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"When the practice of Dharma declines, when injustice is on the rise, when people start acting contrary to the teachings of the Vedas and scriptures, either God Himself incarnates or He sends Amsavatars (partial manifestations of God), prophets and noble souls to correct the situation."



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AMRITA DHARA

BHAGAVAN'S DISCOURSE:
6TH SEPTEMBER 1996: PART 1

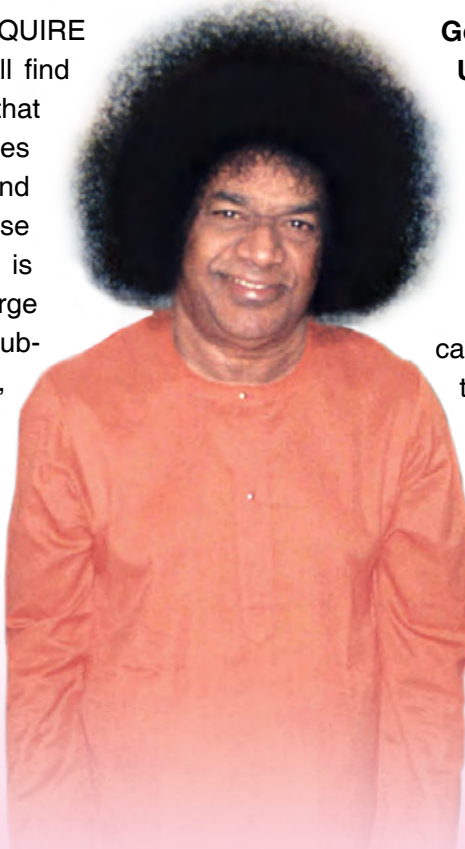
HOLD ON TO THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF ONENESS

*Pots are many, clay is one,
Jewels are many, gold is one,
Cows are many, milk is one,
Likewise, the same Divinity dwells in all forms.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

GOD IS ONE, GOAL IS ONE

I F YOU ENQUIRE deeply, you will find in this world that the same thing assumes different names and forms and is put to use in myriad ways. Seed is one, from which emerge the trunk, branches, sub-branches, leaves, flowers and fruits of the tree. All these have different names and forms and are put to use in different ways. *Ekoham Bahusyam* (the One willed to become many). Though God is one, He assumes many names and forms.



God is the Cause of the Universe

Here you have to enquire into the two types of causes: one is Nimitta Karana (instrumental cause) and the other is Upadana Karana (primary cause). For a pot, potter is the Nimitta Karana and clay is the Upadana Karana. Pots may break and lose their form, but the clay remains changeless. The potter makes different types of pots from the same clay. Just because the pots are broken, the clay does not undergo any change. Similarly, there

are many types of ornaments, for which gold is the Upadana Karana and goldsmith is the Nimitta Karana. You may change the ornaments into different names and forms, but gold remains the same. However, God who is the Upadana Karana of the universe also assumes the role of the Nimitta Karana, the Creator, and creates objects and beings with different names and forms. Here you have to understand the oneness of the Nimitta Karana and the Upadana Karana.

If there is no potter, clay cannot be converted into pots. Even though potter is there, he cannot make pots without clay. Therefore, potter and clay, both are necessary for pots to be made. For the entire universe, God is the Upadana Karana and He is also the creative force of the universe. Your bodies are like different pots. You put your body to different uses and experience pleasure and pain. Just as the pot breaks when it falls down, the body also perishes when the time comes. But God who is both the Nimitta Karana and the Upadana Karana is permanent. The same pot which is useful becomes useless when it breaks. The same can be said about the human body too.

Five Names of God

Five names are attributed to God: Para Nama, Vyuha Nama, Vibhava Nama, Antaratma Nama and Archana Nama. With these five names, God performs various tasks in this world. God dwells in Vaikuntha. Therefore, Vaikuntha Nivasi (dweller of Vaikuntha) is Para Nama.

In this age of Kali, you should realise that it is not Dhana (money) that sustains the world but Daya (compassion). Daya Moolam Idam Jagat (compassion is the basis of the entire world). But there is no trace of Daya in the heart of man today. Hri + Daya = Hridaya. That which is filled with compassion is human heart. But due to the absence of compassion in the heart of man, he is facing many ordeals.

Vaikuntha is that which does not become Kunthita (deformed). There God dwells with Para Nama. Nobody has access to that place. None can enter Vaikuntha where Divinity shines resplendently. From there, God sees and hears everything and creates everything. But He is neither seen nor heard by anyone. Nobody can see His form. This is the principle of Para Nama.

The second name of God is Vyuha Nama. It refers to the One who reclines on the serpent Adishesha in the ocean of milk. There only gods and goddesses can see Him but ordinary mortals cannot see. Here God with the attribute of Vyuha Nama fulfils the wishes of gods and goddesses. You have seen this in dramas and movies. When the demon king Hiranyakasipu was causing untold suffering to people of all worlds, gods and goddesses went and prayed to Lord Narayana who was reclining on Adishesha. He accepted their prayers and



incarnated on earth to kill Hiranyakasipu. Therefore, you can understand that God with the attribute of Vyuha Nama is visible only to gods and goddesses.

The third type of name is Vibhava Nama. This is the name attributed to God when He incarnates in human form like Rama and Krishna for the protection of the world. When God comes down as an Avatar, He establishes intimate relationship with the people of the world, destroys their wicked qualities and wicked thoughts, and puts them on the right path by developing devotion, noble thoughts and good qualities in them. When God comes as an Avatar, He demonstrates the intimate relationship that exists between God and His devotees.

The fourth name is Antaratma Nama. It refers to consciousness that pervades man from top to toe and protects him. There is Antaratma (indwelling divinity) in everyone. The fifth type is Archana Nama. Man worships God in this form to earn His grace through prayer, Bhajan and Kirtan with devotion and surrender.

Decline of Dharma in Kali Yuga

Since time immemorial, God has been incarnating on earth from age to age for the establishment of Dharma. The students today may be surprised to know this. In fact, anyone will be struck with awe and wonder when he hears about the mighty power of the people of Krita Yuga. It really sounds incredible. In Krita Yuga, man used to live for hundreds of years. People used to be very tall and well built, not short

statured like people of today. Their hand itself was six feet long. What was the life sustaining force of people of those days? The life principle was present in their bones. Therefore, people could remain alive even when they were reduced to a skeleton in the absence of food and water. Even if there was no flesh and no blood in the body, the life principle could remain in the bones.

In Treta Yuga, the height of people became comparatively less. Not only the height, even the longevity was also reduced. People could be alive so long as there was flesh and blood in the body. Then in Dwapara Yuga, the life principle was present in the blood and people could remain alive as long as there was blood in the body. This can very well be understood by the example of Bhishma in the Mahabharata war. He was lying on the bed of arrows for 56 days till his entire blood got drained out from the body. There were no life supporting systems like oxygen cylinders those days. The life principle was in his blood which slowly got drained out over a period of 56 days.

In this age of Kali, life principle is present in the food. Man remains alive so long as he takes food. Without food, the body becomes lifeless. Therefore, in this age of Kali, man is called a Annagata Prani (one who is sustained by food). But in earlier ages, food was not important, connection with God was more important. In Krita Yuga and Treta Yuga, people gave top priority to their relationship with God.



But after Dwapara Yuga started, people relied more on their head than on God. Try to understand this clearly. In Krita Yuga and Treta Yuga, people believed, *Dharma Moolam Idam Jagat* (righteousness is the basis of the entire world). But in Dwapara Yuga, people considered *Dhana Moolam Idam Jagat* (money is the basis of the entire world). What was the cause of the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas? The greed for money was so much that the Kauravas refused to give even five villages to the Pandavas as their share of the kingdom. Therefore, money was the cause of the Mahabharata war. In this age of Kali, you should realise that it is not Dhana (money) that sustains the world but Daya (compassion). *Daya Moolam Idam Jagat* (compassion is the basis of the entire world). But there is no trace of Daya in the heart of man today. Hri + Daya = Hridaya. That which is filled with compassion is human heart. But due to the absence of compassion in the heart of man, he is facing many ordeals.

Avatars come to Establish Dharma

During the time when the teachings of Buddhism and Jainism were widely followed in India, Sankara was born in a small village named Kaladi in Kerala to a noble couple Aryamba and Sivaguru. What was the state of affairs at that time? There were many small kingdoms which were fighting with each other for worldly gains. As a result of these wars, people's minds were filled with hatred. Hatred led to disunity which in turn gave rise to

improper conduct, falsehood, injustice and wickedness. Not only that, Vedic scholars, intellectuals and educated people started misinterpreting the teachings of the Vedas and Sastras (scriptures). Therefore, people lost faith in the teachings of the Vedas and Sastras. Consequently, a need arose for a divine power to incarnate to set things right.

Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavadgita:

*Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya Glanir
Bhavati Bharata,
Abhyutthanam adharmaasya
Tadatmanam Srujamyaham.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

(Whenever righteousness is on the decline and unrighteousness is on the ascendance, I incarnate on earth.)

When the practice of Dharma declines, when injustice is on the rise, when people start acting contrary to the teachings of the Vedas and scriptures, either God Himself incarnates or He sends Amsavatars (partial manifestations of God), prophets and noble souls to correct the situation. When God incarnates with all His Divine attributes, He is called Poornavatar or Vibhavavatar. The Archana Nama refers to the names of Amsavatars. Not only in India, but in all countries, such Amsavatars incarnate from time to time.

In the beginning, Jesus said, "I am the messenger of God". Gradually, he

continued on page 12...



ATI RUDRA MAHA YAJNA AT BRINDAVAN

AN ATI RUDRA MAHA YAJNA was performed at Brindavan, Whitefield (Bengaluru) from 1st to 12th March 2015 for peace and happiness in the world and for the welfare of entire mankind. The venue of the Yajna was Sai Ramesh Hall where a beautiful Yajnashala (platform for the performance of Yajna) was set up with coconut leaves and fruits, and eleven Yajna Kundas were constructed according to Vedic injunctions for the performance of the Yajna. A raised platform was set up in the Yajnashala for Abhishekam (ceremonial bathing) and worship of the Linga. There were special floral decorations on the dais where a beautiful silver chair was placed for Bhagavan. The Yajna was performed by 121 Ritwiks by reciting Rudram 14,641 times in eleven days for spreading spiritual vibrations in the entire atmosphere.

One day before the start of the Yajna, clothes which would be worn by the Ritwiks during the performance of the Yajna, were presented to them in the Trayee Mandir on the morning of 1st March 2015. Earlier, Sri V. Srinivasan, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, gave a brief speech stating how this Yajna was the fructification of Divine Sankalpa of Bhagavan and not due to any human effort. The chief priest, Sri Nanjunda Dixit also addressed the Ritwiks and outlined the significance of this Yajna

which was earlier performed at Prasanthi Nilayam and Chennai in 2006 and 2007 respectively in the Divine Presence of Veda Purusha Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Inaugural Session

The inaugural session of the Yajna held on 1st March 2015 started at 3.30 p.m. after the ceremonial procession with a palanquin having Bhagavan's beautiful photograph and another palanquin having the beautiful white Linga were brought from Trayee Mandir to Sai Ramesh Hall. The procession was led by musicians, Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of students followed by Ritwiks carrying Poornakumbham. All the programmes in Sai Ramesh Hall commenced after the arrival of Bhagavan's palanquin in the hall in this sacred manner.

The programme in Sai Ramesh Hall began after lighting of sacred lamps by the chief priest and some dignitaries. Three speakers addressed the gathering after this. The first speaker was Sri Lakshmi Narayana, Managing Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust. Extending hearty welcome to one and all, the distinguished speaker referred to the Ati Rudra Yajna performed at Prasanthi Nilayam in 2006 and stated that Bhagavan wanted the devotees, and particularly youth, to be involved in such sacred activities which



could lead them to spiritual path. The second speaker was Sri K. Chakravarthi, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Explaining the inner meaning of the rituals conducted in the performance of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna, the erudite speaker underlined the spiritual significance of these rituals which could lead to spiritual oneness of the world. This, he said, was the real purpose of performing such sacred Vedic rituals. The last speaker was Sri V. Srinivasan, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, who reminisced the old memories of Bhagavan's countless visits to Brindavan and remarked that the performance of this Yajna at this sacred place had great spiritual significance. Speaking on this occasion, the chief priest, Sri Nanjunda Dixit said that the rituals which would follow on this day were meant for the purification of the Linga and that the actual Yajna would start from 2nd March 2015.

Various purificatory rituals for the Linga were thereafter conducted accompanied by chanting of Vedic Mantras by the Ritwiks. Bhagavan's Divine Discourse was then screened which was shown on two giant LED screens set up in the hall. In His Discourse, Bhagavan highlighted the greatness of Indian culture and said that Ati Rudra Maha Yajna presented the quintessence of the Krishna Yajur Veda. Veda chanting, Bhagavan added, was not limited to any particular community or country; it was for all people

belonging to all races and nations. Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam followed Bhagavan's Discourse. The programme came to a close with Arati at 7.30 p.m.

After the inaugural session, the proceedings of the Yajna were conducted in two sessions: morning session and afternoon session. The morning sessions which started at 5.30 a.m. with Mangalavadyam (auspicious musical notes) in Trayee Mandir and Yajnasala were dedicated to Vedic practices of Linga Abhishekam, Rudra Parayanam, Rudra Abhishekam, Rudra Homam, Sai Gayatri Homam and Bhajans.

Morning Sessions

The morning session on 2nd March 2015 began with the performance of three important rituals. The first ritual was Nethronameelana (opening of the eyes of the Linga), wherein the three eyes of the Linga signifying three eyes of Siva were opened amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras.



Linga Abhishekam accompanied by collective Rudra Parayanam.

This was followed by Prana Pratishtha (investing Linga with life force) to invoke the cosmic energy of Lord Siva. Thereafter, the chief priest sought the blessings of Bhagavan for naming the Linga which he later announced as Trayeeswara Linga signifying Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. All through these rituals, Sai Ramesh Hall reverberated with sacred Vedic chants and joyous musical notes. This was followed by Abhishekam of the Linga with various items which included milk, curd, honey, sugar, fruits, flowers, etc. The Abhishekam was accompanied by sonorous chanting of Rudram which included both Namakam and Chamakam. After this, fire was lit in

of Vedic Mantras by the priests in Sai Ramesh Hall. Thereafter, there was a Bhajan session of half an hour in which all the devotees in Sai Ramesh Hall took part. Abhishekam of the Linga followed this with the accompaniment of collective chanting of Rudram by all the 121 priests. After Abhishekam, the Linga was decorated with flower garlands and Arati was offered to it. Thereafter, fire was lit in all the eleven Yajna Kundas and groups of priests offered oblations in the sacred fire while chanting Rudram and Sai Gayatri to perform Rudra Homam and Sai Gayatri Homam. The morning programme concluded with Arati at 12.30 p.m.



Rudra Homam and Sai Gayatri Homam in 11 Yajna Kundas.

all the eleven Homa Kundas and groups of priests performed Rudra Homam and Sai Gayatri Homam by putting oblations in the sacred fire while chanting Rudram and Sai Gayatri. The morning programme came to a close with Arati at 12.15 p.m.

The programme on 3rd March 2015 began at 5.30 a.m. with auspicious musical notes by the musicians in Trayee Mandir. This was followed by collective chanting

Like the morning programme of 3rd March 2015, the morning sessions from 4th to 11th March 2015 also began at 5.30 a.m. with Mangalavadyam followed by chanting of Vedic hymns, Bhajans, Linga Abhishekam, collective Rudra Parayanam eleven times by 121 priests, Rudra Homam and Sai Gayatri Homam in eleven Yajna Kundas by eleven groups of priests, with eleven priests in each group.

Poornahuti and Siva Parvati Kalyanam

The concluding function of the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna on 12th March 2015 was Poornahuti after the regular morning rituals of Rudra Parayanam, Rudra Abhishekam, Rudra Homam and Sai Gayatri Homam. After seeking Bhagavan's blessings, the chief priest and other priests offered





Poornahuti of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna.

precious materials and oblations of ghee in the Yajna Kundas amidst loud chanting of Vedic Mantras and joyous musical notes to mark the conclusion of the Yajna at 12.30 p.m. Thereafter, Kumbhabhishekam of the Trayeeswara Linga was done with sacred water of the Kalashas (sacred vessels) kept for daily worship during the eleven days of the Yajna. The morning function concluded with Arati to Bhagavan and sprinkling of Tirtham (holy water) on all the assembled devotees by the chief

priest and other priests. Prasadam was distributed to devotees after the conclusion of the function.

The devotees had the great good fortune to witness the celestial wedding of Siva with his consort Parvati on the afternoon of 12th March 2015. The marriage was ceremoniously performed by the chief priest, Sri Nanjunda Dixit, accompanied by appropriate Vedic Mantras recited by the Ritwiks.

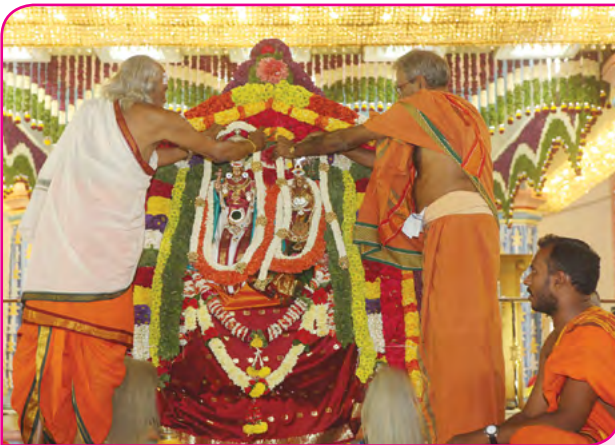
Afternoon Sessions

In the afternoon sessions which started with Mangalavadyam at 4.00 p.m. daily, eminent speakers addressed the gathering, renowned musicians presented music concerts and video clips of Bhagavan's Discourses were screened.

Talks by Eminent Speakers

In the afternoon session on 2nd March 2015, a renowned Vedic exponent, Swami Anubhavananda addressed the gathering.

Explaining the teachings of the scriptures in day-to-day language, the learned speaker observed that spiritual programmes like Ati Rudra Maha Yajna were meant for man's spiritual awakening. The speaker on 3rd March 2015 was Sri Sai Giridhar, a research scholar of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Referring to his interactions with Bhagavan, Sri Giridhar stated that one should be a full time devotee of God, and not merely a part-time devotee to attain His grace.



Celestial marriage of Siva and Parvati.

The speaker who addressed the gathering on 4th March was Sri K.L. Srinivasan, an eminent Sanskrit and Vedic scholar. Explaining the inner meaning of Rudram Mantras, the erudite speaker observed that chanting of Rudram Mantras and performance of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna at Brindavan, the place sanctified by Bhagavan's long periods of stay, would not only remove the sorrows of individual participants but benefit the entire world. On 5th March, Sri Anil Kumar Kamaraju addressed the gathering. Recounting his experiences of Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam, the distinguished speaker observed that it was only Bhagavan who made Vedas popular all over the world, including China, Japan, Middle East, Russia, Ukraine, Thailand, Indonesia, etc. Speaking on 6th March, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Director, Brindavan Campus, SSSIHL, cited many instances where Bhagavan showed His omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence. On the evening of 7th March, the devotees in Sai Ramesh Hall were treated to a spiritual feast by one of the participating Ritwiks in the Ati Rudra Maha Yajna, Dr. Sekhar Boddupalli, who is a renowned scientist working for the last 27 years in California in the U.S.A., and who has taken up the work of propagating the Vedas all over the world. He gave insights into the meaning of many Mantras in Sri Rudram and said Rudram Mantras had to be understood spiritually and not by their literal meaning. The talk on 8th March was given by Sri Chakravarthi Sulibele, a

social activist, who exhorted the devotees to develop love for the motherland and propagate the ideals of self-sacrifice and universal love which alone could ensure world peace and order. An erudite Sanskrit scholar and author of many books on Indian culture and spirituality, Dr. Subbaraya Sharma gave an inspiring talk on 9th March. In his talk, Dr. Sharma said, the holy fire or Agni was the Yajneswara who, like a postman, delivered the oblations made to the respective gods.

The talk on 10th March was given by Dr. Gururaj Karjagi, a noted educationist. He said that only those who sacrificed their lives by working for others would be remembered by posterity, others would just be forgotten. On 11th March, the penultimate day of Ati Rudra Maha Yajna, an eminent Vedic scholar Sri V.S.R. Murthy addressed the gathering. Brindavan, Sri Murthy said, was sanctified by long periods of Swami's stay and He would surely manifest Himself when this Ati Rudra Maha Yajna was being performed in its sacred precincts.

The first speaker who addressed the devotees on 12th March, the concluding day of the Yajna, was Sri S.S. Naganand, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Delivering his talk partly in Kannada and partly in English, the distinguished speaker observed that chanting of Vedic Mantras with devotion and dedication in the sacred precincts of Brindavan had a spiritually uplifting effect on participants. This, he said, was a wonderful experience which



provided right direction to our life. Referring to Bhagavan as the unique Avatar in the history of mankind, the second speaker Sri R.J. Rathnakar, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, observed that Bhagavan Himself came to devotees to shower His unbounded love on them instead of the devotees going to Him. Narrating his dream experience and reciting the Kannada poem taught to him in the dream by Bhagavan, Sri Rathnakar stated that Bhagavan was very much present here and continued to shower His love on all devotees.

Music Programmes

On 2nd March 2015, a renowned saxophone exponent, Sri Kadri Gopalnath offered a sumptuous feast of devotional music containing classical compositions and Bhajans which kept the devotees spellbound for more than one hour. On 3rd March, there was an excellent devotional music presentation by a renowned singer, Ustad Faiyaz Khan. Beginning his concert with the recitation of Sanskrit prayer to Guru, "Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu" followed by prayer to Lord Ganesh, the musician surcharged the entire milieu with deep devotional fervour by his soulful rendition of devotional songs which included "Kali Yuga Mein Hari Naam Bhajore" (chant the Name of Hari in Kali Yuga), "Narayana Karuna Kara" (Oh compassionate Lord Narayana), "Rama Sri Rama". The devotees expressed their appreciation and delight with a resounding applause as the musician concluded his elevating presentation. The musician

who presented his concert on 4th March was Mandolin U. Rajesh. Starting his presentation at 5.00 p.m., the musician kept the audience spellbound for nearly one and a half hours by his superb rendition of Carnatic music compositions and Bhajans, which included "Sankara Siva Sankara", "Parthivasa Sai Deva" and "Bhola Bhandari Baba". On 5th March, Dr. Ganesh, a young Bhajan singer, rendered many Sai Bhajans in addition to some fast moving Bhajans and a Kabir Bhajan. The artiste possessed a melodious voice which kept the audience enthralled for an hour. In the musical programme on 6th March, Malladi brothers, Sri Sriram Prasad and Sri Ravi Kumar gave a scintillating Carnatic music recital and presented a few compositions on Bhagavan. Sri Tippu and his wife Smt. Harini, popular playback singers in the Tamil film industry, gave a light classical Bhajan concert for an hour on 7th March, singing a variety of songs in Tamil, Sanskrit and Hindi. A scintillating music programme was presented by Sriram Parthasarathy, a child prodigy on 8th March 2015. Accompanied by his father on the Veena, and other instrumentalists, he sang classical compositions in various languages, including a few Sai Bhajans. The music programme on 9th March was presented by Sri S.R. Maruti Prasad. Although visually challenged, he had excellent modulation in vocal singing, which sent the audience into raptures. In addition to some classical Bhajans, he sang a few Sai Bhajans, playing the keyboard himself while singing. On 10th



March, alumni of Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning gave a Bhajan concert, singing around 10 Bhajans in various languages. On 11th March, devotees in Sai Ramesh Hall were lost in the ocean of bliss when the students of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning made a soul-stirring presentation which included "Sai Premaye Veda Saramu" (Sai's love is the quintessence of the Vedas), "Siva Sankari Sivananda Lahiri" (stream of Siva's bliss).

Bhagavan's Divine Discourses

During the course of the Yajna, video clips of Bhagavan's eleven Discourses were shown on the two giant LED screens to the delight of the devotees. Invariably,

...continued from page 5

understood the principle of indweller. Then he declared, "I am the son of God". Being the son of God, he acquired all the attributes of God. Just as the son has complete right over his father's property, Jesus being the son of God acquired all the divine attributes. When he realised that the same Atmic principle is present in everyone, he declared, "I and my Father are one". The same was stated by Zoroaster also. First he said, "I am in the light". He declared, God is in heaven and he is living in His light. Gradually, he understood that Divinity is present within him. Then he declared, "The light is in me". In the beginning, he thought he was in the light.

Bhagavan concluded His Discourses with Bhajans which the devotees followed in chorus with deep devotion. In His Discourses, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to have good company in order to develop good thoughts and perform good actions. He asked one and all to get rid of animal qualities like hatred, jealousy and anger, fill their heart with good qualities and realise their true nature. He advised the students to acquire spiritual knowledge along with secular education and make themselves deserving of God's grace. Bhagavan said that devotees should always remember the principle of oneness and never doubt that the Atma present in all is one and the same. They should not criticise anyone because God indwells all, said Bhagavan.

Then he realised the same light was within and the light outside was nothing but the reflection of the inner being. He believed that he was being guided by the light within. When he realised the oneness of the inner light and the outer light, he declared, "I am the light". As per Indian philosophy, these three stages are represented by Dvaita (dualism), Visishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) and Advaita (non-dualism).

... to be continued

(Please see Part 2 of this Discourse in the next issue.)

– **Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 6th September 1996.**

MY JOURNEY TO SAI

Patrick Gallivan

OVER THE YEARS, MY connection and studies of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings have answered many questions of a religious nature that crowded my mind. My Catholic Seminary education gave me the traditional answers to my spiritual quest. They satisfied me for a time, but it wasn't until a questioner asked Swami as to the existence of heaven and hell, that He put a new perspective on the issue. He replied, "Heaven and hell do not exist on the other side. Heaven and hell exist here on earth". This answer was new and it opened up an exciting new vista in my previously held spiritual thinking. I thought of the many seriously ill patients in hospitals, who were fearful of dying not knowing what was in store for them. My heart goes out to them and I wish I could tell them what Sai Baba said that would give them a peaceful transition.

How Swami Graciously Took Over my Life

I now feel I have come a long way from the early days back in the mid 1970's when I was asked by a friend if I had heard of Sai Baba. The name conjured up an image of a "guru" popular at the time on the west coast of America, but he quickly dispelled that image and went on to speak of Baba's

miraculous healings and resurrections. That got my immediate attention because at that time both my wife, Geraldine, and I were actively interested in and practised spiritual healing, and were active members of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers in the U.K.

This answer was to herald my introduction to the greatest Being ever to walk on this planet and Who was to take over my life from that moment. I was now being led into areas I never thought possible, giving public talks in both Ireland and the U.K., and establishing the "Sathya Sai Newsletter", which is now a popular journal both at home and abroad. However, it was not until 1990 that I decided to establish the Sai Organisation in Ireland with the assistance of Lucas Ralli, the U.K. chairman at that time.

It was from this small acorn that our "Sai Organisation" oak was to spring into life and establish itself in Ireland. Indeed, how blessed we are to be a humble part of this world-wide organisation of love, peace and truth!

It would take a while before I was to finally journey to my Lord Sai in Prasanthi Nilayam. Memories now flood back of those early days when I was privileged to sit in the front-row position in the



Poornachandra Hall, and I observed to my left, the orange-robed form of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, collecting letters from enthusiastic devotees as they eagerly reached out to touch His robe and feet. I thought how wonderful it must be to touch the feet of our Lord - our God! I wished that I too could experience the bliss of touching His feet. No sooner had I thought this then Swami spun around and looked in my direction and began slowly to walk towards me. It was as if He picked up my thoughts. He stood in front of me collecting letters from devotees as they vied with each other to touch His feet. I was reluctant to do so, not knowing the protocol involved. I felt it would be an intrusion, until He placed His left foot directly in front of me as if to say, "You may touch"! I had the feeling of being ennobled.

Answers to my all Mental Questions

On another occasion, I had been ill in bed with heat-stroke for a day or so, when my good friends, Drs. Jal and Eruch B. Fanibunda called to visit me with a tiffin containing rice and ice cream, which assisted in bringing down my temperature. Indeed, I was well enough that evening to attend the closing hours of the Sivarathi festival. I was met at the entrance by a tall gentleman in a cream safari suit saying, "You are very late"! I explained my illness and he took my hand and led me into the vast hall where I was put sitting by myself in the front row, and in front of the orchestra. Later, Swami supervised the distribution of Prasadam at the close of that evening. I had been presented with a "dish" consisting of three leaves stitched together

with tiny twigs, on to which were ladled rice and a sweet dish. I wondered at the time, what the latter consisted of, whereupon Swami stood up on the stage and slowly walked down the side steps and came in my direction. As He passed where I was seated, He announced, "Sweet and sour. Eat up! Eat up"! once again answering my mental question!

Swami frequently suggested that one should sit quietly after Darshan, and this I did in a small garden, with the sound of running water. One could meditate beautifully there; it was a haven within a heaven.

After three visits to Prasanthi Nilayam, I felt I would not be up to future visits, and it was with a sad heart that I prepared to leave for the last time. As I was seated on a bench in the garden awaiting the taxi, I asked an Indian gentleman next to me if he would like an ice cream, and he said he would. Upon returning with the ice cream, I walked slowly between the "round towers" accommodation blocks, when somebody shouted, "Swami!" Looking around, I saw a police jeep followed by a car, in which Swami was seated beside the driver. I had to stoop to see Him properly, as He looked straight ahead. My thought was that He was graciously giving me my last Darshan, knowing that I had elected not to return for future visits following the World Education Conference in 2008. Swami never fails to shower His blessings on all His devotees.

– The author is Founder and former Chairman, Sathya Sai Organisation, Ireland.

Indian Values in the Global Context *

S.S. Naganand

Whatever be the vicissitudes one may face, whatever be the personal sorrows and privations one may undergo, true love should remain unaffected. Today, when any difficulty arises or when some trouble crops up, love turns into hatred. True love is the sweet fruit that grows out of the fragrant flower of good deeds. Love rules without recourse to the sword. It binds without laws. Like the lotus which blooms when the sun rises, the heart of man blossoms when love enters it.

ALL ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS HAVE demonstrated deep philosophical foundations. The Indian civilisation, which dates back to around 5000 B.C., is a storehouse of values. With the advancement of the world, and the exponential growth of knowledge, coupled with the phenomenal advances made in communication, modern ideas and modern thought have made considerable advances in many fields of human learning. It is often commented upon by current thinkers that ancient ideas and ancient values are no longer relevant in the modern world. On the other hand, saints and seers have been propounding ancient Indian values as the panacea for the modern world.

These two divergent viewpoints need to be synthesised. There are certain eternal values which apply to changing societies. Founders of most modern religions base their teachings on ancient values. These values continue to be relevant both in the Indian context and indeed in the global village that we today live in. Some of these ancient values from Sanathana Dharma are discussed below.

An often-quoted expression is *Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*. It is used in the context of humanity being a global village and that all human beings are part of one family, that family being the family of God. This idea enshrines in itself many qualities for peaceful co-existence,

* Talk delivered in the National Conference on "Value Initiatives in Institutions of Higher Learning" held in Maharani Lakshmi Ammani College for Women, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru.

namely, tolerance, patience, acceptance, forgiveness, love, respect, good conduct, measured speech, and so on. Applied to relationships between countries, this idea will germinate into world peace. Applied in the context of neighbourly relationships, family relationships and corporate relationships, it emphasises the principle of give and take. With this as the basis, let us look at the five major principles of every religion. These are Indian values because they have

taken birth in the ancient scriptures and epics which originated in India, namely, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, the Mahakavyas [the Mahabharata and the Ramayana] and the Bhagavadgita.

Sathya

The first of these values is Sathya, meaning truth. It is said that God is truth and truth is God. This means that God is eternal and eternity is God. Truth is that which does not change. It is that quality which ensures that thought, word and deed are unified. When thought, word, and deed are unified, it leads to greatness, and when



they are divergent, it leads to evil. Truth is unchangeable. In that sense, the Supreme Being or God is also described as truth. In our daily life and conduct if we follow the path of truth, it will lead to success. The Taitthiriya Upanishad exhorts *Sathyam Vada*, meaning, speak the truth. The national motto of this country is *Sathyameva Jayate*, meaning that truth alone will win or prevail. Imagine a world where everyone

speaks truth. There would be no need for governance, for the police, for the courts of law and law enforcement authorities. All these are needed in a modern society because the primordial concept of truth has receded to the background. This eternal value is bang on the point in the global context.

In the words of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba:

“The experience of truth alone can foster love, for truth is all embracing and integrating, and sees no distinctions. Truth is the current and love is the bulb it illumines.



Through truth, you can experience love; through love, you can visualise truth.”

Dharma

The concept of Dharma has evolved in Hindu philosophical thought. The contours of the meaning of the expression Dharma are difficult to be encompassed in any one English word, and therefore it is loosely translated as righteousness. Dharma has many facets. Dharma is often described as right conduct. It is a way of life. It is a state of mind in which one strives to go along the right path. The adage “*Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitaha*” clearly drives home the point that one who protects and upholds Dharma is always protected by Dharma. Dharma emphasises on the essential practices that one has to follow in one’s own profession and stage of life. It requires a student to be a Brahmachari (celibate). It requires the householder to take care of the family: it requires the Sannyasi (renunciant) to follow deep penance for the upliftment of his soul and for the community.

Therefore, Dharma is the way of life. In simple terms, it is to follow one’s conscience and one’s status in life.

A pithy quote from Baba puts this concept in the right perspective:

See no evil, see what is good.

Hear no evil, hear what is good.

Speak no evil, speak what is good.

Think no evil, think what is good.

Do no evil, do what is good.

This is the way to God.

Santhi

The concept of Santhi or peace emphasises the need for all beings to

remain in a calm composed atmosphere. It is not a mere passive quality. The various conflicting emotions, pulls and pushes of one’s station in life are in conflicting dominance. It is the essential quality to maintain equilibrium within the family, within the society and within the country. It requires various mental qualities such as contentment, happiness, satisfaction, acceptance, tolerance and forgiveness. It is only when these qualities are harmonised in the mind and they are translated into action, that a peaceful demeanour is possible. Santhi is the state of mind which helps the upliftment of the soul.

Prema

The primordial principle from which life emerges is love. The concept of love is universal. There is no being in this world which does not want love or which shuns love. It is a natural state for all beings to love and be loved. The difference between the ordinary day-to-day expression of love and the philosophical meaning of love is that the latter is universal and unconditional. Love makes no distinction between persons. When love is translated into action, it becomes Seva or service. When this is done selflessly, it enhances love. The concept of love is described in many ways in the Upanishads. There can be no love without Thyaga or sacrifice. *Shraddhaya Deyam* means give with respect. This could only happen if you love the persons to whom you are giving. If you are giving with a sense of guilt, that is not true love. The ultimate aim is for human beings to realise that the divine spark in all



living beings is one and the same as in the Divine Being or God or by whatever name He is called.

In the words of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, true love is defined thus:

“Pure and unselfish love towards all living beings considering them as embodiments of the Divine, with no expectation of reward, is alone true love. Love must be free from dislikes, friendly, and compassionate towards all beings (*Adveshta Sarva Bhutanam, Maitra Karuna Eva Cha ...*)! Whatever be the vicissitudes one may face, whatever be the personal sorrows and privations one may undergo, true love should remain unaffected. Today, when any difficulty arises or when some trouble crops up, love turns into hatred. True love is the sweet fruit that grows out of the fragrant flower of good deeds. Love rules without recourse to the sword. It binds without laws. Like the lotus which blooms when the sun rises, the heart of man blossoms when love enters it. Like the glow of the flame in a fire, like the rays of the sun, Divine Love is the natural quality present in every human being.”

Ahimsa

Ahimsa does not mean the absence of violence. It is the same as peace. Ahimsa is a state of mind, which envisages that the practitioner is always in such a state that he or she cannot even think of hurting anybody by any violent act. The ideal form of Ahimsa was displayed by Mahatma Gandhi who often talked about and preached that if you were slapped on

one cheek, you must offer the other. This means that even if a person harms you, you should never retaliate and continue your peaceful demeanour. In keeping with this philosophy, Gandhiji developed the concept of “Sathyagraha” which is a form of peaceful protest as an alternative to anger. It is a means to express one’s strong views in an extremely peaceful manner. Ahimsa when practised in the modern world would bring down violence not only to human beings, but violence to other living beings who also have the right to co-exist. Ahimsa need not necessarily be a passive act but has many facets. In Baba’s words:

“We generally think that Ahimsa means not causing harm to any living being. Himsa (violence) is not merely causing physical harm; even looking at debasing things, listening to evil or wrongful words and speaking harshly amounts to Himsa.”

Temper Education with Values

Looking at these key Indian values, it becomes apparent that these are all universally applicable in the global context. These values when synthesised and appreciated by students, especially those in institutions of higher learning, result in the creation of peace in society. The effect of adherence to the five eternal Indian human values is summarised by Bhagavan Baba thus:

When there is righteousness in the heart,

There is beauty in character.

When there is beauty in character,

There is harmony in the home.



*When there is harmony in the home,
There is order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
There is peace in the world.*

In a highly competitive world, where the pursuit of knowledge is driven by the survival instinct, the ancient Indian practice of acquiring knowledge for the sake of it and for the spiritual upliftment has taken a back seat. With the information explosion, knowledge is easier to find at the click of a computer mouse. Students today are striving hard to acquire knowledge by seeking admission in institutions of higher learning in every field, be it medicine, engineering, law, humanities, and so on. The essential inculcation of values as a part of the curriculum in these institutions is very rare. This is for two reasons. First, the emphasis is on secular knowledge and no attention is paid to spiritual upliftment. The goal of human life is confined to material success.

The altruistic aim of ancient Indians was to uplift the soul towards a higher being called God. In that process, the secular knowledge, which had been developed by them, most of which is today not known to modern students or indeed to the teachers, and which lies hidden in our ancient texts, has been lost to our current civilisation. Baba has said, knowledge without wisdom is surely a prescription for disaster. Consciousness about the society, about the effects of various actions of the individual components of society on the rest of society are being ignored. A classic example is the environmental degradation

being caused by the western world, which is responsible for a substantial part of the green house gases. Tested on the touchstone of Dharma, the answer is apparent, that we have no right to use natural resources in such a way as to cause harm to fellow citizens of this world.

Sensitisation to these values in institutions of higher learning is essential for the welfare of the world. Students who pass through the portals of these institutions enter society and in due course play a very key role in the affairs of corporate bodies, government and professional bodies. Students who have been exposed to value education are in a better position to play an effective role. They can help to inculcate the best practices, which ought to be followed in the global context. These human values are universal and have nothing to do with religion. All religions profess the same values. In the course of imparting technical and other education in the institutions of higher learning, tempering them with value education in the form of case studies, group discussions, and lectures on the broad topic of Indian values, will enable students to be better equipped to use these concepts in their future life, irrespective of where they live and work.

In conclusion, viewed from any angle, institutions of higher learning will contribute in greater measure towards nation building activities when they synthesise the technical education they are imparting by adding value education

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From our Archives

LIVE UP TO THE IDEALS OF RAMA

HAVE STRONG DETERMINATION TO DO GOOD

HERE IS NO Bharatiya who has not heard the story of Rama, nor is there a village in Bharat without a Rama temple. From time immemorial, every individual in Bharat has regarded Sri Rama's life as an ideal and has sought to sanctify every moment of his life by living up to it. Bharat has always considered the life of anyone devoid of spirituality as utterly valueless.

Truth is the Foundation of Righteousness

In the Ramayana, Sathya (truth) and Dharma (righteousness) are the most important concepts. The Vedas, which are regarded as their very life-breath by the Bharatiyas, have proclaimed: *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness). In order to honour the plighted word of his



father, Rama elected to go to the forest leaving Ayodhya. Truth is the foundation for all righteousness. There is no greater religion than truth.

Rama stood out as an upholder of truth to fulfil the promise of his father, to maintain the traditions of his Ikshvaku dynasty, to protect his country and for the sake of the welfare of the world. Everyone who calls himself a human being should stand up for truth in the same manner. It is said of Mahatmas (noble souls) that what they speak, what they think and what they do are in perfect accord. In the case of the wicked, their thoughts, words and deeds are at a variance with each other. By these definitions, Rama was a Mahatma (a high-souled one) and Ravana was a Duratma (wicked person).

Chanting of Rama's Name Destroys all Sins

When you utter the word "Ram", you first open the mouth with the

sound “Ra”. All your sins go out when your mouth is open. When you utter “M” by closing the mouth, the entry is barred against the sins that have gone out. Everyone should recognise the sweetness, the sacredness and the divinity enshrined in the name “Rama”. It was for this reason that Thyagaraja sang: “Oh mind! Contemplate on the name of Rama with full awareness of its power”. It is good to utter the name Rama with full understanding of all that it signifies. But even without that understanding, the chanting of the name has the power to destroy all sins.

Chant the Name of Rama Wholeheartedly

Today everybody utters Ram, Ram. But very few follow the example set by Rama. They are not true devotees of Rama. At best, they may be described as “part-time devotees.” True devotion means perpetual remembrance of the name of the Lord and constant meditation on that name, cherishing the figure of Rama in the heart.

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across all courses that are offered. This unique way of dealing with value education and making it a part of higher educational institutions is the hallmark of the method of education devised by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba across all educational institutions set up by Him, from the primary school to the schools for doctoral studies. Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, a deemed to be university, follows the Gurukul system, where the teacher and the taught

The one with noble qualities of purity, patience and perseverance is verily God. You should have the determination to uphold good and remain peaceful in the face of adversities. Don't aspire for name and fame. Keep your heart sacred. Have strong determination to do good. This is the Sadhana (spiritual exercise) you are supposed to do.

Students! You are young and have a long way to go. Society is like a train, and all elders are bound to get down soon, but you have yet to travel a long way. So, keep your 'compartment' clean and have a comfortable journey. Keep your goal in mind and be the recipients of divine grace. Chant the Name of Rama wholeheartedly. Install Him in your heart and sanctify your lives. Rama is present in every heart in the form of the Atma. That is why He is known as Atma Rama. Atma is changeless, and that is your true form. Develop the faith that you are Brahman (all-pervasive divinity).

– **Excerpted from Bhagavan's Sri Rama Navami Discourses.**

reside together, and the teachers impart education for the all-round development of the body mind and soul. This would be the ideal way for the Indian education system to proceed if we have to lead our younger generation into a better world.

– **Sri S.S. Naganand is Vice Chairman of Maharani Lakshmi Ammani College Trust, Bengaluru and a Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.**

SRI SATHYA SAI OLD AGE CARE PROJECT

A Report

G.S.R.C.V. Prasad Rao

"Old age is the fourth stage. By the time one reaches this stage of his journey, he must have discovered that the joys available in this world are trivial and fleeting. He must be equipped with the higher knowledge of spiritual joy, available through delving into the inner spring of bliss. Through his experiences, his heart must have softened and be filled with compassion. He has to be engrossed in promoting the progress of all beings without distinction. And he must be eager to share with others the knowledge he has accumulated and the benefit of his experiences."

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

THERE ARE ABOUT 200 VERY senior citizens who stay in the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam Ashram and lead an exalted life in the contemplation of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba whom they served lovingly in their youth for decades. Bhagavan took upon Himself the responsibility of looking after them in their advanced age. Elsewhere some people say, "Old age is a curse". But at Prasanthi Nilayam, Sri Sathya Sai Old Age Care Project of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust is an attempt to make old age a better period

for Self-realisation in the ambience of Bhagavan's divine grace.

Generally, old age throws up problems of body and mind in the form of diminishing energy levels and high rate of recurrence of sickness and harbouring a sense of neglect. There are old people who have money needed for their living including for medical needs but there is nobody to help them to properly utilise the money. There are others who do not have enough; they have no regular flow of money for their daily / monthly

needs. Generally, single old ladies are in much larger proportion compared to single men. There may be paid domestic helps (for those who can afford) but they may not take care of the old properly or may extract more money and other resources, even by using force or coercion, without delivering the much needed services. The two hospitals in Puttaparthi, Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital and Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospital provide them treatment both as outpatients or inpatients, as and when required. But as the hospitals are not hospice care centres or old age care



centres, they discharge them after the needed treatment. These old people do not have their sons, daughters or reliable servants around to objectively assess and meet their physical and mental needs in a timely manner and to escort them to the hospitals when needed. No relatives or friends may be visiting them to enquire about their welfare and / or supply the missing links in the proper and timely delivery of the needed services.

These missing links for the proper care of the old and physically challenged persons are now being provided by two groups (six in each group) of counsellors. One group takes care of about 180 old persons living in Sheds 29, 30 and 31. The second group takes care of nearly 20 single persons in their allotted blocks, located in the Ashram. These counsellors are educated ladies who work honorarily, innovatively and with zeal to serve. Shed No. 28 is another shelter to house bedridden or not so mobile single ladies isolated or picked up from the 200 as per their need. They require frequent medical interventions and so the shelter is being run in collaboration with Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital. A service minded lady employee of the General Hospital is the friend, philosopher and guide for the inmates of Shed No. 28 who with her continuing experience in the General Hospital provides them round the clock service with the assistance of hospital attendants.

The persons in the helping profession, counsellors have taken upon themselves to provide the much-needed succour,

continuing quality communication in a loving and caring manner and keeping the old people enlightened in spirituality through Bhajans, Vedic chants, Sai Literature and using other resources. They help in the maintenance of personal hygiene and overall cleanliness, ensuring timely food, nutrition and medication, yoga, exercises and physical mobility. They also assist in meeting their daily needs and procuring necessities, accompanying them to hospitals and back, communicating with their relations, friends, maids and in case of emergencies taking all the relevant steps / procedures.

As Prema (unconditional love), Santhi (absolute peace), harmony and plentiful caring is provided to them by the counsellors, there is an impact on their head and heart which has resulted in a new found joy in many of them during the last one year. The mind as one sees understands love, peace, harmony and abundance of every kind. The body and mind are actively used and engaged in new activities and joys. Old persons are therefore seen healthier, happier and better prepared to face old age and its associated problems. Swami's grace is the panacea for all their problems.

The initiatives briefly outlined aforesaid, plus many more are continuously being taken up for the welfare of the old people, a Seva dear to Swami.

– The author, **Sri G.S.R.C.V. Prasad Rao, is Secretary, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.**



What should a Devotee Desire?

AFTER GIVING THE NEWS of Rama's well-being to Sita and finishing his task in Lanka, Hanuman went to Sita before going back



Hanuman was overjoyed when Sita blessed him to be the recipient of Rama's love.

to Rama and prayed to her, "Oh revered mother! Bless me". Showering her blessings on Hanuman, Sita said, "May

you become the embodiment of peace, strength and virtues! May you remain ever youthful"! Realising that Hanuman was not satisfied with all this, Sita said further, "Dear son Hanuman! May you become immortal"! Looking at his face after giving this unique blessing to Hanuman, Sita found that even this did not please him. She therefore showered more blessings on him, saying, "May your fame spread to all the three worlds"! Seeing Hanuman without any response with his head bent, Sita understood what really would please him. Finally, she gave him this blessing, "May Rama always love you"! Hearing this, Hanuman started dancing in joy. That was what he desired.

A devotee should always yearn for God's love. One without God's love is nothing but a living corpse, thought Hanuman.

Man can justify himself and prove his claim to be a worthy individual only through Seva (service), undertaken sincerely, selflessly and with no thought of worldly reward. Seva is the only path to Self-realisation. It is the highest expression of love and of the sacrifice love involves. You have to expand yourselves in Seva, unto the very last breath. You cannot retire after certain years of Seva or when you reach a certain age. When you have such a Lord and Master, there should be no dearth of Sevaks (servants). The servants are the glory of the Lord.

- Baba

CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

CHINESE NEW YEAR

ABOUT 300 DEVOTEES FROM Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan came to participate in Chinese New Year celebrations held from 24th to 26th February 2015 at Prasanthi Nilayam. The theme of this year's Chinese New Year celebrations was "Love and Selfless Service".

The programme commenced at 5.00 p.m. on 24th February 2015 with the lighting of the sacred lamp. Children from countries in Zone 4 then offered traditional Chinese delicacies to Bhagavan. The melodious and uplifting chanting of sacred Buddhist and Kuan Yin hymns led by devotees from Indonesia followed next.

Thereafter, students of Nanyang School, Indonesia made a musical presentation on Gu Zheng, an ancient Chinese musical instrument.



A musical presentation by the students of Nanyang School, Indonesia.

In his welcome address, Sri Billy Fong, the coordinator of the Chinese New Year celebrations, compared the annual mass homeward journey of Chinese people with the Chinese devotees coming back to their real home Prasanthi Nilayam to be with Swami to celebrate Chinese New Year. Introducing the theme of the celebration, "Love and Selfless Service", he reiterated how Swami's teachings on love and selfless service could unite the people of India and China, the two living ancient civilisations for the good of mankind.

A colourful traditional Chinese dance – "Thousand Arms Kuan Yin" – followed next. Making colourful and aesthetic patterns with symbolic formations, the participating



Traditional Chinese dance, "Thousand Arms Kuan Yin".

children from Indonesia won the hearts of the audience by their graceful offering.

A musical medley of Chinese and English songs / Bhajans was the next



Devotional songs by Chinese devotees.

item of the programme. As the session progressed, Aum Mani Padme Hum, the six-syllabled Sanskrit Buddhist Mantra reverberated in the hall followed by Happy New Year compositions as well as Prasanthi Bhajans by Chinese devotees. After Bhajans by the Chinese delegates, the session ended with Arati to Bhagavan.

The programme on 25th February 2015 commenced at 5 p.m. with an address by Dr. V.K. Ravindran, Chairman, Zone 4 of the Sathya Sai International Organisation. The congregation of devotees broke into loud applause when Dr. Ravindran gave the inspiring news that the Indonesian Government had decided to incorporate human values into the mainstream school curriculum on the model of Sri Sathya Sai Educare.

Students from the Nanyang Zhi Hui School of Medan, Indonesia then played two songs followed by the Bhajan, "Ganesha Saranam" on Angklong, an ancient Chinese musical instrument.

Justice (Ms.) Isabella Chu from Hong Kong then narrated in her inspiring speech

how Swami helped her at every step of life and how she was elevated to the high post of judge by His grace. She also explained how Swami taught and trained her to transform her work into His work.

The students of Nanyang Zhi Hui School, Medan, Indonesia who earlier presented a musical treat on Angklong



Colourful dance by Nanyang School students.

came back on stage to perform a dance presentation entitled "Dances of Joy".

On the closing day of the three-day celebrations of the Chinese New Year, devotees from Singapore presented a drama entitled "Change your Thoughts, Change your Life". The drama depicted how a dishonest restaurant owner was transformed into a man of great integrity when a holy man brought a change in his thoughts. The theme of the drama was illustrated by the stories of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu transforming a thief and Lord Vitthala showering his grace on Pundalika.

JOYOUS HOLI FESTIVAL

Bal Vikas children and devotees from Bihar and Jharkhand presented music and cultural programmes to celebrate





Graceful dance by Bal Vikas students.

the joyous festival of Holi at Prasanthi Nilayam. The programme on 7th March 2015 commenced at 5.00 p.m. with a Vandana (salutation) dance by the Bal Vikas children from these States. Dancing with graceful movements, the students enlivened the spirit of Holi by their spirited dance.

A soulful devotional music concert by Ms. Jyotsna and Ms. Suvarna followed this. Beginning their presentation with the prayer “Ekadantaya Vakratundaya Gowritanayaya Dheemahi” (I pray to Ganesh, the son of Parvati), the duo enthralled the devotees with mellifluous rendition of sweet songs which included “Madhura Mohana Ghana Shyama Sundara Sai”, “Jyot Se Jyot Jalatey Chalo”, “Allah Tero Naam Ishwar Tero Naam”, concluding their programme with the Holi song, “Rang Daroongi Nand Ke Lalan Pe” (I will throw colours on the son of Nanda). The singers and their accompanying musicians were felicitated at the end of the programme.

On 8th March 2015, Bal Vikas children presented a dance drama entitled “Sri Sathya Sai Divya Katha” depicting the

childhood Leelas of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The children depicted the episodes of Bhagavan’s birth, divine pranks in the village and school leading to the declaration of Avatarhood, embellished with their beautiful dances and sweet songs. At the conclusion of the drama, the children were felicitated.

UGADI FESTIVAL

Ugadi festival, marking the beginning of Telugu New Year, was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great devotion and enthusiasm. More than 1,500 devotees came on a pilgrimage from Hyderabad to celebrate it at Prasanthi Nilayam. On this occasion, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Hyderabad presented a variety of programmes on both days, viz., 21st and 22nd March 2015 and Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana dedicated a mobile hospital to Bhagavan’s Divine Mission.

The first programme on the Ugadi morning, 21st March 2015, was “Panchanga Sravanam” (almanac reading). Enlisting the predictions of the Telugu New Year, the noted scholar, Sri Siva Subrahmanya, Principal, TTD Veda Pathashala, Tirumala, said that the New Year named Manmatha would bring peace and happiness in the world. Panchanga Sravanam was followed by a talk by Dr. K.S. Rathnakar, Director, Global Hospitals, Hyderabad, who observed that man should get rid of anger and desires to attain peace and happiness. Devotees thereafter were blessed with a Discourse of Bhagavan, in which He



said that all human beings were endowed with ennobling qualities of morality, righteousness and spirituality. They should get rid of their delusion and realise their true nature, added Bhagavan. At the conclusion of the morning programme, the learned scholar, Sri Siva Subrahmanya was honoured with a shawl.

The devotees in the evening were offered a sumptuous musical feast by renowned playback singers Smt. Nithyasanthoshini and Sri Nihal. Beginning their concert with a prayer to Lord Ganesh "Siddhi Vinayaka Paahi Gajanana", the duo enthralled the audience for nearly one hour with Carnatic music compositions and popular devotional songs. They concluded their presentation with the famous Mira Bhajan "Payoji Maine Ram Ratan Dhana Payo" (I have found the jewel of Divine Name).

On the morning of 22nd March 2015, Sivam Music Group of Hyderabad presented a devotional music programme which included "Vandanam Sai Vandanam" (salutations to Sathya Sai), "Sai Ram Bhajare oh Manasa" (oh mind, chant the Name of Sai), "Jai Jai Sai Ram

Raghuveera" (hail Rama, the descendent of Raghu). Deep devotion of the singers and mellifluous rendition of the songs touched the hearts of one and all and transported them to a higher plane.

While the singers sang devotional songs and Bhajans, the Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and other



Inauguration of mobile hospital on the auspicious day of Ugadi.

dignitaries inaugurated a mobile hospital of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. This is the 11th mobile hospital of the Sai Organisation which would serve the rural population of Nellore district.

Ugadi celebrations and the two-day eventful pilgrimage of the devotees of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Hyderabad came to a conclusion with Arati at 10.00 a.m.



Devotional music by Hyderabad devotees.

Effulgence of Divine Glory

FOR THE DAUGHTER'S MARRIAGE

I MET FOUR OF THE FIRST batch interviewees. One of them was from Krishna district, one from Bangalore (Bengaluru) and the other two from North India. All the four were quite well-to-do. The one from Krishna district was reluctant to disclose details. He told me that Baba had assured him of His blessings and that he had come to Prasanthi Nilayam twice before. One was a businessman from Uttar Pradesh. While touring the South, he had heard about Baba and came to see Him. Baba materialised a gold ring for him though he already had two more rings on his fingers. He showed me all. The other North Indian had slipped away, not in a mood to talk. I gathered from others that Baba scolded him for something and when he started moaning, Baba consoled him and gave him Vibhuti which He had materialised. The Bengaluru man was given a rosary materialised by Baba and was asked to stay for four days as his truant son who had stolen money and run away from home would be coming to Prasanthi Nilayam, that He would call both of them together and that he need not worry about his welfare.

One man who saw me talking to some people, presumably mistaking me to be

an inmate of the Ashram, came to me and asked me, “Will Baba call me again”? Then I recognised him. He was also from the same batch to which Baba had granted interview. His soiled Dhوتي and a dirty towel on his shoulder, discoloured Kasi (black) string around his neck, his unshaven beard and the pungent odour of Berhampur Zarda Pan (betel with tobacco) – all bespoke of his Odisha nativity and penury. Right then, he said he was eking out his livelihood as a masseur in some hotels in Vijayawada.

When I enquired the reason for his coming there, he narrated his sad story. He was making preparations for his daughter's marriage. A fortnight before the marriage, there was a burglary in his house. Twelve hundred rupees cash, the silk Sari for the bride and silk clothes for the bridegroom and the sacred Mangala Sutra made of gold were all stolen. I asked him why he came here instead of going to police. “I reported the theft to police but I know what would be the outcome. I saw Baba two years back at Rajahmundry and since then I have been worshipping Him. I am a poor man. People around me can only shower sympathy but who can help me! Suddenly, I remembered Baba and came here for

His help.” He stammered with moist eyes. “Did you tell all this to Baba in the interview room?” I asked. “When I saw Baba, I broke down and fell at His Feet and with my voice choked, I could not say a word. Then He patted me on the back and opening the door, bade me to go and sit outside.” He looked pitiable with tears trickling down his cheeks, mopping with his dirty towel. I asked him, half heartedly to sit down and wait. My recollection of Baba giving gold ring to the affluent businessman who was in no need of it and driving away this poor man enraged me against Baba’s indiscretion and partiality towards the rich.

By this time, the second batch of interviewees also came out. I explained to my friend about the miserable plight of this man. He said, “We don’t know the extent of truth in his story. Baba knows everything. Anyway, for our satisfaction let us contribute something to him”. So saying he pulled out from his wallet and counted fifty rupees to which I added my share of fifty rupees to be given to him. Just then Prof. Kasturi, clad in embroidered Dhoti and Kurta, with streaks of Vibhuti on his forehead came out calling, “Jagannath, who is Jagannath who just now came out of the interview room”? Our man went forward. After ascertaining he was the right man, he beckoned the student who accompanied him with a tray from which he took out a silk Sari, silk Dhoti pair, and an envelope and gave them to Jagannath and said, “Take this Prasadam from

Swami. Go home at once and perform the marriage of your daughter happily. Your family members are all worried about your whereabouts and safety. You did not even tell them that you were going over here”. I, by then stood by Jagannath and watched him spread his towel on the ground, keep the Sari and the pair of Dhotis on it and eagerly open the envelope. It contained hundred rupee currency notes, surely more than what he had lost. He was counting the currency notes without taking them out. Suddenly, he pulled out the golden Mangala Sutra from the envelope and looked around in ecstasy. He bound carefully all of them in his towel, bowed low in front of Baba’s sanctum and went away clasping the bundle to his chest. He was in such a euphoric mood that we did not dare offer him the trivial amount.

A North Indian devotee who was watching all this asked the man who brought the gifts, “Are you Baba’s secretary”? The gentleman promptly replied, “I am Baba’s Chaprasi (peon)”. We came to know later that Prof. Kasturi, who having worked as a college Principal, Programme Executive in All India Radio, freelance journalist, staying in Ramana Maharshi Ashram for a few years, had finally settled here as the editor of “Sanathana Sarathi”, using his multilingual proficiency for authoring Baba’s biography.

– Excerpted from “Nectar of Love” by
B.V. Ramana Rao.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

TAIWAN

ON 16TH NOVEMBER 2014, 200 people attended a two-hour programme at the Tien Educational Centre in Taipei, celebrating both Bhagavan's 89th Birthday and the 18th anniversary of SSEHV in Taiwan. Local students from the Sathya Sai Educare Programme (kindergarten) sang human values songs; SSE students from Tienmu Sathya Sai Centre sang devotional songs, and graduating students performed a drama titled "The Angels of Light". Taiwanese SSE teachers offered a presentation, "Selfless Service", and students recited a composition titled "The World of Non-violence".

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

More than 80 members of the Bosnia SSIO and the public celebrated Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday in a



Bhagavan's 89th Birthday celebration in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Sarajevo art gallery. The programme began with a short video, followed by quotations on love and selfless service by Bhagavan. Devotional poems were recited by two professional actresses. The programme concluded with songs by Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, and Jewish faith groups from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CROATIA

On Avatar Declaration Day in 2013, Sathya Sai volunteers, including youth, resolved to serve the homeless in Rijeka. The volunteers spent several hours in locating 30 destitute individuals who usually hide from public view, and served



The restaurant where the homeless are served food.

them sandwiches, cakes, fruit, and milk. On Christmas Day 2013, the volunteers returned to serve food to the homeless and entertained them with a musical programme. The workers of a nearby

business, in appreciation of the loving services, switched on powerful overhead lights, lighting up the street. This service project continued on the streets on a monthly basis until 2014, when a few Sathya Sai volunteers opened a restaurant on the same street. The volunteers now invite the homeless to dine inside the restaurant, where they are seated comfortably at tables set with china and silverware.

– Sathya Sai International Organisation

BHARAT

Delhi–NCR: With the aim of promoting awareness about the relevance of Human Values in daily life, a "Walk for Values" was organised in Noida, Delhi-NCR on 22nd February 2015 by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Delhi-NCR. The event garnered support and participation from a large number of people from across the city. Over 3,800 people came out to participate



A walk for values in Noida, Delhi-NCR.

in this altruistic event. Groups from over 20 schools, five colleges and 10 corporates walked along pledging their support to the five human values of love, truth, peace, non-violence and right conduct.

Gujarat: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat organised "Sri Sai Sandesh Yatra" from 15th to 21st November 2014 to create awareness about Swami's Mission and Sai Organisation's activities in all parts of the State. The Yatra passed through about 350 villages covering a distance of over 2,000 km in ten districts. A total of nearly 5,000 devotees participated in this activity.

Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital

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– Medical Superintendent

ONLINE ROOM RESERVATION PORTAL

Greetings on the holy occasion of Ugadi! The Divine Mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has spread far and wide to over 150 countries in the world. Bhagavan always had utmost concern for the welfare of the devotees. While He urged every devotee to make his stay in the Ashram meaningful and

spiritual, He was also caring about their welfare, comfort and the amenities provided to them. He would often lovingly enquire them about their stay in Prasanthi Nilayam. In that direction, with the Divine blessings and guidance of Bhagavan, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust is happy to announce the launch of Online Room Reservation Website for the benefit of the devotees. Devotees can visit www.prasanthinilayam.in and book rooms 30 days in advance.



– *Secretary*
Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME IN CARDIAC ANAESTHESIA UNDER IACTA EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CELL

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– *Joint Director*

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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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7. Bhakthi And Health
8. Life Is Love, Enjoy It!
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Rudram chanting by priests.



Ati Rudra Maha Yajna in progress.



*A soulful music concert by
Ms. Jyotsna and Ms. Suvarna.*

Bhakti, Virakti and Mukti

Bhakti (devotion) is essential for experiencing Ananda (bliss). Bhakti is the source of man's true Shakti (power). This power endows man with various abilities. Through this power, man can develop ultimately Virakti (detachment). When detachment grows, man achieves Mukti (liberation). Mukti is not a special state or object. It is the gradual elimination of all desires. Desires arising from Kama (lust), Krodha (anger) and Lobha (greed) have to be reduced as much as possible.

– *Baba*



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