



Sanathana Sarathi

APRIL 2016





Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

Vol.: 59 Issue No. 4 Date of Publication: 1st April

April

2016

© Sri Sathya Sai
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division
Prasanthi Nilayam

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

On behalf of the owner, Sri Sathya Sai
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi
Nilayam 515134, Anantapur District (A.P.)
And Printed at M/s Rajhans Enterprises, 136,
4th Main Road, Industrial Town, Rajaji Nagar,
Bengaluru 560044, Karnataka
And Published at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust,
Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam
515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

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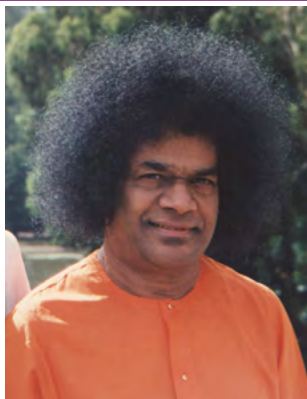
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"God is all-pervasive. Develop the feeling that God is everywhere. To have that broad feeling, get rid of your animal qualities. Only when you remove your animal qualities will divine feelings manifest in you. So, along with Namasmarana (repetition of God's Name), you should also develop broad-mindedness."

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Bhagavan's Photographs Online: www.saireflections.org

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Other Countries: ₹ 850

or US \$19 or UK £13 or €13 or

CAN \$22, AUS \$26

Telugu India: ₹ 60 (12 issues)

Other Countries: ₹ 550 or £9 or US \$13

or €9, CAN \$15 or AUS \$17

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Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications
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AVATAR VANI

TREASURE SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE IN YOUR HEART

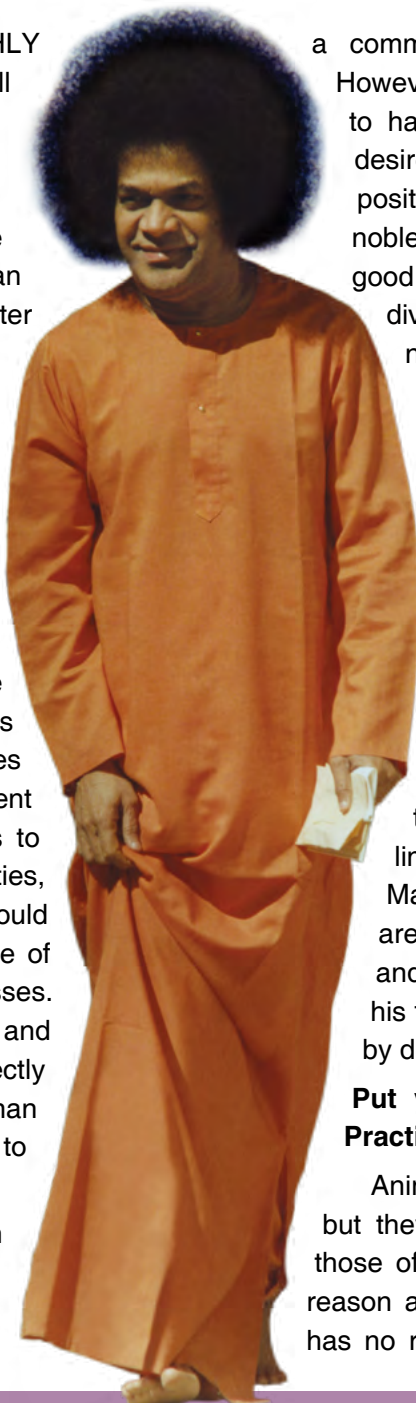
DO NOT ALLOW BAD THOUGHTS TO ENTER YOUR MIND

HUMAN LIFE IS HIGHLY valuable, sacred and full of radiance of virtues. We waste such a noble human life for the sake of sensual pleasures and worldly possessions. The main responsibility of a human being is to develop good character and realise human values.

Face Problems to Develop Human Qualities

Man is born without any desires and qualities. At the time of birth, he has no attributes whatsoever. As he grows up, he acquires some qualities, due to the influence of the food habits he develops and the company he associates with. As he develops attachment and possessive instinct, he has to face so many losses, difficulties, troubles and challenges. Man should uphold human values in the face of all challenges, defeats and losses. Human life is full of problems and challenges. They all help indirectly to develop human qualities. If man is to lead a human life, he has to develop human qualities.

In the first instance, man develops desires. Desires are common to all, whether one is young or old, man or woman,



a common man or a saint. However, it is very important to have good desires, e.g., desire to reach an exalted position, desire to lead a noble life, desire to be a good student, desire to tread divine path. It is quite natural for man to have desires as he has to live in the world. But there should be a limit to his desires. As his desires have crossed all limits due to the effect of Kali Yuga, he has lost his peace and is experiencing restlessness. Desires may be there, but there should be some limit to man's desires. Man's unlimited desires are like chains which bind and imprison him. He loses his freedom as he is bound by desires.

Put your Knowledge into Practice

Animals have also desires, but they are not limitless like those of man. Animals have a reason and a season, but man has no reason and no season.

That is why man today is facing so many troubles and problems.

Man has no dearth of food, raiment and shelter. Then, what is the reason for his restlessness? It is only excessive desires that make him restless. Therefore, he must put a ceiling on his desires. *Less luggage, more comfort makes travel a pleasure.* Life is a long journey. In this long journey of life, you should not have excess luggage. This in Vedantic parlance is called renunciation (Vairagya).

You have been reading about renunciation for a long time. You have been listening to many Discourses. But how much have you been able to practise? If you question yourself, you will find that you have not moved even a single step forward; you are where you were. In spite of listening to and reading Vedantic texts, in spite of Japa (chanting) and meditation, in spite of knowledge of sacred texts, your position is the same as it was. How can you make progress? You will reach noble heights only when you put your knowledge into practice. But students today are zero in practice and hero in bookish knowledge. You may hear and learn so many things. But your position is the same as it has been. Instead of learning hundred things, it is very important to practice at least one. So, you should start practising. You get experience only through practice.

Your hunger is not satiated merely by hearing the names of delicious items. You have to make an effort to eat. A beggar will never improve his condition simply by listening about the greatness of economy. Pitch darkness can never get dispelled by listening to the power of light. Similarly, you can never become a Vedantin by learning about Vedanta.

Your heart is the cup. Divinity is sugar. Worldly desires are water. When you put in the spoon of intellect and stir the water, which is Sadhana, then Divinity will spread all over. So, what is it that you are supposed to do? Divinity within you is quite natural. You are not expanding it all over. You are limiting it; you are making it narrow with the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. This is only contraction of love. But there should be expansion of love.

Bookish knowledge is merely superficial knowledge. What we need is supreme knowledge. Supreme knowledge is obtained through practical knowledge. So, man must make an effort to practise at least to some extent. In spite of all their learning, people do not make any effort to attain God's grace. They do not develop the spirit of sacrifice. What is it that we practice? What is it that we sacrifice? We neither practise nor do we sacrifice anything. Then why should we listen? We listen to sacred texts just as we listen to other stories. In daily life, we listen to the radio, we watch TV. What is the result of watching this? We derive happiness so long as we are watching. Later we forget. But spirituality is not like that. That which is heard, that which is watched must be treasured in the heart. Then only will we have satisfaction and strength.

Man considers himself good and decries others as bad. But good and bad depend on one's thinking. Here is a small example.

Once Krishna thought of testing the nature of Yudhishtira and Duryodhana. First, He called Yudhishtira and said, "I

have a task to perform. For that, I need a very mean-minded person who is given to untruthful and evil ways. Can you bring such a person”? Afterwards, Krishna called Duryodhana and said to him, “Duryodhana! A great task is to be performed. For that, a noble person is required who is pure, kind-hearted and virtuous”. Both of them agreed to perform the tasks assigned to them by Krishna. Yudhishtira went in one direction and Duryodhana in another direction in search of the persons asked for by Krishna. After some time, Yudhishtira came back, and said most humbly to Krishna, “Oh Lord! There is no wicked person in our kingdom. I am the only one who has some wickedness or the other. Please make use of me”. Some time after this, Duryodhana also came back and said to Krishna, “Krishna! A thoroughly noble person is nowhere to be seen in this kingdom. I think, I am the only such person. If You tell me the task, I will surely perform it”.

In the egoistic outlook of Duryodhana, all appeared to be wicked. In the humble nature of Yudhishtira, all appeared to be good. Hence, whatever is the colour of the glasses that you wear, everything will appear to you of that colour. If your vision is evil, everything will appear evil to you. Duryodhana was extremely wicked and evil-minded. On the other hand, Yudhishtira was an epitome of virtues. He was the very embodiment of Sathya and Dharma. Therefore, everyone appeared noble and good to him. An egoistic person will think that he knows everything; others are ignoramuses. But one who knows everything is always humble. One who claims that he knows everything actually does not know anything. One who says that he does not know anything may really know everything. So, we may try to

know everything. But we should practise at least one or two things out of many that we know.

Many people know the story of the efficacy of chanting the Divine Name of God. As narrated by the speaker in his talk, by hearing the Name of the Lord, the bird had next birth as a calf and the calf as a prince. Many people chant ‘Sai Ram’, ‘Sai Ram’ constantly. But to what extent is there transformation in them? If they enquire themselves, there is not even a fraction of change in them. What is the use? A bird could change, an animal could also change, the prince too could have merged with the Lord. But what is the reason for lack of transformation in modern man? It is not enough if you repeat God’s Name. The tape recorder can also repeat the Name of the Lord. Gramophone record also repeats Lord’s Name. To what extent do they enjoy the result? So, we should not chant the Name of the Lord mechanically. We should do it with full awareness. Everything should come out of the heart, not merely out of the lips. We say everything with lips, but we do not experience at the level of the heart. In order that the human life be transformed into divine, we should imprint divine feelings in our heart. We should develop the spirit of sacrifice and sublimate human life.

Sacrifice Imparts Immortality

What do you mean by spirituality? Spirituality does not mean mere Japa, meditation, Bhajans. They are all good actions. But man has to sacrifice all animal qualities which are deep rooted in his heart over many past births. Then only his chanting of Divine Name will have due impact.

When you chant God’s Name, sacred feelings should also develop in you. When a tree grows up, its roots also should go



in the soil. The weight of the tree is borne by the roots below. Then only will the tree have safety and strength. If the roots don't go deep, the whole tree will fall. So, as the practice is growing, the feelings also should go deep. God is more concerned with your inner feelings than your external practice. When external practice and inner feelings go together, your Sadhana is transformed into divine radiance. You should change both externally and internally because God is present within, without and all over. As the Vedas say, *Antarbahischa Tatsarvam Vyapya Narayana Sthita* (That all-pervasive God is present within and without). When you advance on the spiritual path, you should also enquire how far you have controlled your worldly attachments. As your attachment increases, your distance from the Lord also increases proportionately. However, when you develop attachment towards God, your attachment to the world decreases. It is a see-saw. You are at the centre. On one side is the world and on the other side is God. If you move towards God, world will be away from you. If you move towards the world, you will become distant from God.

In which direction should you move then? You have worldly attachment and desire for God. But you cannot have both at the same time. Heart is a single-seated sofa, not a double-seated one. It is not a musical chair either. It should not change continuously. *Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaik Amrutatthwamanasu* (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice). Therefore, if you want to attain immortality, you must renounce worldliness. Here in this container there is water. If you want to pour milk in it, you have to throw the water out of the vessel.

Then only can you pour milk in it. If you pour milk when there is water, neither water nor milk will stay there. Similarly, in your heart so many worldly desires are there. First, make it empty by removing worldly desires; then fill it up with divine desires. If the heart is really empty, you can fill it with anything. If it is filled with other things, then how can you fill it with divine knowledge?

First, cleanse your heart. That is Chitta Shuddhi (purity of heart). Without purity, unity is not possible. Where there is no unity, divinity will never enter. On the other hand, enmity may enter there. First of all, develop purity. What do you mean by purity? God is in everyone. So, you should respect all. You should develop that nature. *Sarva Jiva Namaskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (whomsoever you salute, it reaches God) and *Sarva Jiva Tiraskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (whomsoever you criticise, it reaches God). So, whomsoever you meet, offer respect to him realising that God indwells him. Never criticise anybody. Criticising others amounts to criticising God.

Rectify your mistakes; never point out others' mistakes. As Jesus said, man does not see the log in his own eye but looks at the speck in other's eye? It is not good. Man should get rid of his own defects. He should see good in others; never look at their faults. That is real spiritual practice. When man looks at his own defects and others' merits, he will reach noble heights. When man tries to cover up his own mistakes and exaggerates others' demerits, he completely subdues his humanity.

So, first he should enquire within himself. It is self-enquiry. When he enquires, then he will have self-realisation. Wherefrom does self-realisation come? Self-realisation comes out of the Self. Self-confidence leads



to self-satisfaction, self-satisfaction leads to self-sacrifice and self-sacrifice leads to Self-realisation. Everything is within the Self. Then what is the Self? That is the Atma.

Develop Broad-mindedness

Man has to investigate and visualise his own true Self. He says Nenu, Nenu ('I', 'I'). Who am 'I'? Where is that 'I'? Is it in the body or in the mind or in the intellect or in the Chitta or in the Antahkarana (inner instrument)? No. This 'I' is present all over. Constant Integrated Awareness is 'I'. That is Prajnanam (Supreme Consciousness). That is God. It is in the mind, it is the body, it is in the intellect, it is all over.



This morning also Swami said this. In the cup, there is water. If you put a teaspoon of sugar in it, the sugar will settle down at the bottom. Above there is water. Taste lies at the bottom, not on the top. If you drink the top water, it is tasteless. What is that tasteless water? The tasteless water is worldly desires. But Divinity is at the bottom. In order to mix sugar with water on the top, what should you do? You should stir it well with a spoon. In this way, sugar at the bottom will spread all over in the water. Then wherever you drink, it is bound to be sweet. Your heart is the cup. Divinity

When you advance on the spiritual path, you should also enquire how far you have controlled your worldly attachments. As your attachment increases, your distance from the Lord also increases proportionately. However, when you develop attachment towards God, your attachment to the world decreases.

So, God is all-pervasive. Develop the feeling that God is everywhere. To have that broad feeling, get rid of your animal qualities. Only when you remove your animal qualities will divine feelings manifest in you. So, along with Namasmara (repetition of God's Name), you should also develop broad-mindedness.

Many people come here from far off places, spending a lot of money. After spending so much money and travelling long distances what is it that they should get? They should develop divinity within.

is sugar. Worldly desires are water. When you put in the spoon of intellect and stir the water, which is Sadhana, then Divinity will spread all over. So, what is it that you are supposed to do? Divinity within you is quite natural. You are not expanding it all over. You are limiting it; you are making it narrow with the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. This is only contraction of love. But there should be expansion of love. In order to expand love, you should have the feeling that everyone belongs to you because there is God in everyone.



So, the true spiritual practice is to travel from the position of 'I' to the position of 'we'. You should travel from small zero to big zero. This is a zero. There is another bigger zero. It is also zero. Still bigger is another big zero. It is also zero. All are zeros. There is difference only in quantity, but quality is the same. To think that we are moving from smaller truth to bigger truth is a mistake. Truth is truth. Truth remains the same at all times.

You should have a broad mind. When you have a broad mind, you will be able to recognise the Divinity in everyone. Without broad feelings, study of sacred texts is merely a waste of time and labour. You cannot attain Divinity merely by reading scriptures, if you have narrow feelings. To realise one's Self, one word is enough. To tell others, you have to read many texts. That which is said by reading the texts has no taste. It is not the true sign of Divinity.

Chant the Divine Name from the Depth of your Heart

Siva keeps the moon on the top of his head to give light to everyone. But he keeps the poison in his throat. He keeps all that is harmful in himself, but distributes the good to all. That is equanimity (Samatva) in the nature of Easwara or Siva. *Iswara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). That Iswara is in everyone. You should also be like Iswara. Distribute good to others but keep all the bad within you. Do not distribute your bad qualities. You have to subdue all your bad qualities, never pass on to anybody. But distribute good, do good to everybody. You may not have time to go through the 18 Puranas (mythological texts). But you should know their essence. What is that essence? The essence of 18 Puranas

is: *Help Ever, Hurt Never*. It is enough if you know this. Help everybody. Never hurt anyone. If you know these two principles, you can know anything.

God is in everyone. You have to recognise this truth and develop love for all. The spirit of love is spirituality. Split of love is duality. Boys! At this young age, you should develop broad feelings. Instead of telling many things to others, it is enough if you practise at least one yourself. Study of sacred texts can never transform anybody at any time. You may repeat many Slokas (verses) but your Shoka (grief) will never be eradicated. Put into practice the essence of one of the verses you read. That is enough.

There are potatoes and chapathi served in the plate. Even if you repeat 'potato chapathi, potato chapathi' a hundred times, your hunger will not be satiated. When you eat potato chapathi, then only will your hunger be appeased. First experience, then practise. It is no use merely chanting Lord's Name. You go on repeating Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram – Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram – Krishna, Krishna, Krishna... like a tape recorder; it is of no use. It is not enough if it comes out of the lips; it should come out of the heart. When it comes out of the heart, then there will be transformation. Through transformation, you will get bliss (Ananda). That bliss only will lead you to self-realisation. So, self-realisation is important. We should question ourselves, who am I, who am I, am I the body? No! When you say, "This is my body", then body is separate from you. You say, "This is my mind". Then mind is separate from you. You are different from the mind. "Then who am I?" you should ask. You say, "This is my body, this is my mind, this is my Buddhi (intellect).



Then ask yourself, “Who am I”? You should say, “I am I. I am not the body, I am not the mind. Mind and body are only instruments. I am the owner, I am the master. Therefore, I am Atma”.

Make use of all the instruments. Develop the feelings that you are the Atma. Then you can experience the Self. Body is a water bubble. Mind is a mad monkey. Don't follow the body. Don't follow the mind. Follow the conscience. That is Atma. That is the true self.

Realise Unity in Diversity

Body is needed. Body is an instrument. Because of the body you could practise thus far. There is the mind. Don't allow bad thoughts to enter your mind. Divert all actions of the body and all thinking of the mind towards God. Then work will be transformed into worship. Whatever actions you perform, consider them as acts of worship. Never divide, this is my work and that is God's work. Every work, any work is God's work. When we go with that feeling, we can easily understand spirituality.

Never give scope to the feelings of mine and thine. That is ego. You should not have ego. So far as you have ego, you cannot accomplish anything. You should be very humble. You should have humility and obedience. When you have humility, then you will have all potentialities and capabilities. So long as there is ego, you can achieve nothing. So, get away from ego. Develop obedience and humility.

To think of the Lord, who is all-pervasive, is most essential. From tomorrow, if devotees have any doubts, they should get them clarified. Westerners come here with very high expectations. We should give them this opportunity. They have no idea of Indian

culture. What do you mean by culture? What is the difference between Indian culture and Western culture? In Swami's view, there is no difference whatsoever. There is only difference in words, nomenclature. But the material is one and the same.

An Englishman may say, it is 'water'. A Hindi person calls it 'Pani'. A Telugu person calls it 'Neeru', a Tamilian calls it 'Thanni'. A Sanskrit knowing person calls it 'Vari'. Only there is change in words but water is water. God is one. But names and forms differ. That is unity in diversity.

Jewels are many, but gold is one.

Beings are many, but breath is one.

Stars are many, but sky is one.

Nations are many, but earth is one.

(Telugu Poem)

We should firmly establish that unity in diversity. There is no difference at all. There are no differences whatsoever among the congregation here. Here there is only one big house. The entire universe is one big mansion. America is one room, Italy is another room, U.K. is another room. Different countries are like different rooms. In a big mansion, there are all sorts of rooms. A small example.

Here is a big house. There is dining hall, drawing room, bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. There are differences here. But when do you get differences? Only when there are walls. When you remove the walls, there will be only one single hall. No rooms – there are no differences. Then where do you get differences? Because of the Upadhis (adjuncts). The walls are an obstacle. When you remove the walls, everything will be one. We have to remove the walls of ego. When you remove the walls, the dining hall, the bathroom, the kitchen, everything becomes one. So, we have to get rid of ego.



We should develop love and love only. *Love is God, Live in Love*. Only through love, can you resolve all differences.

We have devotees coming from U.K., Russia, China, U.S.A. The relationship here is only of love. Love is one. When there is no love, you don't need to come here spending a lot of money and bearing all inconveniences. Out of love, you are not bothered about your inconveniences. At their residences, where they have separate drawing room, separate bedroom, separate dressing room, they don't have

satisfaction. But here where no comforts are available, all adjust. They understand. Their adjustment and understanding amount to a very great spiritual practice. Sacrificing all conveniences, they try to enjoy the bliss. It is only that bliss that unifies. As they adjust in a single room, they should develop broad feelings. Get rid of narrow thinking. Develop the spirit of love. That spirit of love is spirituality.

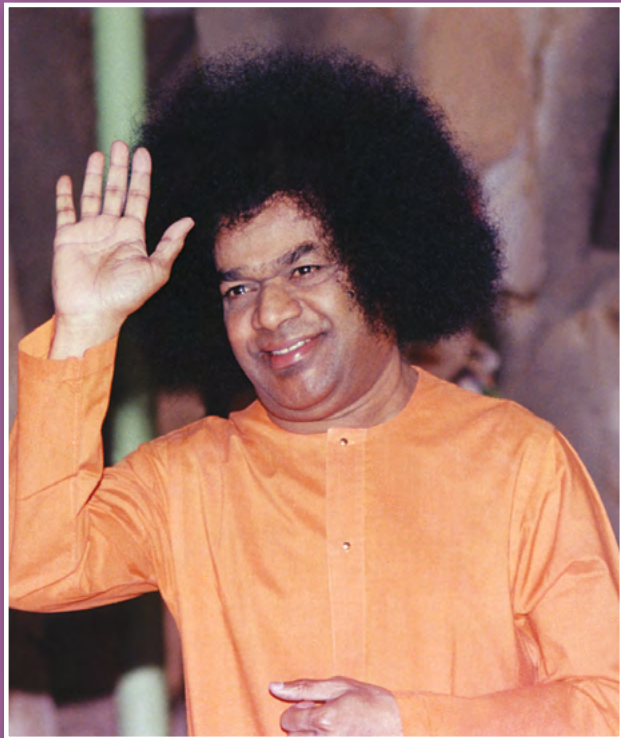
– **Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 4th April 1993.**

Whatever spiritual path you tread, it should help you to uproot ignorance.

What is ignorance? It is the belief in all that is outside, the external scenario. You have to discriminate whether it is right or wrong, good or bad. You should have Samyak Drishti (right vision). Then you will attain deservedness. I am always ready to tell you the easy path to divinity. I will be happy only when you are happy. Make every effort to put into practice what you hear.

Bhajans are highly sacred. Bhajan singing makes the heart sacred. What is important is that it should come out from the heart. Bhajan is not just rhythm, tune and beat. You should sing God's Name with love.

– Baba



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF KANCHIPURAM DEVOTEES

MORE THAN 500 DEVOTEES came from Kanchipuram (North) District of Tamil Nadu on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam and presented an excellent cultural programme on 27th February 2016. The first item of the programme was a Carnatic music presentation by Sri Sai Vignesh, a former Bal Vikas student, who rendered a couple of Carnatic classical compositions of famous musicians, maintaining all their lyrical beauty and musical charm. His presentation also included the devotional song “Bho Shambho Siva Shambho Swayambho” and a song dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya. This was followed by a speech by another former Bal Vikas student, Sri Sai Krishna, who spoke about the universal divine love of Bhagavan Baba, and said, the story of Sai is the story of limitless divine love. The next item of the programme was Bharatanatyam dance by two dancers who first presented a dance dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya and then a dance expressing gratitude to Bhagavan



Folk dance by Bal Vikas girls students of Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu.

Baba. Another dance presentation was made by Bal Vikas girls students who performed a folk dance of Tamil Nadu in their colourful costumes to the delight of the viewers in Sai Kulwant Hall.

SIVARATHRI FESTIVAL

The holy festival of Sivarathri was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with great devotion and piety. On the auspicious night of 7th March 2016, a large number of devotees participated in Akhanda Bhajan for 12 hours which commenced at 6.00 p.m. on 7th March and concluded at 6.00 a.m. on 8th March.

Siva Sankalpa: A Dance Presentation

On the eve of Sivarathri, Prasanthi Dance Group, comprising former students of Bhagavan, made an enrapturing dance presentation entitled “Siva Sankalpa” (Will of Siva) in Sai Kulwant Hall which was beautifully decorated for the festive event. The dancers offered their adoration and worship to the Divine Cosmic Dancer, Lord Siva, through this devout dance performance.

Students Musical Offering

On the Sivarathri morning, 7th March 2016, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning made a musical offering to Lord Siva which commenced at 8.20 a.m. with auspicious Panchavadyam notes by the percussion band of the Institute. Recitation of Stotras (praise songs) and devotional songs which followed next accompanied by a brilliant commentary and narration of mythological stories showcased the Divine



Musical offering by students on Sivarathri morning.

Glory of Lord Siva and Bhagavan Baba. A DVD on “Sai Symphony” music programme held on Bhagavan’s 90th Birthday was released on this auspicious occasion.

Abhishekam of Sayeeswara Linga

Ceremonial procession led by the students band and Veda chanting group of students and followed by priests carrying Sayeeswara Linga marked the beginning of the evening programme on 7th March 2016. The Linga was brought out from Bhajan Mandir in this grand manner and set up at a raised platform in front of Bhagavan’s Samadhi. The Abhishekam (ceremonial bathing) of the Linga was thereafter performed with 18 items by the



Ceremonial procession of Sayeeswara Linga.

priests amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras and auspicious notes of Panchavadyam music. The significance of these offerings was explained in Telugu and English for the

benefit of the devotees. While decoration of the Linga was performed by the priests after Abhishekam, the students chanted Sri Rudram. Worship was then offered to the Linga by the priests accompanied by recitation of Sathya Sai Ashtottaram followed by chanting of Lingashtakam Stotra. The ceremony of Abhishekam of Sayeeswara Linga came to a conclusion with offer of Arati to it at 5.30 p.m.

Sivarathri Bhajan

A video clip of Bhagavan’s Sivarathri Discourse was then screened in which He explained the esoteric significance of the Siva principle and exhorted the devotees to realise the fundamental truth of oneness of all as the same divine principle is present



A huge gathering of devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall participating in Sivarathri Bhajan.

in all. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan “Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma”. With this Bhajan of Bhagavan, the Sivarathri Akhanda Bhajan for 12 hours began at 6.00 p.m. A large number of devotees participated in the Sivarathri Bhajan which continued throughout the night of 7th March 2016 and came to a close at 6.00 a.m. on 8th March 2016 with two Bhajans in the golden voice of Bhagavan, namely, “Siva Siva Siva Shambho Hara Hara Hara Shambho” and “Hey Girdhara Gopala”. After Arati, Prasadam of tamarind rice and sweet Pongal was served to the

entire assembly of students and devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall.

HOLI FESTIVAL

The joyous spirit of Holi came alive at Prasanthi Nilayam when Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Bihar and Jharkhand organised two programmes of devotional music and Holi songs in Sai Kulwant Hall on 23rd and 24th March 2016.

The first programme was presented by three noted musicians on 23rd March 2016 who enthralled the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall for over one hour by their brilliant rendition of devotional and Holi songs which included “Sai Ram Bhagavan”, “Mein To Sanvare Ke Rang Rati” (I am dyed in the colour of Krishna), “Tu Pyar Ka Sagar Hai” (You are the ocean of love), “Sai Baba Bolo Sai Baba Bolo” (hail Sai Baba), “Aaj Braj Mein Holi Hai Re Rasiya” (Today is Holi in Braj). The singers who presented these songs were Sri Ravi Kumar and his two daughters Mrs. Jyotsna and Kum. Suvarna.

The next programme of devotional and Holi songs was presented on 24th March 2016 by Prof. Krishnanand Mishra, Sri Gaurang Kumar Choudhary and Smt.

Rachna Jha. Commencing their presentation with a Maithili song of famous Maithili poet Vidyapati “Jai Jai Jai Jai Akhila Dharini” (hail the Divine Mother who supports the universe), the singers showcased the glory of Bharat’s rich cultural heritage through a fine selection of devotional songs dedicated to Rama, Krishna, Siva and Bhagavan



Musical offering by the singers of Bihar and Jharkhand.

Baba and concluded with a hilarious Holi song “Sainath Parthi Mein Rang Barse” (there is a riot of colours in Parthi). Bhajans followed next led by the devotees of Bihar and Jharkhand. The programme concluded with the Bhajan “Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram” in the golden voice of Bhagavan, thus bringing to an end the joyous Holi celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Discipline and concentration are like the embankments which control and direct the flood waters of a river into harmless and fruitful channels. You are engaged in Sadhana and enquiry into the Self and, in this great task, these two will be of great help. No one ignorant of the path can reach the goal; no one unaware of the goal can choose the path and tread it. You must have the proper conception of the path, as well as its destination before you decide on the journey.

– Baba

From our Archives

RECOGNISE YOUR SPIRITUAL REALITY

PRECEPT AND PRACTICE SHOULD GO TOGETHER

THE STORY OF RAMA IS THE story of one who was filled with the sweetness of compassion. This story is the royal road to human progress and an ideal life.

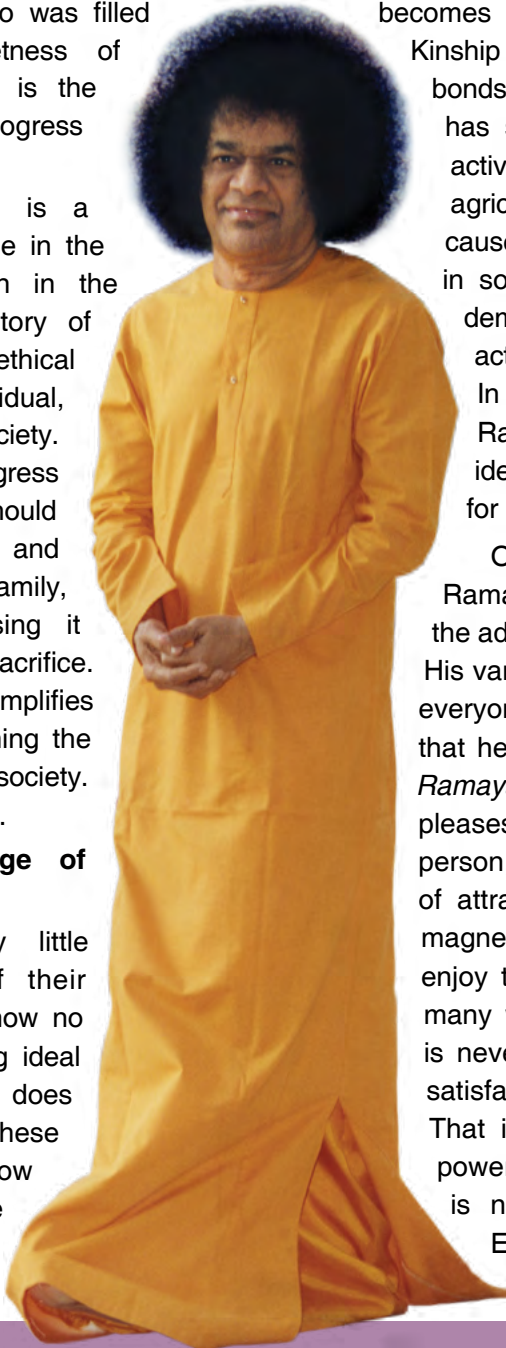
The Rama principle is a combination of the Divine in the human and the human in the Divine. The inspiring story of Rama presents the triple ethical code relating to the individual, the family and society. If society is to progress properly, the family should be happy, harmonious and united. For unity in the family, the individuals composing it must have a spirit of sacrifice. The Rama story exemplifies the ethical codes governing the individual, the family and society. It holds forth many ideals.

Everyone is an Image of Rama

Children today pay little heed to the words of their parents. Parents also show no great concern for rearing ideal children. The preceptor does not command respect these days. The teachers show little affection for the students. Hatred and bitterness between

people are growing. Today's friend becomes tomorrow's enemy. Kinship itself is robbed of its bonds of affection. Pollution has sullied every sphere of activity—business, education, agriculture, politics, etc., and caused general degradation in society. In every sphere, demeaning ideas and actions are rampant. In such a situation, the Ramayana provides the ideals and the examples for reforming society.

On the occasion of Sri Rama Navami, people hail the advent of Rama and recall His various achievements. But everyone should remember that he is an image of Rama. *Ramayati Iti Rama* (One who pleases is Rama). In every person, there is this power of attraction. Because of this magnetic power man is able to enjoy the world. He develops many worldly desires. But he is never satisfied. He derives satisfaction from discontent. That is a sign of the divine power of attraction. There is no limit to this power. Everyone can experience the divinity within him.



See the difference between Rama and Ravana. Both were equally intellectually eminent and were great scholars. Ravana was a great man. Rama was a good man. The difference between greatness and goodness should be understood. Ravana, out of egoism and uncontrolled desire, misused his knowledge and brought about his ruin. Rama used his knowledge for the benefit of the people and made them happy. Ravana did not digest his knowledge properly and suffered from the consequences of indigestion. The difference between Rama and Ravana was that between Dharma (righteousness) and Adharma (unrighteousness).

Rama and Ravana are present in each human being. When a person takes to unrighteous course, he becomes a Ravana. When one pursues the path of truth and righteousness, one becomes Rama.

Lead a Spiritual Life

Precept and practice should go together like medicine and diet control. Meditating on God, one should engage oneself in godly activities. It is useless to study or listen to spiritual discourses without leading a spiritual life. Righteousness means living according to the dictates of one's conscience. Acting in violation of the conscience is wrong. To realise this, there is no need to study books.

Man has the option to pursue the Pravritti Marga (path of worldliness) or seek the bliss that is in Nivritti Marga (path of spirituality). Everyone is responsible for his condition. It is a bad habit to blame others for one's plight. One should recognise one's defects. There is no greater sin than accusing others. One should see the Divine in others. When this attitude grows, the nation will prosper. Men have immense potentialities for good or

ill. By their good thoughts and good deeds, they can transform the state of the nation.

Everyone should realise that he is the embodiment of the Divine. You may talk about the Avatars of Rama and Krishna. But your present Avatar is no less significant. All the Avatars came to tell mankind that all human beings are Avatars (incarnations of the Divine). Having taken birth as human beings, people should conduct themselves as embodiments of the Divine (as beings in whom the Divine spirit resides). Recognising your spiritual reality, you should live always in the Atma Tattwa.

Man should progress upwards from day to day, but he is going down the slope. This is not the right learning. Every day you should make the ascent towards the Divine. "I am God. God is not different from me." This is the conviction with which men should live.

Live up to Rama's Principle

Rama was always deeply concerned about the welfare of his subjects. He fostered unity among people. This is the duty of everyone at the individual level. Four qualities have to be developed by every individual: equality, integrity, unity and fraternity. The individual's personality blossoms when he has these four qualities. A family composed of individuals of this nature is an asset to the nation. It is not enough if people merely observe Rama's birthday and glorify the Ramayana on one day in a year. Each one should develop Rama's qualities within himself. You should experience Rama's divinity within yourself, irrespective of whatever name you may bear. From the Atmic point of view, you are Rama or Krishna.



Let people understand the Rama principle and live up to it. Restrain your desires. Experience the bliss of the Divine at all times. That is true humanness. It manifests itself when you think of God. Happiness is union with God. How much bliss can you experience if you see God in yourself and in everybody! Let all differences cease. Recognising the divinity that is present in all, you should foster the principle of love and develop compassion in the heart. Love is God. It transcends all human relationships based on attachment. Develop divine and selfless love which is enduring and infinite. A true lover of God will experience no sorrow. On this auspicious day, ponder over the sacred teachings and develop the spirit of oneness.

Put the Teachings of the Ramayana into Practice

The Ramayana speaks of the true identity of the individual, the real significance of the family and the sanctity of society. It teaches the importance of human values. Today corruption is rampant in all fields such as business, education and politics. Under these circumstances, the principles of the Ramayana are very important. It explains in detail the relationship that should exist between brothers, the father and the son, the preceptor and the disciple.

Today many people read the holy Ramayana, but few understand its essence. They spend their time in acquiring bookish knowledge and superficial knowledge, but fail to have practical knowledge. There are many people who can explain the teachings of Ramayana in a beautiful way, but how many of them obey the command of their fathers in their daily life? Not many! What is the use of reading various texts, if we do

not put into practice the message contained in them? Can anyone enjoy the taste of various delicious items such as Mysore Pak, Gulab Jamoon, Jilebi, etc., by merely repeating their names? No. One can enjoy the taste only when one eats them. Mere textual information is of no use. But, man today is interested only in information, and not transformation. Intellect will blossom only when there is transformation.

If your ambitions are not fulfilled, do not waver or get depressed. He is a realised one who is cheerful in the face of all adversities. (Telugu Poem)

One has to face many obstacles in one's life, but one should never get depressed. Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a dream, realise it. Life is a game, play it. Life is love, enjoy it. Be cheerful and courageous in the face of adversities, never give scope to any weakness whatsoever. The Vedanta declared: *Na Ayamatma Balaheenena Labhya* (a weak-minded person cannot realise the Atma). A weak-minded person cannot accomplish anything. So, you should be strong-minded. Develop faith in that which is good.

As there is no fear of sin and love for God, humanness is on the decline in human beings. This is the cause for lack of peace in the world. (Telugu Poem)

Therefore, man should cultivate *Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti* (love for God, fear of sin and morality in society). Though Rama and Ravana were equally well-versed in all forms of knowledge, sage Valmiki extolled Rama as Divine and condemned Ravana as wicked. What

continued on page 20...



R.S. Subramanian

MY LIFE'S MOST PRECIOUS TEN DAYS

THIS HAPPENED IN JUNE 1954 during my maiden visit to Puttaparthi.

The journey to Puttaparthi was very arduous and tiresome in those days. How Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba drew me to His Divine fold at a young age of 17 years, when I was just a college student in Delhi, is an interesting story, which I would like to share with my fellow devotees through Sanathana Sarathi.

Journey to Puttaparthi

A native of Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu, I had spent the first ten years of my life with my paternal grandparents in a remote hamlet called Melappavoor. In July 1946, I bid adieu to my village and set out for New Delhi where my parents were already living along with my uncle, Sri V.S. Chidambaram, a long-time Sai devotee and renowned violinist who, for more than ten years, had been teaching violin to many people including quite a few Sai devotees. Among his students was a noble lady, Smt. Kamala Sarathi, who was an ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Bhagavan Baba. It was my practice as a high school student to attend regularly lectures of Swami Ranganathananda of Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi, on every Sunday evening. Later as a college student, I used to accompany Smt. Kamala Sarathi every Sunday morning to bring Swami Ranganathananda from the Mission to Delhi University and back, for his lectures on 'Narada Bhakti Sutras' and Adi Sankara's 'Viveka Chudamani' for a period of almost two years. It was during this period

in 1950, that I came to hear about Bhagavan for the first time. How Swami had planned to take care of my first visit to His abode dawned on me later!

A burning desire rose in me to go to Puttaparthi and with my parents' consent, I made my plans at the end of my first year at the college during the summer vacation in June 1954. Thus, I embarked on my journey to meet my dear Lord Sai. I undertook the train journey from Delhi to Bangalore (now Bengaluru). From there I boarded another train and reached Penukonda on 11th June. I had to take a bus from Penukonda to go



to Bukkapatnam en route the final Divine destination. As I boarded the bus, I heard a voice calling me by my nick name. Who could call me at this strange place by my nick name? Who else, but my dear aunty Kamala Sarathi, who by His Divine Will, had been made to board the same bus from an earlier stop, on her journey from Bombay (now Mumbai), to the same Divine destination. It was like the comfort of a cool breeze in the hot desert. All my anxiety about my stay in Puttaparthi disappeared, as the Lord had sent my guardian angel to look after me in His abode. This was the beginning of the Divine Leela, and my heart



was full of joy, with no worry about being in a strange place.

After travelling for about an hour, we reached a small hamlet called Bukkapatnam at about 2.45 p.m. in the sweltering heat of summer. From here the gents were to walk the distance of over five kilometres to Parthi, while ladies, children and the luggage were taken in bullock carts. In this manner, we reached Puttaparthi in the evening at about 5.30 p.m.

We kept our luggage in the old Mandir where Swami used to reside before shifting to the new Mandir in the year 1950. We then left for the new Mandir about 1.5 kilometres away, and as we approached it, Baba, standing in the balcony, smilingly watched us walking towards His abode and blessed us when we reached the Mandir. Baba also made loving enquiries about our welfare and journey. He then asked us to come over to the new Mandir and stay in the new garage which was on the right side of the Mandir, where we now have the three-storeyed East Prasanthi apartments.

Blissful Days of Stay at Puttaparthi

Accordingly, we shifted to the garage and settled down quickly. Again I felt immensely happy and thankful to the Lord that I could succeed in my plan to visit Puttaparthi. I realised that everything was His Will. Thus, I started my brief sojourn of ten days in Parthi. In those days, there was not much of a crowd, and the daily average number of devotees in Puttaparthi was 100-150 only. Baba used to call some of the devotees on the last day of their stay for bestowing special grace, besides counselling or speaking to them on personal matters, after which they undertook their return journeys.

During my stay, the most privileged event was Swami's visit to our garage daily

in the afternoon! Swami would usually get down from His abode at about 4 p.m. for a short stroll and would visit the hutments where permanent residents including Sri N. Kasturi with his wife and mother, stayed. These dozen or so hutments, were situated at about 300 metres, in two parallel rows opposite Baba's abode. Swami would invariably come to our garage first, before going down further to other houses, as was His normal routine. But, more significant for me was the fact that Swami would stand inside the garage and chat with Smt. Kamala Sarathi for about 45 minutes daily, after which He would return to the Mandir, where many devotees would be waiting for Swami's Darshan. During these conversations, Baba would suddenly look at me frequently and smile in all His benevolence. Sometimes, He would lovingly speak words of encouragement looking at me, a nervous young lad, standing in awe, close to the Lord of the Universe! I considered myself so blessed, for I could get His Darshan and also listen to His conversation all the days of my stay in the Ashram. In His talks, Swami would dwell on all aspects of healthy and peaceful living. Besides, Swami advised that one should be loving as well as simple and sincere always. He also said that He would take care of everyone who followed His teachings faithfully.

Time flew by quickly and on 21st June 1954, Swami called me during the morning Darshan for a private interview. The room for the interview has always been the same ever since. As soon as I entered the room behind Bhagavan, He closed the door and beckoned me with utmost love to take Padanamaskar. I did the traditional Sashtanga Namaskar (prostrated obeisance) to the Lord of the Universe and surrendered myself at the



Lotus Feet. Bhagavan touched my head in blessing and lifted me by my shoulders. He then materialised Vibhuti, applied on my forehead and gave the rest to me along with a glossy sheet 5" by 7", containing a photograph of Shirdi Sai Baba and Bhagavan Himself. He gave me 10 more packets of Vibhuti and asked me to take them home. Thereafter, Bhagavan enquired about my parents in my mother tongue, Tamil, and told me a couple of things relating to my home front in Delhi. Then He looked into my eyes intently and said that I had the habit of worrying excessively. He emphatically advised me that I should henceforth give up my habit of worrying. The Lord assured me with motherly concern that everything would be alright in my life as He would always take care of me. I was in tears of ecstasy. Before taking leave, I prostrated once again at His Lotus Feet.

...continued from page 17

is the reason? Ravana did not translate into action the knowledge he had acquired and on the contrary he used it for wicked purposes. On the other hand, Rama translated all his knowledge into action and gave joy to one and all. *Sarvaloka Hithe Ratah* (one engaged in the welfare of all). *Sarva Jnanopasampannah* (one who is endowed with all wisdom). *Sarve Samudhitha Gunaihi* (one who is receptacle of all praiseworthy virtues). These are the three aspects that manifested Rama's divinity. Whoever has these three aspects is essentially divine. In fact, everyone is divine. But because of attachment to the body, man is not able to understand his divine nature. Man can experience and enjoy divinity only by treading along the path of love. *Love is God, God is Love. Live in Love.*

I returned to the garage and bid goodbye to Kamala aunty and also thanked her profusely for taking care of me during the 10 days of my stay with her. I then left Prasanthi Nilayam at 10.15 a.m. for Bukkapatnam. Along with other devotees, I walked up to Bukkapatnam, where I had to board the bus to Penukonda railway station. Thereafter, I resumed my train journey homeward alongside my Invisible Companion with a song in my heart and a swing in my step. Till today, I cherish my boyhood experience at Prasanthi Nilayam during the ten most precious days of my life with Divinity and basking in the all-encompassing love of Bhagavan – our true companion in this life and ever after.

– **Sri R.S. Subramanian is Joint Director (retired), Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), New Delhi.**

*Start the day with love
Spend the day with love
Fill the day with love
End the day with love
This is the way to God.*

The cause for man's suffering is that he has constricted his love to himself and his family. He should develop the broad feeling that all are his brothers and sisters. *Expansion of love is life; contraction of love is death.* All are the children of God. All are sparks of the Divine. Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavadgita: *Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). So, man should have the broad feeling to identify himself with everybody. Humanity can never progress without broad feelings.

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



TRANSFORMATION IS HIS BUSINESS

Jan Floris

I did a little exercise. Whenever I saw a mistake in an employee, first I would mention inside myself three virtues of that person, like: he is always in time, he is working very hard and he has a nice smile. I did this for one and a half year. Everything changed for the better and there is much more love in my life now.

WHEN I WAS 30 YEARS OLD, I prayed to God to come into my life and take charge. Then not much happened. So, I went about to look for Him and took several courses on God. When I was 45, my teacher in a spiritual course mentioned the name Sai Baba. When I heard His name, I knew for sure God was on earth. From then on, He was my teacher. Immediately, I joined a centre to learn more. Fellow devotees invited me to join them and visit Baba. However, I had no money. Then a miracle happened. A large sum of money came in my bank account. I could join the pilgrimage and was able to touch His feet for the first time. In this way, Baba came into my life in 1989. He performed countless miracles. That never impressed me. Is it such a big thing when the Lord who created life and the mysterious universe makes a little ring or changes some events? Swami says about this, miracles are My visiting cards. After receiving a business card, nothing happens until we start doing business. What business? My biggest miracle is that

word was formed in my mind: blabbermouth (this means talking too much). Swami meant me. Then I asked for confirmation. How do I know it is You talking to me, Swami? Then an eagle flew from one of the tall cypresses that surrounded the Darshan area, straight to me. It flew right over me and I could feel the strong wind of its wings. Wow, I thought, this is a big sign! After Darshan, I met a group member and I apologised. I told him what happened. You mean this bird, he said, and pointed at the sky where an eagle was circling above our heads. In the evening I met another group member and I apologised and told the story. She pointed at the setting sun at the horizon. A big bird flew across it; there was the eagle again!

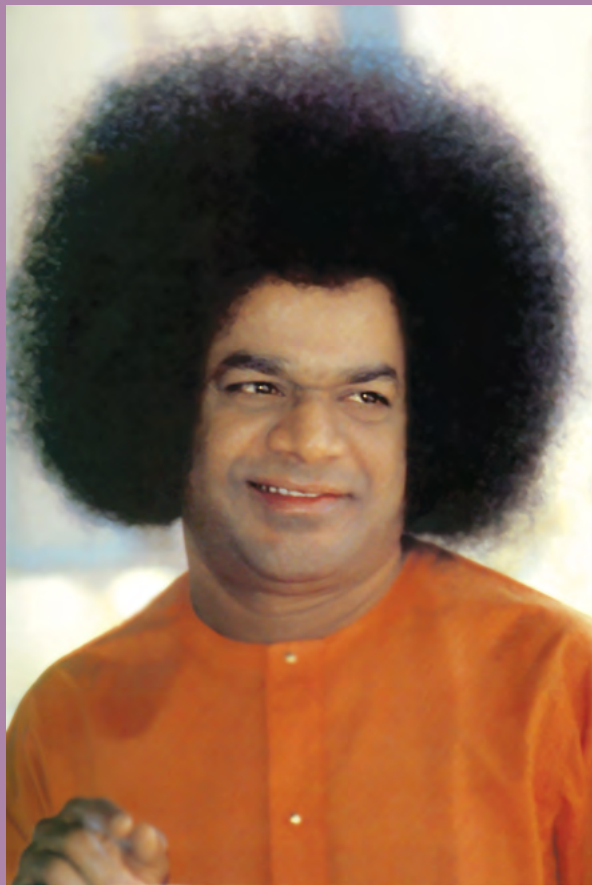
Now I was certain, I had to improve. At this point I have to tell you something about my life. I was an instrument in making glass recycling profitable for the first time and also in setting up one of the first health food stores. In that process I was a pioneer, not a diplomat. Now I did not need that trait any more and it was time to change. We were

I can transform you, Swami says. Clearly, transformation is His business.

Love Exists

One day in Prasanthi Nilayam we were all waiting for Baba's Darshan. I was searching my soul because in my little group we had an argument the day before. I asked Baba inside to tell me what happened. Then a





walking in a group of eight in the Ashram and I tried to say some friendly words. It came out very awkward and all stopped and looked at me pitifully. I clearly did not touch the right chord. Inside however I felt so very happy! This is Swami letting me know that yes, indeed, this is what I want, I want you to change.

I had a business. Baba stresses morality in business. To me this means to love my customers, society and also my employees. I wanted to be a good leader, not a great one. We all know that only love exists. I wanted to experience that. I did a little exercise. Whenever I saw a mistake in an employee, first I would mention inside myself three virtues of that person, like: he

is always in time, he is working very hard and he has a nice smile. I did this for one and a half year. Everything changed for the better and there is much more love in my life now. Not because of this little effort, but because of Swami's grace. "Take one step towards Me," Swami says, "and I will take a hundred steps towards you". I did a little exercise and was rewarded with a mountain of happiness.

This is What I Want from you

During Christmas celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, I was always singing in the choir. I often managed to sit in the front. In this process, others were left behind. This did not feel right. I decided that Swami could put me wherever He wanted. On Christmas day, I was put all the way back at the gate opposite the temple. I felt Baba was at play. When we were singing a Siva song, He came all the way to where I was sitting and looked at me as if to say, yes, this is what I want from you.

Those were all little experiences about transformation. Now I want to tell you a little story about how Swami protects us. One day, I went to a selfless service project in Amsterdam where we would feed the homeless. While I was walking over there, a robber attacked me and I fell to the ground. Then the robber suddenly grabbed his head like he got some attack. I had enough time to get away. I said, Baba thank You, You are compassionate omnipresent Lord.

– The author is Central Coordinator of Region 72 and a member of Disaster Management Committee of Sathya Sai International Organisation.

All the worldly things are fleeting and momentary. Only God is immutable, pure, eternal and immortal. So, spend your time in singing the glory of God.

– Baba

Effulgence of Divine Glory

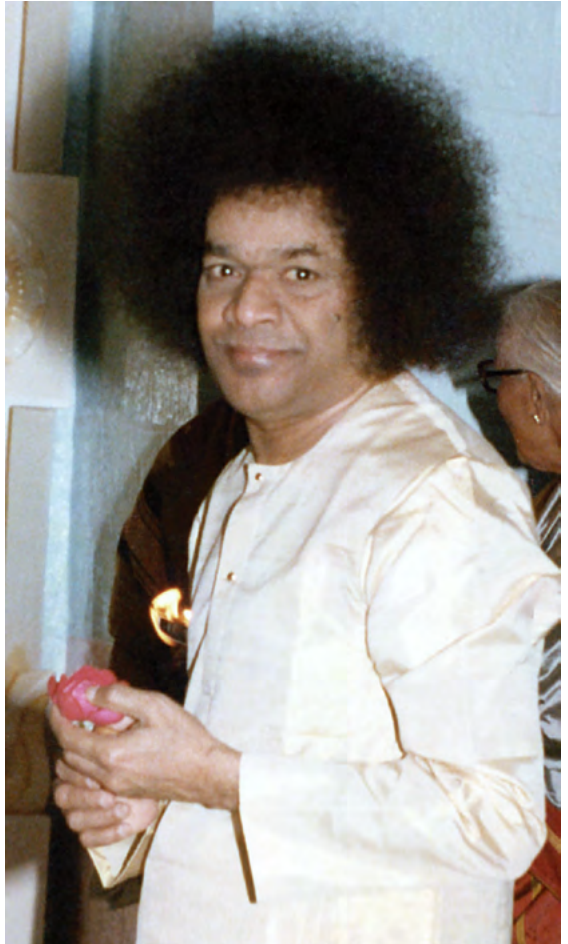
THE LAW OF KARMA

THE ELDERS IN THE FAMILY thought that my husband would take the responsibility of looking after the family. Since my father's house was vacant, we stayed there with children. We did not have to pay the rent, which was a relief. We lived together happily. Suddenly, one day, my husband said that he had to go to Madras (now Chennai) and went away. A few days later, I got a letter from him, saying that he was in Bombay (now Mumbai) looking for a good job. My parents-in-law were staying with me because my father-in-law had fallen ill again.

I was in total darkness. There was no way left for me but to take refuge in my one and the only source – Bhagavan. I wanted to run to Him. But I could not. Travelling to Parthi was not an easy as it is nowadays. I wanted somebody to accompany me. Our neighbour was an old lady. Seeing my situation, she agreed to come with me even though she had her own problems.

We got into the train at Bangalore (now Bengaluru) and reached Penukonda railway station. There, we came to know that the very same day my parents had left for Bengaluru. Narasappa, who had been our regular porter from the time of my marriage, gave me this news at the railway station. But my grandma was still there in Parthi.

As soon as we reached Parthi, Swami called both of us for interview. He asked me, "What has happened? Why are you so upset"? I could not control myself. I started crying. I was in a desperate mood. I said, "Swami, we are all puppets in Your hands. You are playing with us and it is fun for You".



Immediately, He replied with a smile, "Oh! You have realised that you are all mere puppets in My hands. And also you have come to know that I am the Director of the Drama. Then – why those tears"? It is very difficult to argue with Him, the Divine Master. Then, He asked me to come next morning to His dining room during breakfast.

But I disobeyed Him. I did not go upstairs. I did not want to discuss my problem in front of other ladies who were sure to be there. I

stood in the shade of a tree waiting for Him to look at me after coming out of the dining room. As expected, He came to the balcony, saw me and said, “Oh! You are the queen of Wilson Garden (the locality where I lived in Bengaluru)! If I ask you to come, you do not want to come”.

I was ashamed. I went up with the elderly lady. By this time, the ladies who had brought breakfast for Him had gone. He was alone. He said, “There, in the interview room, I cannot talk to you for a long time”. In those early days, Swami used to call people from each family separately, not in groups. “The people waiting outside will be watching the time. I wanted to talk to you for a long time. That was the reason why I asked you to come to My dining room,” He added. I felt sorry. Even God is bound by society!

He sat on the chair and asked me what the matter was. Between sobs I started relating to Him the problems, the financial situation in the family and so on. He said, “Poor Padma, you are the only daughter of your parents. You have been brought up very indulgently. Therefore, you are unable to face difficulties. Do you know there are many people going through more difficulties than you”?

I could not accept His argument. I boldly replied, “Swami, my difficulties and my pains are mine alone. I am suffering. Will the suffering become less if I think of the pains and difficulties of others? Why, Swami, why these problems? The whole family from the youngest to the eldest has surrendered to You – then why”? Swami responded, “See, Padma. If you stand in front of a mirror, and go on making faces, what would you see in the mirror”? I said, “The same faces that I make will be seen in the mirror. It is simply

reflection”. “Ah! That is it. Previously you might have made ‘faces’, and now you are seeing their reflection. Be happy that all these are happening in your younger age. You have both mental and physical strength to bear it. Your parents are alive to help you and I am available so easily. If these things happen in your old age, you would not be able to bear it!” Swami explained the theory of Karma concisely. I was relieved.

When I was just twenty years old, I had many dreams and aspirations about my married life. When everything was shattered, I could not bear it. I kept crying and Swami kept smiling at me. I became very much upset. It seemed to me that He was teasing me. I said, “After all, these things do not affect you, Swami. For You it is just nothing. We are the sufferers – and You seem to enjoy our sufferings”.

He clarified, “No, no, Padma. Not so. Be confident that when I laugh there will be good in the future. I am only laughing at your ignorance. You are imagining that this suffering will last forever. No, that’s not true. I know the future. You are sure to be happy. You will understand later”.

Swami continued, “I am not angry with your comments. This has been there all through the life of Avatars – praise followed by abuse. Even in the Krishna Avatar, when Aswatthama had slain all the sons of the Pandavas, they abused Me for not saving them. But when I protected Parikshit in Uttara’s womb, they praised Me as the ‘Kuloddharaka’ (redeemer of the clan). I do not mind, both are same to Me. Do not worry. Be happy”.

– Excerpted from “Twameva Matha...” by Smt. Padmamma.



Purity of Mind

DURING THE TIME OF LORD Krishna's rule over Dwaraka, there was once a great artist. Though he had made the portraits of many great kings and had received precious rewards from them, he was not satisfied. He felt that his art would find consummation only when he made a portrait of Krishna and received His grace. To fulfil this desire of his, he went to Dwaraka and met Lord Krishna. When Krishna asked him the purpose of his coming, he prayed to Him, "Oh Lord! I have visited many places and earned a great name as an artist who has no equal. But this

the form of Krishna seen by him, drew a beautiful portrait after going to his residence and presented it to Krishna the next day. But he found that Krishna's features differed from those drawn by him in the portrait. So, he went to his residence, sketched another portrait of Krishna and brought it before Him the next day. But he was not satisfied with this portrait of Krishna also as it did not depict His true form. In this way, he tried to draw a true portrait of Krishna five or six times, but he failed to sketch it. Unable to bear the pain of his failure, he decided to leave Dwaraka at midnight without telling anybody.

Realising the sad plight of the artist, Sage Narada came to him and said, "Do you realise who is Krishna? How can you



The artist prayed to Lord Krishna for an opportunity to draw His portrait.

has not given me fulfilment. Please bless me with the opportunity of drawing your portrait to make my life worthwhile. If You sit before me for some time, I can draw Your true picture". Krishna sat before the artist without moving for some time and went inside His palace. The artist captured in his mind



A pure mind can have a true reflection of God in it like a mirror.

conceive and draw His true portrait? None can draw a true portrait of this Divine Actor and Director whose form changes every

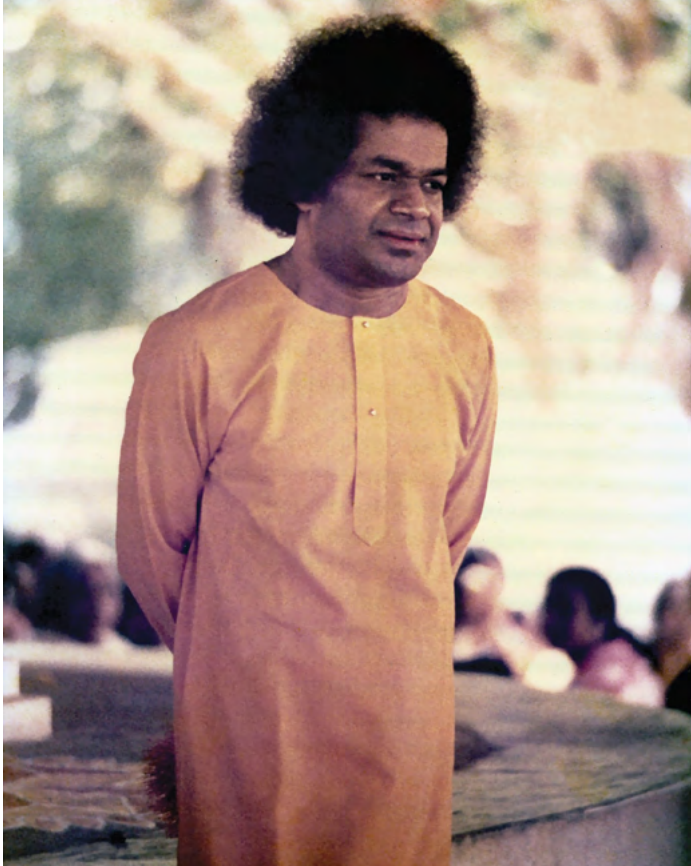
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Dr. R.P. Tiwari

EXPERIENCING SWAMI'S GRACE

I WAS INTRODUCED TO BHAGAVAN Sri Sathya Sai Baba in early 1970's. I once got a small pamphlet about His Incarnation in south India and coincidentally a documentary film about Sathya Sai was shown in June 1971 in Kumudini Homes, a school situated here in Kalimpong. After



seeing it, I didn't believe 75% of the said documentary.

Meanwhile, in November 1971, my mother brought a photograph of Swami

which was duly framed. She was told by the shopkeeper (who sold the photograph) that the figure in the photograph was the reincarnation of Lord Siva. After my mother narrated the story, it had a positive impact on our mind and we started worshipping Swami. A fixed schedule was set for morning and evening Bhajans without implementing odd rules and regulations.

Swami Answers my Prayers

Later, I heard my classmates hum some Bhajans, and my belief developed in the existence of Lord Siva. Slowly, our Bhajans became regular with rules and discipline. One day, I bought a couple of Bhajan books from a shop on the main road of Kalimpong. We then slowly started to sing those Bhajans in our own way.

Meanwhile, my father fell ill in 1972. He was serious with many diseases attacking him at the time, and we had no option but to pray to Swami. That's when I earnestly prayed to Swami for his early recovery. Swami heard my prayer and restored my father's health in all respects. Similarly, when my mother fell sick in May 1974 due to cardiac problem and respiration trouble, I prayed to Swami in the same way like I prayed for my father's speedy recovery. She too recovered. When she suffered a relapse in 1991, I again prayed to Swami and He gave her another life.

She is still in sound health.

In this way, my faith in Swami became firm and I began sacrificing everything to Him. Each day, before starting any work,



I prayed to Swami for His divine blessings and my entire work was done without any hindrance whatsoever.

Swami Sends Father Home

Subsequently, my entire family became Sai devotees. I joined Sai Samithi with all my family members in 1975 and started participating in various programmes. Suddenly, in the year 1978, my father left home without telling anybody. We searched for him in and around Kalimpong but in vain. Later, my mother discovered that he had taken some religious books including Bhagavadgita and a Japamala with him. So, we assumed that he might have gone to Swami's Ashram in Puttaparthi. We were worried for he had no money with him, except 500 rupees. In the meantime, we assumed that he had an intention of not returning home. We unanimously prayed to Swami by frequently uttering, "Swami, if You really are God, then You should return our father home".

Coincidentally, the same evening Baba called my father who was in Puttaparthi Ashram and questioned him, "Why have you come here without consulting your family members? You go back home rightaway". My father was in a dilemma because he had

travelled to Puttaparthi to stay there forever. Moreover, he had no money to return home. The next day, Swami left for Whitefield. My father was in an awkward situation and he whimsically decided to follow Swami to Whitefield. Next morning, Swami saw my father loitering in Whitefield again. Swami called him and asked, "Haven't you gone home yet"? But my father stood dumb and answerless.

Finally, Swami called my father in the inner room, created a huge quantity of Vibhuti and asked him to take it home and give it to his family. Seeing the quantity of Vibhuti, he received it in his Nepali cap, got back to his room and began to pour it in another container. But to his surprise, within the created Vibhuti there was some money, the exact fare to reach home, Kalimpong. My father then realised that he had to return home and meet everyone for Swami wanted it that way. So, without wasting time, he bought the railway ticket and got home safe. Ever since then, the grace of Swami is being experienced by us day in and day out.

– The author is an old-time devotee of Swami from Kalimpong, Darjeeling (West Bengal).

...continued from page 25

moment. Do not be disappointed at your failure. I will give you an advice". Saying this, Narada whispered a secret in his ear. The artist happily went away and brought a full-size mirror covered with a cloth. After placing the mirror in front of Krishna, he removed the cloth from it and said to Krishna, "Oh Lord! All the changes in Your form will be reflected

in the mirror". Seeing the predicament of the artist, Krishna showered His blessings on him.

When you purify your mind, then you can see the clear form of God reflected in it. Purity of mind can be attained by devotion full of love and faith.



SAI BABA IS MY SOLE SPIRITUAL MASTER

Yashas Rajkumar

SRI SATHYA SAI BAL VIKAS IS A movement launched by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for training children to grow up as worthy citizens of this great nation and become leaders of tomorrow. It complements school education by emphasising on five cardinal human values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Baba has said that education is not for a mere living. It is also for more meaningful and more worthwhile life. It is necessary to foster good character and conduct in children for a peaceful world. It not only promotes virtues but helps to raise the moral and spiritual standard of the educated. Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas programme aims to develop physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological and spiritual aspects of a child.

As I joined Bal Vikas, I slowly developed interest in it. As my interest grew day by day, I considered Baba as my sole Spiritual Master, and through Bal Vikas I found peace and contentment. The interesting method adopted by our Guru was to teach through stories and examples. The best part of Bal Vikas was that I became part of its activities and celebrations. My favourite service was Narayana Seva as I felt peace and joy in serving the poor and needy.

My first stage performance was in the Sai Qawali titled 'Sai Bin Raha Na Jaye...' which



was performed during May 2012 as a tribute to Baba on Easwaramma Day. By the grace of Lord Sai, I got a chance to visit Puttaparthi to perform on Deepavali and Gujarati New Year celebrations in 2013. I also performed Arati in Sai Kulwant Hall on Deepavali which is the moment I cherish the most. My latest contribution was participation in a skit on the moral 'Honesty is the Best Policy' in May 2015.



Since the time I joined Bal Vikas, I have become more helpful to others and wish to serve others as much as possible. I value food and money and never waste them. Bal Vikas has inculcated many good qualities in me and I am definitely a better human being

who does not lose his temper and patience easily. By joining Bal Vikas, I feel connected to Baba and I constantly seek His blessings. I pray to Him everyday.

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

Valuable Maxims

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

1. I have told you that My Life is My Message. Avatars proclaim their Divinity that way.
2. I am the very breath of your life.
3. Since God assumes human form in order to restore Dharma and to lead man back to the path of virtue and wisdom, nothing pleases God more than vigorous adherence to Dharma.

Life, Message, Avatars, proclaim, Divinity, way, breath, assumes, human, restore, Dharma, lead, man, virtue, pleases, adherence, vigorous.

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

Swami's Tips to Students

Wherever students are, silence, serenity and security should prevail, for such an atmosphere alone promotes study. But, what do we find now? What prevails is fear, anxiety and restlessness! Those who come out of our colleges are not at all educated in the real sense of the term. Many behave even worse than their uneducated brethren.

Students should be clear about their life-values, their true reality and the ideals which should shape their lives. Now they are engaged more in judging and blaming others. When one has no knowledge of oneself and what is good for one, how can one claim the right to correct or condemn others?

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

HONG KONG

THE 90TH BIRTHDAY celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba began on 19th November 2015, with a service programme for the elderly. This being Ladies Day, the Ladies Wing treated the guests to a sumptuous lunch, entertained them with games and gave each guest a hamper of basic necessities. On 23rd November, Bhagavan's Birthday celebrations opened

bath towel and a dental care set, packed in an environmentally-friendly, reusable bag. SSIO volunteers serve destitute people living on the streets of Hong Kong all the year round.

On 11th December 2015, about 1,100 people attended a cultural programme which featured a dance drama titled "Our Lives are His Message", and a video presentation followed by a traditional cake-cutting ceremony.

CHINA

With devotion and gratitude, SSIO members observed Bhagavan's 90th Birthday in Guangzhou by offering prayers and an evening programme to an audience of 80. The evening session included videos about Bhagavan and the work of the SSIO. The Sathya Sai Centre offered lovingly to Bhagavan the premier issue of a monthly newsletter. The publication provides information to Sathya Sai devotees in Guangzhou regarding the activities of the SSIO in Guangzhou, as well as in Zone 5 and around the world.

On 29th November 2015, SSIO members lovingly distributed rice, oil, noodles, cakes, and blankets to the residents of Huiling Home in Guangzhou, a centre for people with mental challenges.

JAPAN

The SSIO of Japan initiated its 90th Birthday celebrations by offering curry and rice to 250 people on 22nd November 2015. On the same day, the SSIO offered a programme for ladies at the Kobe Sathya Sai Centre. Then, on 23rd November, about



Cultural programme on Bhagavan's 90th Birthday.

with prayers and Bhajans. In the evening, the Sathya Sai Centre was packed to its seams with people who came to celebrate the life of Sathya Sai. The programme included uplifting Bhajans and beautiful videos. The annual publication, Sai Sarathi, with the theme "Transformation of the Self: the Grace of Sai", was offered to Bhagavan.

In other activities, the Service Wing distributed 1,000 utility hampers to street sleepers and disadvantaged people. Each hamper contained a warm blanket, a muffler, a pair of socks, an umbrella, a face towel, a



150 Sathya Sai devotees from the Kansai region of Japan – including the Kobe, Osaka, and Kyoto Centres and the Nara Group – gathered in Kobe for a daylong celebration on the theme, “Love is the Source, Love is the Path, Love is the Goal”. The programme included an oath-taking ceremony for new SSIO office bearers of the Kobe Centre, and the afternoon session included an insightful talk by the National Council President of Japan. Thereafter, members of the Kobe Sathya Sai Centre presented a beautiful drama on the legend of Markandeya, and rendered a popular Bhajan in both Japanese and Hindi. The evening programme concluded with a video of Bhagavan’s divine message on love. In Tokyo, the SSIO released a Japanese translation of Bhagavan’s Sutra Vahini, after offering it to Bhagavan.

KENYA

Sathya Sai Baba is known as the founder of the Sathya Sai School in Kisaju, Kenya. As a token of love on the occasion of His 90th Birthday, Sathya Sai followers in Kenya organised a ground-breaking ceremony for a secondary school on 29th November



Founder's Day celebrations of Sathya Sai School, Kisaju.

2015. More than 360 people attended this joyful event as part of the Founder's Day

celebrations at Kisaju. The school fraternity was joined by parents, guardians, the local Member of Parliament, members of the local government, the Area Chief and his assistants, media representatives, and other guests. Primary school students graduating in December 2016 are expected to continue as students at the newly-constructed secondary school starting in January 2017.

MEXICO

During January 2016, members of the Institute of Sathya Sai Education (ISSE) of Mexico visited the Sathya Sai School of Guatemala located in El Limonero, generally considered as a crime-ridden neighbourhood. More than 100 children attend this primary school. The Mexican visitors were received with joy and enthusiasm and presented with letters and drawings of the Mexican flag, specially prepared by the



Sathya Sai School of Guatemala.

Sathya Sai children of Guatemala. Upon returning to Mexico, the ISSE members shared their experiences with the students and teachers of the Sathya Sai School of Chihuahua, Mexico, who thereupon created beautiful watercolour paintings in honour of the children of Guatemala and displayed them in an exhibition. The paintings were then



sent to the Sathya Sai School of Guatemala. The Guatemalan students placed these paintings around a picture of Jesus at the school entrance, in loving acknowledgment of the two schools' friendship and unity. The Sathya Sai children of Guatemala also wrote 30 letters of gratitude to their Mexican friends. Juan Enrique, a 3rd grade student, wrote, "Thank you for considering me as your friend. I'm very happy because even though we don't know each other, you have opened your heart to me... We have learnt to fly like birds, swim like fish but we still haven't learnt to live like brothers. For this reason, when I read your letter stating that we are brothers and we love and respect each other, I really wanted to know you".

SAUDI ARABIA

Fifty members of the Riyadh Sathya Sai Centre celebrated Christmas 2015, congregating at the Sai Majlis to sing the glories of Bhagavan Baba. A large picture of Sathya Sai Baba, adorned with garlands



Christmas in Riyadh.

of Christmas flowers and multi-coloured lights, greeted everyone at the entrance to the venue. Sathya Sai volunteers had decorated the hall with streamers, festoons

and golden stars. In addition, snowmen, decorated Christmas trees, and a display of the Nativity scene created an atmosphere of joy and peace. The programme featured soul-stirring English devotional songs and Christmas carols, heightening the Christmas spirit with traditional favourites including "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World". At a climactic moment, Santa Claus entered the hall with a bag full of sweets and delicacies and distributed them to everyone. Each child likewise received a Christmas gift, bringing a sparkle to their eyes. The programme concluded with closing prayers and the sharing of food and cakes.

Thereafter, on New Year's Eve, about 50 SSIO members from Riyadh organised a special evening Bhajan session, starting with prayers. As the clock ticked away toward the midnight hour, the singing gained momentum, ushering everyone joyfully into the New Year.

GERMANY

A new project, Values-Relay, was started to organise various human values-related activities along a south-to-north route in Germany between May and September 2015. The project was launched on 9th May 2015 during the Pre-World Conference in Wartaweil, with the participation of 15 Sathya Sai Centres. During the inauguration ceremony, a first relay runner received a symbolic trophy for transport along the designated route. The trophy arrived in Stemwede on 18th May, where 108 Sathya Sai devotees gathered to celebrate a traditional Pentecostal meeting, themed "We are Sources of Love: the Sound of the Golden Age". A few weeks later, the trophy arrived in Darmstadt, where five "values columns" were erected in a public parking





Values-Relay in Germany.

lot. SSIO members displayed material on value-based education, including games, stories, cards and Sathya Sai teachings on human values. Many parents, walking with their children in strollers, viewed the material on display.

Values-based programmes were likewise organised throughout the summer. On 20th June 2015, the symbolic trophy reached Bonn, the former capital of Germany. The proceeds from a book sale in Bonn were donated to the SSIO Disaster Relief Fund set up after the earthquake in Nepal. Cards with quotes from Bhagavan were distributed to the public. On 18th July 2015, Sathya Sai devotees from Freiburg assembled in the Catholic Church of the University Hospital, presenting a concert including multi-faith songs. A live video of the programme was broadcast to patients in the hospital. In Ahrweiler, SSIO volunteers provided community service by cleaning up the bank of the river Ahr. In August 2015, SSIO volunteers in Karlsruhe offered to children a similar programme, titled "Values Afternoon". The Sathya Sai Centre of Tübingen organised several values-oriented recreational activities for children during the summer of 2015.

The relay arrived in Berlin, via Kiel and Hamburg, on 26th September 2015 for a grand finale. A boat trip on the River Spree

was organised for the 57 SSIO volunteers who had come together from all parts of Germany for the occasion. A steamer, decorated with banners of the Sarva Dharma symbol and the message "Love All – Serve All," sailed through the city, passing the government quarters, on a three-hour trip. The message of love and unity was thus shared throughout the country.

–Sathya Sai International Organisation

B H A R A T

Gujarat: Like every year, this year too Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat organised a Maha Sammelan (Annual Meet) of all the devotees of Gujarat at Tithal, Valsad on 27th and 28th February 2016, in which more than 1,000 devotees and office bearers took part.

Dwelling on the theme of the meet, "Transforming Self to Transform Society" Sri Manohar Trikannad, State President of Gujarat gave the example of sugarcane



Participants in the Annual Meet.

which gives only sweetness when crushed. Whatever hurdles might come in life, we should reflect divinity, he said. Narrating his experiences with Swami, Sri Nimish Pandya

stated that Bhagavan was not interested in our service, but during the service, the transformation that took place in us. He stressed that the pre-qualification to join the Sathya Sai Organisation was the intention to change oneself and not to change others. Lastly, Munishri Sri Jin Chandra Maharaj addressed the gathering. He said that God would be happy when we showed love and compassion to others. Quoting Mahavir Swami, he said that one should be peaceful in mind, then the reflection of Paramatma would be seen in the Atma. In the evening session, group discussion for the various wings of the Sai Organisation, viz., Bal Vikas, Youth, Mahila, Prasanthi Security, Seva Dal, Sri Sathya Sai Village Integrated Programme (SSSVIP) was held. Later in the evening, group leaders put forth their plans of action. Evening Bhajans were sung by the youth.

The next day, Sri Nimish Pandya had a separate meeting with office bearers. There, he said that every office bearer's duty was to spread Swami's message with genuine love. He said that Swami always said, "I don't want the ability of my devotees, I want availability". We should be available for Swami's work, he added.

The elocution prize winners were awarded trophies and this year's rotating trophy was bagged by the district of Bhavnagar. More than 12 doctors were awarded Appreciation Certificates for rendering their selfless services for more than 15 years in Sathya Sai Medical Centres in various districts. This was followed by Bhajans. Finally, the

State President along with all the devotees present there took an oath to render selfless service to their best ability.

Odisha: Two drinking water projects were inaugurated in Alauti village on 6th February 2016. The first one is operating since last year. The story behind it is like this. During summer, the cattle don't get any drinking



Water project to provide drinking water to the cattle of a village.

water while grazing in this area. To quench their thirst, they move towards the railway track in search of water and meet with accidents and death. Every year the animal casualties in the village were about 25. Sathya Sai Seva Group, Alauti therefore built an innovative drinking water project so that cool drinking water could be provided to animals in the middle of the cultivating field, where there was no other water source around. Human beings are also getting drinking water from the attached tube well. After the first project, the animal deaths due to train accidents in the area were nil. The first project was completed in 2015, and the second in 2016.

Love of any kind, of any measure, is but a spark of Divinity. Love knows no fear; it promotes truth, it finds peace, it builds faith, it promotes concord.

– Baba

Book Review

Liberation, A Reachable Goal



LIBERATION, A
REACHABLE GOAL
Edelio Sanchez Perez
₹ 60.00

EDELIO SANCHEZ PEREZ'S book in Spanish has been translated into English by Sase Narayan Persaud. It is commendable because of the accurate terminology and brevity of language.

The text is arranged into three main parts in line with Bhagavan's exhortations on the three stages in the life of Jesus Christ in progression. The author corroborates his spiritual evolution with each of his visits to Bhagavan Baba. He narrates his spiritual reflection in the direct physical proximity of Bhagavan Baba as also the experiences gained from practices at home, in a chronological order.

The quest to become conscious of our absolute consciousness as Sat, Chit, Ananda begins with awareness, fosters on belief and is realised on persistent practice. The author seems naturally imbued in this direction, and hence finds no difficulty in reaching higher levels of awareness with minimal effort.

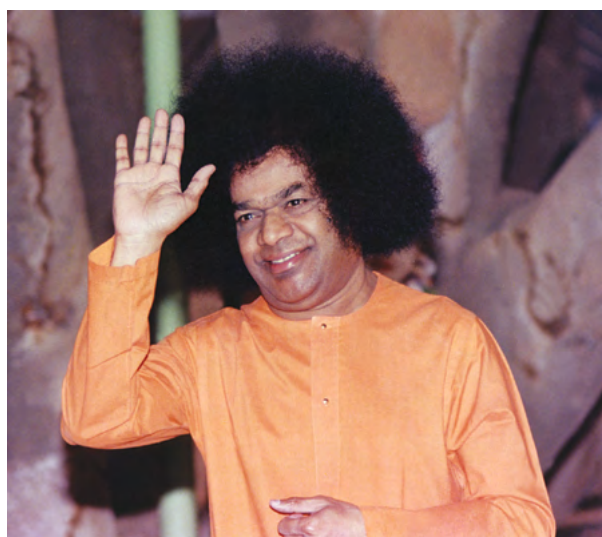
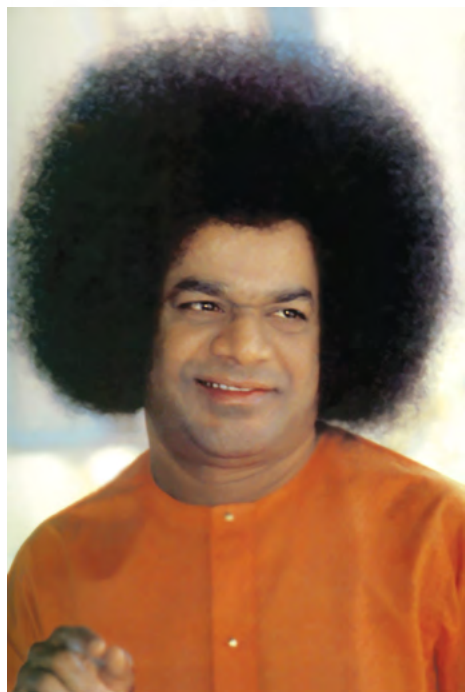
It is verily impossible to explain transcendental, yogic experiences and the metaphysical concepts in graphical illustrations. The book is replete with graphical illustrations running along with various topics.

When the great scientist Werner Heisenberg propounded, "On observing physical phenomena, it is impossible to completely separate the observer from the observed object or phenomena", not many scientists of the day agreed with him. One of the observations of the author, "...I felt love and a very subtle expansion, which encompassed everyone. Everyone was I, and I was in everyone. I was no other than the Atma from which I observed with Love that emanated from the vital centre of my chest..." can serve as a metaphysical proof to Heisenberg's scientific theory.

The author sums up his reinterpretation on the waking, dream and sleep states of experiential living with the words, "We ought to direct our attention of the observer towards the observer itself, i.e., our attention to our own attention, to realise the consciousness of Self, Prema, the Divine Love, the true form of Sai".

– PPS Sarma

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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-version of the magazine is also released simultaneously and is available in the popular Interactive PDF format on www.sanathanasarathi.org.
- 3) Maintaining a reporting channel, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
- 4) Organising and conducting seminars and conferences on spirituality, religion, education, and human values.
- 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!
9. Life Is A Challenge, Meet It!
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12. Body And Mind
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Printed by K.S. RAJAN Published by K.S. RAJAN On behalf of the owner Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur District (A.P.) And Printed at M/s Rajhans Enterprises, 136, 4th Main Road, Industrial Town, Rajaji Nagar, Bengaluru - 560044, Karnataka And published at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

Editor: G.L. ANAND

Sadhana of Seva

Through the Sadhana of Seva (practice of selfless service), it is possible to cognise the One, of which the many are appearances. He who serves a master with his eye on the pay packet cannot be called a Sevak. He is the servant of the pay packet. That type of service will only bind him to the profit or loss that it entails, and bring about disappointment or elation. Service has to be rendered either from a supreme sense of duty or as a humble dedicatory offering to the Lord, or in a spirit of total surrender to the Will of God, leaving all thoughts of the consequence to His grace.

— Baba

