you developed love towards her, as you considered her as



a part of your life. Similarly, it is faith that makes a man love his mother. So, faith is the basis for love. Where there is love, there is the spirit of sacrifice. A mother is ever ready to sacrifice for the sake of her son or daughter. For the mansion of life, self-confidence is the foundation, self-satisfaction are the walls, self-sacrifice is the roof and Self-realisation is like living in the mansion of bliss. *Life is a game, play it; life is a challenge, meet it; life is a dream, realise it; life is love, share it.*

One has to recognise Divinity, experience Divinity and spread Divinity in society without making any distinctions of language, caste, religion, etc.

There is only one religion, the religion of love.

There is only one caste, the caste of humanity.

There is only one language, the language of the heart.

There is only one God, He is Omnipresent.

People suffer because they lack faith and love. They develop fear of each and everything – on the street, in the office, in a plane and what not. What is the reason of fear? The reason behind this fear is cruelty of man and lack of kindness.

It is said that proper study of mankind is man. *Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked.* There is no need for fear when your thoughts, words and deeds are in harmony. When your purse is not full of currency notes, you don't have to fear about theft. One can easily overcome fear with faith in God. *Faith in yourself and faith in God – this is the secret of greatness.* Always have good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Know that you are ever surrounded by Divinity. Develop this strong faith. Then only will you have peace.

– **Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 24th April 1992.**

The touchstone for virtue in a person is his keenness to give up, to sacrifice, to develop detachment. I exhort students on many occasions to associate with good and godly people only so that the precious aspect of divinity in them can manifest. Many of them are humble, subdued and disciplined as long as they are in hostel and college, but once they enter the outer world, they resume the routine and ruin themselves. This should not happen. Once truth is accepted as an article of faith, one should sacrifice one's entire life to its practice. Or else, man degrades himself below the level of birds and beasts.

– Baba



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM KHAMMAM DISTRICT

EARLY 3,500 DEVOTEES came to Prasanthi Nilayam on a two-day pilgrimage on 27th and 28th January 2018 from Khammam district of Telangana and presented music and cultural programmes on both the days. A group of singers and musicians



A devotional music presentation of Khammam devotees.

of this district presented a programme of devotional songs on 27th January 2018. Beginning with a prayer song to Lord Ganesh "Sri Ganesh Sivuni Kumara" (Ganesh, the son of Lord Siva) at 5.00 p.m., they enthralled the devotees with melodious songs with deep devotion for nearly 45 minutes which included "Deena Janavana Mana Mohana" (Krishna, the refuge of the destitute), "Anandame Paramanandame Brahmanandame". Bhajan continued after this and came to a close with Arati at 6.10 p.m.

On 28th January 2018, Bal Vikas children from Khammam district presented a thematic drama which showcased the various facets of the Divine Mission of



A thematic drama by Bal Vikas children from Khammam district.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by depicting how the Sai Organisation was helping poor and needy villagers by solving their problems of healthcare, education and potable water. Embellished with a number of beautiful dances of children, the drama highlighted the Divine Glory of Bhagavan through various incidents in the life of some villagers. In conclusion, a short video clip was screened which showed the Seva activities being carried out by the Sai Organisation of this district.

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM KERALA

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Kerala organised a three-day Parthi Yatra (pilgrimage to Puttaparthi) for devotees from Kerala in which media persons and advocates of this State also took part. As part of this pilgrimage, a soul-stirring devotional music programme was presented by a noted singer Smt. R. Sreebharathi on the morning of 28th January 2018. Beginning with a song dedicated to Lord Ganesh, "Gaayiye

Ganapati Jaga Vandana” (sing the glory of Lord Ganapati), the renowned singer rendered devotional songs and Bhajans which included “Sanwara Hamari Preet Nibhaoji” (Krishna, respond to my devotion), “Sai Mata Pita Guru Bandhu Sakha” (Sai is the mother, father, preceptor and friend), “Jaya Jaga Janani Sayeeswari” (hail mother Sai, the creator of the world).

SIVARATHRI FESTIVAL

The sacred festival of Sivarathri was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 13th February 2018.

Siva Stuti: A Dance Presentation

As part of Sivarathri celebrations, a dance performance entitled “Siva Stuti” (worship of Siva) was presented by the Prasanthi Dance Group comprising students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary



A dance number by Prasanthi Dance Group.

School and Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on 12th February 2018. Beginning their dance programme at 5.00 p.m., the students presented in all five dance numbers showcasing the divine glory of Lord Siva. Performing the dances to the tune of melodious devotional songs, the students portrayed the mythological stories depicting Siva’s qualities such as

destroyer of sins and the bestower of bliss through their expressive gestures and attractive formations.

Devotional Music Programme by Students

A huge gathering of devotees thronged Prasanthi Nilayam to participate in the nightlong Sivarathri Bhajan held in beautifully decorated Sai Kulwant Hall from 6.00 p.m. on 13th February 2018 to 6.00 a.m. on 14th February 2018.



Auspicious Nadaswaram notes by the Nadaswaram team of students.

As part of Sivarathri celebrations, the students of Bhagavan’s educational institutions presented a soulful devotional music programme on the morning of 13th February 2018. First, the Nadaswaram and



An elevating devotional music presentation by students.



Panchavadyam teams of students presented a variety of devotional music notes heralding the Sivarathri celebrations. Thereafter, the students made an exhilarating devotional music offering comprising Stotras (verses) and devotional songs which included “Viswanathashtakam”, “Sivashtakam”, “Subah Subah Lo Siva Ka Naam” (recite the Name of Siva early morning), “Siva Sankara Deva” (Oh Lord Siva). Bhajans followed next after this most elevating musical offering of the students. The morning programme concluded with Arati at 10.00 a.m.

Abhishekam of Sayeeswara Linga

As the programme in the afternoon began at 4.30 p.m. with Veda chanting, the sacred Sayeeswara Linga was brought out from the Bhajan Mandir in a grand procession led by Panchavadyam, Nadaswaram and Veda chanting groups of students and priests. After the Linga was set up on a decorated platform in front of Bhagavan’s Samadhi in Sai Kulwant Hall, the priests started the Abhishekam of the Linga amidst chanting of Veda Mantras and auspicious notes of Panchavadyam by the students. Abhishekam was in this way performed with 18 items such as honey, flowers, fruits, Bilva leaves, milk, etc., and the significance of each such offering was explained in Telugu and English. After Abhishekam, the Linga was beautifully decorated. Meanwhile, the Veda group of students recited Rudram. After the decoration of Linga, worship of



Sivarathri Akhanda Bhajan.

the Linga was performed accompanied by Sri Sathya Sai Ashtottaram recitation and Lingashtakam. At the end of worship, Arati was offered to the Linga.

Sivarathri Akhanda Bhajan

Bhagavan’s Discourse followed next, in which Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to recognise their immanent divinity and experience the bliss of Atma Jnana (knowledge of the Self). Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan “Siva Siva Siva Anarada”. Nightlong Akhanda Sivarathri Bhajan for 12 hours began with this Bhajan of Bhagavan. Meanwhile, sacred Teertham (sacred water) was sprinkled on devotees by students and priests in the entire length and breadth of Sai Kulwant Hall. Groups of students, Ashram staff and devotees took turns to lead Bhajans during the night. Sivarathri Bhajan concluded at 6.00 a.m. on 14th February 2018 with two Bhajans in the golden voice of Bhagavan “Hey Siva Sankara Namami Sankara” and “Om Sivaya Om Sivaya”. At the conclusion of the Bhajan, Prasadam of tamarind rice and sweet rice was served to the entire assembly of devotees.



From our Archives

RECITATION OF THE NAME OF RAMA ELEVATES MAN

CATERING TO SENSES MAKES MAN BESTIAL

EVEN TO PLACE ONE FOOT forward, man needs an inner urge, a purpose, a prompting. His will is moved by his wish. Therefore, man must endeavour to wish for higher and holier goals. His mind is a bundle of wishes; turned

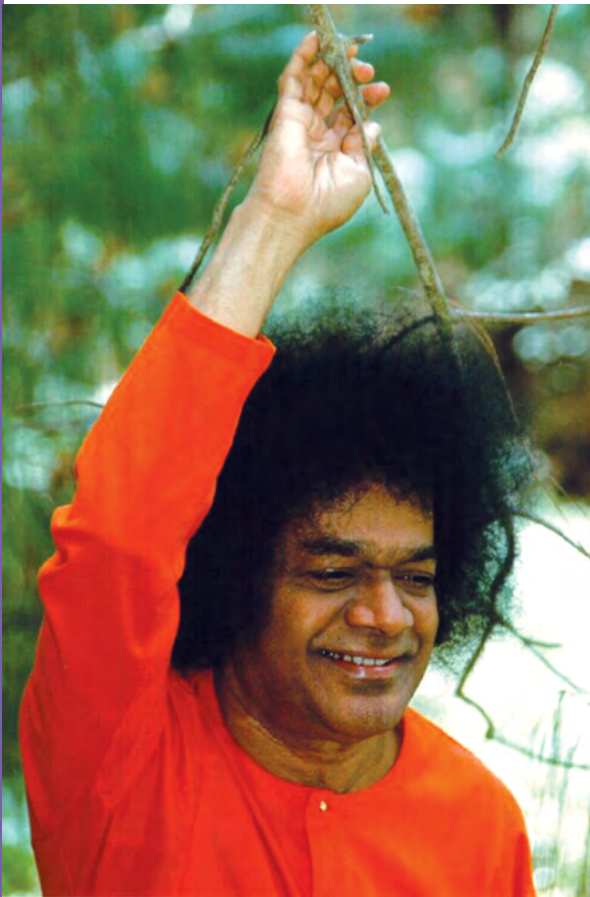
his conscience believing that he is acting right.

But man has to recognise the preciousness of time. Not even a fraction of a second should be wasted. He must be engaged always in the investigation of his own truth and his own duty to himself. Life is dripping away, drop by drop, from the leaking pot! Time hangs over every head like a sharp sword, ready to inflict the mortal slash. But man pays no attention to this ever-present calamity.

Cynics declare that statements like “man is the crown of creation” are only for textbooks and platform. But really speaking, human life is holy, sublime, sacred, ever-new, ever-fresh. The Upanishads try to arouse and awaken man into the awareness of this truth for man is slumbering in ignorance, wrapped in his ego and his desires. “Awake and adore the sun and recognise your reality in the light of its rays,” that is the call reverberating from the Upanishads. But man is deaf to this entreaty.

Three Eshanaas (cravings) are holding man back: he is enamoured of wealth, wife and children. These obstruct him at each step and act as handicaps to spiritual advance. Of course, wherewithal is essential for the process of life and labouring for it cannot be avoided. But beyond a limit, riches foul the mind and breed arrogance. They must be used for good purposes, promoting

hither and thither by the dictates of each wish, man wastes the time allotted to him and the skills he is endowed with. He slaves



virtue and well-being, fostering Dharma and fulfilling one's duties along the divine path. If riches are spent for realising fleeting desires, they can never be enough and the ego discovers newer and more heinous ways of earning and spending. It is indeed deplorable that this Eshanaa for Dhana (money) has laid hold of the people of this holy land, where Divine incarnations have taught the lessons of selflessness and service.

Peace has to be Attained through Spiritual Efforts

People are ignoring the very beacons which illumine the darkness and reveal the path of liberation from the bonds of incessant struggle, endless pursuit, bewildering agony and ceaseless activity to gain the ungainable! What is the reason? The mind guides him, not the faculty of the intellect. The intellect discriminates; it probes, it analyses. But the mind follows blindly every whim or fancy. The intellect helps one to identify one's duties and responsibilities. Slavishly bound to the vagaries of the mind, man hops from one spot to another, without rest or peace. He runs to catch a bus, rushes to the office, to the cinema hall, to the club and has no moment of calm silence. Peace has to be attained through spiritual efforts, that is to say, through spiritualising every thought, word and deed. What has to be planned today to set the world aright is not a new spiritual order or institution but men and women with pure hearts. They alone can uplift this land from the morass.

Rama is a Name sweeter than all the sweet things in Nature, when imbibed alone or together. It can never cloy on the tongue or the mind. It has mysterious mystic potentialities to elevate man. So, one must endeavour to keep the mind ever dwelling

on it. The story of Rama – the Ramayana – is but another version of the Vedas. In fact, it is said that the Vedas incarnated as the Ramayana, in order to help the destruction of evil and the revival of righteous living, tasks which the Lord took upon Himself during His career as Rama. Why! Rama and his three brothers are, from one point of view, the four Vedas in human form. The Yajur Veda lays down the rights and duties of man, the Dharma (righteousness) which ensures peace and prosperity for him, both here and hereafter. So, it is represented by Rama Himself. He put on the vesture of manhood in order to establish and exemplify Dharma. *Ramo Vighrahan Dharmah* (Rama is Dharma personified) is how the Ramayana describes Him.

Mankind should Follow Rama's Life

Rig Veda enshrines Mantras (potent sacred formulae). It elucidates them and elaborates their meanings, with the Mantra "Rama" as their crown. Brother Lakshmana, who repeated it, recited it and relied on it, for everything in life and beyond, is indeed the embodiment of the Rig Veda. He teaches mankind that the Rama Mantra confers on man the constant presence of the Lord. The same Veda contains songs in praise of creation and the Creator and through adoration sublimated into song, the Lord yields grace. Bharata whose every thought, word and deed was an act of thanksgiving, a paen of praise dedicated to Rama, was the Sama Veda itself.

Then, we have the Atharvana Veda which is a collection of medical and ritual details, of charms and protective amulets to overcome internal and external foes. Satrugna, whose very name means 'the destroyer of foes' is therefore appropriately the Avatar (incarnation) of the Atharvana



Veda. This Veda enables man to conquer evil habits, attitudes and tendencies, so that he can listen to the voice of God and gladly translate the words into daily life. Satrugna demonstrated by his humility, loyalty and devotion the victory he had won over his ego, greed and anger.

Very often the mistake is committed of forgetting that Rama came in order to lay down the norms of life and that His life has to be observed and followed by mankind. He is the ideal man, with qualities and virtues which every man can earn to elevate himself. Mere worship, empty adoration is not what the Avatar expects.

Rama underwent trouble, disappointment and distress like any man, in order to show that joy was but an interval between two griefs, that grief was but a challenge, a rest, a lesson. He held forth the ideal relationship between son and father, husband and wife, brother and brother, friend and friend, ally and enemy and even man and beast.

To purify the heart, one must practise Sama, Dama and other Sadhanas which can control the senses of perception and action. These may seem difficult in the early stages but any work that is worth doing has that drawback. Take riding a bicycle, for example. You will have to go through many falls and scrapes and lose many square inches of skin before you learn to balance and pedal on an even line. But once you have mastered the art, you can ride safe without even holding on to the handlebar. It is the same for a person learning to drive a car. At first, when you keep your foot on the clutch, you cannot hold the steering wheel; you cannot lift the foot from the clutch, when you hold the wheel

and when you manage both, you forget the brake. When you attend to all three, you do not watch out for pedestrians who run across. But when you have mastered the art, you are aware of the ups and downs, the stops and lights, and the roads along and across quite spontaneously and you can drive safe and fast conversing with the persons sitting to your left and on the back seat, and even singing a song to win their acclamation.

Happiness Lies in Helping others

Control gives power; regulation gives greater strength; discipline reveals divinity. People pine for happiness. But, can one gain it by allowing a free rein to the senses? Can one be happy eating four meals a day, or riding prestigious cars or living in many-roomed bungalows? No. Happiness consists in helping others. It is brought about by giving up, not by hoarding. Catering to the senses makes man bestial. They will drag him into dirt and disgrace. The yogi is the person who has fixed his mind on the Divine, not on the mundane. The Gita exhorts man to transform himself as *Satatam Yoginah* (attain permanent yogic state) But man is a Yogi in the morning, turning into a Bhogi (sensuous man) at noon and a Rogi (disease-stricken person) when the day ends! Man lives today without faith (the base) and without ideal (the superstructure). Dharma should be the base and Moksha (liberation), the superstructure, but the world has neglected both and it relies on Artha (wealth) and Kama (desire) for happiness and liberation. How can mankind progress without the first of the Purusharthas as the faith and the last as the ideal?

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Sri Rama Navami Discourses.



THE UNIVERSAL TEACHER

Prof. Leonardo Carvajal

You are the best Medical Doctor, Swami, to cure the sick, raise the dead and build free Super Speciality Hospitals, and teach the world medical community that the best healing medicine is Love and that the patient is not a sick client but a spiritual seeker.

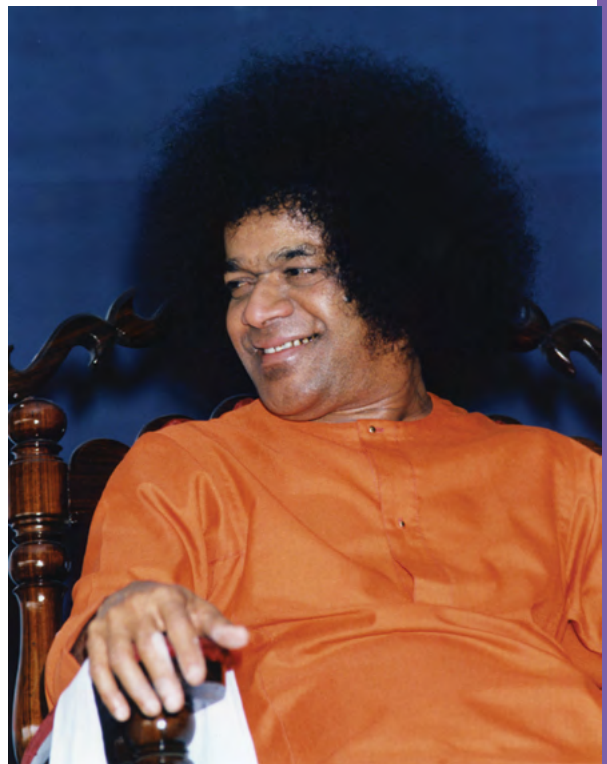
words ever uttered on earth are contained in Your hundreds of Discourses between 1953 and 2009, and compiled in 42 volumes of the Sathya Sai Speaks. What else can we add to the deepest teachings that You personally gave to humanity in the 16 books written directly by Yourself as Avatar and which undoubtedly for me represent the spiritual state-of-the-art of these

AT THE OUTSET, I THANK SWAMI for this opportunity to say a few words in this sacred place, Prasanthi Nilayam, where He has been giving His Divine Darshan for more than six decades since its inauguration in 1950. I remember, someone asked Swami, "Swami, I should have done some good merit in my past life to have gained this possibility of meeting an Avatar", to which He answered: "Yes, it is certainly the result of your good actions accumulated not only in your past life but during hundreds of past lives".

Gems of Divine Wisdom

Thank you, Swami, for your Prasanthi Nilayam Ashram in which You give us comfortable accommodation, healthy food, but above all, where You recharge us with the energy of Divine Love that drives our spiritual growth, our awareness that we are God with amnesia and therefore the main purpose of our human birth is to remember it.

But, Swami, what else can I say when all the most beautiful teachings and the sweetest



times? What word is missing to say beyond the divine experiences narrated by Your devotees in more than 140 books about You?



Since You captivated me through Your Divine books and profound writings, allow me Swami just to humbly share with my brothers and sisters that my Sai readings and experiences during the last 17 years as an aspiring Sai devotee took me to the following certainties:

You are, Swami, the best Linguist, we have been amazed to see You perfectly playing with the words to teach us: “Less Internet, More Innernet”. Or, what You replied when I asked You for the peace in my country, Colombia, South America, in war for half a century, between 1964 and 2016: “Peace is inside, outside are only pieces”, meaning that world peace can be built only on the foundation of individual transformation. You are the best Mathematician, Swami, when You taught us that wonderful equation $G = M - M$, meaning God = Man – Mind. The best Social Leader when You warned us, “politics without principles, science without ethics and education without character are not only useless, but dangerous”. The best Ethics Teacher when You taught us “Forget the good you have done to others, forget the harm others have done to you”.

You are the best Taxonomist Biologist when You told us that there are eight million species in the universe, only one of which is the human being, and that we are brothers between us and with everyone. And also the best Science Teacher to explain to us that everything in the universe is alive, and therefore the classical distinction between living and inert beings is incorrect. You are also the best Historian of Religions when You stated that the Vedas for the 21st century can be summarised in only eight words: “Love All, Serve All”, “Help Ever, Hurt Never”.

You are, Swami, the best Nutritionist to tell us that “three meals a day make a Rogi

(sick person), two meals a day make a Bhogi (a person given to sensual enjoyment), and one meal a day makes a Yogi”.

You are the best Medical Doctor, Swami, to cure the sick, raise the dead and build free Super Speciality Hospitals, and teach the world medical community that the best healing medicine is Love and that the patient is not a sick client but a spiritual seeker.

You are, Swami, the best Watchmaker to explain that the real Watch is not the one we wear on our wrists, but to Watch our Words, Actions, Thoughts, Character and Heart. The best Alchemist in turning the metal of our worldly existence into the gold of our new spiritual and divine lives. The best Humorist to remind us that the true spiritual aspirants are not those who “put on a castor oil face, but those with a smile on their face always”. The best Singer as well. You taught us so many beautiful Bhajans sung with Your Divine voice of Nataraja, combination of Siva and Sakti. The best Poet to start all Your Divine Discourses with precious poems in the sweet Telugu language. The most loving Father to always name us in Your Divine Discourses as Premaswarupulara (embodiments of love). The best Hydraulic Engineer to build 2,300 kilometres of aqueducts to bring water to more than one million inhabitants in 750 villages. The best Weather Forecaster by telling us that “our problems are just passing clouds”.

You are the best Pedagogue to underline that there are three kinds of teachers, “those who complain, those who explain and those who inspire”. My experience as university teacher for 19 years can be divided in two periods. Before knowing You, Swami, my teachings were delivered in a head to



head way, and after meeting You, Swami, my classes changed to be a heart to heart process, from information to transformation, as You say.

Darshan and Interviews

I remember, Swami, the first time my wife and I came to Prasanthi Nilayam in August 2001. I was sitting under the burning sun and on a very hot pavement, when our queue leader picked the number 3 from the token bag, which allowed me to sit on the first row to get Your Darshan.

Since the very moment You started Your Darshan, there from the ladies' side, my heart knew for sure that You were coming towards me. With my eyes closed all the time, I could feel when You stopped in front of me and asked me with Your sweet voice: "How many"? And then, the Divine invitation: "Ok, come on".

It was August and the Ganesh festival was taking place. I was amazed by reading Your explanation on the symbolic meaning of Ganesh, and that's why, when in the interview room, Swami, You asked me: "What do you want"? I replied: "An elephant head". And Swami said: "What"?, and everybody laughed. And I repeated: "An elephant head, Swami", but my intention was to be given the wisdom of Ganesh.

At that very moment, You started waving Your hand, and everyone in the interview room was scared of what You, Swami, were going to do with my head. So was I, with my eyes closed. Eventually, while looking at the beautiful ring You made, Swami said: "Three diamonds", and I immediately understood that to have the wisdom of Ganesh, my mind had to die not only one, not even two, but three times.

During that interview you also made Vibhuti, Swami, which makes You the best Chemical Engineer to produce the holy ash of Vibhuti to remind us that our body is dust and into dust will it be converted, and that only the Atma is eternal.

To finish, I would like to say, Swami, that I have personally experienced that You are also the best Family Planner. In our same first visit to Prasanthi Nilayam, we had just married and I was discussing with my wife on the best time to have children. Since I wanted to wait more time, during the interview, Swami, You asked me: "Why don't you want a son"?, and looking at my wife Swami said: "I know what you want" and You posed and in your usual style You wrote in the air, and said: "I bless that son"! And our son is here with us today. Swami has also blessed us with twin daughters.

And we can go on and on comparing the teachings of Swami through any profession or career. I invite you all my sisters and brothers in Sai to make your own list and, most importantly, to practise the Divine teachings.

According to the Gospel of John, Lord Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me". In my case, Swami, I came directly from the Catholic Church in my neighbourhood in Colombia to Prasanthi Nilayam. For this reason, allow me, Swami, on this Christmas day, to end by thanking Lord Jesus for fulfilling his promise and taking me so lovingly to the Father.

– **From the talk of Prof. Leonardo Carvajal, a Senior Diplomat of Colombia serving in its Embassy of Thailand, on 25th December 2017 during Christmas celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam.**



Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas - A Ray of Hope for Mankind

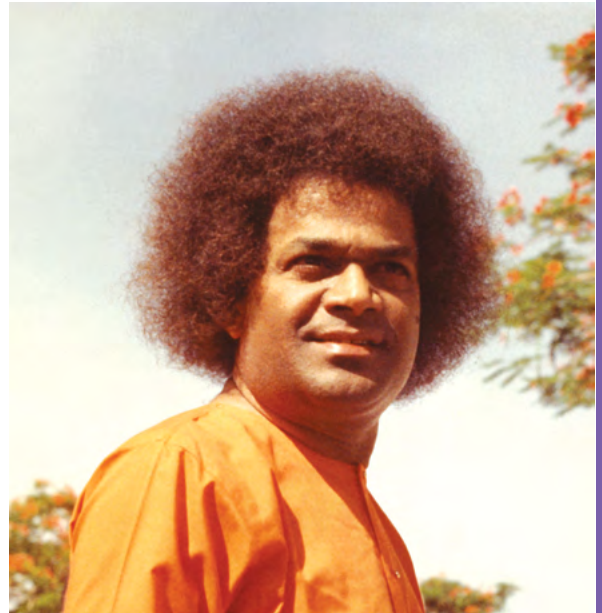
Kamala Pandya

TODAY IS INDEED A GREAT DAY, as we celebrate the 8th Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Alumni Meet and 5th All India Bal Vikas Convention. At the outset, I welcome each one of you to the Divine Abode of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam and am grateful to Bhagavan for giving us this one more chance to celebrate this great event. Many of you might be visiting the divine precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam for the first time in your life. My earnest request to you is: dwell in the peace, tranquillity and quietude of this divine place and enjoy every moment of your stay here, taking back valuable lessons in life when you leave, so that wherever you go, the world will say... "Yes, here is the product of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas".

A Journey to Perfection

It is said that we only know the present, but God knows our past and future also. It is with this vision of the future that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has blessed mankind with the only ray of hope for the world – this unique programme called "Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas" that aims at the blossoming of human excellence. This is His greatest legacy to mankind. The Bal Vikas programme not only touches the life of the students but brings about change in the lives of the Bal Vikas Gurus and the parents of the students also.

Keeping in tune with the motto "Transforming Self to Transform the World",



Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas programme is a journey to perfection. And perfection is Divinity. All of us, who are a part of this movement must first Be, then Do and finally Tell. Hence, we must practise, practise, practise. The first thing, we, the students and Gurus can do is to follow the Master, who said if you cannot oblige, at least speak obligingly. Hence, speak sweetly and softly and always be happy and cheerful.

I remember, once when a group of Bal Vikas students visited Puttaparthi in 1990, they were called for a private audience with Baba. One of the teachers asked Baba, "How do we bring about transformation, Baba"? Baba replied, "Inspire one and all with stories from the lives of great men..."



You don't worry about transformation, that is My job".

The Five Teaching Techniques

The five teaching techniques of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Programme help us in our journey to perfection. The five techniques are: Prayers, Story Telling, Group Singing, Group Activities and Silent Sitting. When you are stepping out into society after graduating from the Bal Vikas course, you have to continue to practise these five techniques.

Prayer helps in bonding with the Creator. It enables us to rely on God and make Him a friend for life. It is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening. Those who pray everyday do not need a psychiatrist or a counsellor because they have the greatest Saichiatrist, Bhagavan Baba, with them in their life. Prayers help to contribute to harmony in society and peace in the world. When the children pray at home along with their family members, it strengthens family ties, and when this prayer "Samasta Loka Sukhino Bhavantu" (May all the worlds be happy!) is extended to encompass all beings in the universe, it paves the way to actualise "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" "(the whole world is one family).

Stories of saints and sages are the greatest source of inspiration for students. They leave indelible impression on the young minds and raise their drooping spirits. Jesus Christ inspired mankind with parables and so did Bhagavan Baba with "Chinna Kathas".

Group singing brings about harmony of body, mind and soul. Transcending barriers of caste, creed and language, group singing paves the path to Unity, Purity and Divinity.

Group activities sow the seeds of sportsmanship and togetherness. They promote brotherhood and prepare the students to be a part of society. They ignite the spark of service before self. Group activities gear them to assume significant roles to make this world a better place to live in. They instil in them a sense of responsibility and accountability to society, Nature and God.

Silent Sitting / Meditation is the crowning glory of all the techniques. It aids in management of thought, breath and time. By reducing the flow of thoughts, Silent Sitting is an exercise to master the mind to become a Mastermind. It kindles the spark of intuition and awakens the dormant potential in a child. At the physical level, tuning within begins with improving power of concentration, memory and retention capacity and being at peace with oneself. At the mental level, it endows the students with the power of discrimination by strengthening their conscience. A successful life is all about exercising the right choice. The practice of silent sitting aids in right decision making. At the spiritual level, it is the dawn of understanding of Oneness and Cosmic Connectivity. You are like the squirrel in Sai Ram's Yuga scampering from the shore to the beach picking up tiny granules of sand and offering it to build the bridge to Lanka. Thus, Bal Vikas is undoubtedly the only ray of hope to salvage mankind from the brink of disaster.

– From the talk of Smt. Kamala Pandya, National Coordinator, Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, at the 5th Bal Vikas Students Convention and 8th Bal Vikas Alumni Meet on 6th January 2018.



SATHYA SAI SCHOOL OF RIBEIRÃO PRETO, BRAZIL

The First Meeting of Alumni of Sathya Sai School of Ribeirão Preto was held in December 2017, wherein the alumni expressed their views about the impact of the school on their lives. Here we give the views of two alumni of the school: . .

Evelin Alexandra Faria Oliveira
(graduated at 9th Grade in 2013)

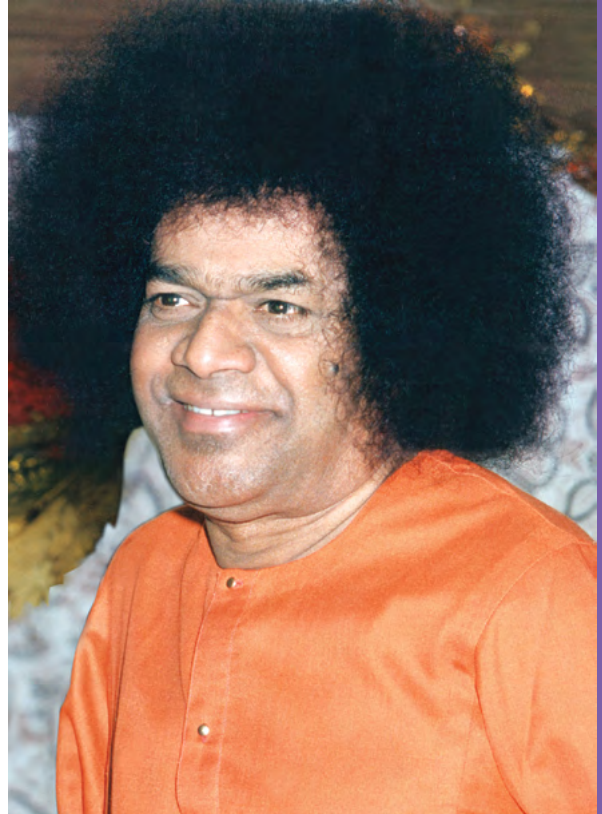
STUDYING AT SATHYA SAI SCHOOL was a process of discovery and learning, especially in our development as humans. It is a unique experience because, in addition to academic learning, we learn human values. It is not only a school, it is also a second family. It's like being at home; we feel like talking, expressing and acting. It is the place where we feel protected and loved. It is our refuge! And here we have tranquillity. It is a privilege to live in such a school!

Our parents always tell us, "Study to be someone in life". Here we discover that we are already someone, because the school has given us the flight... The school offered us content and information, but most valuable was to learn what love is, what respect and compassion for all beings is. It is impossible not to be grateful for all this!

Jaqueline Martins (graduated at 9th Grade in 2012)

"While writing this text, I could think about my learning experiences and definitions from the Sai School and also the Alumni Sai project.

Alumni, from the Latin *alumnus*, means "old", "former student". But this is not the



origin of the word. *Alumnus* originally meant "a child that is given to the care of another", i.e., a pupil.

In 2012, when we graduated, there were no previous stories about Sathya Sai School alumni, no one knew what would happen after the graduation.¹

continued on page 27...

¹ It was the first graduation ceremony of the Sathya Sai School, of students accepted in 2002, when the school began its activities (note of the translator).



J. M. KUMAR

REMINISCENCES OF MY GOLDEN DAYS AT PARTHI

IT GIVES ME GREAT JOY TO SHARE some of the sweet memories of my golden days spanning two years at the Prasanthi Nilayam campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, doing the erstwhile Master of Financial Management (MFM) course during 1998-2000. The two years were the most critical in the extended reformation phase I have been going through in both my personal and professional life.

After I passed out from the Institute in 2000, I was employed as a Management Trainee at the erstwhile Global Trust Bank Ltd (now Oriental Bank of Commerce). Since the bank was in poor financial condition, every working day was a harrowing experience with pressure to pacify irate customers, protect dwindling business and still manage to garner new clients. As a fresher passed out from college, this was even more difficult for me. After the bank was declared insolvent and it merged with OBC, the pangs of merger aggravated the situation. Looking back on those days, I see the relevance of some of the subtle lessons imparted by Bhagavan.

Lesson 1

Bhagavan narrates an anecdote from the Mahabharata wherein Lord Krishna hands over a leaflet to Yudhishtira with some

golden words written on it, with the instruction that he may open and read the contents of the leaflet only when their suffering and pain reaches its pinnacle. After bearing a certain ordeal, he decides to open the leaflet. In it was written “This too shall pass”.

I felt the relevance of this saying in every day of my professional life in my banking days, and it worked wonders in every situation I encountered. Now I am a successful Business Analyst at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Lesson 2

During the first overseas travel owing to unfamiliarity with the immigration and other statutory rules, I was subject to some nail biting issues during the immigration and customs clearance. One such learning experience was imparted by Bhagavan at Frankfurt International Airport on 9th September 2005 – anniversary of the 9/11 bombings. We all can imagine the quantum of security cover at international airports on this day given that Frankfurt is one of the important gateways not only for Europe but also for the US. Keeping this in mind, I made futile attempts not to commence my maiden travel on this day. I wished to travel one day before or one day after this anniversary date. But my company wanted me to travel on that day only. It so happened that I got involved in such situations wherein everyone from the immigration officer at Chennai International Airport to Passport Controls at Frankfurt had a hearty laugh at my expense. After this ordeal, I have reached a stage where travel does not perturb me, even if the travel schedules are very tight. Bhagavan’s message “Iron can be moulded and soldered only when it is red



hot, malleable and ductile; after this process, it gets so highly toughened that it can accept any quantum of stress and strain”, was very relevant for me in this context.

Lesson 3

During my first year of MFM, my grandmother passed away. Since I was very much attached to my grandmother and was away from home for the first time in my life, I was overwhelmed with grief and this grief was aggravated because I was homesick as well. When I requested the Warden for permission to go to my home at Hyderabad, he suggested that I sit in the front row during Darshan with a letter and pray to Bhagavan. Swami came for Darshan and seeing me with tears like a small child, He called me, patted me on my back, granted Padanamaskar, materialised Vibhuti and silently messaged me that all this was part of life. Pondering deeply on His unspoken message with the Vibhuti, I learned that we must consciously move in the direction of merging with the Lord and that one day this material body shall end up only in ash... that is, Vibhuti.

Lesson 4

Bhagavan always reinforces the message of Nishkama Karma... 'Do your duty and leave the rest to God'. I find that in my client presentations, seminars and personal life, I do my best and the results though mixed, always turn out to be favourable for me. I was asked to make a presentation on Risk Management in Banks to an audience filled with domain experts at very short notice. I was unprepared and culled out the presentation material overnight. At the commencement of the presentation, I



candidly acknowledged that I did not have full time to prepare for the presentation and that I may be corrected wherever necessary. Honestly, it was only the grace of Swami that the presentation went smoothly and the reviews were positive. The teachings of Bhagavan on doing duty without focus on rewards have thus worked wonders in every walk of my life.

Lesson 5

Bhagavan always says, “Everything that happens in our life is for our own good”. A small experience on this golden thought is illustrated here. I wanted to take up the medical profession but could not be successful in the entrance examination. Out of sheer frustration and grief, I ended up taking the B.Com. course at Osmania University, Hyderabad. After graduating, I had the once-in-a-lifetime chance of being admitted to the Management Course in Bhagavan's University. If I had not been unsuccessful in the medical entrance examination, I would not have had this golden opportunity to study at Parthi and be in the physical proximity of Bhagavan. My



grief of not getting through in the medical entrance has now transformed into daily thanksgiving to Bhagavan for giving me this golden opportunity.

Lesson 6

Bhagavan always emphasises on Namasmarana. We must always subconsciously be in unison with the Divine and chant the Divine Name, having Divine thoughts at all times. During the long travel durations in Europe and the US, with cold winters where getting ready to work is itself a tough task, I have found a useful way of practising this teaching: I store Chamakam, Rudram, Vishnu Sahasranama and others in my MP3 player and listen to them as I commute to and from the office. Though we do not have the time to sit and chant Veda during working hours, this method helps me to remember the Divine Name. I listen to these Mantras for some time when I am free, and devote some time during weekends for Namasmarana. This has contributed to my professional success and has also given me immense peace of mind.

Lesson 7

As a conclusion, let us accept the fact that 'Everything that happens in our life is His Divine Will and that we must accede to this so that the resulting pain and pleasure is neutralised'. Once Swami narrated an interesting anecdote of a person's life. When the going was good, the person had two shadows following him...one was his and the other was God's. As things became tough, he found that only one shadow was accompanying him. When the person departed and reached the abode of God, he asked the Lord: "Why did You abandon

me in my times of difficulty, O Lord"? God replied, "In bad times, the shadow was not yours, but was Mine. I had carried you in My arms during your bad times. Hence, you saw only one shadow". Swami has guided us thus far in our life. He will continue to be in us, around us, with us at all times - 24 x 7 x 365 so that the road ahead will always be the best for us.

I wish to devote some sentences to the road ahead for Sai students. Let us focus on spreading Swami's message. Swami is like the ocean – vast and incomprehensible. But we may do our bit in the form of selfless service, assisting elders in old-age homes, speaking softly, speaking convincingly even though we may not be able to convince at all times, practising vegetarian eating habits, eschewing consumption of liquor and other Tamasic items and so on. Brothers who are in western countries, Europe and the US will have some difficulties because the world is more oriented towards materialism and less inclined to our Indian lifestyle, wherein social service and Seva may not always be received in a positive way. However, we must endeavour at all times to practise Bhagavan's teachings so that we make a distinct mark on the world's stage. Let us attend Bhajans regularly at Sai Samithis and try to be role models for others. As Swami says, 'Keep parents happy'... We must do everything possible to keep our parents happy so that in turn, Swami would be happy.

– The author completed his MFM from Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in the year 2000 and is presently working in TCS as a Business Analyst in Amsterdam, Netherlands.



Devotion and Grandeur Mark Chinese New Year Celebrations

A LARGE NUMBER OF DEVOTEES came from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Japan to celebrate Chinese New Year in the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam. The celebrations held on 22nd and 23rd February 2018 comprised chanting of sacred Buddhist Mantras, devotional songs, illuminating talks and a variety of music and cultural presentations. The theme of this year's celebrations was "Honour our Parents Everyday".

The programme on 22nd February 2018 began at 5.00 p.m. with lighting of sacred lamp at the Samadhi of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba followed by traditional

Quoting from the teachings of Bhagavan Baba on this subject, the learned speaker stressed that celebrations of the Chinese New Year would be fruitful if we surrendered at least one bad quality and developed one good quality. Another inspiring talk was delivered by Ms. Lindawaty Roesli from Indonesia who narrated her personal experiences during her visits to Prasanthi Nilayam and described how Bhagavan showered His grace on her and her family.

An exhilarating devotional music presentation "Sathya Sai Harmonica Ensemble" followed these talks, comprising recital of Bhajans which included "Bolo Narayana Jai Jai Vitthala", "Jagadodharani



*Traditional Chinese offerings
by the Chinese devotees.*

prayer offerings at Bhagavan's Samadhi accompanied by recitation of the Mantra "Buddham Saranam Gachchhami...", chanting of Buddhist Mantra "Na Mo Pen She Se Cia Mo Ni Fo" followed next, after which Sri Billy Fong, Coordinator of this year's Chinese New Year celebrations addressed the gathering. Dwelling on the theme of the celebrations, Sri Billy Fong observed that filial piety is the foundation of all virtues.



Sathya Sai Harmonica Ensemble.

Mata Durga", "Parthi Purisha Prasanthi Vasa" and "Prasanthi Sai Baba", in the last two of which the devotees also joined in singing. Another engrossing presentation of Bhajans and devotional songs was made on keyboard, guitar and angklung followed by Chinese New Year songs. Then came the crowning glory of the celebrations in the form of beautiful dances by devotees and students from Nanyang Zhi Hui School of Medan, Indonesia who transported





A cultural dance by Chinese devotees.



Chanting of Buddhist Mantras by Malaysian devotees.



A dance number by the students of Nanyang Zhi Hui School.

the viewers to heights of ecstasy by their excellent dances in colourful costumes. Bhajans followed next which concluded with the Bhajan “Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam” in the golden voice of Bhagavan. The programme came to a close with Arati at 7.20 p.m.

The programme on 23rd February 2018 began with chanting of sacred Buddhist Mantras by the devotees from Jakarta (Indonesia), in which both the ladies and gents devotees took part. This was followed by Welcome Address by Dr. V.K. Ravindran, Chairman, Zone 4 of Sathya Sai International Organisation, who narrated some past incidents of celebrating Chinese New Year in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan and stated how the compassionate Lord Sai responds to the earnest prayers of His devotees. He urged the devotees to realise the omnipresence of Bhagavan and celebrate all festivals with full enthusiasm.

Chanting of Buddhist Mantras by the devotees of Malaysia followed this. Thereafter, Ms. Jeannie Boo from Malaysia addressed the gathering. Describing her experiences of Bhagavan’s Divinity, the distinguished speaker stated that the teaching of Bhagavan “see good, do good, be good” was most appealing to her. It was, in fact, all that man needed for his spiritual journey, she added. An excellent musical recital on Guzheng and another equally absorbing recital on Guzheng and Er Hu



Display of the ancient Chinese art of changing masks.

then enthralled the devotees. After this, the entire hall was submerged in the waves of mirth when a Malaysian artiste Bian Lian displayed the ancient Chinese art of changing masks.

Two exhilarating and touching presentations then illustrated the theme of



the Chinese New Year celebrations. The first presentation entitled “The Cornerstone of Chinese Civilisation” portrayed various incidents, wherein the parents in their old age were respected and honoured by their children.

The second presentation was a musical offering entitled “The Kneeling Lamb” which illustrated how the children should have gratitude for their parents who bring them up making great sacrifice. A lamb, it depicted, bows down in gratitude when it sucks the milk of its mother. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati, bringing the Chinese New Year celebrations to a happy conclusion.



A scene from the dramatic presentation “The Cornerstone of Chinese Civilisation”.

...continued from page 21

Within the premises of the school we were seeds and when love sprouted, we left “home” and went to flourish in the world. The process of flourishing was not so simple. We had become used to the protection of the Sathya Sai School. At first, we still did not know the size of the power of our roots, which kept us alive and connected, to continue to bloom and still sow. For a good part of my life, I had the opportunity to be part of one of the most wonderful projects I have ever heard of. Being part of something so big made me understand in practice the idea of utopia, a “magic world”, where things work, where people really care. Looking from outside, it may seem exaggerated or surreal.

At first, we resisted... and the first reaction was to create a bubble around us, which in a way would “defend” us from the unknown. Even so, we kept alive with what we received from the Sai School.

I realised that the best way to keep alive and amplify what we get here is to take a

little of that light outside the school premises, take it wherever we go, and reproduce everything we have received and learned at the Sathya Sai School. Understanding that the Sai School was not just a wood house surrounded by green and good people, maybe it was the biggest transformation of my life.

Today I know and understand that the Sai School is a project that is much bigger than academic training, I know that the school believes in me and in every student that passes from here. I know that the goal of the school goes far beyond preparing us for exams; it is preparing us for life. Every alumnus is a brick in building a better world.

In the most sceptical phase of my life, I chose to believe, to believe in people who want the best, to believe in others, and especially to believe in the strength of education, and in projects like the Sathya Sai School. I know it is worth it. I see and feel the results everyday.



DIVINE PROXIMITY AT BRINDAVAN

Dr. Sudhansu Kumar Nayak

I HAVE BEEN PROMPTED TO WRITE this article after reading the article 'Swami is Swami'! in September 2017 issue of Sanathana Sarathi, in which the author, Dr. Prabhakaran says that the proximity to Bhagavan one gets at Brindavan is once in a lifetime opportunity! This is applicable not only to His students but also to those who have been privileged to be in His proximity even for a few days at Brindavan. I got this opportunity thrice on three different occasions.

Summer Course: 1974

I was blessed to have the first Darshan of Bhagavan during the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality: 1974 (20th May to 20th June) when I was accommodated in the old dining hall of the students, opposite to Sairam Shed. Thus, Brindavan became my temporary residence for 35 days. Our daily schedule was Omkaram, Suprabhatam and Nagar Sankirtan at 5 a.m., Veda chanting / yogasanas at 6 a.m., classes by erudite scholars from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with two hours lunch break and Bhagavan's Discourse at 5 p.m. In this busy schedule, from dawn to dusk, Baba was with us – to bless us at the end of Nagar Sankirtan, to talk to us after Veda / yoga class, to move among us during breakfast, lunch and dinner like a loving mother and distribute Laddus (sweets) or mangoes in the lunch, to go round the hall during the class and sit at some vacant seat, gesturing us to be attentive to the speaker instead of looking at Him. Everyday prior to His Discourse, He would receive garland from Sai Geeta and

move around, conversing with students. He also was making surprise visits to our living places to look after our personal needs and comforts.

On Sundays we had Seva work in the campus, after which we were blessed with Padanamaskar and ice cream from the divine hand as also a photo session on the concluding Sunday. On some days, after dinner some cultural programmes were held, in which Bhagavan sat in the audience with us making beautiful explanatory remarks. Sometimes when we were free and moving in the campus, we found Bhagavan watching us from the balcony and giving some individual instructions, which signalled me to give up cinema from that day. He was so close to us that it is difficult to say when He was not there with us. And we were 449 college students from different States of India.

Bhagavan arranged stitching of shirts for the convocation, two days prior to which one examination was held. I was writing seriously putting my right leg on the left, when somebody passed in front of me and my leg touched his thigh. As usual I uttered 'Vishnu' apologetically touching his arm, but found him to be none other than Bhagavan Himself smiling and telling me 'Santosham'!

During these blissful days, my parents came for Darshan and I gave to my mother two mangoes gifted by Bhagavan during lunch, seed of one of which she planted and worshipped the tree everyday for 25 years till it was uprooted during the super-cyclone in 1999.



Bengaluru Seva Dal: 1978

I joined the Space Department of Government of India at Bangalore (now Bengaluru) on 29th March 1978 and on the next Sunday while waiting for the bus to Brindavan, met Sri R. Thyagarajan, Secretary of Bengaluru Samithi, who inducted me in Seva Dal. My first day's assignment was to clean the Saraswati statue in front of the hostel. Again on the next Saturday, we were at Lalbagh and I was stationed in such a place that I got the rare opportunity of opening the door of Bhagavan's car on His arrival.

The normal work of Seva Dal volunteers at Brindavan was to clean the campus and make Sairam Shed ready for Darshan and Bhajan; and the special work was to remove the earthen mound from the quadrangle of the newly-constructed second hostel for students. On Wednesday evenings, some of us led by Prof. A. V. Krishnamurthy of Indian Institute of Science, who later became the Karnataka State Seva Dal Convener, used to come for the said work. After taking food in the hostel, we worked up to 11 p.m., slept in the Sairam Shed or in the old dining hall and would leave in the morning for our jobs. On some evenings, Baba would call us to His Abode, talk to us individually and play with us throwing oranges to catch.

During this period, my marriage was fixed, but I could not give the invitation card to Bhagavan sent by my father. However, Bhagavan blessed me, but with a mysterious smile which I failed to comprehend till I reached home to know that my engagement had been cancelled and the marriage was settled with another girl.

My wife had a chronic burning sensation on the top of her head which she had not disclosed to me. The pain was acute on

12th August 1978 night and she started weeping, which I mistook to be due to the separation from her family. The next day, being a Sunday we went to Brindavan to join my Seva Dal duty. At the time of Darshan, Bhagavan came straight to my wife, created Vibhuti, put it on her head and said, *Sab Theek Ho Jayega, Gaon Chala Jayega* (everything will be alright and you will be back to your native place). That put an end to her pain for ever and we left Bengaluru on 2nd September for my new appointment as a college teacher in my native State. Bhagavan's love and blessings during these few months made us feel Bengaluru to be next to our native place and Sri Thyagarajan was our local guardian then.

Summer Holidays: 1983

In 1983 summer holidays, I got another opportunity to be at Brindavan with my wife and two children. At that time, the old Bungalow was demolished and Baba was staying in Rajmata's residence. Students had left for their homes and the Ashram was almost empty. Everyday we were coming from Bengaluru for morning Darshan and returning after evening Darshan. The whole day was spent in the Sairam Shed and in the old dining hall, which had been so dear to me for the last ten years. I also used to spend some time in Vraj Brindavan Press with Sri Thyagarajan, Sri K.M. Bopay and Sri Changkakoti learning many valuable lessons from them. During these two weeks of stay, the merciful Lord conducted 'Vidyarambha' of my three-year-old son by writing 'Om' on his slate and called my wife and children and blessed them with divine conversation before leaving for Puttaparthi on 3rd June.

– The author is the editor of Odia edition of Sanathana Sarathi.



Effulgence of Divine Glory

THE TEST OF FAITH

ON REACHING UDUMALPET, WE found that 12 wagonloads of jaggery I had sent as per the orders of my customary buyers had not been taken delivery of because of the steep price fall. When my relatives came to know of this, they began to deride my devotion to Baba. They warned me to discontinue my association with Him before I was completely ruined. I replied to my brother-in-law thus, "You only took me to Baba. Had He cured your brother's wife and got you a treasure, He would have been still worship-worthy; is it not? It is improper to blame Baba when we get into trouble through our own folly. I have the fullest faith in His statement that He will never forsake me and ever protect me. Don't try to change me!"

Some wagonloads of jaggery – which one of my buyers had returned – were left in the open, and were spoiled in rains. So, I filed a suit against him in Udumalpet court for not taking delivery of the jaggery he had ordered. In turn, he filed a suit against me for defamation in Penukonda court, claiming that I had not sent the jaggery in proper time.

I went to Penukonda for the final hearing in person. An adjournment for three days was announced and I decided to visit Puttaparthi in this interval. But in Bukkapatnam, I was told that the Chitravathi river was in full spate. So, I left my bedding at an acquaintance's house and walked to the Kothacheruvu tank where the water was only knee-deep. I forded the river and then walked to Janakampalli village



Bhagavan Baba in early 1944.

two kilometres away. But here the river was swollen, running thick and fast. It was getting dark and I was alone. Around 7 p.m., it became pitch dark, and I heard the cries of wild animals. I was terribly afraid and depressed.

In that state of mind, I decided to drown myself in the river and put an end to all the tension and worry. I stepped down into the river only to get back to the bank, because I saw an old man with a stick in his hand, near me! A ghost? I grew chill at the thought. But the old man asked, "Young man, what are you trying to do? Where are you going"? I replied, "To Baba". He said, "Oh! You are a mad fool. What can He give you"? I replied, "Sir, today is Thursday, the day of the Guru.

It is enough if He allows me to touch His feet". The old man persisted in questioning me and asked me how the touching of Baba's feet was so important. I explained that it was my practice to fast on Thursdays, and the grace obtained through Baba's feet alone sustained my life. The old man laughed at this and asked, "How will you cross the river"? I answered, "If the living God does not help me, I don't mind dying".

While we were talking, I wondered about the old man. How he came to be there in this dark hour in the raging waters? But he was asking me questions rapidly leaving me no time to ask any. After hearing me fully, the old man said, "I am also going to Puttaparthi. So, you hold one end of my stick while I'll hold the other. I will be your support and you will be mine. Beware! Don't leave the stick! You'll be washed away by the river!"

That is all I remember. I was wet and chilled all over, only half-conscious of having crossed the river. I found myself standing on the other bank, right on the cremation ground of Puttaparthi. The old man was nowhere to be seen. Since I was quite familiar with the topography, I ran to the Mandir. When I reached there, Baba was waving the Arati. It was 8.30 p.m.

Later, I was told that Baba was singing Bhajans in the Mandir with seven devotees when suddenly He announced in Telugu, "Balapattabi is coming"! and fell down in a swoon. His body seemed to be lifeless. And moments before I reached the Mandir, He had got up and had begun to wave the Arati.

I fell at Baba's feet, Baba touched my head and said, "It is all so wet. First, take off your clothes and dry them". I did so, and tying a towel around my waist stood before Him. He asked the others to lay a cot and spread thick bed sheets on it. He sat on it, while all of us stood around Him. The moon had risen. Baba commanded, "Give him something to eat". Seshagiri Rao replied, "We have finished all food. There is nothing left".

Baba then asked them to bring a vessel. He lay down on the cot, kept the vessel on His chest and began moving His hand on the edge of the vessel. Hot Puris (unleavened deep-fried bread) appeared in the vessel! These He handed me! I objected, "Swami it is my day of fasting, I won't eat anything." Baba told me, "You don't have to fast or observe austerities. Eat". I hesitated. Saying, "Oh! You must have some other food to go with it", He inserted His hand into the vessel and took out a steaming preparation of pulses and onion. He placed it on the Puris in my hand. I had not been eating onions for a long time as a religious austerity, and so my hesitation grew further. But Baba persuaded me to eat both the Puris and the curry. Again, He took out some more Puris from the vessel, but I respectfully said, "I can't possibly eat any more, Swami". At this point, the others who were standing beside me prayed, "Swami! Please give them to us". But Baba said, "No, no. These are not for you", and the Puris vanished.

– Excerpted from "Nectarine Leelas of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba" by R. Balapattabi.

Man should merge in the Universal and lose his inhibiting individuality. That is the Karma the Atma craves for and delights in.

– Baba

Soft and Sweet Speech is the Hallmark of a Sadhaka

Chinna Katha

ONCE THERE LIVED IN PERSIA A person named Rabbia Malik who had a son called Hussain. Hussain was a very religious-minded person who went to the mosque everyday early in the morning and performed his prayer with great devotion. One day when he came back from the mosque after his early morning



Hussain scolded his servants when he found them sleeping late in the morning.

prayer, he found his servants still sleeping. Greatly enraged at their carelessness and irresponsibility, Hussain started abusing them. Seeing this, his father said to him, "My dear! These servants performed hard



Hussain's father told him that worship of God was meaningless when you hurt or harm others.

labour all through the night, so they were not able to get up early in the morning as they were very much tired. By abusing them, you will lose the merit earned by you through your prayer and worship. You don't derive any benefit from going to the mosque and performing worship when you put others to trouble. God will shower His grace on you when you do not hurt or harm others". In this way, Hussain's father admonished him calmly without any agitation.

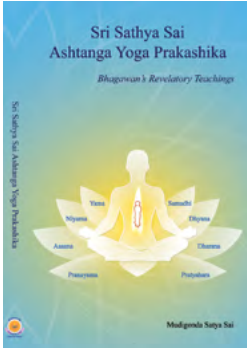
There is no use worshipping God when you harm others.

Every being in the universe has the potentiality of transcending the senses. Even the little worm will one day transcend the senses and reach God. No life will be a failure. There is no such thing as failure in the universe.

– Baba

Book Review

SRI SATHYA SAI ASHTANGA YOGA PRAKASHIKA



SRI SATHYA SAI ASHTANGA YOGA PRAKASHIKA

Compiled from the Discourses of
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by
Mudigonda Satya Sai

₹ 80.00 shipping charges extra,
Code No. 14096, pp. 276

THE QUINTESSENCE OF SPIRITUAL pursuit is the realisation of one's Self and unification with the Supreme Brahman, the process and prospect of which is known as yoga. This science of yoga (Yoga Sastra) forms a part of the Vedic philosophy. Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga is most popular among various systems prevalent across the world.

Bhagavan Baba in His infinite compassion towards earnest seekers has reinterpreted various branches of yoga in simple terms, by means of His Divine Discourses and Vahini series.

Sri Mudigonda Satya Sai has done a commendable job of compilation of Bhagavan's exhortations on principles and practical methods pertaining to various forms of yoga, emphasising especially on Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga.

This compilation titled "Sri Sathya Sai Ashtanga Yoga Prakashika" is arranged in three parts. The first part contains Baba's exhortation on the efficacy of yoga practice. The second part deals with preliminaries pertaining to yoga, knowledge and liberation (Moksha), extracted extensively from Bhagavan's Prasnotara Vahini. And the third part elaborates on the prerequisite knowledge pertaining to this pursuit. Yoga requires relentless and well-guided practice. Sustained balanced state of intellect (Dhee) is Samadhi, says Bhagavan Baba.

Describing the uniqueness of Atma and the non-dual principle, the author quotes elaborately from the Mandukya Upanishad, relating them with Bhagavan's expositions on the subject. Similarities of certain concepts contained in Nyaya, Vaisheshika and Sankhya philosophies and that of Patanjali Yoga are briefly highlighted.

The correct method of chanting Om, the ways of Mudras and the necessity of moderation in food, sleep and other habits are dealt with in detail as necessary components of Yoga Sadhana.

The author stresses the need to attain no-mind state through the practice of non-attachment and proper discrimination, and the need to transcend all agitations and attachments. Irresponsible inferences about the unreal world will pester the mind as long as the illumination of truth is absent, says the author while excerpting from Bhagavan's Upanishad Vahini.

— P.P.S. Sarma

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(Sd) K.S. RAJAN

(Signature of Publisher)

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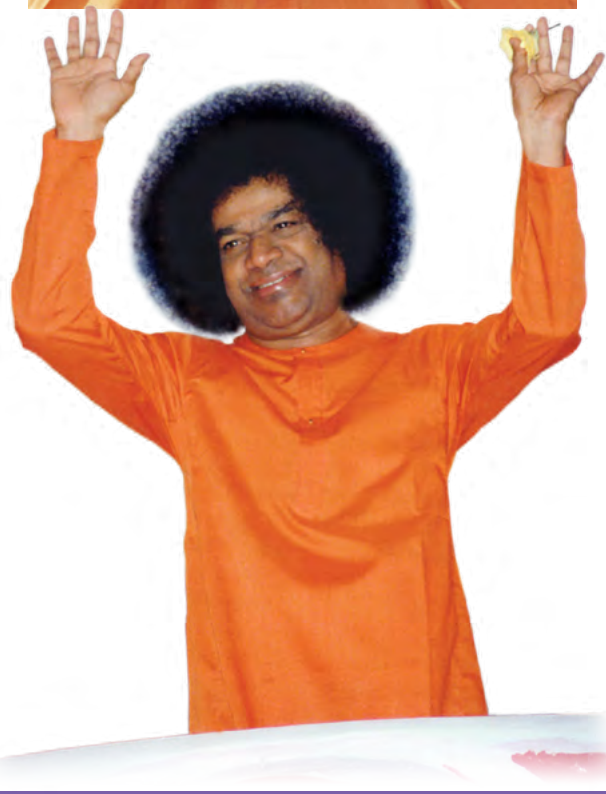
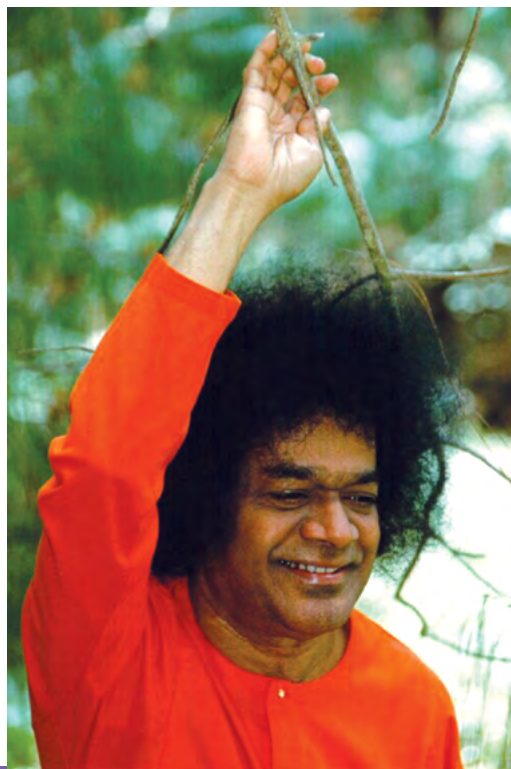
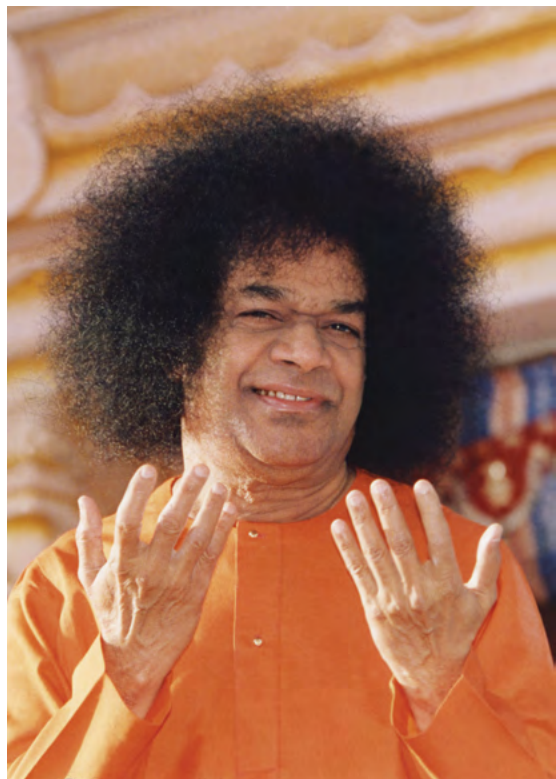
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– *Director*

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- 1) The publication and distribution of spiritual, religious, and educational Sai Literature and the production and distribution of audio and visual multimedia, photographs, calendars, and diaries for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
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Abhishekam and worship of Sayeeswara Linga.



A musical recital on Guzheng and Er Hu.



A dance number in the drama by Bal Vikas children of Khammam district.

Date of Publication: 1st March 2018

Trikarana Shuddhi

By speaking truth, the tongue is purified. Through study and penance, the spirit is rendered pure. The intellect acquires purity through Jnana (wisdom). In these ways, the body has to be made a fitting shrine for the Divine by pure thoughts, pure deeds and by meditation. Purity of mind, speech and actions has been described as “Trikarana Shuddhi” (triple purity).

– *Baba*

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