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Sanathana Sarathi



Cover Story
Sai Geeta
An Ideal Devotee

Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

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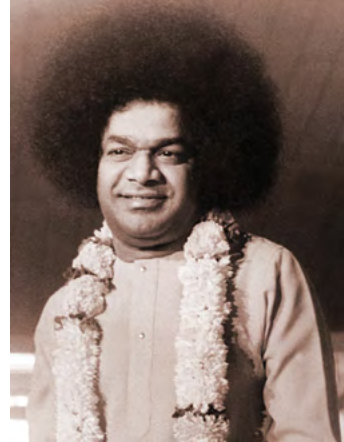
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*"You may acquire any type of knowledge,
but always focus your mind on spirituality.
What is the basis of all types of knowledge?
It is spirituality. Lord Krishna declared
in the Bhagavadgita, Adhyatma Vidya
Vidyanam (spiritual education is true
education). Out of all types of knowledge,
I am the spiritual knowledge, said
Krishna. Spiritual knowledge should be
the basis of all types of knowledge."*



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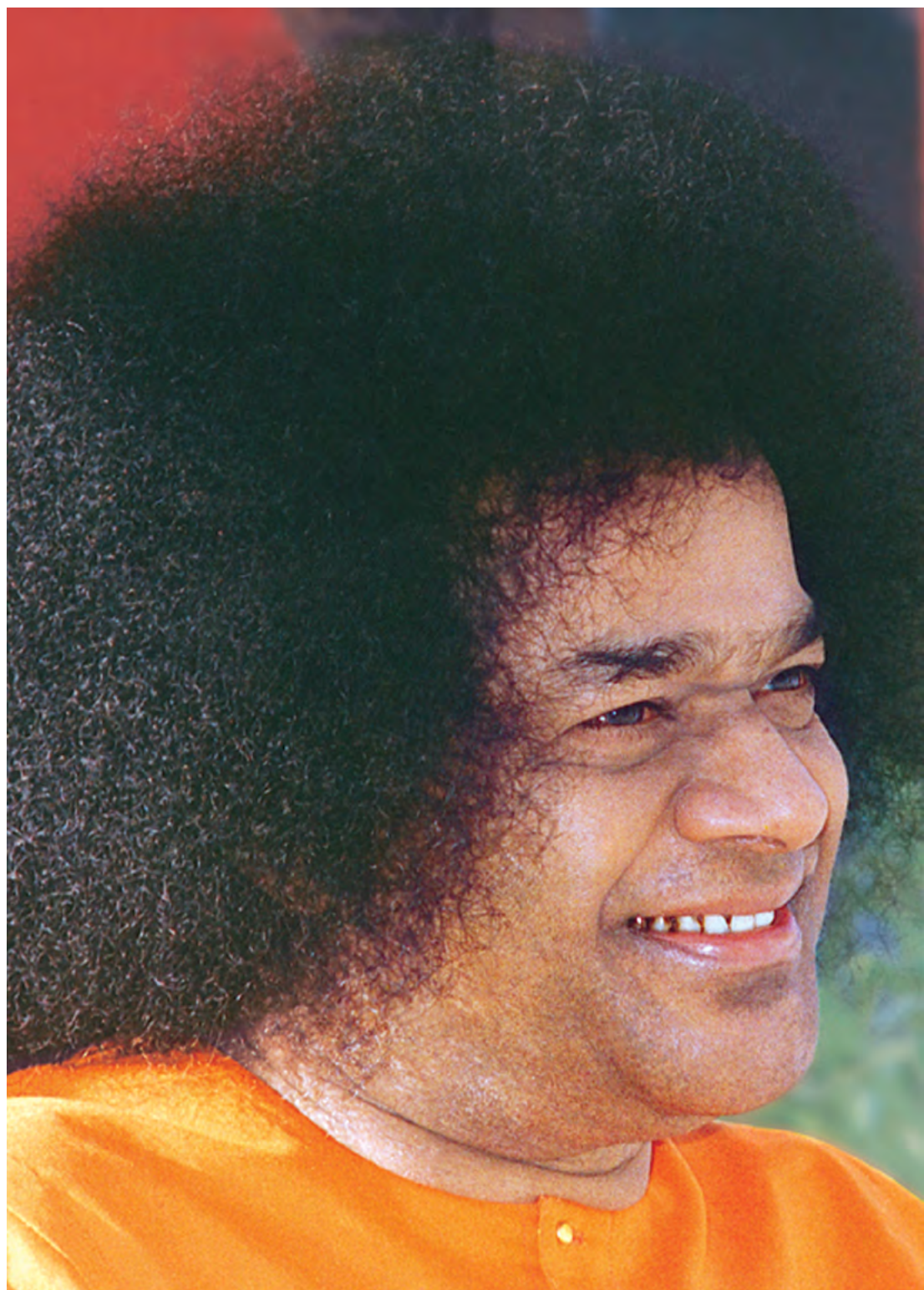
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AMRITA DHARA

BHAGAVAN'S DISCOURSE:

28TH AUGUST 1996

SPIRITUALITY IS THE BASIS OF ALL TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

Do not get deluded by thinking what appears to the naked eye as truth. If you follow Me with steadfast faith, I will be happy to show you what is truth.

(Telugu Poem)

ANNIHILATION OF IGNORANCE LEADS TO LIBERATION

ALL THE scriptures of Bharat such as the Vedas, Sastras and Puranas are written in Sanskrit. Therefore, if one wants to learn the culture of Bharat, one should develop the understanding of Sanskrit. In ancient times, even in villages, people used to converse with each other in Sanskrit. Sanskrit was the language of even street plays in those days. Sanskrit language is so sweet that one can enjoy listening to it even without knowing its meaning.



Never Leave Sathya and Dharma

In a street play, when the actor playing the role of Dharmaraja (Yudhishtira) comes on the stage, the stage manager as per the tradition asks him, "Who are you? What brings you here?" Dharmaraja replies, "My name is Yudhishtira; I am the one who adheres to truth at all times, under all circumstances and in the face of all trials and

tribulations. That is why I am called Dharmaraja.” Dharmaraja was the embodiment of Dharma. He had the power to destroy Adharma and make people follow the path of Dharma. The main teaching of the Vedas is *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness). The Vedas exhort man that he might leave anything in this world, but he should never leave Sathya and Dharma. Hence, always speak truth and follow righteousness. But how many follow the teachings of the Vedas and how many put them into practice in their lives? Sathya and Dharma are not the products of the mind. They emerge from the heart which is filled with compassion. But, unfortunately, man today follows the mind, forgetting his heart and ignoring his intellect which is endowed with the power of discrimination.

One who follows the mind degenerates to the level of an animal and ruins his life. One who follows the intellect will rise to the level of the Divine, says the Lord of Parthi. (Telugu Poem)

The moment a thought enters his mind, man today acts upon it. In this way, he follows his mind. This is an attribute of the mind, but in fact, it is not an attribute, but an evil tendency of the mind. As soon as a thought arises in one's mind, one should not translate into action immediately. One should examine the nature of the thought with the power of Buddhi (intellect). Only when one investigates with the power of one's intellect can one know whether a particular thought is good or bad, right or wrong. Buddhi has the ability to distinguish

It is not enough if you acquire knowledge; you should use it for the welfare of society in a proper way. You should take a vow to do good to others in every possible way according to your capacity. Your knowledge becomes useless if it is not put to proper use.

There is a lot of knowledge in the Pustaka (book) but what is the use if the Mastaka (head) is filled with mud? Don't make your Mastaka another Pustaka by merely stuffing it with information.



between the ephemeral and the eternal. It is only when man enquires using the power of his intellect can he take to the right path.

All the elements are immanent in Akasha (ether). Sound is the attribute of Akasha. Where has the sound originated from? *Sabda Brahmayi, Characharamayi, Jyotirmayi, Vangmayi, Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi and Sreemayi* (embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion and wealth). Everything has originated from sound and sound is Brahman. Atma is another name of Brahman. The Atma, the mind and the speech, all belong to the same Atmic family. People describe mind in many ways. But, in fact, it should reflect the nature of the Atma. Therefore, never put the mind to misuse. Do not allow the mind to act in an arbitrary manner.



Though the mind has no specific form, it sees everything, it hears everything. In fact, it is responsible for all actions. You may be under the wrong impression that when everything in this world is meant for our use, why should we give up anything? That is a great mistake.

Intensity of Gopikas' Love for Krishna

Everyone experiences three states of the soul, namely, Viswa (individual soul in the waking state), Taijasa (individual soul in the dream state) and Praajna (individual soul in the deep sleep state). In your dream, you go to Mumbai, see your parents, meet your friends and go through many experiences. What is it that has created all these? It is your mind. It has created you, your journey to Mumbai, your parents, your friends and all the bazaars of Mumbai. It has created everything, but it is not real. As the proverb goes, "All the mansions and buildings that you see in your dream become non-existent when you open your eyes." You see Marine Drive, Shivaji Park, Dharmakshetra, etc., in your dream, but when you wake up in the morning, you find yourself in Prasanthi Nilayam. Who has seen and experienced all this and who is responsible for this experience? It is only your mind. All this is a play of the mind. Similarly, whatever you see and do is only illusory. All that is not related to the Hridaya.

There are many students here. They study their textbooks, listen to their teachers, acquire degrees and take up jobs. But how much of what they have studied do they put to use in their profession?

Not much. What for is all this study? You should acquire the capability to use your education for the benefit of society. It is not enough that you secure a job, maintain a family and lead a comfortable life in this world. No one seems to enquire, what have I studied and what is the benefit of my education. You should think how you can use your education for the benefit of society. You have prepared many delicious dishes in your kitchen, but what is the use if you do not bring them to the dining room and serve them to the guests? What a waste it is! All the good things that you have learnt should be imprinted in your heart and should be used to serve others.

Uddhava was a great scholar of yoga, Upanishads and other Sastras. He was Krishna's dear friend. Once he told Krishna, "Swami, Gopikas are illiterate and ignorant. They have not understood Your power. Therefore, I would like to go there, teach them yoga by which they can have Your direct vision." However, he knew that Gopikas would not pay any heed to him unless he carried a message from Krishna. All the Gopalas and Gopikas had treasured Krishna's love in their heart. They knew no God other than Krishna. Therefore, Uddhava requested Krishna, "Kindly write a letter to Gopikas and give it to me. Unless I carry a message from You, the Gopikas would not listen to me." Accordingly, Krishna wrote a letter and gave it to Uddhava. He wrote, "I am sending this letter through My dear friend Uddhava. Listen to his advice."

Uddhava took the letter and went to Brindavan in Krishna's own chariot. This



made Gopikas think that Krishna Himself had arrived without any prior information. All of them ran towards the chariot looking for Krishna. All along they were waiting for Krishna day and night foregoing even their food and sleep so much so that their eyes were swollen. They had not seen Krishna even for a moment after He went to Mathura. Therefore, they were dejected and depressed. All their energy had drained out. But once they saw Krishna's chariot, they were overjoyed and ran towards it. Uddhava showed them Krishna's letter and said, "This is the letter Krishna has sent for you."

Then one of the Gopikas said, "We are illiterate as our parents never sent us to any school. We don't know even the alphabet. How can we read your letter?" Then Uddhava said, "If there is anyone who knows to read may take this letter and read." One Gopika knew how to read. But she did not want to touch the letter. She said, "I offer my salutations to you. I know Krishna's handwriting very well. But I cannot touch this letter." Then Uddhava asked, "Why can't you touch this? You are all great devotees of Krishna. You worship Him with total faith. Then why don't you even touch this letter?" The Gopika said, "You do not understand our devotion and sense of surrender to Krishna. Our body is burning from top to toe in the fire of our separation from Krishna. If we touch the letter, it may also get burnt. Whatever we touch is sure to get burnt. We do not want to reduce this sacred and golden letter of Krishna to ashes by our touch." See the intensity of

devotion of the Gopikas! Someone else in their place would have felt, "I am educated and I can read this letter." But Gopikas did not do like that. Uddhava then tried to give the letter to another Gopika. She also said, "My salutations to you. I also know Krishna's handwriting well. But I cannot control my tears if I try to read it. My tears are bound to fall on the letter and smudge His handwriting completely. How can one read a letter which is totally smudged? Therefore, I do not want to take this letter and read." Ultimately, Uddhava himself had to read out the letter. The moment he completed reading those two lines written by Krishna, the Gopikas started leaving the place. They did not even look at the face of Uddhava. They were not prepared to look at anyone else having feasted their eyes on the Divine form of Krishna. Such was their sense of devotion and surrender towards Krishna.

Oh Lord! In spite of having eyes, people are verily blind as they do not yearn to see Your auspicious form. Though they are endowed with ears, they are deaf to Your teachings. Though God is immanent in them, they have drowned themselves in worldly life. How can one describe their misfortune?

(Telugu Poem)

When Uddhava noticed Gopikas leaving one by one, he pleaded with them, "At least, listen to my teaching of yoga." Then the Gopikas replied, "We have not seen Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. How can we focus our mind on some God whom we have not seen? We have seen



Krishna and experienced His Divine power. Therefore, we do not want anyone other than Krishna. You may have a number of minds, but we have only one mind which has gone to Mathura along with Krishna. We do not have a second mind to listen to your teaching on yoga.” This statement of the Gopikas was an eye-opener for Uddhava. What for is all this learning?

Acquire the Education that Liberates

Students are stuffing their head with all sorts of worldly information to such an extent that it is ready to burst any moment. They are filling their head with all sorts of useless information from various countries of the world. Is this the purpose for which God has endowed you with head?

One can fill an empty head with anything, but is it possible to put something in the head which is already full? How can it be filled with sacred feelings unless it is emptied in the first instance?

(Telugu Poem)

This is not what you are supposed to fill your head with. Study what you are



When you do good to others, you will certainly receive good in return. Therefore, you should be prepared for any sacrifice to do good to others. Not only that, do good to even those who harm you. You will be richly rewarded. Whatever good you do to others, it will never go waste. You may not get the result immediately, but in due course of time, you will certainly get the reward.



supposed to study. Retain in your head only that which is necessary and discard all that is unnecessary and useless.

Once a teacher was taking a class for village children under a thatched roof. He asked a student, “3+3+3-2 is equal to what?” But the absent-minded student was looking at something else. The teacher was angry. He asked, “Hey, what are you doing? Has everything I taught entered your head? Has it gone inside completely?”



As the proverb goes, “the body is in the temple but the mind is thinking about the sandals left outside,” the boy’s attention was totally diverted on something else. He absent-mindedly replied, “Yes, sir, it has gone inside completely except the tail.” He was referring to a rat that had just entered a hole in a corner of the hut. The rat had entered the hole but the tail was still outside. The teacher was teaching something and this boy was concentrating on something else. Is this the way to learn? No, no. What is the purpose of all your studies? Students should become role models and serve society. What is meant by Vidya? That which gives true knowledge is Vidya. But modern education does not impart real knowledge to students.

Give First Priority to Dharma in Life

Chanda and Amarka were the teachers appointed by Hiranyakasipu to teach his son Prahlada. Once when both of them went to a river to take bath, Prahlada gathered all the students around him and started teaching the Bhajan, “Narayan Bhaja Narayan...” Teachers should not think it otherwise. Prahlada told his fellow students, “Look here, our teachers are really misguiding us. My father Hiranyakasipu has instructed them to teach us only about Artha and Kama (wealth and desire) and nothing about Dharma and Moksha (righteousness and liberation). What for is this education? They are teaching us that education is meant for earning money. Should one go to school and study just for earning money? Even beggars and thieves earn money. What is the necessity for education if we

have to only earn money? Our teachers are stressing only on Artha and Kama. So, we should not pay heed to them.” Then Prahlada pointed to a monkey and a dog and said, “They are also enjoying all the worldly and sensual pleasures. What is the use of this education if it promotes only Artha and Kama? We need teachers who give us the knowledge of the Self. Why do we require a teacher who gives us only the worldly knowledge? We should oppose this education which is centred only on earning wealth and fulfilling our worldly desires.” All the students were inspired by what Prahlada taught them.

As the teachers returned from the river, the students started singing “Narayan Bhaja Narayan...” They were uttering the name of Narayana which Hiranyakasipu had forbidden them from chanting. Not only did Prahlada chant the name of Narayana but he also taught the other children to chant the same much against the wishes of his father. Seeing this, the teachers started slapping their own heads in desperation. They understood that it was none other than Prahlada who had made the children chant the name of Narayana. They threatened to punish Prahlada, but he was least perturbed and said to them, “What you are teaching is wrong. Dharma should be the foundation of education. This is the main step in achieving the objective of human life. No doubt, money is required and there is nothing wrong in having desires, but all this should be done on the principles of Dharma. Only then can one attain liberation.”



Liberation does not drop down from the sky nor does it emerge from the nether world. It is not available on earth either. It is only when the veil of ignorance is removed from your heart can you attain the sacred state of Moksha. This is the truth propounded in the Smritis (texts composed by the sages).

(Sanskrit Verse)

Moha Kshaya (removal of attachment) is Moksha (liberation). Annihilation of ignorance leads to liberation. When the ash that covers the fire is blown away, the fire becomes visible. Similarly, when the clouds that cover the sun move away, the sun becomes visible. There is no need to make any special effort to drive the clouds away. In fact, the clouds are born out of the sun and cover the sun. Does the sun get angry when it is covered by clouds? No. The clouds will anyway move away in a short period. Similarly, when the clouds of ignorance move away, one will have the vision of the Self.

What is it that teachers are supposed to teach their students? They should teach them to give top priority to Dharma in their life. They should pursue Artha and Kama on the basis of Dharma. Then they will reach the top level, Moksha (liberation). To reach the top of a building, you take the help of a ladder. Unless you start from the lowest step of the ladder, you cannot reach the top. The lowest step is Dharma and the top is Moksha. Artha and Kama come in between. Prahlada exhorted his fellow students to make their teachers

understand the importance of Dharma and asked them to become the teachers of teachers. Scientists today have understood and declared that atom is all-pervasive after doing research for thousands of years. But the same truth was proclaimed by Prahlada thousands of years ago when he told his father:

Never doubt that God is here and not there. Wherever you search for Him, He is there.

(Telugu Poem)

Wherever you see, God is present in every atom and every particle. This all-pervasive Divinity is referred to as atom by scientists. The same is described as energy by philosophers. They say this energy is God. Scientists go in a round about manner to understand this simple truth whereas the same truth can be experienced directly by following the spiritual path. Unless you put your hand and mouth to work, how can the food served in the plate reach your stomach? But what are the scientists doing today to make the food reach the stomach? They don't put it in the mouth directly; they do it in a round about manner by taking the hand round the head. Whatever the method they adopt, ultimately they will reach the same truth. Prahlada understood this truth by his intuitive intelligence. This is the type of intelligence that students should develop. You may not be able to put everything into practice in daily life that you study in the classroom. Say, for example, when you go to a laboratory, you mix two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen to make water. You can do this



only in a laboratory. But when you sit for food, do you mix hydrogen and oxygen to get water? Modern education leads only to agitation whereas education in those days led to elevation. What we need today is elevation and not agitation. Elevation confers happiness to all. The system of education should be moulded in such a way that everyone in society is benefited by it.

Focus your Mind on Spirituality

Develop faith in God. Then He will take care of you wherever you are.

God is your sole refuge wherever you may be,

In a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea. (Telugu Poem)

God knows you wherever you are. Your head is on the top and the feet are at the bottom but when an ant crawls on the feet, your hand automatically hits the ant without even the eyes seeing it. Just as the power of consciousness is present in your entire body, God pervades the entire universe. Deha and Desha (body and universe) are mirror images of each other. Light and darkness do not exist separately. The absence of one implies the presence of the other. For instance, when you switch on the light in a dark room, the darkness at once disappears. Where does it go? When you switch off the light, the darkness reappears immediately. Where does the darkness come from and where does the light go? They neither come nor go. The existence

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of one leads to the non-existence of the other. There is only one aspect, that is the truth. *Trikalabadhyam Sathyam* (Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time - past, present and future). Wherever you go, whatever you do, you should never forget this transcendental truth.

Students!

You may acquire any type of knowledge, but always focus your mind on spirituality. What is the basis of all types of knowledge? It is spirituality. Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavadgita, *Adhyatma Vidya Vidyanam* (spiritual education is true education). Out of all types of knowledge, I am the spiritual knowledge, said Krishna. Spiritual knowledge should be the basis of all types of knowledge.

Suppose you have a magnet and an iron piece. The magnet at once attracts



the iron piece when it is brought close to it. However, if the iron piece is rusted, it is not attracted by the magnet. Then the iron piece says, "Oh magnet! You do not have the power to attract." Hearing the words of the iron piece, the magnet laughs and says, "Oh mad iron! You have covered yourself with great amount of rust and dust. How can I take you closer? First of all, clean your rust and dust. Then automatically you will be attracted by me." Human life is like an iron piece. It is not enough that you clean yourself with soap and water by having a bath. You should be pure and clean inwardly as well as outwardly. When you make yourself pure in this way, the divine magnet will immediately attract you. The magnet not only has the power to attract an iron piece but can also transform it into a magnet. Students can perform this experiment. Take a pin and keep it in contact with the magnet for two days. On the third day, the pin itself will become a magnet. Due to its continuous contact and association with the magnet, the iron will turn into a magnet. *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi* (the knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman himself).

Just as a magnet imparts its power to an iron piece, noble souls impart their sacredness to all those who come in contact with them. Suppose you go to a forest and try to cut a sandalwood tree with an axe. Does the sandalwood tree curse the axe which cuts it? No. On the

other hand, it imparts its fragrance to the axe also. Similarly, good people will impart their goodness to even those who try to harm them.

When you do good to others, you will certainly receive good in return. Therefore, you should be prepared for any sacrifice to do good to others. Not only that, do good to even those who harm you. You will be richly rewarded. Whatever good you do to others, it will never go waste. You may not get the result immediately, but in due course of time, you will certainly get the reward.

Students!

It is not enough if you acquire knowledge; you should use it for the welfare of society in a proper way. You should take a vow to do good to others in every possible way according to your capacity. Your knowledge becomes useless if it is not put to proper use. There is a lot of knowledge in the Pustaka (book) but what is the use if the Mastaka (head) is filled with mud? Don't make your Mastaka another Pustaka by merely stuffing it with information. Rather, use the knowledge acquired from Pustaka for a good purpose. Make efforts to understand the essence of education.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*")

– From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 28th August 1996.

Bathe in the water of virtues, apply the perfume of truth to your body. Then shall your face become bright and the one Giver shall bestow hundreds of thousands gifts on you.

- Guru Nanak

SRI SATHYA SAI ARADHANA MAHOTSAVA

A LARGE NUMBER of devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam

to offer their homage to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the solemn occasion of Sri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsava held on 24th April 2014. Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the programme was aesthetically bedecked with festoons, buntings and flowers. Special floral decorations were made on the Samadhi of Bhagavan and a beautiful silver chair was placed for Bhagavan on its right corner.

The two-day programme held on this occasion began on 23rd April 2014 with an offering of musical tribute to Bhagavan by the renowned artiste Sri A.S. Ram and his team of musicians, who presented captivating fusion music and tunes of many popular Bhajans, keeping the audience mesmerised for nearly one hour with their soulful musical offering. This was followed by Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam. Meanwhile, Sri Ram and his team of musicians were felicitated. The programme came to a close with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

The programme on 24th April 2014 began at 8.20 a.m. after regular Veda chanting for 20 minutes. The first item of the programme was a musical tribute offered to Bhagavan by His students who presented two specially composed Kritis in



An enchanting dance presentation by the Bal Vikas children.

Telugu on this solemn occasion. Beginning their presentation with the composition, “Pranamami Sayeesha” (salutations to You Sayeesha) they followed it with “Sadabhavayami Sri Sathya Sai” (I always meditate on Sri Sathya Sai) and surcharged the entire milieu with devotion and piety. Video screening of Bhagavan’s Darshan which accompanied this presentation made the programme all the more enriching.

This was followed by an illuminating talk by an eminent social and economic thinker Sri S. Gurumurthy. Referring to Bhagavan as the Teacher of teachers, the distinguished speaker observed that Bhagavan’s teachings were most relevant for the moral and social uplift of the country today. Commenting on the extraordinary work done by Bhagavan for the welfare of mankind, the distinguished speaker wondered at the stupendous organisational work initiated by Bhagavan all over the globe.



Speaking on this occasion, Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, observed that Bhagavan incarnated on earth to make man realise his innate divinity. Describing the ongoing projects of the Sai Organisation, the distinguished speaker exhorted the devotees to rededicate themselves to Bhagavan's Mission and offer Him their Hridaya Pushpam (flower of heart full of love).

This was followed by video screening of a Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, in which Bhagavan called upon man to leave body attachment which was the cause of his suffering. He exhorted one and all to realise the truth of their divinity by understanding the principle of 'I am I.' Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam." Bhagavan's Discourse was followed by Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam. The morning programme in Sai Kulwant Hall came to a close with Arati at 10.40 a.m.

After this programme, Narayana Seva was performed in Sri Sathya Sai Hill



Narayana Seva in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium.

View Stadium and food and clothes were offered to thousands of people gathered there. Food was also served to devotees in a specially erected Pandal in Prasanthi Nilayam premises.

The evening programme in Sai Kulwant Hall began with Veda chanting at 5.00 p.m. This was followed by a music concert by Prof. Debashish Bhattacharya and his team of musicians. Presenting instrumental and vocal music compositions dedicated to Bhagavan with devout feelings, the singers enthralled the devotees for about one hour. This was followed by distribution of Prasadam and Bhajans which concluded with the Bhajan "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram" sung by Bhagavan. Meanwhile, the musicians were felicitated. The programme came to a close with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

The cause of man's suffering is that he has constricted his love to himself and his family. He should develop a broad feeling that all are his brothers and sisters. Expansion of love is life; contraction of love is death. All are children of God. All are sparks of the Divine.

- Baba

MOTHER EASWARAMMA: THE EMBODIMENT OF SIMPLICITY AND NOBILITY

Bikkina Veera Nagamani



IT IS WITH A SENSE OF EXTREME thankfulness and indebtedness that I remember our family's association for nearly 20 years with our Swami's Mother Easwaramma. I think it is a special grace and blessing to have known her at all. It must be owing to merits acquired through several lifetimes. My grandfather Dr. Sitaramaiah came to Prasanthi Nilayam in the year 1953 hoping to lead a quiet retired life devoted to spiritual discipline. But Swami laid the foundation of Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital in 1954, and in 1956 when it was ready to function, persuaded him to work there. Swami told my grandfather that he was merely to be an instrument in His hands and He, the Divine Doctor, would do everything.

Cheerful and Considerate Demeanour

Our family's association with Mother Easwaramma that had its beginning then blossomed into a happy, beautiful and intimate relationship in the years that followed. She and my grandmother were good friends in those early years. She would every morning come for Swami's Darshan walking briskly all the way from the village to the Ashram. Though she

was the mother of the Avatar, Mother Easwaramma's life had not been an easy one. She had more than her share of trials and tribulations. But she maintained cheerful and considerate outlook towards life and people. She laughed, made jokes and infected the people around her with her mirth. When she came for Darshan, she would come and sit in the verandah of our apartment and as was her wont she would talk to us in her happy, jovial manner. To my grandfather she would sometimes say, "What doctor, shall we see who walks faster, you or I? Let's walk up to the Old Mandir."

In those days too, she used to worry about who would take care of Swami for He had not married. If we pointed out that being God, Swami did not need to marry, she would retort, saying, "Did not Rama marry? Did not Krishna marry?" But as the years passed and more and more devotees came to Swami, she forgot her fears seeing their love and devotion. Then she stopped talking about it.

On Swami's Birthday every year, it was the practice for the married women at the Ashram to ceremonially invite Swami's family to take part in the celebration. From the Ashram they would go in a procession carrying plates filled with fruits, flowers, turmeric, vermilion powder, bangles and other auspicious things, accompanied by a group of musicians to bring them to the Mandir. Then Srimati Easwaramma and Sri Pedda Venkama Raju would anoint Swami's hair with fragrant oil and garland

Him. Thereafter, other couples selected by Swami would similarly offer their love and adoration to Him. It was considered a rare privilege and honour and Swami conferred it always on His parents first. In 1963 when Sri Pedda Venkama Raju passed away, Swami asked Mother Easwaramma to come and live at Prasanthi Nilayam. That year, He Himself went to her room on His Birthday and had her anoint and garland Him before granting that boon to others in the auditorium.

Mother Easwaramma's Concern for Others

I first came to Parthi along with my parents in 1956 and continued to make regular trips here until 1965. In June 1965 when I came here, Swami said I should live here for good and so I have lived here since then and Prasanthi Nilayam has become my home. My acquaintance with Swami's mother soon developed into an extremely sweet and intimate relationship despite the difference in our ages. It became a regular practice for her and me to visit one another without fail everyday. Either she would come to our room or I would go to her's. One day when she was in our room, Dr. Jayalakshmi who worked in the hospital happened to come there. When she saw Swami's mother in our room, she sat down to listen to what she was saying because our conversation invariably centred around Swami. Dr. Jayalakshmi naturally wanted to hear something about Swami. She asked her what Swami was like as a child. On a wall in our room, there was a calendar



with a picture of baby Krishna eating butter. Pointing to it Mother Easwaramma said: "Swami also looked like Him with His smiling countenance and curly hair. But we couldn't deck Him up with so much jewellery (as the Krishna in the picture). Still somehow, I do not know how, we got some silver ornaments made for Him."

Her compassion towards people in distress prompted her ever so often to intercede on their behalf and plead with Swami. Whenever she saw devotees looking unhappy or troubled she would become concerned and appeal to Swami to talk to them. At the same time, her love for Swami made her ever alert to what people might say about Him. In those days, Swami used to freely grant interviews to devotees. At festival times, He used to personally supervise each and everything. One year at the time of Durga Navaratri festival, Swami being very busy could not so freely grant the much-coveted private audience to devotees who wanted to leave after the conclusion of the festival. So, He had it announced that they should return home without waiting for an interview and that His blessings were with them. Then two days later when a devotee came to the Ashram, He granted him an interview. That upset Mother Easwaramma immensely. She could not bear the thought that people might speak adversely of Swami. She wanted Him not to do anything which might prompt people to speak against Him. Feeling very agitated she said to me, "See, this is how He does things. What will

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people think?" At such times, she became just a mother concerned about her son's reputation. She forgot that He is above praise and calumny and that whatever He does, He does for very valid reasons known only to Himself.

Mother Easwaramma dearly loved her native village of Puttaparthi. Even during the summer months when Swami usually stayed at Brindavan Ashram in Bangalore (now Bengaluru), she chose to remain at Parthi. If someone suggested that she too should go to Bengaluru she would say, 'No.' She felt happy to stay at Parthi and was content to live there in spite of the heat. Summer would not last for ever, she would point out. She never took any medicine. Sometimes, the visiting doctors would give her vitamin tablets which she would place in my hands with the injunction that I give them to some poor patient at the hospital. If I said she should take them in order to be strong, she would retort, saying



she did not need to be strong as she was not going to fight in any war. If a patient's condition was reported to be serious, she would frequently enquire about that patient and repeat the injunction that we should take proper care of the patients.

Divine Protection during Train Journey to Mumbai

On 12th May 1968, Dharmakshetra at Mumbai was to be inaugurated by Bhagavan. Swami who was at Bengaluru came to Parthi in April for He intended to take all the residents of Prasanthi Nilayam to Mumbai for the function. Only a few would remain at the Ashram to take care of it. One day after Dhyana session was over, Swami started telling who would travel by bus and who by train, and Sri N. Kasturi was making two separate lists. Then Swami asked one lady by name Yajni Bullemma whether she would like to travel by bus or train. She said she preferred to travel by train as that would be more comfortable and she could sleep during the journey. Then Swami made a cryptic remark about rail accidents being quite frequent those days. The joy we felt at the thought that our Beloved Swami was taking us all with Him was so overwhelming that we just did not bother about that seemingly casual remark.

All arrangements were made by the Mumbai devotees for those who were going by buses and they did not even have to pay the fares. But for us a group of 30 people including our family, Sri Kasturi's and others we had to make our own arrangements.

We booked our accommodation on the Madras-Bombay Mail but the compartment in which we travelled would be attached to the train at Guntakal. So, we went from Parthi to Dharmavaram to Guntakal where we boarded the train and travelled happily singing Bhajans. As we were nearing Pune, there was a strange sound for a while and the compartment began to sway dangerously. Then suddenly it leapt high into the air causing the bags and suitcases to fall from the upper berths. My grandmother hugged me tightly. But before we knew what was happening, the compartment returned to its normal position. At the next station, the train stopped and it was decided to abandon our compartment there and that our group should get into another compartment. Luckily for us, a group of delegates to the World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations being held at Mumbai prior to the inauguration of Dharmakshetra were on the train. Spotting Sri Kasturi in our group, they took us all into their compartment.

When at last we reached Mumbai somewhat late and shaken, others having arrived much earlier were anxiously waiting for us. Swami who had travelled by car from Bengaluru to Mumbai went to see them and Srimati Easwaramma voiced their anxiety about us. Looking into distance, Swami answered her, saying that there was a small accident but we were all safe and would arrive soon, for He was there with us all the way, watching and guarding us and controlling everything. What might



have been a major disaster was reduced to a minor mishap by Him. We knew it and the thought of what could have happened to us did not trouble our minds at all then or later. We were happy, supremely so, trusting in Him, relying on Him, without being even conscious of our being so.

We extol Him as our mother, father, Guru, friend and so on but to actually witness and experience His motherly love and care, fatherly protection, that is something one should only experience. He is a mother unlike any mother, a father, unlike any father for no worldly mother or father can care and love like or guard us the way He does! After satisfying Himself that His flock from Parthi were well taken care of, He told the Seva Dal volunteers that the aged ones of our group should be shown how to use the western type toilets as they were unfamiliar to them.

On 12th May, the day of Dharmakshetra's inauguration, Swami personally took us round Satya Deep, His residence, at Dharmakshetra. It is an architectural marvel shaped like a lotus with 18 petals. Swami pointed out to us that the Bhagavadgita also has 18 chapters and that the first word in it is Dharma meaning duty and the last word Mama meaning mine. Together it becomes Mama Dharma, meaning the duty of an individual. Thus, Gita teaches us our highest duty as human, said Sai Krishna, our Beloved Swami, who never missed an opportune moment to teach and exhort us to be conscious of and realise the purpose of our human birth.

Mother Easwaramma's Fear of Swami's Visit to East Africa

After the conclusion of the World Conference, we left Mumbai with Swami's blessings and permission to visit Shirdi en route to Parthi. Swami returned to Parthi on 11th June and on 13th June He gave us all Padanamaskar and Vibhuti Prasadam because He was once again leaving Parthi to go to Bengaluru that day. So, along with Dr. Jayalakshmi I went upstairs to Swami's dining room to seek His permission for us to follow Him to Bengaluru. To Dr. Jayalakshmi's verbal request He gave a verbal affirmative reply. I sought His permission with a mute look of appeal and He too indicated His assent with a look. Two days later, I went to Brindavan along with Pedda Bottu, an old devotee who had known and had been with Swami's previous Shirdi form.

At Brindavan, Swami told me to stay inside the Mandir along with Mother Easwaramma and other ladies. Swami had His food in the company of some male devotees in the dining room while the ladies were served food in the adjoining verandah. Swami would finish His food in about two minutes and then would come to the verandah to talk to the Mother. One night, He said in a most casual manner that He was going on a visit to Africa. And as He did so often to tease her, He remarked that in that strange land lions and tigers roamed about as freely as dogs do in our country. That really scared her and she pleaded with Him to give up the idea. Swami only laughed at her fears and then



to divert her attention told her that gold was extremely cheap in Africa.

That night, Mother Easwaramma had no sleep for Swami's proposed visit to a land full of wild beasts preyed on her mind. A few days later, Swami once again spoke of His intended visit to Africa and said that His Mumbai devotees were making preparations to give Him a grand send-off on the occasion of His first ever visit abroad. They were constructing an arch with 108 lotus-like structures adorning it. Realising that Swami was definitely going to this far away land despite her protests, Mother Easwaramma asked to be allowed to go with Him as far as Mumbai. Swami said, "We will see," in a non-committal fashion, but she was not satisfied with that response. As the day of His departure to Mumbai drew near, she once again voiced her wish. Aware of her feelings, and ready to comply with her wish, Swami still did not say yes. He said, "But who will bring you back from Mumbai? Wait, let us ask Java." So saying, He went in for His breakfast and as we waited outside for Him to come out, there came Smt. Java herself. She greeted Mother Easwaramma and noticing the look on her face asked what the matter was. I asked Mother Easwaramma if I might say what it was and she nodded her agreement. When I told her the problem, Smt. Java was quite willing to accompany her and when Swami came out told Him the same. Swami looked at the Mother and said, "So, you asked her already?" Smt. Java said, "No Swami, she did not tell me," but Swami said, "You should not tell lies."

So, Mother Easwaramma accompanied Swami as far as Mumbai and after Swami left Mumbai for East Africa, her anxiety for His safety left her sleepless. She ate nothing and would not even drink water until a telegram came announcing His safe arrival in East Africa. Until His return to India, she spent a very anxious and restless time and appeared to have lost her appetite. Though He is the Lord and Master of all the worlds, He was her son and it was a mother's love that she had towards Him always. She addressed Him like all others as Swami though and had the highest regard for His words, scrupulously disciplining her life in accordance with His wishes.

Peaceful End

Early in the morning, on 6th May 1972 there came a lightning call from Brindavan. The message was that Srimati Easwaramma was being sent to Parthi as she was unwell. We must have been too naïve to understand what it meant. Dr. Jayalakshmi and myself at once busied ourselves to get a bed ready, thinking that we would be taking care of her at the hospital. But when the car bringing her went straight into the village to Sri Janaki Ramaiah's house, we knew what had happened. With all due honours, the body was buried on the same day.

On the following day, we went to Bengaluru. As soon as we went in, Swami came out to meet us. Smt. Venkamma and Smt. Parvatamma started weeping when they saw Him. He comforted them, saying



they should not grieve for the mother had left her mortal coil at the right time without suffering from the ills of age or sickness. She had an easy and peaceful end and they should be thankful for that.

Those of us who were at Parthi and all the villagers paid their respects to the physical body placed in the verandah of Sri Janaki Ramaiah's house and bade her a fond farewell. Our eyes were blinded by tears and our hearts too overflowed with love and gratitude to the blessed mother who left us though her physical form lay before us still and serene. At Brindavan on the 11th day of her death, Swami personally gave Saris to all the Prasanthi Nilayam ladies. So, when she breathed her last peacefully in May 1972, there was also a feeling of gratefulness alongside a profound sense of loss for she left to us a precious legacy of happy memories and something else that had gone deep within us, enriching our lives.

A School in Mother Easwaramma's Name

During that year, Swami had the old hall at Prasanthi Nilayam demolished to make room for Poornachandra Auditorium. The construction work was progressing swiftly, fast reaching completion. Mother Easwaramma used to often remark, "This Swami has nothing else to do but build and demolish all the time. And He says He would build a school and name it after me." And this Swami did on His return to Parthi soon after the Summer Course. The existing High School at Parthi was

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named after her and later it was shifted to a new building that Swami built to house the school. In the next few years, Swami not only fulfilled His promise to His mother but made good His word that a university would come into being at Puttaparthi. Sri Sathya Sai University came into being in 1981.

There used to be a beautiful clay image of Lord Krishna in Mother Easwaramma's room. Blue in colour even as He is depicted in the scriptures, bright-eyed and with a shining, smiling countenance and the flute daintily held close to His half-parted lips, this boy Krishna was not just an icon but somebody very much alive. He was very dear to Mother Easwaramma and was her confidant, and whenever something upset her or made her sad she used to talk to Him. After her death, Dr. Jayalakshmi prayed to Swami to have Him placed in the hospital and He is there now receiving our adoration daily at Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital.

– The author rendered service in Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital till her last breath. She merged with Swami in June 2013.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

UGADI FESTIVAL

GAIETY AND PIETY MARKED the celebration of Ugadi festival at Prasanthi Nilayam on 31st March 2014. Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of the celebrations, was tastefully decorated with flowers and traditional Ugadi decorations. The morning programme began at 8.20 a.m. with traditional Ugadi event Panchanga Sravanam (listening to the predictions of the almanac) which comprised exposition on the advent of the new year named Jaya (victory) by noted Vedic scholar from Tirupati, Sri Kuppa Siva Subrahmanya Avadhani. This was followed by a Ugadi Discourse of Bhagavan, in which He cautioned modern man to desist from running after material gains and exhorted him to devote his time and effort to chant the Name of God with pure heart. Bhagavan brought His Divine Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram." Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam followed this. Meanwhile, the Vedic scholar who delivered Panchanga Sravanam was honoured with a shawl and offered mementoes. The morning programme came to a close with Arati at 9.30 a.m.

In the evening, renowned carnatic music exponent Sri O.S. Arun enthralled the gathering in Sai Kulwant Hall by soul-

stirring devotional songs and Bhajans. Beginning his presentation "Bhajan Sandhya" (an evening of Bhajans) at 5.30 p.m. with the Bhajan "Jai Jai Rama Krishna Hari," the singer kept the audience spellbound for nearly one hour with his mellifluous rendition of devotional songs and Bhajans which included "Govinda Madhava Gopala Keshava," "Vanamali Radha Ramana Giridhari Govinda." At the conclusion of his concert, the singer was felicitated and honoured with a shawl. Video screening of Bhagavan's Darshan which accompanied the concert made the programme all the more captivating. The Ugadi celebrations came to a close with Arati at 7.00 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam to all.

SRI RAMA NAVAMI FESTIVAL

Deep devotional fervour marked the celebration of the sacred festival of Sri Rama Navami at Prasanthi Nilayam on



Devotional music programme on Sri Rama Navami day.

8th April 2014. The programme began at 5.20 p.m. with a delightful presentation of carnatic and Hindustani classical devotional songs by the staff and students of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music. Beginning their concert with a Thyagaraja Kriti "Sri Raghavam Dasarathamajam," the singers enthralled the audience for about one hour and brought their rendition to a close with a Hindustani classical composition "Raghupate Raghava Raja Rama." This was followed by a talk by Sri K.M. Ganesh, a research scholar of the Institute, who narrated a few episodes from the Ramayana to highlight the significance of steadfast devotion and total surrender for earning the grace of the Lord.

Bhagavan's Divine Discourse which followed this talk provided the befitting finale to the celebration. In His Discourse, Bhagavan said that the Ramayana was nothing but another form of the Veda and the four sons of King Dasaratha namely, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna represented Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvana Veda respectively. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Rama Kodanda Rama." This was followed by a brief session of Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam. The programme came to close with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

TAMIL NEW YEAR AND VISHU

Prasanthi Nilayam bore a festive look when devotees from Tamil Nadu and Kerala came to celebrate their respective

New Year on 14th and 15th April 2014. On this occasion, they presented beautiful music and cultural programmes. They also conducted Veda chanting and led Bhajans both in the morning and evening. The venue of the celebrations was Sai Kulwant Hall which was tastefully decorated on both the days.

A large number of devotees including Bal Vikas students came from Tamil Nadu to celebrate Tamil New Year Day in the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam on 14th April 2014. The programme on this auspicious day began with Veda chanting by the Tamil Nadu Veda Group at 5.00 p.m. This was followed by a talk by Sri Bala Ramachandran, an alumnus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning who reminisced the golden days spent by him as a student of Bhagavan and narrated some incidents to highlight Bhagavan's teachings and His Divine Glory. After this talk, a group of Bal Vikas



Invocation dance by Bal Vikas students from Tamil Nadu.

students from Tamil Nadu presented a thrilling dance invoking the blessings of Bhagavan. The last item of the programme was a drama entitled "Sai World Vision."



Presented by Tamil Nadu youth, the drama depicted through the story of a news reporter how millions of Sai devotees in all parts of the world were bringing about societal transformation through



Drama "Sai World Vision" by the youth of Tamil Nadu.

their selfless service to society as part of the Sai Organisation worldwide, a unique and unparalleled service organisation set up by the Avatar of Kali Yuga Bhagavan Baba Himself. Simple story, powerful dialogues and brilliant video support made the drama realistic and impressive. At the conclusion of the drama, the participants were felicitated. This was followed by Bhajans which concluded with the Bhajan "Subrahmanyam Subrahmanyam" in the golden voice of Bhagavan. Bhajans on this day, both in the morning and evening were led by Sundaram Bhajan Group and regular Veda chanting was also performed by the youth of Tamil Nadu.

Vishu programme began on the evening of 15th April 2014 with devotional music presentation by renowned singer Sri T. Krishnan Namboodiri and party.

Beginning his concert with a prayer to Lord Ganesh, the talented singer mesmerised the audience with soul-stirring songs which included "Ram Ram Ram Sri Ram Ram Ram," "Bho Shambho Siva Shambho Swayambho" (Lord Siva who is self-born), "Manasa Bhajare Prabhu Namam." This was followed by a vibrant dance to the accompaniment of drum music by the



Vibrant dance by village youth from Kerala.

village youth from Kerala. Video screening of a Vishu Discourse of Bhagavan followed this, in which He exhorted one and all to sanctify their time by doing hard work and performing their duty which was the only way to their individual happiness and happiness of the nation at large. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram." Bhagavan's Discourse was followed by Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam. Meanwhile, Sri Namboodiri and his accompanying artistes as well as village youth dancers were felicitated. The programme came to a close with Arati at 7.10 p.m.



Effulgence of Divine Glory

The Power of Vibhuti

I SAT ON THE COUCH AND THE little boy came to sit on a chair in front of me. His back was towards me, but I immediately noticed that he had two lumps the size of walnuts on either side of his neck. After opening the package of materialised Vibhuti, I gave a little to the boy to eat and put the rest on these lumps. Next, I placed my hands on the lumps, praying to Swami, asking that His energy flow through me. "Please, Swami," I silently asked, "If it is Your Will, use me to heal this boy."

My hands got very hot and astonishingly, in just a few minutes, I actually felt the lumps began to shrink. The boy was getting tired, so after about ten minutes, he got up and went to play with his brother.

I gave the handkerchief to the mother, explaining to her that Swami had cleaned His hand on it after creating Vibhuti; it still had a lot of Vibhuti on it. I suggested that she put it under her son's pillow when he went to sleep at night.

The family invited us for lunch, so it was two o'clock in the afternoon when my friend and I arrived back at her house. We discussed and talked about Swami's teachings until five o'clock, when the telephone rang. My friend immediately passed the phone to me, saying, "It's for

you." It was the boy's mother. Her voice had totally changed. "Nooshin," she said, "You won't believe it, both lumps have completely disappeared and the fever is gone."

The joy in all of us was beyond description, but the practical steps had to be taken. The parents right away arranged for follow-up tests. My own heart told me that a cure had taken place. The boy was already feeling much better when they visited the doctor in the morning. Ten days later, the results of all the tests showed conclusively that the cancer had disappeared. I knew then that the Vibhuti Swami had materialised had been meant for this special young boy.

A few weeks later, the little boy was home alone with his older brother while his parents went to a function. What happened when he went into the bathroom is an incredible story. In his own words I heard him say, "Swami came to me in the bathroom. He opened His hand and I saw something moving. Swami told me, 'I will show you the forms of the ten Avatars.' I saw everything small in Swami's hand. I saw a lion and a fish and a turtle . . ." He

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From our Archives

PARENTS ARE THE LIVING SYMBOLS OF GOD

NEVER CAUSE PAIN TO YOUR MOTHER

Embodiments of Divine Love!

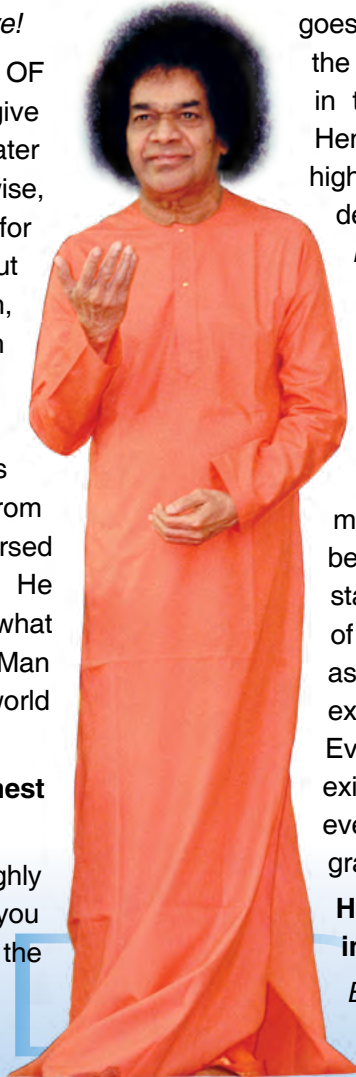
FOR THE BENEFIT OF others alone trees give fruits, rivers carry water and cows yield milk. Likewise, human body is meant for rendering help to others. But not recognising this truth, man uses his body for selfish purposes.

Man is forgetting the purpose for which he has been endowed with a body. From dawn to dusk, he is immersed wholly in selfish pursuits. He has no comprehension of what selflessness means. Man considers the phenomenal world as the only reality.

Mother Deserves the Highest Honour

The mother principle is highly sacred. Wherever you turn, you will see manifestations of the feminine principle in Nature.

The mother fosters the child in the womb and



goes through all travails to protect the child. There is no greater love in the world than maternal love. Hence, the ancients accorded the highest honour to the mother and declared: *Matru Devo Bhava* and *Pitru Devo Bhava* (revere the mother and father as God). For every person, the first preceptor is the mother. It is from the mother that a child learns the first words of speech, the first steps in movement and many other primary lessons in behaviour. Hence, the mother stands out as the reflected image of Prakriti (Nature). It is in her role as mother that there is the highest expression of a woman's strength. Every child that is born owes its existence to the mother. Hence, everyone should be extremely grateful to one's mother.

Have only Thoughts of God in your Heart

Embodiments of Divine Love!

You must be prepared to make even the supreme

sacrifice for showing your gratitude to your mother. Even the Avatars, Rama, Krishna and others owed their advent to their mothers. Everyone should pray for sacred mothers who will bring forth good children. There may be bad sons in the world but there are no bad mothers. Most mothers today lament over the bad behaviour of their children. No son who has caused distress to his mother can come to anything good. The Telugu saying is: "There can be no prosperity in a home where the mother sheds tears." Today we need sons who will please their mothers.

The mothers, for their part, should teach the children always to speak the truth. When a mother asks the son, "Where have you been?" he should not prevaricate. He must tell the truth and confess his mistakes if he has done anything wrong. Very few children tell the truth to their parents today.

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went on to describe all the Avatars. Next, he said, "Swami washed my whole body with Vibhuti. He told me, 'I cured you.' Then I took a shower."

A week after this experience, Swami appeared in the dream of the boy's father and told him, "Bring your son to India, I want to bless him." A few months later, father and son were in Prasanthi enjoying close Darshan and Swami came to bless them both.

Through experiences like this, Swami shows His power and presence in our lives. He draws us closer, transforming us, making our lives sacred. My friend who

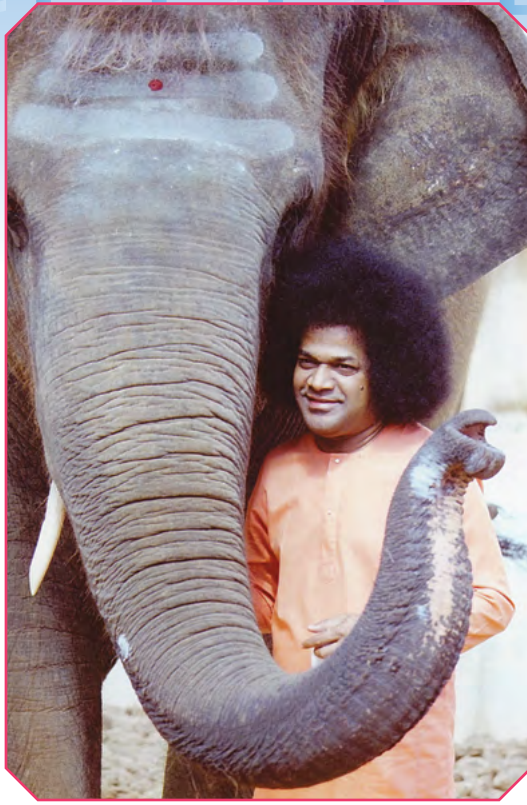
Of what use is education for such children? Children should recognise the supremacy of maternal love, which is equal to Divine Love. Revere and love the mother. That is the meaning of celebrating Easwaramma Day. The parents are living symbols of God. Children must make them happy.

Parents have a duty to shape their children as ideal sons and daughters of the nation. Students who have acquired proximity with Sai should develop more and more spiritual wisdom. Get rid of negative thoughts first. Then try to develop good thoughts. You are living in Swami's Ashram. How far are you following the code of conduct relating to Ashram life? There is no use in keeping only the body in the Ashram, and letting the mind roam elsewhere. You should have only Daiva Chinthana (thoughts of God) in your heart.

– **Excerpted from Bhagavan's Easwaramma Day Discourses.**

introduced me to the boy is a Christian from India. The boy's family are Hindus and I am a Muslim. After this incident, we all became very close. The family began to attend various functions at the Vancouver Sai Centre. They learned Bhajans and eagerly participated in the different Seva projects. They also decided to do regular Paduka Puja (worship of the sandals of the Lord) at their home and I often attended. Together we prayed at the Lotus Feet of Sai Baba, the God of the Universe come in human form.

– **Excerpted from "Love and Suffering: My Road to Liberation" by Nooshin Mehrabani.**



SAI GEETA AN IDEAL DEVOTEE

IT WAS DURING A VISIT OF SWAMI to Mudumalai forest near Mysore that He adopted a ten days old baby elephant when the officers of the forest prayed to Him, saying, “Swami, her mother died just yesterday and she has nobody in this world.” Hearing this, the compassionate Lord put her in His car and brought her with Him. Being ten days old and only two feet high, she easily fitted in His car.

At Prasanthi Nilayam, at first she stayed under a big tree near Swami’s room from where He could see her from His window all the time. Swami christened her Sai Geeta and appointed two persons Murali and Sathyanarayana as her caretakers. He spent time with her both in the morning and evening and fed her with His Divine Hands. She would always obey Him and run to Him as soon as she sensed His presence like a child runs to her mother. Devotees watched this play between Swami and His dear pet with great delight in those early days. When the number of devotees increased, Swami asked one of the Ashram officers to lodge her in a shed near the Gopuram gate. Though this was a comfortable lodge for her, it faced east from where Sai Geeta could not see Swami during Darshan. It was an agony which she could hardly bear. So, one day in her fury she brought the whole structure down. Obviously, the officer did not execute the order of Swami correctly. Therefore, Swami got a new room constructed for her which faced south, from where she could always see Swami. This, of course, made her happy and satisfied.

Separation from her Divine Mother Sai was, in fact, difficult for her to bear. The most agonising time for her was when Swami left for Brindavan in summer. It was a sight to see how time and again she would take Him in her grip with her trunk and Swami would most lovingly plead with her to let Him go. Once when Swami went to Brindavan, she became extremely



restless. She uprooted trees and roamed the streets wailing loudly. Poor mahout Vasant became panicky when she stopped eating and telephoned Swami to seek His orders. Moved by the intense feelings of Sai Geeta, Swami asked him to send her to Whitefield. When she reached Whitefield, Swami lovingly caressed her and fed her. Only after pacifying her in this way, Swami sent her back to Puttaparthi. On another occasion, she reached Whitefield at midnight and created a loud clatter at Swami's door which made the caretaker Ramabrahmam panicky. Swami smilingly calmed Ramabrahmam, opened the door and pacified Sai Geeta who was hungry for His Darshan. Swami retired to His room only after making arrangements for her stay at Brindavan.

It was Sai Geeta who would first have Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan of Swami in early sixties when Swami

came on His Darshan round at Prasanthi Nilayam. She stood outside the gate on the ladies side and waited impatiently to have the vision of her dear Lord. Swami would first walk towards her and she would kneel down bending her legs, salute Him, raise her trunk and garland Him. Swami would then lovingly pat her cheeks and speak to her gently and softly. It was a thrilling sight for devotees who witnessed this sublime play of pure love between Swami and His beloved devotee.

Sai Geeta stayed in the Mandir premises from 1962 to 1975. When the preparations began for Bhagavan's 50th Birthday celebrations, Sai Geeta was temporarily lodged in a spacious shed in south-western corner of the Ashram. Later, when Swami inaugurated Sri Sathya Sai Gokulam, Sai Geeta was shifted there in the serene and calm atmosphere where she lived with cows. It was for the first time

that she had to stay at a place away from Swami, but it did not diminish her love and devotion for Him. Later when the number of cows increased in Gokulam, Sai Geeta was accommodated in a big shed opposite Senior Boys Hostel.

On festival days like Sri Krishna Janmashtami, Dasara, Swami's Birthday, etc., she led the procession majestically. Bedecked in all types of





one-pointed devotion as Sai Geeta did.”

When the plans were drawn up for the construction of Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Sports in 2006, a beautiful new shed with exquisite carvings was constructed for Sai Geeta in the premises of Sri Sathya Sai Space Theatre (planetarium) which was destined to become her Samadhi.

glittering ornaments, she assumed a regal air and enacted her role perfectly befitting the grandeur of the occasion.

Once on the suggestion of some elders that Sai Geeta might want a male companion, she was sent to forest. But she showed no such desire. She had transcended all animal instincts by her one-pointed devotion to Swami. She, in fact, longed to get back to Puttaparthi and meet her Beloved Mother Sai. It was at this juncture that Swami visited the forest suddenly. Swami's car was across the river and Sai Geeta was on the other bank with mahout Sathyanarayana who had accompanied her to the forest. The moment he shouted “Swami has come,” she plunged into water, crossed the river and was lost in joy when she met Swami. Swami also caressed and fondled her like a fond and affectionate mother. She was ultimately brought back. Admiring her devotion, Swami once said, “Sai Geeta demonstrated an extremely exalted life. Therefore, one should lead such a life of

All-knowing Bhagavan returned to Prasanthi Nilayam directly from Kodaikanal on 18th May 2007 instead of going to Brindavan as was His usual practice. Soon after that, Sai Geeta passed away peacefully on 22nd May 2007. It was a moving sight when Swami came in the morning on 23rd May 2007 and held the hand of the caretaker Sri Pedda Reddy to console him. She was buried in her beautifully carved home in the presence of Swami who stayed there for nearly two hours and supervised the arrangements of her burial with full honours. Her body was adorned with jewellery, turmeric, vermilion and numerous garlands. Time stood still when Swami bade her emotional farewell, thus drawing a curtain on the saga of pure love between the Lord and His ardent devotee who attained the highest state of devotion in spite of her birth as an animal.

– **Source: Radio Sai Global Harmony.**
“The Glorious Life of Sai Geeta” by Madhuri D. Kara.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

MEXICO

THE LATIN AMERICAN Congress of the Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO) was held in San Luis Potosí, México from



A section of the participants in the Latin American Congress.

7th – 9th February 2014. About 125 Sathya Sai devotees from 23 countries of Latin America, U.S.A., Spain and India, alongside 120 devotees from Mexico, attended the event. The event was inaugurated by Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman, Prasanthi Council, and Gary Belz, Chairman, Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation, with the symbolic lighting of a lamp. Oscar Morado, President of SSIO, Mexico, welcomed the guests, and Dr. Reddy gave the inaugural address. Workshops on “Sai Leadership” and photography exhibitions on Sathya Sai Organisation activities in Latin America were held the next day. Gary Belz and Dalton Amorim, Chairman, Zone 2B of

the SSIO, addressed the audience on the second day, and nine workshops were held. Leonardo Gutter, Member, Prasanthi Council, gave an inspiring closing speech, and the event concluded with devotional songs from different countries of Latin America.

PHILIPPINES

On 8th November 2013, a Category 5 typhoon, named Haiyan, made landfall in Guiuan, a small town in the Eastern Samar province of the Philippines. The storm affected an estimated 15 million people, with 6,000 reported dead. In the town of Samar, the roof of a house that belonged to a Sathya Sai devotee was blown away in the storm and the walls collapsed. Only the altar, which had a picture of Bhagavan, was miraculously unaffected by the passing storm!

The Sathya Sai International Organisation of Philippines immediately sprang into action. On 16th November, Sathya Sai volunteers loaded a 20-foot container with goods and supplies, including 351 family packs containing food and other items, and transported it by barge to the island of Biliran, arriving on 23rd November. The food and supplies were distributed to the needy by the wife of the local Congressman of Biliran province. By early December 2013, debris had been cleared from most of the typhoon-ravaged areas and government relief supplies were



being widely distributed, but the need for humanitarian relief remained. The SSIO began planning for medical camps and offering of food, water and basic necessities on a long-term basis. During the first week of January 2014, Sathya Sai doctors and volunteers toured the badly damaged areas of Tacloban, Ormoc and Biliran to assess the needs, contact local officials and secure a local base camp for future operations.

In early February 2014, Sathya Sai medical volunteers from the Philippines and other countries conducted medical camps in the town of Ormoc and on the island of Biliran. On 10th and 11th February, 760

were examined in Larrazbal. More than 400 kg of medicines, including analgesics, antibiotics and diarrhoea medications, were distributed. Food supplements and milk powders were also offered to the needy. Sathya Sai volunteers served daily meals of rice, vegetables and beans in a local area of Tacloban.

Medical professionals and others who are interested in serving in the disaster relief efforts in the Philippines are invited to visit the website, www.sathyasaihumanitarianrelief.org.

U. K.

In February 2014, heavy rains and storms caused unprecedented flooding in many areas in southern U.K., displacing a large number of people. Sathya Sai devotees across the country rallied together to donate blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, bottled water, biscuits, nuts, crisps, body wipes, disinfectants, brushes and other essential goods, which were collected at the Sathya Sai Relief Hubs in London and Leicester. The Sathya Sai International Organisation of U.K. helped



Offering medical aid to people affected by typhoon in the Philippines.

people were provided medical services in Ormoc, two hours by road from Tacloban. Between 12th and 14th February, several medical camps were organised on the island of Biliran: 310 people were served in Atipolo, 465 people were seen in Calungpang and more than 385 people



Relief material for flood victims in U.K.

to coordinate the delivery of relief materials to the worst-affected counties of Somerset and Gloucestershire. Even children at Sathya Sai Centres, practising the Ceiling on Desires principles, sacrificed their chocolates and crisps and donated the money thus saved towards the purchase of relief items. As of March 2014, three large deliveries had been made by Sai Emergency Relief Volunteers (SERV) in the Bridgwater and Tewkesbury areas, starting on 17th February 2014. In addition, SERV was preparing to join the clean-up phase of the relief efforts, pending the receding of the flood waters.

GREECE

On 1st February 2014, a group of 15 Sathya Sai volunteers from Athens distributed 35 bags of food and medicines to needy families in Perama. They also distributed firewood to six indigent families. During the same weekend, a Sathya Sai volunteer paediatrician visited 15 families and examined 22 children. The volunteer also distributed food and clothes to 16 families. On 15th February, continuing a past tradition, 16 Sathya Sai devotees and others offered loving services to the mentally and physically challenged children at KAAPAA, the Children's Recuperation and Rehabilitation Centre at Voula.

About 55 Sathya Sai devotees attended Mahasivarathri celebration at the Patisision Sathya Sai Centre in Athens on 28th February. On this auspicious occasion, short presentations and



Devotees celebrating Sivarathri in Athens, Greece.

updates were given on construction and restoration of houses, blood donations, devotional, spiritual and youth activities, as well as on the latest local Sathya Sai Organisation websites.

INDONESIA

On the evening of 13th February 2014, Mount Kelud – an active volcano in East Java, Indonesia – erupted violently, spewing stones, gravel and sand. Volcanic ash reached distances of over 200 km, causing several regional airports to shut down and forcing the evacuation of tens of



Beneficiaries who were provided relief material in East Java.

thousands of people to safer areas. Sathya Sai devotees of Surabaya, Java, conducted a quick survey of the affected areas and began offering aid to displaced victims in Batu, located 20 km from Malang. On 21st February 2014, a team of nine Sathya Sai volunteers distributed rice, sugar, oil, milk, tea, coffee, biscuits, instant noodles and water to nearly 1,500 people. In addition, they distributed blankets, clothes, undergarments, disposable diapers and medicines.

OMAN

Since 2011, the Serve And Inspire (SAI) Group has organised 36 Education in Human Values workshops for various



A workshop on human values in teaching in Oman.

schools in Oman. These workshops were authorised by the Ministry of Education, and the initial workshop series was inaugurated in September 2011 by Dr. Madiha Al Shaibaniya, Minister of Education of Oman. Between 7th December 2013 and 3rd January 2014, four workshops on the

theme, "Integration of Human Values in Teaching," were organised at schools in the cities of Nizwa, Salalah and Sur. More than 185 teachers from these schools participated in the workshops, which were conducted by ten Sathya Sai volunteers. "The Times of Oman" featured an article on these workshops.

– Sathya Sai International Organisation

BHARAT

Gujarat: On 31st March 1967, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba stopped for two hours at a school in Waghaldhara, Valsad district on his way from Mumbai to Vadodara. To commemorate this event, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat constructed Sri Sathya Sai Tirth at the very place, which was donated by the Waghaldhara Kelavni Mandal. To mark this day, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat organises an annual festival every year. This year, the annual festival was held on 30th March 2014. The programme commenced at 9 a.m. with lighting of the lamp by the Chief Guest Sri Kamlesh Yagnik, President of South Gujarat Chamber of Commerce. The State President, Sri Manohar Trikannad, Sri Aman Jhaveri, Doctoral Research Scholar, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, the Chief Guest Sri Kamlesh Yagnik and Sri I.J. Desai, President, Waghaldhara Kelavni Mandal then addressed the gathering and emphasised the sacredness and significance of this important day. On this occasion, 50 students from the S.P.B. Adijati Hostel were given T-Shirts, uniform cloth and stitching charges for the



same. This is what Swami had given to the students when He came in 1967. Around 1,000 persons attended this festivity from all over Gujarat.

Karnataka: A State-Level Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Gurus on the theme of “Bal Vikas to Loka Vikas – the Sai Way” was organised on 19th and 20th April 2014 at Sri Sathya Sai Baba Education Institutions, Jayalakshmi Puram, Mysore. Dr. Gururaj Karajagi, Coordinator, Academy of Creative Teaching, Bangalore delivered the keynote address on “Education is for Life.” Over 500 Bal Vikas Gurus and a large number of dignitaries including Sri K. Ananda, Director, Primary Education, Department of Public Instruction, Karnataka and Sri U. Selvam, Vice President, TVS Motor Company Ltd., Hosur participated in this conference.

A Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality was conducted at Sri Sathya Sai School, Alike for students of Sri Sathya Sai Schools in Karnataka. Over 300 students participated in this programme.

Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh organised at Hoshangabad, a city situated on the bank of holy river Narmada, a two-day State-level Training Camp for Disaster Management on 22nd and 23rd March 2014. The camp was attended by 27 youth from the States of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and 9 from the State of Rajasthan. Training was imparted by a team of five trainers from Tamil Nadu

headed by All India Disaster Management Coordinator, Sri Thyagarajan Sitaraman. Water and fire rescue techniques were



Disaster management training.

demonstrated and first aid training was provided. Flood, earthquake and landslide and rescue operations were also taught to the trainees.

Maharashtra and Goa: A severe hailstorm damaged standing crops and affected the life of people in many districts of Maharashtra. Seva Dal volunteers from Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Maharashtra and Goa sprang into action and distributed close to 3,500 Amruta Kalasams (food provisions) to affected families in Washim, Buldhana, Nashik, Kopergaon, Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Jalgaon and Dhule districts. Roof top tins were distributed to the people who lost the cover over their houses – especially migrant workers and those who were not covered under any government scheme. Additionally, Seva Dal members helped a family who had planned a wedding in the house but lost all groceries by providing them the required materials instantly.



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About SSSSTPD

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 Bhagawan Baba's monthly spiritual journal - Sanathana Sarathi - in English and Telugu languages. Since 2011, e-versions of the magazine are also released simultaneously and are available in PDF and EPUB formats 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.

5) Providing library and Reading room for visiting devotees, with a very large collection of various spiritual and religious books.

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8. Life Is Love, Enjoy It!
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– *Baba*



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