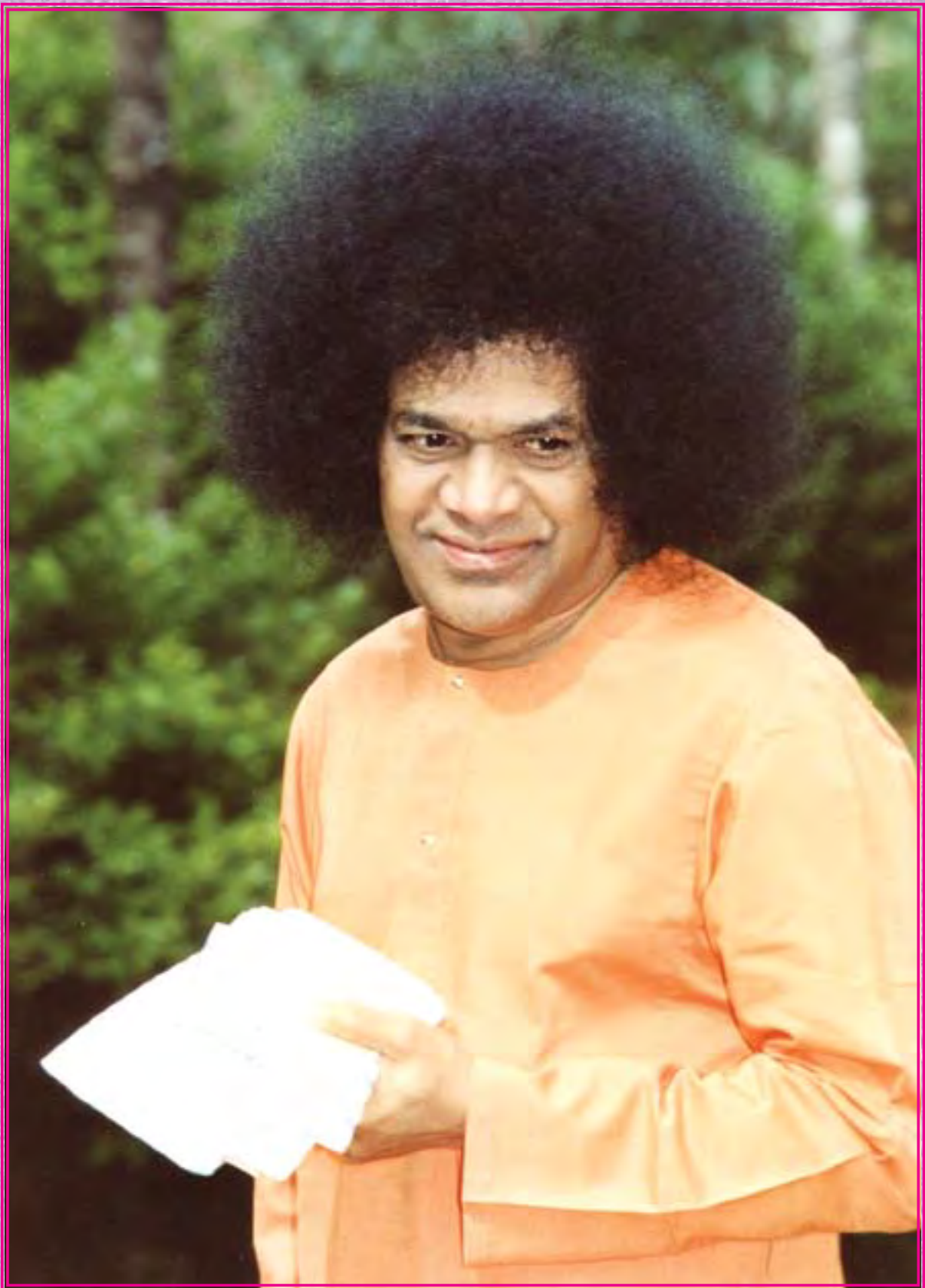


# Sanathana Sarathi

APRIL 2021





# Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

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*"Do not consider women as of little value.  
A house without the woman is like a  
forest. When the woman is present in the  
house, it is 'for rest'. Give due respect to  
women and take care of their needs and  
comforts. If a woman sheds tears, wealth  
and prosperity will not remain in that  
home. Therefore, do not cause suffering  
to any woman."*



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AVATAR VANI

# THE GLORY OF WOMANHOOD\*

WOMEN ARE THE EMBODIMENTS OF LOVE AND DEVOTION

**T**HE WHOLE WORLD SYMBOLISES womanhood. Therefore, one's country is called motherland and the earth is called Bhumata (mother earth). All bodies have taken birth from mother earth. Mother is important for all, and motherly feelings are supreme which ensure the welfare of the family, society and country.

## Mother's Love is most Sacred

Once Sage Viswamitra went to King Dasaratha and asked his help in the performance of a Yajna he was conducting. He told Dasaratha that demons were creating hurdles in the performance of this ritual and asked him to send his sons Rama and Lakshmana to safeguard the Yajna. He added that he had the power to kill these demons but could not use it as violence was prohibited in the performance of the sacred ritual. Dasaratha felt sad because Rama and Lakshmana were of tender age and they had no experience of warfare. Viswamitra then told Dasaratha that Rama and Lakshmana were highly divine who prayed to the Mother Goddess first and their father afterwards. When Viswamitra thus convinced



Dasaratha, Rama and Lakshmana followed Viswamitra. While going with the sage, they paid respect to their mothers first, their father next and the sage afterwards. Why this order? It is so because it is mother who gives birth and nurtures the child with extreme tenderness. She keeps awake day and night when her child has any illness. She will not eat food when her child has fever. Such sacred love is found only in the mother. The mother takes care of the child with tenderness and gives intense love to the child.

It is a mistake to consider that women are fit for only inferior type of work. In modern times, both men and women go to work and earn money. So, they employ a cook, a driver and other servants for household work. But the salaries of the servants employed by them usually exceed the earning of the wife. If the wife gets a salary of two thousand rupees, the salary of the servants is three thousand rupees. This is like eating more pickles than the meal. Thus, the expenditure becomes more than the income. On the other hand, if the housewife remains at home, she will be able to take care of all the household matters. As

\* Continued from March 2021 issue.





that all this had happened because she had no mother. The businessman usually came late from office at night. One day, the girl decided to end her life due to loneliness and grief. As the businessman did not return home till 10 o' clock at night on that day, she thought that was the right time to commit suicide and end her life instead of spending all her life in misery. So, she jumped into the river Ganga and ended her life. On the 10th day of the death of his wife, the businessman served food and sweets to the inmates of an Ashram in Rishikesh. There was a young renunciant in this Ashram who used to meditate everyday. Normally, he could meditate well but that evening he felt disturbed when he sat for meditation because he saw a young girl crying while he meditated. The renunciant sat in meditation again at night but saw the same girl again. He could not sleep the whole night and tried to know what mistake he had committed that he was unable to meditate. Somehow he spent that night.

The next day, he went to his Guru and told him how he was disturbed in his meditation. The Guru said, "You must be having bad thoughts. That is why you were having such an experience". The renunciant told his Guru that he had no bad thoughts. The Guru meditated for some time and asked him, "What did you eat yesterday"? The renunciant then told his Guru that he had partaken of the food that was served by a businessman in the Ashram. When the Guru made enquiries, he came to know that the food was served as part of the ritual on the death of the businessman's young wife who committed suicide because she could not bear the suffering due to her marriage with an old man. So, the young renunciant in the Ashram was disturbed in his meditation because he had eaten the food that the businessman served. Hence, we should not eat whatever food is offered to us. Since then the young renunciant of the Ashram stopped eating food offered in feasts by others and became content

with whatever food was cooked and served in the Ashram.

### Develop Devotion for God

Therefore, it is necessary to eat pure and sanctified food by offering first to God. Where is God? God is within you. When you recite the prayer to offer food to God, He replies from within, "Oh mad man! I am present within you as Vaishvanara (digestive fire)". God is present everywhere at all times. He is in you, above you, below you and all around you. You are God; your heart is the altar of God. Love is His Form. Bliss is His food. You speak about energy. Many people ask Swami, "Swami! Wherefrom do You get energy? You eat so little". I tell them, "I do not get energy. I am energy. Energy is a form of Divinity".

Do not consider women as of little value. A house without the woman is like a forest. When the woman is present in the house, it is "for rest". Give due respect to women and take care of their needs and comforts. If a woman sheds tears, wealth and prosperity will not remain in that home. Therefore, do not cause suffering to any woman. Woman is the embodiment of love and devotion. At the Atmic level, there is no difference between a man and a woman since the same Atma is present in them. Both are the creation of God.

God is your old friend, not only friend but old friend. Old is gold. Worldly friends have a selfish motive. They will be close to you as long as you have money. Such friends change from moment to moment. They are friends today and may say goodbye tomorrow. But God is always with you. He is in you, above you, below you and all around you. So, love God. Develop devotion for God. This is the purpose of human life.

(Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, "*Hey Siva Sankara Namaami Sankara...*")

– **Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 19th April 1996.**



## Chapter 3

# CHILD PARIKSHIT AND THE PROPHECY

**A** LAS! "IS HE TO SUFFER AT last this tragic fate? Is this to be the reward for all the good in store for him? Can the consequence of years of good living suddenly turn into this calamitous end? It is laid down that those who die drowning, those who are killed by fall from trees, and those who die of snakebite have a bad afterlife. Those are considered 'inauspicious deaths'. Those whose deaths are such, become ghosts and have to suffer so, it is said. Why should this child end up like that? Oh, the horror of it. Oh, the injustice of the whole thing"! lamented Yudhishtira, biting his lips to suppress his sorrow.

The Brahmins hastened to console him. "Maharaja," they interceded. "There is no reason to give way to grief. Such a great man will never meet with such a tragedy. No. In the horoscope of this child, studying the positions of the planets, we can clearly notice two happy conjunctions, which indicate Vajra Yoga and Bhakti Yoga, both powerful and propitious. Therefore, as soon as he learns of the curse, he will give up his kingdom as well as his wife and children and retire to the bank of the holy Bhagirathi river and surrender himself to the Lord. The great sage Suka, son of Vyasa, will arrive there and initiate him into Atma Jnana (Self-knowledge) through the recital of the glories of Lord Krishna and the singing of His praise. Thus, he will spend his last days on the sacred bank of Ganga and breathe his last with the adoration of the Lord. How can such a man meet with any tragedy or calamity? He will not be born again, for, through Bhakti

Yoga, he will attain oneness with the Lord of All, Purushottama". Hearing these words, Yudhishtira gave up grief and became happy. He said, "If so, this is no curse; it is a unique boon!"

At this, everyone rose. The Brahmins were honoured as befitted their learning and austerity. They were given gems and silken clothes and the king arranged to send them home. Yudhishtira and his brothers moved into their palaces, but they spent many hours talking about the happenings of the day and of the fears, luckily removed. They were filled with joy at the turn the predictions had taken.

The baby grew in the lying-in-room, as the moon in the bright half of the month. Since it was born as heir to the great empire, after a succession of dire dangers, everyone loved it and guarded it like the apple of the eye, as the very breath of their lives. Draupadi who was broken by the loss of her own children (the Upapandavas), Subhadra who had suffered inconsolable loss in the death of Abhimanyu, and the Pandava Brothers who dreaded that the terrific sorrow of Aswatthama directed against the posthumous child of Abhimanyu, still in the womb of Uttara, might do the worst and destroy forever the Pandava line – all were relieved, nay were overjoyed when they saw the child. They were supremely happy. They spent the days doting over the little lovely babe, whom they brought from the zenana for the purpose, whenever they felt the urge to see it and hold it in their arms.

The child too was very bright. It seemed to watch the lineaments of everyone who fondled

it or came before it. It stared into their faces long and longingly. All were surprised at this strange behaviour. Every person who came to it was subjected to this searching examination by the child who seemed determined to trace someone or something, in the world into which it was born.

Some said, "Sadly, it is seeking its father, Abhimanyu". Others said, "No, no, the child is searching for Lord Krishna". Some others opined that it appeared to be trying to discover some divine brilliance. The fact remained that the child was examining all for some trait or sign which it knew already, to recognise some form it had in mind. "Pariksha" was the word used by everyone for the "quest" in which the child was engaged; and so, even before the formal naming ceremony, everyone both in the palace and outside it, began referring to the child as Parikshit, "He who is engaged in Pariksha"!

That name, Parikshit, stayed. From the Raja to the ryot (farmer), from the scholar to the boor, from the monarch to the man-in-the-street, everyone addressed the child as Parikshit or referred to him so. The fame of the child grew from day to day. It was on everyone's lips. One auspicious day, Yudhishtira had the court priest brought before him and he commissioned him to fix a good day for the ceremony of naming the child-prince.

The priest called together his group of scholars and astrologers and after consulting the conjunctions of heavenly bodies, they discovered a day which all of them agreed was a good one for the event. They also settled at what hour the actual naming had to take place. Invitations to attend the ceremony were sent to the rulers of the land and to scholars and Pandits as well as prominent citizens. The king sent his emissaries to invite sages and personages full of spiritual wealth. Arjuna went to Lord Krishna and reverentially prayed that He should shower His grace on the child on

the occasion. He succeeded in bringing Krishna along when he returned.

When Lord Krishna arrived, the sages, Brahmins, Rajas, subordinate rulers and citizens got ready to receive Him with respectful homage; the Pandava brothers, attired magnificently, waited at the main gate of the palace to offer Him welcome. When the chariot of the Lord was sighted, drums sounded, trumpets pealed a mighty welcome, and joyful Jais rose from every throat. Yudhishtira approached the chariot and embraced the Lord as soon as He alighted. He held Him by the hand and led Him into the palace, where a high throne was specially placed for Him. After the Lord was seated, all else occupied their seats according to their rank and status.

Sahadeva went to the inner apartments and the child was brought on a gold plate, resplendent as the sun, made more charming by magnificent jewels. The priests recited Mantras, invoking the gods to bless the child and confer on him health and happiness.

Sahadeva laid the child down in the centre of the court hall. Maids and chamberlains came in long lines towards the place where the prince was, holding in their hand gold plates full of perfumes and flowers, silks and brocades. Behind specially fitted curtains, the queens Rukmini, Draupadi, Subhadra and Uttara were rejoicing at the happy scene, watching the gambols of the child. Sahadeva took the child and placed it on a bed of flowers in the Mandap that was erected for the naming ceremony. But the child rose up on all fours and started crawling bravely on, in spite of the remonstrances of the maids. Apparently, it wanted to proceed somewhere!

The efforts of Sahadeva to stop its journey proved futile. Yudhishtira, who was observing its movements with interest said with a smile, "Sahadeva, do not stand in the way. Leave him alone. Let us see what he does". And



Sahadeva left his hold. He allowed the child to move wherever he liked. Only, he took care to keep his eye always on him lest he fall or hurt himself. He followed him at every step, vigilantly.

The child, who got freedom of movement, soon made a beeline towards the place where Lord Krishna was seated, as if He was a long acquaintance whom he was seeking to meet. The child grasped the feet of Krishna and pleaded, by his looks, that he may be taken onto the lap and fondled! The Lord saw his yearning. He laughed aloud. Then, He graciously bent low to lift the child onto His lap.

Sitting on His lap, the prince was staring at the Lord's face without even a wink. He did not turn his head this way or that or pull at anything with his hands or make any sound. He just sat and stared. Everyone was amazed at this behaviour, so unlike that of a child. Even Krishna shared in the feeling that pervaded the hall.

Turning to Yudhishtira, Krishna said, "I did not believe when I was told that this child stared at everyone who came before him and examined their lineaments. I thought it was a new explanation given by these priests, to the usual prank and play of children. Now, this is really a wonder. The fellow has started examining even Me! Well, I shall test his behaviour a little Myself".

Then, the Lord tried to distract the attention of the child from Himself by placing before him a variety of toys, and Himself hiding from view. He expected that the child would soon forget Him. But his attention was not drawn towards any other object. He had fixed his eyes inexorably on the Lord Himself, and he was seeking Him and no other. He was trying to move towards the place where he imagined Krishna was. When His attempts to transfer the attention of the child from Himself failed, Krishna declared, "This is no ordinary child. He has won through My tests. So, the name Parikshit is the most appropriate one for him. He lives up to it, already!"

At this, the Pandits recited verses indicating their blessings on the child. The Brahmins recited relevant passages from the Vedas. The music of trumpets rent the air. Women sang auspicious songs. The family preceptor dipped a nine-gemmed jewel in a golden cup of honey and wrote the name on the tongue of the child. On the rice grains spread on a gold plate, the name was written and the rice was then showered on the head of the child, in token of prosperity and happiness. The naming ceremony was thus celebrated in grand style. Men and women who attended were given presents as befitted their rank and they departed. Everyone was talking appreciatively of the wonderful way in which the child sought out the lap of the Lord. Many praised the steady faith that the child had already attained.

Yudhishtira who was puzzled at the unique behaviour of the child approached Vyasa, the great sage, to know from him the reason for the strange search and learn about the consequences of this attitude. Vyasa said, "Yudhishtira! When this child was in the womb, the deadly arrow that Aswatthama aimed at it in order to destroy it was about to hit its target, Lord Krishna entered the foetal home and made it safe and saved it from destruction. This child therefore has been eager to know who had saved him from within the womb where he lay. He started examining everyone to find out whether he had the same effulgence that he saw, while a foetus in the womb. Today, he saw that Divine Form with all its splendour and so, he moved straight towards Him and prayed to be taken up and seated on the lap. This is the explanation for the strange behaviour about which you are curious to know".

Hearing these words of Vyasa, Yudhishtira shed tears of joy and thankfulness. Overjoyed at the limitless grace of the Lord, he paid Him reverential homage.

# HOW SWAMI SAVED MY LIFE

Dr. Kishan N. Gadhia

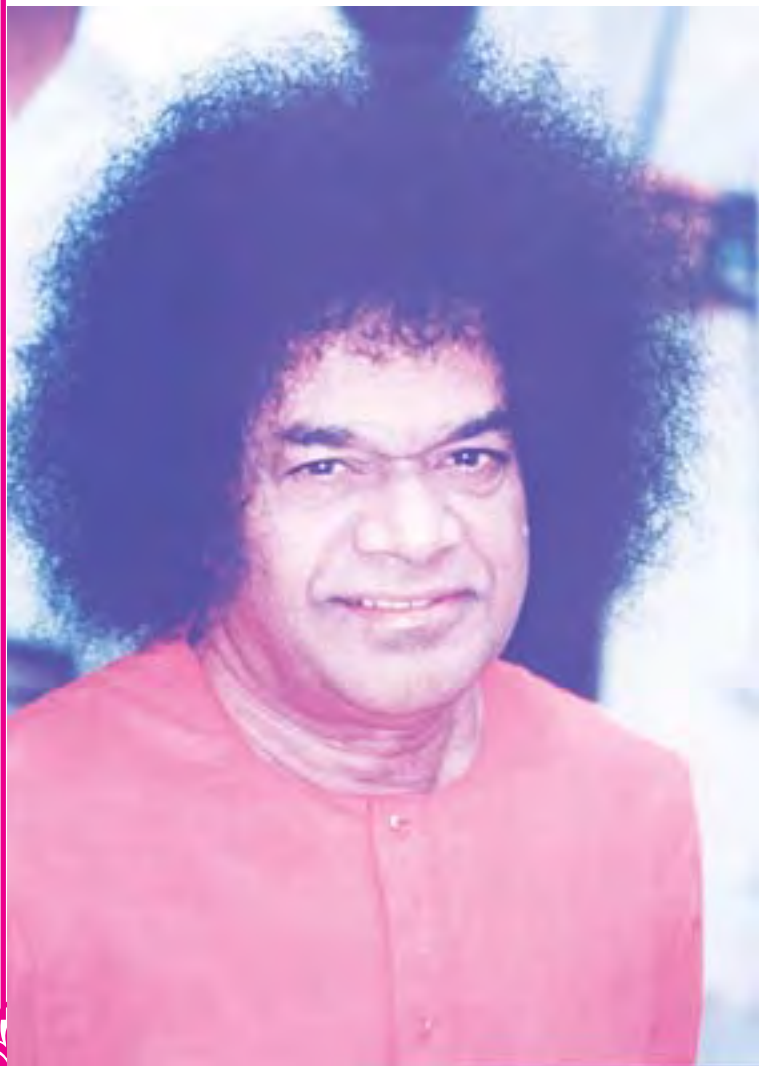
**T**HE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF STORY of how I first came in direct contact with Bhagavan in 1960, and the many personal miracles and experiences that I have had over the past fifty years. I first heard of Bhagavan in the late 1950s from my cousin Dr. D.J. Gadhia. After his own

personal experiences over many years, he was convinced that Bhagavan was none other than the reincarnation of Shirdi Sai Baba, who lived in the 19th and early 20th centuries in North India. Shirdi Sai Baba had taken birth as Sri Sathya Sai Baba with the primary task of bringing about personal transformation of human beings through love and selfless service.

All of this sounded very good indeed, but my parents and the rest of my family in those early days continued to pray, as Hindus normally do, to Rama, Krishna and Siva. It was not until I had direct and personal experience of Bhagavan that I fully realised the true divinity of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

## **First Encounter with Divinity**

During my time as a medical student in Jamnagar in 1957, a small group of my friends and I went on a pilgrimage tour of various temples in South India. One of the destinations was to be Puttaparthi, a small village of barely a few thousand inhabitants, and the abode of our Beloved Bhagavan. We visited a number of temples and spiritual retreat centres, including Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry (Puducherry). But for one reason or another, we could not make it to Puttaparthi during that time. Perhaps the time was not ripe to see divinity face to face. However,





the time did finally come in 1960 when, with a few of my fellow medical students, I visited Puttaparthi for the first time. Fifty-five years ago, there was no accommodation whatsoever for any visitors. There were no sheds even to lay a bed for the night. Prasanthi Nilayam was a very small Ashram in those days, with only a simple non-elaborate Mandir as its main structure. Professor Kasturi, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan, kindly advised us to build a makeshift bed under a tree opposite the Mandir, so that we could rest for the night after a long journey from Jamnagar, a small city in the State of Gujarat. This we did, and in the morning, we had to walk all the way to the Chitravathi river, about a kilometre away for daily ablutions.

Before I continue with my first ever encounter with Bhagavan, let me narrate a small incident that occurred in Jamnagar some weeks earlier. My cousin, Dr. D.J. Gadhia had come to visit me in Jamnagar after his visit to Bhagavan in Puttaparthi. In Jamnagar, he took me to a jewellery shop to buy a small silver container in which we would keep Vibhuti. After we reached home, he proceeded to take out some Vibhuti that he had been given by Bhagavan, so that he could fill the silver container that he had just purchased for me. As I opened the new container, to our sheer amazement, we found that it was already full of fragrant Vibhuti! My cousin immediately knew that this was one of Bhagavan's miracles, but my doubting mind told me that there must be another more "rational" explanation for this. I thought that the shopkeeper was perhaps a devotee of Bhagavan and that he had filled the container before wrapping it. So, next day, I went to the shopkeeper, and he assured me that he had not even heard the name Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Still my mind was not convinced that this could have been the work of Bhagavan.

Coming back to my first encounter with Bhagavan, Professor Kasturi came to me and my fellow medical students and informed us that Bhagavan would now give us an interview, and that we should proceed to the interview room. As we entered the interview room, Swami immediately started to call each student by his name, and the country where each student had come from. None of us had mentioned these details to anyone before. This was quite a shock to all of us. Swami then proceeded to roll up the sleeves of His robe, and started waving His right hand in a circular motion. No sooner had He started doing this, than Vibhuti started flowing from His fingers. He began giving the Vibhuti to everyone in my group, except me! I told Swami that He had omitted to give me Vibhuti, but He turned around and said that He had already given me the Vibhuti in a silver container in Jamnagar! I was speechless at this point. He then asked, "Do you need any further proof"? I immediately replied that I did not and that I was fully convinced that He was God incarnate.

### **Mother has a Heart Attack**

During the interview, Swami called me alone into a smaller room within the interview room. As we entered, He said, "Your mother has just had a heart attack in Uganda and she is now in a hospital in Kampala. There is no need for alarm. I am taking care of her". He then started waving His hand in a circular manner and materialised Vibhuti, and gave it with the clear instructions to send it to my mother in Uganda.

After reaching Bombay (Mumbai), I rang up my father in Uganda to enquire about mother's health. He was surprised that I already knew of my mother's heart attack. I narrated what transpired in the interview room and told him that the materialised Vibhuti would be sent immediately by post.

## Dasara 1963

I was very fortunate to have been in Puttaparthi, during the Dasara festival in 1963, to witness one of the truly great moments, when Swami performed the Vibhuti Abhishekam (a bath of the holy ash) of the statue of Shirdi Sai Baba. I remember being seated in the fourth row from the front, and by the time Swami completed the Abhishekam of the Shirdi Sai Baba statue, all of us seated in the first few rows were completely covered with the holy ash. It was truly a most divine blessing to have been a witness to this event.

## Going Back to Uganda

I graduated as a medical doctor in 1966. I went to Puttaparthi after the graduation ceremony. I was sitting in the Darshan lines in the front of the Mandir, and Swami walked over to me and asked, "You are going back to Uganda"? I replied affirmatively. He then materialised His visiting card, which had His photo, His name and address on it. On giving me this card, He told me to keep it always in my pocket and not in my Puja room.

Thus, I left for Uganda after having completed my medical degree in India. I got married to Tarla in 1967 and decided to set up my medical practice in a small town called Masaka, some 80 km away from the capital Kampala. Although I was so far away from Swami physically, I felt He was always with me in Masaka.

## Swami Visits Uganda

In 1968, Swami made His one and only overseas trip to East Africa, visiting Uganda, and briefly Kenya. He was in Uganda for fourteen days in total, and I would come to have His Darshan on the weekends when I was not seeing patients. One day, He gave all the local doctors an interview. He called one

of my uncles (Dr. D.J. Gadhia's father), and informed him that He would be visiting the Gadhia residence in Kampala. He said, "You can call all your family members and tell them to be present at your residence when I visit there". We were all amazed at this, and very happily made all the necessary arrangements for this grand occasion, when Divinity would visit our home in His physical form.

Swami came to our home, and the entire Gadhia clan was present and felt elated at the presence of the special guest. He gave Padanamaskar to all the family members. He then told us, "Your time has come to leave this country, move out of this country". He told all ethnic Indian people to leave Uganda. We were all shocked at this, as most of us were born in Uganda, and for all intents and purposes, this was our country. Where shall we go, and in any event, which country would accept us? Nevertheless, I took heed to His good advice, and sold my property and deposited the proceeds of the sale into a London bank.

There was a military coup in Uganda in 1972, and General Idi Amin Dada took control of the country. He warned all the non-Africans to leave the country within ninety days or else face severe consequences, including death. Luckily, Swami had warned us well in advance, and I proceeded to make arrangements to leave Uganda as soon as practicable, and head for the U.K.

## Face to Face with Death

I was on my way by car to Kampala from Masaka to request my parents also to make immediate arrangements to leave Uganda. On the way, I came across a military checkpoint. One of the military officers asked me if I had any weapons in the car, and the purpose of my going to Kampala. I gave the appropriate answers and asked him to let me through. But

he did not. Instead, he asked me to get out of the car, and placed a gun at my chest. He asked me to stop by the side of the road, near some bushes. At that very moment, an African man driving a taxi, who knew me, stopped his car and pleaded with the military officer to let me go, but to no avail. The officer even threatened to shoot the taxi driver if he did not leave. Not surprisingly, he left hastily.

I felt completely helpless by then, thinking that the end of my life was near. The officer, pointing his gun at my chest, asked me what my last wish was. I pleaded with him to let me free, so that I could return to my family in Masaka. He refused flatly, but offered me a cigarette instead. I told him that I did not smoke. In that case, he said, "Pray for the last time, I will give you two minutes". I put my hand in my pocket and took out Swami's visiting card. I recalled Swami telling me to always carry the card with me, and not leave it in the Puja room. Very scared and frightened, I started praying to Swami holding the card to my head and my chest.

The officer then said that the time for prayers was over, but before shooting me, he was curious to find out whom I was praying to. I showed him Swami's visiting card, which read: "Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Puttaparthi, Penukonda Taluka, Anantapur District". It also had His photo on it. As the officer finished looking at the card, he surprisingly handed the card back to me and said, "Go". Something stopped him from shooting me to death.

In 2004, whilst I was in Whitefield Ashram, Swami called me one day and asked me to narrate the above story to the students who were present at Swami's residence, Trayee. After my narration, Swami told the students that when the officer took the visiting card in his hand, he saw the picture of Swami on it,

and on seeing, he immediately changed his mind about killing me. Swami confirmed that He made the military officer change his mind completely and let me go.

Now here is the most interesting sequel to the above incident: Swami mentioned that the military officer had sought out a photo of Swami to keep for himself after seeing Swami's form in the visiting card. The officer kept that photo in his home in Uganda and used to meditate on that photo. Swami said that, one day, as the officer was meditating, a big laughter was heard by him in his room. The officer was very surprised at this, as there was no one else in the house. Swami revealed that the laughter was that of none other than His. Swami continued, "I came out of the photo, and directed the officer to come to Puttaparthi for blessings". Swami also told the officer to give up being a cruel and violent man.

Swami then startled everyone by saying that the military officer did come to Puttaparthi for blessings and that he was called in for an interview. In the interview, Swami gave him a robe as a token of His love. This incident was unknown to me until Swami mentioned this on that day. I was really surprised at this. Swami said that He had changed the military officer "from being a Vali to a Valmiki".

## In Conclusion

Swami has performed many miracles for me and my family for the past fifty years. They range from solving personal, medical and financial problems. All my family members have full faith and confidence in Swami, and He in turn has always showered His blessings and love on all of us.

– **The author, a doctor by profession, was an ardent devotee of Bhagavan for over five decades.**



## BHAGAVAN'S SRI RAMA NAVAMI MESSAGE

# INSTALL RAMA RAJYA IN YOUR HEART

*What can the evil effects of Kali Age do to a man whose heart is full of compassion, whose speech is suffused with truth and whose body is dedicated to the service of others?*

(Sanskrit Verse)

## FOLLOW THE NOBLE IDEALS SET BY RAMA

### *Embodiments of Divine Love!*

**A** TRANQUIL MIND, A TRUTH-FILLED speech and a body dedicated to service, one who has these three qualities is described as the embodiment of triple purity. Such a one is the noblest of all human beings.

Tulsidas was the great one who proclaimed that human life is redeemed when every talent and every moment are utilised by humanity for realising the Divine. All objects in the universe are alike to God because they are the manifestations of the Divine. The scriptures declared about this Divine manifestation *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* (verily all this is

Brahman). Hence, whoever worships the Supreme Lord should also worship Prakriti (Nature). He should love Nature and adore

Nature. Nature is not different from Paramatma (Supreme Self). Nature is the effect and God is the cause. Nature is the expression of this relationship between cause and effect.

Goodness is a synonym for God. Hence, it is only by contemplating on the qualities of God that human existence finds fulfilment. The body of a human being who does not think in this way is merely a lump of clay.

God's words, actions, thoughts are always pure, selfless and infinitely precious.



The truth of this is illustrated by an episode from the Ramayana.

### **Dramatic Acts of God to Prove His Omnipresence**

Once going with Sage Viswamitra, Rama sat on a stone in the Ashram of Gautama. That very moment, a woman emerged from the stone. However, Rama did not feel proud that by a mere touch of His Feet, the stone had turned into a woman. On the contrary, He felt sad that His feet had touched the wife of a great sage and thereby He had committed a wrong. This shows that God dwells in the minds of sages. God indulges in dramatic acts like these to demonstrate His omnipresence in the universe and to teach the world the greatness of Nature.

Another episode reveals another aspect of the Divine. For all the mighty deeds done by Hanuman and great help rendered by him, Rama asked him: "Hanuman! What reward can I give you? Apart from expressing My gratitude to you I cannot give you any befitting recompense. The only way I can show My gratitude to you is that whenever you think of Me at any time in your life, I shall appear before you". Rama was showing His gratitude to Hanuman in this manner. This indicates that the primary duty of man is to be grateful all his life to the person who has done him a good turn.

Man has to realise his divinity and look at all Nature from the divine point of view. Instead, man looks at everything only from the mundane point of view. The body is indeed perishable. But it is also the means for realising the imperishable truth. This means, all speech should be about the Divine. All actions should be godly. Every thought should be about God.

That is the appeal which Thyagaraja made to his mind: "Oh mind, think always about Sri Rama". Thyagaraja was chanting Rama's name all the time and singing His glories. This is an example to the world.

### **Rama, the Ideal Exemplar of Righteousness**

Rama is the supreme exemplar of how people should conduct themselves in the world, how a country should be governed, how the integrity and morality of human beings should be protected. High-minded actions, ideal qualities and sacred thoughts are basic foundations of character. Rama is the very embodiment of these three attributes. This means that every human being should cultivate sacred thoughts, perform right actions and develop good qualities. Rama demonstrated by His words, thoughts and actions how such a life can be lived. Rama acted up to the ancient injunction: "Speak Truth. Practise Righteousness". Eschewing harsh words, Rama pleased everyone by His sweet speech. He countered harsh speech by others with His composure, patience, sweetness and smile. He never pried into the affairs of others, never took notice of their faults, never indulged in ridicule, and never caused any pain to others by the way He spoke to them. It is essential for everyone to follow the example set by Rama and cultivate His many noble qualities and do righteous actions. People should entertain sacred thoughts.

### **One should Never Go Back on the Plighted Word**

Man is an image of the Divine. The Lord has declared in the Gita: "My Spirit is the indwelling Spirit in all beings". God is the indweller in all beings. Today, in the pursuit of power, men are prepared to commit any kind of crime and to inflict any kind of harm on people to achieve their ends. Rama, on the contrary, gave up the kingdom and chose to face the ordeals of life in the forest to honour the pledge given by His father. He demonstrated to the world that one should never go back on one's plighted word. Rama gave up the throne and became a denizen of the forest. In life, it is not comforts and conveniences that are important. The supreme importance of Truth

was that Rama wanted to hold forth to the world. One should never go back on one's pledge even at the cost of one's life.

Today, however, men go back on their words from moment to moment. They indulge in falsehood at every step. Promises are forgotten. How can the Rama principle flourish in such an environment? The Rama principle is distant from such an atmosphere.

God will be in proximity only to those persons whose thoughts, ideals and deeds are in accord with Rama's. Rama was a man of His word, but man is the very reverse. It may be asked, "In this situation how is it possible to say that there is divinity in human beings"? Not at all. In such human beings, there is either animality or demonic nature. Whatever Sadhanas (spiritual practices) one may perform or however much one may recite the Lord's name, God will not judge one by these criteria. What is the transformation in one's heart? If there is no transformation of the heart, of what avail are spiritual practices?

### **Indwelling Divinity within the Shrine of the Body**

Man is not a mere creature of flesh and blood. He is the embodiment of the Atma. It is only when man recognises this truth will true spirituality be evident to him. Concentrating all the time on the physical body as the only reality, time is wasted on external observances. The body should be regarded as the temple of God. To consider it otherwise is a sign of foolishness. Only he is a true human being who recognises the indwelling divinity within the shrine of his body. The scriptures have declared: "In the temple of the human body dwells the individual Self which is the Eternal Self".

In this context, it may be noted that even scholars and intelligent persons tend to get confused over this matter. People who go to endless trouble to acquire positions, power or reputation do not care to devote even a small

fraction of that effort to earn God's grace. The lesson taught by the story of Rama is different. Tulsidas said: "Rama! I am helpless, poor and crippled". Why did he say he was a cripple? He had hands and legs, head and other limbs. Nevertheless, he declared that he was a cripple. What is the inner meaning of this? "What is the use of having hands when I am unable to serve You, oh Rama! What is the use of having eyes, when I am unable to see You? So, I am verily blind". Tulsidas declared that limbs that were not used in the service of the Lord were as good as lost.

Purandaradasa also sang in the same manner. "Alas, even when they are endowed with eyes, they do not see God's glorious form! Even when they have ears, they do not listen to the songs in praise of the Lord".

Men use their eyes to look at the attractions of the world and not the effulgent form of God. As long as man is fascinated by Prakriti (the phenomenal world), he cannot comprehend the Divine. Even the most eminent persons are subject to this weakness. This is the mark of the powerful influence of the Kali Age.

### **The Reign of Dharma is Rama Rajya**

At the outset, understand what is Rama Rajya. It is the reign of morality, of truth and virtues. Rama Rajya means that which engenders happiness (Ramayati). There should be no ill-will towards anybody. No one should be harmed. That is Rama Rajya. When such feelings arise among people. Rama Rajya will come into existence of its own accord.

It is with such feelings that Tulsidas extolled Rama. His Ramayana is suffused with his deep devotional experience. He exclaimed: "Rama! I have no abilities of any kind. I have practised no system of yoga. I have not developed any method of meditation. I have no possessions of any kind. I have only one thing and that is my love. I love You for love's sake". Spiritual



practices of various kinds, including Japa, yoga and the like, will not lead you to God-realisation. I do not suggest that you should discontinue these exercises. The devotional activities are better than many other useless pastimes. But, if you want to get near God and experience God, you have to transform the heart. As you sow, so shall you reap. Sow the seeds of love and reap the fruit of love. Sow the seed of immortality and reap the fruit of immortality. Today you want sweet fruit, but you sow poisonous seeds. This is thoughtless action.

Some people say that they are too weak to scale spiritual heights. But you have the strength to commit sins and do wrong actions. The strength required for good or bad actions is the same. In fact, it is more difficult to commit sin than to be good and meritorious. To utter an untruth is difficult. To speak the truth is easy. Speaking the truth calls for no effort. But to declare what is not true as true calls for considerable ingenuity. Uttering an untruth is therefore more difficult. Equally, cheating is more arduous than being honest.

Many devotees tell Swami that they are caught up in the coils of Samsara (family and worldly life) and are unable to break away from it. But what is the truth? Is it you who are clinging to Samsara or is it Samsara that is holding you in its grip? Has Samsara any hands to hold you? You have hands and you are holding on to worldly life. Samsara is not holding you. It is a paradox for you to say that Samsara is holding you in its grip when the truth is otherwise.

It is excessive attachment that is the cause of man's troubles. Do everything as an act of offering to the Divine. Without faith in God man ceases to be human.

### **Diversion of Mind in Religious Gatherings**

Devotees who attend Bhajans turn their looks this side and that side without concentrating on

the Bhajans. If they are not interested in the Bhajans why should they come at all?

Once Ramakrishna Paramahansa slapped Rani Rasmani at a gathering of scholars and worshippers. All people were astonished at Ramakrishna's action. Rani Rasmani felt humiliated. Ramakrishna explained that he found Rani Rasmani thinking about her court affairs while sitting in the religious gathering. This was highly improper and hence he slapped her. It was equally improper for devotees to sit in Bhajans and divert their thoughts to worldly matters. Sitting in good company, how can one entertain bad thoughts? People speak about Satsang. What is Satsang? It is not mere assemblage of ten devotees. 'Sat' refers to that which exists in all the three periods of time – past, present and future. The term applies to the Divine. Satsang, therefore, means association with the Divine.

### **God is Pleased only with Inner Feelings**

Each word has profound and sacred meaning. But common people do not relish such interpretations. They enjoy what is trivial and pleasing to the ears. I do not want to please people in this way. The truth has to be taught. Some day or other people will understand it. Worldly sayings may please people for the moment, but they are of no value spiritually. God is pleased with the inner feelings and not the external show. But most people are interested only in the external and do not bother about the inner feelings. If you break the branch of a tree and plant it in the sand, will it grow into a tree? It must be planted in soil where it can strike roots. Similarly, the feelings must arise in the heart and get deeply rooted in it. Then the fruits will appear in the external world. Therefore, cultivate the feelings inside and enjoy the fruit outside.

Such wise teachings were taught to the people in the reign of Bharata and Rama.

*continued on page 22...*

Prasanthinilayam

16-12-73

My Dear! Have you got any  
spiritual hunger?

Spiritual hunger is the  
ultimate meaning of every  
activity in life. The dissatis-  
faction and the restlessness  
that remain even after obtain-  
ing all the necessities of life  
show that everyone conscien-  
tiously or unconsciously, does  
suffer from spiritual hunger  
and it is not appeased until  
the spirit within is realised.  
Without this divine discontent  
there is no real progress.

World peace is possible when  
all the people of the world wake  
up to the facts governing  
universal life and when  
there is a heart to heart  
feeling of goodness, love and  
oneness among the inhabitants  
of the world.

With Blessings  
Sri Sa/lisa Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam

16-12-73

*My Dear! Have you got any spiritual hunger?*

*Spiritual hunger is the ultimate meaning of every activity in life. The dissatisfaction and the restlessness that remain even after obtaining all the necessities of life show that everyone consciously or unconsciously, does suffer from spiritual hunger and it is not appeased until the spirit within is realised. Without this divine discontent there is no real progress.*

*World peace is possible when all the people of the world wake up to the facts governing universal life and when there is a heart to heart feeling of goodness, Love and oneness among the inhabitants of the world.*

With Blessings  
Sri Sathya Sai Baba



# JOURNEY TOWARDS THE ULTIMATE

Vasanthi A. Salyankar

**B**HAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA came into my life in the year 1958 when on my visit to Mangalore (Mangaluru) to my parents home, I saw His photo in our altar. I was eager to know about this new person with an unusual crown of hair. My mother later gave me the book Sathyam Sivam Sundaram. After careful reading, I felt a new devotional upsurge in me and yearned to meet Baba. Then immediately after, that one day in Bombay (Mumbai), I met a college friend who took me to a place where Baba was showering sweet smelling Vibhuti on His photos and even on the wall behind the altar. My desire to meet Baba intensified and I made a few attempts to reach Him. My efforts fructified only in November 1967 when we landed in Puttaparthi.

Bhagavan Baba blessed us with an interview. I told Him that we were doing congregational Bhajans once a month and I was also conducting classes in our home in Mumbai for a group of my friends' and neighbours' children. I also said that I loved to be in their midst and tried to convey to them through stories and Bhajans the importance of values-based life. The children loved the classes and attended regularly, participating actively in all the topics and proceedings. Baba was very happy, and He said that His blessings were there for all of us and I should continue the activities. He lovingly asked me to come again to Puttaparthi.

Born in a family where parents were spiritual aspirants and were able to create a

favourable climate and environment in the home for us the young and tender children during the early formative years, we had disciplined lives. Under the care and guidance of my dear mother, who was a Vidwan and Kannada Pandit in a school in Mangaluru, and my father, a known musician, we led a God-centred life with the whole family of eighteen members praying together at sunset. My mother always believed: a family which prays together stays together.

## **Shower of Divine Grace**

Married into a religious family, my spiritual aspirations were maintained to my total satisfaction. Being introduced to Baba through His Divine miracles and teachings, my husband and I started living our lives with His Divine Name on our tongues and His glory in our hearts. Experiencing Baba's Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan (vision, touch and conversation), we were highly blessed. The living loving God was everything for us. The turning point in my life came soon after when Swami blessed me with the Seva of the character building programme for children. He explained how to bring about the overall blossoming of the child through moral values like Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. I heard Him attentively and humbly accepted the Divine command. But, I thought, could I, a zero, shoulder such a great responsibility? This thought was due to my ignorance; it was my ego playing its part. I was dumbfounded, but soon knowledge dawned on me when Baba showered His Divine grace on me. I realised

how wrong I was in thinking that I was the doer. Ashamed, in humble submission, I expressed my prayer to the compassionate Lord, "Swami, it is Thee who will work through me". He blessed me profusely. In a moment, I felt light and buoyant, floating in Sai love. He inspired and guided me to continue doing my Seva in the spiritual education of the children, who are the future leaders of our country, Bharat. Now see the change that came in me while I was being transformed from Amma to Bal Vikas Amma (this is how Baba called me).

### Transformation through Seva

My devotion was rediscovered and deepened through this Seva. I had to put into practice what I preached to the tender children. Thus started my personal Sadhana (spiritual practice), *Sravanam*, *Mananam* and *Nididhyasanam* (listening, recapitulation and contemplation). I am still struggling as I am in the process of transformation of my own inner personality. All through the years, my husband, children and mother helped and encouraged me in my pursuit, lending me full cooperation.

I learnt my lessons also from the Bal Vikas children. To be amidst the children is elevating. Their love is so pure, their desires so innocent. They are closest to God. Children in loving God are only reaching out for union with their source. The first lesson that I learnt was – be like a child, pure and innocent, bereft of all that is undesirable. This meant Thyaga, renouncing unwanted thoughts and desires which lead to negative and wrong actions, and giving up entanglements. The second lesson I learnt was to dedicate all my



*The author with Bal Vikas students who enacted the play "Kanakadasa" at Prasanthi Nilayam in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan.*

abilities, skills and gifts to Paramatma who has lent them to me; they are His alone. So, it is right that I dedicate all actions and the fruits thereof unto Him. This is an expression of love, we offer because it gives us happiness and satisfaction. Thirdly, I learnt to surrender to His Divine Will. With such an attitude of dedication, my personal prestige no longer exists. Whatever life gives, I accept considering it to be Bhagavan's Prasadam. Whatever has to be done is done without attachment or aversion. I have to be a mere witness of the activity and look upon everything as passing phases.



*The author being felicitated at the All India Mahila Vibhag Convention at Prasanthi Nilayam on 25th September 2016.*

Bhagavan Baba says, "Why fear when I am here? Bring your sorrows and griefs, worries and anxieties and take from Me joy and peace, courage and confidence. Give Me something which is clean and fragrant with the perfume of virtue and innocence, and washed in the tears of repentance. Install the Lord in your heart and offer the fruits of your actions and the flowers of your inner thoughts and feelings. Take from Me Prema, learn Sarva Sambhavana, the capacity to see all as moved and motivated by the One Paramatma". Bhagavan Baba assured me that He would take care of my responsibilities and this is how it worked all through. In the lives of our family members, we have innumerable experiences

of Baba's miracles of curing sickness and caring. He guides, guards and protects us. He is God, the Kali Yuga Avatar.

I am short of words to express my gratitude to Baba in bringing about transformation in me. He did it through the 'Bangaru' therapy and treatment for curing the deep illness of the mind. By His grace alone, have I been able to withstand all tests.

I crave to be born again and again with no other desire but to serve Poornavater Bhagavan Baba, my Beloved Lord.

– **The author is a former Mahila Vibhag Convener, Maharashtra, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation.**

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When we speak of establishing Rama Rajya, let not Bharatiyas imagine that it is relevant only to Bharat. The whole world needs the advent of Rama Rajya. What this means is that the rulers should have three qualities. They are: Satpravartana (righteous conduct), Sadhalochana (good counsel), Sadguna (good qualities). There should be a combination of all the three. Today good counsel is a rarity. As for good qualities, the less said the better. High-souled persons, who represent harmony in thought, word and deed, should fill the seats of power. There should be no place for the wicked who think one thing, speak another thing and act in a different way.

Devotees should fill their mind with sacred thoughts. At least from now on, banish all bad thoughts. Turn your mind towards God. Install Rama Rajya in your heart. When this happens, the world will experience Rama Rajya.

Fill your mind with the ideals of Sri Rama and try to put them into practice as much as possible. This will cost you nothing. You do not have to perform any Asanas or go to the forest for practice. Staying in your home, attending to your duties, purify your heart.

– **Excerpted from Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Ramesh Krishan Hall, Brindavan, Bengaluru on 9th April 1995 on the occasion of Sri Rama Navami.**

*University degrees without mental equanimity and the control of the senses are but handicaps, extra burdens that one has to jettison, before becoming free and happy. If you seek to fulfil low desires, why come here? Come here only if you seek to earn grace. Go to hospital only when you are resolved to take the drug the physician prescribes and go through the regimen he lays down. So, obey the directions that I give, whatever others may say or however difficult they may appear to be. You have not come to Prasanthi Nilayam to please those others; you have come to please Me.*

– *Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*



# Selfless Service Changes Your Destiny

T.G. Krishnamurthy

**I**T WAS 29TH OF JULY 1990. FROM Bangalore (Bengaluru), I was travelling in a car with my wife and also a friend of mine. I was driving the car and my wife was sitting on my left. My friend was sitting in the rear seat. The car was approaching Chikkaballapur from Bengaluru. About seven km before Chikkaballapur, I saw a buffalo crossing the road. I immediately applied the brakes. The buffalo was safe and ran away. However, our car somersaulted four times and then landed on its wheels. There was a ditch twenty feet deep on either side of the narrow road. There was absolutely no traffic in the front of the car and at the rear of the car at that time. The roof of the car was blown off and I could see the sky from inside the car. I asked my wife to check if she had any fracture. She checked and said she was fine. I checked with my friend and he too was fine. My right collar bone was broken. As a result, I was not even able to lift my right hand. Though the fuel tank was full, the car had not exploded.

Somehow, the car started. I drove the car slowly like a bullock cart and reached Chikkaballapur. Then, I contacted my people in Bengaluru. In those days, there were no cell phones. I telephoned my people in Bengaluru. When they saw the car, they thought that nobody could have survived, the car having somersaulted four times. They took us to a doctor in Bengaluru for a medical check-up. The doctor advised us to scan our body. I was not interested. Neither was my wife interested. My friend was also not keen. We live or die, it is His Will – not ours. We did not want to care about the body. So thinking, we went back to



Chennai and from there, I sent a telegram to Swami, stating, "Swami, I met with an accident and hence could not come. I will come and have your Darshan at the earliest". The doctors put a bandage on my injury and said it would automatically heal in 21 days. After three weeks, I went to Puttaparthi. Captain Oberoi was then in charge of Sri Sathya Sai Airport in Puttaparthi. He was previously the General Manager of Indian Airlines, Chennai. Then, he became a devotee and stayed in Puttaparthi. He was a friend of mine. The moment I reached there, he saw me and wished me, "Hello TGK, how are you after the accident"?

"What accident?" I asked him with surprise!

"Hey, on this day, on Monday, 29th July, 10.48 a.m., you fell down, car somersaulted four times and got damaged..." he explained everything in detail. I was wondering how he knew all these things because I had not told

this to anyone. Even to Swami, I had not told any details except that I met with an accident.

After he teased me for some time, I asked him as to how he knew so much of details. He then explained: Swami came out at 10.49 a.m. on that day. He came out and called me. He asked me, "You know Krishnamurthy, your friend"? "Yes, Swami," he said. Swami continued, "That buffalo saw another buffalo on the road and applied the brakes. That buffalo went away, but this buffalo somersaulted in the car. I had to stop the traffic in the front and at the rear and I also ensured the car landed on its four wheels. Otherwise, the car would have exploded as its fuel tank was full. Buffalo! Buffalo! He does not know how to drive a car"! I got a little scared, and later went and sat in the verandah. When Swami came out, He looked at me and raised His eyebrows meaning to ask, "How are you"? I slowly showed my collar bone. It was a little swollen. The next day, Swami was going to Brindavan. He told me, "You also come to Brindavan".

I went to Brindavan. There were about 450 Japanese devotees who were accommodated in the hall there. The next day morning, after Darshan, Swami came there to give His Divine Discourse. He wanted me also to speak.

Generally, in my talks, I quote a stanza from the Bhagavatam, praising and glorifying the Lord. When I thus began with a prayer, Swami said, "Forget about all this. Talk about the car accident". So, I explained in detail about the accident and said, "Swami saved my life. Otherwise, I would have been dead". Immediately, Swami said, "No! No! No! I did not save your life". I asked Him, "Swami, how can that be? Who will believe when You say You have not saved our lives"? Then Swami said, "Do you think I am telling a lie? I did not save you. I am telling you the truth". Then I asked Swami to reveal how else I was saved.

Then He said, "You have been coming to Puttaparthi for so many years and you are doing Seva, not only in Puttaparthi, but also

in your place. Whenever people thank you for your Seva, you ignore that and tell them, "Please thank the Lord, not me. All that gratitude thus comes to Me, instead of you, because you always ask them to thank the Lord. So, they were all indirectly thanking Me and I accumulated the results of all your good actions with Me. That accumulation keeps on increasing as you continue to tell them to thank the Lord. It means, you have opened a Spiritual Account in my Spiritual Bank, where the assets are nothing but the results of your good actions. For example, if your accident on that day costs about five hundred thousand rupees and you have accumulated one million rupees in your account, the accumulated balance automatically saves you. I am only a custodian of the results of your good actions. I did not save, but the results of your good actions saved you. This is the purpose of Seva, which I have been telling you from the beginning. One has to do Seva with love, full of humility and without any ego. Those things will come to Me. The very purpose of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation is Seva. There is a difference between Seva and service. In the case of service, you expect something in return after the act. But in Seva, you only give and do not expect anything in return. From this, you understand how Seva changes your own destiny provided you do the good acts and offer the results of the good acts to God".

Swami also told me, "Had you not come to Me, you would not have done these good acts. Had you not done any good acts, you would have been dead on that day of the accident. Hence, the death went back without killing you because of your good acts. So, keep this in mind".

This is what Swami told me in front of all the Japanese devotees.

– The author is a former State President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Tamil Nadu.

# My Swami – My Constant Companion

Sujata Ravindran Menon

I WOULD LIKE TO NARRATE A scintillating incident in my life which goes to prove that one's genuine and sincere prayers are always answered by our Beloved Swami. My family is Swami's devotees for the past three generations and my mother is one of the first Bal Vikas Gurus of the city of Mumbai.

During 1978, I was selected for the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality from Maharashtra State, which was conducted at Brindavan in Bangalore (Bengaluru). The event influenced me so much that I was determined to study for my degree course in Swami's college in Anantapur only. On my return to Mumbai, I took transfer certificate from my college and came over to Anantapur for admission along with my parents. I had confidence in Swami that He will listen to my prayers and provide a seat for me in His institution.

## Love My Uncertainty

We were in for a great shock when the Principal Madam told us point blank that we could go back as the admissions were all over. I was really very upset, since I had already taken transfer certificate from Mumbai University. Totally disillusioned, I went to Puttaparthi for Swami's Darshan along with my parents. In the Darshan lines, my mother informed Swami that I did not get the admission. Swami replied, "Go there and see Amma", in Tamil. My mother prayed to Swami that we had already been to the college and I was denied admission. To this, Bhagavan replied, "Santhosham Amma...



Santhosham" (happy mother...happy). My mother was very unhappy and I was totally dejected! It was a real test of faith...and my monkey mind started playing its pranks.

Meanwhile, after Darshan, we saw Principal, Jayamma Madam and Pushpa Madam going into Swami's interview room. All

of a sudden there was a heavy downpour and all of us ran helter skelter. My mother and I took refuge under a big tree near the Mandir sands. The Principal Madam also took shelter under the same tree. On seeing us, she informed us that I was selected for admission by Bhagavan Himself and asked us to come to college the following day. I was really on seventh heaven and my mother offered some loud prayers, thanking Swami profusely. The next day, we went to Anantapur and we were accorded a royal welcome by the Principal and other faculty members. The Principal even left the choice of the hostel room to my discretion! By Bhagavan's grace, I was able to enter the hallowed portals of Anantapur College, without any written examination and viva. This was a life-changing experience and it proves that if you place complete faith in Swami, He will guard and guide you in all ways. Then I understood the inner meaning of Swami's words, 'Love My uncertainty'!

### Saviour in Times of Crisis

Swami has always reminded us that He is always with us, in us, around us, above us, below us and protecting us, just as the eyelids protect the eyes. In this context, I would like to narrate a mesmerising incident which displayed in ample measure Beloved Sai's compassion and His assurance to devotees that He is the real 'Apadbandhava' (saviour in times of crisis). This incident happened during the year 1980 when I was studying for my Bachelors in Commerce course in Swami's Anantapur College. In one of the semesters, I had fallen ill and as per the suggestion of the Warden, I decided to return to my home in Mumbai for treatment. Since it was vacation time and the journey was decided all of a sudden, no railway reservation was available. One student who was going to Guntakal told me that her father would assist me in getting a ticket. On

reaching Guntakal station, she forgot about the matter and left with her parents! I was left behind at Guntakal station at 8 o'clock at night, without a ticket and with heavy luggage to fend for myself. I was very sick and this left me physically and mentally drained. The train to Mumbai had already arrived at Guntakal station.

I made a fervent prayer to Beloved Lord Sai and ...Lo and behold, from nowhere an old Muslim man appeared before me. Confidently, he picked up my luggage and asked me to follow. Somehow, I did not feel any doubt or diffidence. He kept the luggage in a reserved compartment, took out a ticket from his pocket and gave it to me. On enquiring about the money to be paid, he said that he would take it from me and went out of the compartment as the train was about to move. Then he came near the window and told me three times, "Remember my name is Kadhar". His eyes were extraordinary and luminous! As I was looking out, 'Kadhar' (meaning Almighty in Arabic) just disappeared into thin air!! I was really dumbfounded and realised that it was our dear Swami who had taken the role of a poor railway porter to save me from this precarious situation. The travelling ticket examiner came and examined the 'ticket' and confirmed my lower birth! This 'miracle' shows that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba will go to any extent to salvage a situation and provide safety and succour to His devotees. *Faith is seeing the invisible, believing the incredible and experiencing the impossible.* Such incidents cement our unshakeable faith in Swami and help us to realise His Omnipresence, Omniscience and Omnipotence.

– The author is a former student of Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur.



## Chinna Katha

*There is Nothing Superior to Devotion*

ONCE TWO BROTHERS JNANADEVA and Bhaktideva were travelling together. Both of them felt thirsty after walking for some time. Bhaktideva asked Jnanadeva, "Oh brother, I am thirsty, but cannot find water anywhere in the vicinity". Jnanadeva said, "Let us see if there is a well nearby". After walking some distance, they found an old well which had a little water at the bottom. Immediately, Jnanadeva assumed the form of a bird, went inside the well, drank water and came out. Jnanadeva had the ability to assume any form. *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* (experience of non-dualism is wisdom). Since he did not observe any difference between one form and the other, he could assume any form. But Bhaktideva did not have the power to change his form. He could not go into the well to drink water. Therefore, he sat there and started contemplating on God with love. As he was contemplating on God, water started overflowing from the well. When he felt something cold touching his feet, he opened his eyes and found that water had



*The power of devotion is supreme.*

come up to quench his thirst. Jnanadeva had to change his form, but there was no need for Bhaktideva to do this. As he turned his love towards God, whatever he wanted came running to him. There is nothing superior to devotion.

*The Lord may have two or two hundred vows; that is His Will. But the Bhakta need have only one vow, to save himself – the vow of total surrender – of Saranagati. If you have full faith in the Divinity of every being, the attitude of surrender will automatically be fixed in you. Do not treat them as Nara (human), treat them as Narayana, the Lord Himself. You are not alleviating the distress of that other person; you are offering worship to the Lord, in that form, in that body.*

*– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*



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# THE STORY OF TRAYEE BRINDAVAN

Bishu Prusty

**T**HERE IS A BEAUTIFUL SECRET about “Trayee Brindavan”, Bhagavan’s abode in Bengaluru. Everything about this architecture is a multiple of 9. There are 9 rooms on the first floor of this building, the inside atrium of this edifice measures 18 feet, the lotuses on the top are 18, and even the outer diameter of this holy structure is 54 feet.

Bhagavan gifted this sacred home to humanity on 26 April 1984. Prior to this, in the same spot was a building of the British era and it was commonly referred to as the ‘Old Bungalow’. Swami started staying here from early 1964.

Since then, the Raj Mata of Nawanagar, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan, was pleading with Him for permission to build a new mansion. Her relentless prayers continued through the ‘60s, ‘70s and the early ‘80s. Finally in 1983, Bhagavan acceded to her request and gave the responsibility of bringing down the Old Bungalow to an engineer, Sri Vimalanathan.

Keen to serve Bhagavan, he was ready to quit his job with a reputed company in 1969 when he was just 26, to dedicate his life in His Mission. However, Swami did not permit him to do so. His ceaseless prayers to Swami for 10 long years got answered in 1980 when Bhagavan did permit him to leave his job. Still Swami did not give him any assignment. For three years, he stayed in the Ashram pining for a chance to serve. His moment of reckoning

came when in the summer of 1983, Swami entrusted him with the task of demolishing the Old Bungalow.

Sri Vimalanathan went about his task with utmost reverence to every inch of that sacred space. The structure was dismantled brick by brick, without keeping one’s feet on the walls of the house. Every brick came out as a unit and all of these were neatly piled. As the demolition went on, Sri Vimalanathan used to send graphical reports of the work to Bhagavan who was in Puttaparthi. Swami was so eager to see these pictorial representations that on one occasion even before Sri Vimalanathan’s wife reached Puttaparthi with these papers, Sri



*Trayee Brindavan during construction*

Kutumba Rao, the Secretary of the Ashram, was waiting to receive her and collect these drawings, even though Sri Vimalanathan had not informed anyone about her visit. To do these reports was not easy for Sri Vimalanathan as in those days he had to travel 36 miles to the



Bengaluru city to just get a photocopy done. But he wanted to do the best for Bhagavan and Swami indeed rewarded his sincerity beautifully. Once the ground was flat again, Bhagavan got Sri Vimalanathan involved in the construction of the new home too. He worked along with other senior engineers of the Trust.

"I learnt a lot during this period," Sri Vimalanathan recalls and narrates a few telling episodes. "One evening, Swami suddenly came to the work site and went around the premises. Before He left, He softly told me – 'Do not waste anything. Use up the mix. It will get spoiled tomorrow'. I did not understand what He was referring to. Later, when I checked with the head mason, he confessed that he had hidden some concrete mix as he wanted to wind up the work for the day. Since that could not have been used the next day, it would have been a loss. Swami always emphasised that we should not waste devotees' money.

"Bhagavan's attention to every minute detail was an eye-opener for us. For instance, when we were painting the moat wall of Trayee Brindavan, Swami suggested that we should dig 6-9 inches deep into the ground and paint that surface also, because during monsoon, that much earth would probably get washed away and the base of the wall would then look ugly.

"Even as He was physically guiding us about everything, His unseen hand was also protecting us at every juncture. When we were building the rooms of the second floor, unfortunately a young worker fell off the scaffolding, from a height of 12 feet. Once he hit the ground, he became still. All of us feared the worst. Somehow we put him in a car and took him immediately to Sri Sathya Sai General

Hospital. After 2-3 hours, he walked back from the hospital as if nothing had happened to him! Next morning, Swami sent us Vibhuti and Prasadam with the message: 'Ask them to be careful'. Instances like this are many.

"Once we finished the exteriors and went to the interiors, now the lessons from Bhagavan were too moving to say the least. First, we wanted to know which room on the second floor would be His bedroom. So we made a 2D model wherein various segments of the second floor could be moved. We wanted Bhagavan to tell us where He would like His room to be. But Swami was so excited about how that model functioned that He kept playing with it, rotating each segment, like a gleeful child but never revealed to us what we wanted to know.

"Ultimately, the Raj Mata stepped in and she brought her treasure chest of expensive fittings for Swami's washroom and bedroom



*Bhagavan coming out of Trayee Brindavan*

– gold-plated nozzles, gold plated taps, a sophisticated Jacuzzi, a shower cubicle, and so on. Swami flatly dismissed all this saying, 'Why bath tub? What do you put there! Why gold taps? Is the water that comes through a golden tap different!' Much to the discomfiture of the Raj Mata, Bhagavan settled for a standard wash basin and the regular nickel



*Bhagavan standing outside the ornately decorated Trayee door*

chromium tap.

"But the Raj Mata did not give up. She wanted to place a large king-sized cot for Bhagavan. Again, Swami intercepted and asked, 'Have you seen My frame? Why do I need such a big bed!' He did not want even an air conditioner. We had to reconcile ourselves with just a regular fan and a simple table for His room. Truly, we saw it in action what Swami means when He says 'My Life is My Message'. It did bring tears to our eyes and taught us how we should lead our lives."

"When it was time for inauguration, Bhagavan considered various names – 'Sathyam', 'Sivam', 'Sundaram' and so on. But Swami's abode in Mumbai is christened 'Sathyadeep', His home in Hyderabad

is 'Sivam' and His temple in Chennai is 'Sundaram'. Ultimately, Bhagavan declared: "This new temple will be called 'Trayee'!"

Trayee indeed is the confluence of 'Sathyam', 'Sivam' and 'Sundaram' as this edifice has the lotus-petal charm of Sathyam, everyday Trayeeswara Linga is worshipped here like in Sivam, and just like Sundaram, it is not only alluring to look at but also pulsates with selflessness and sacrifice.

Trayee also means the Vedas – Rig, Yajur and Sama. It is also one of the names of the Divine Mother as described in the Lalita Sahasranamam. Therefore, this is the abode of the One who is the source of all knowledge, all wisdom, all power, all beauty and all glory.

When Bhagavan inaugurated this home by cutting the ribbon and unveiling the tablet with the inscription 'Trayee Brindavan', a group of journalists requested Him for a message for the occasion. Swami sweetly smiled and said, "Your joy is My joy". He mentioned to them how this building was the result of the labour of love and devotion of so many dedicated devotees who worked silently and diligently like the monkeys of Rama's army.

Thousands of people were fed and clothes were distributed to the old and physically challenged on that day. The evening of 26 April 1984 was marked with soul-stirring devotional music. As the lotus-abode of the Lord bloomed, hundreds of hearts blossomed.

As Trayee Brindavan celebrates its anniversary this month, it continues to connect, transform and sublimate the lives of spiritual seekers.

To watch the "Prasanthi Chronicle" video based on Trayee Brindavan, visit the YouTube Channel – Sri Sathya Sai Official – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHnKgA9xXIQ>

# SIVARATHRI AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

**D**EEP DEVOTIONAL FERVOUR marked the celebration of the holy festival of Sivarathri at Prasanthi Nilayam. The first programme of the celebrations was a devotional music



*Devotional music presentation "Siva Aradhana" by Prasanthi Bhajan Group.*

presentation "Siva Aradhana" which began at 8.20 a.m. on 11th March 2021. Presented by Prasanthi Bhajan Group, the programme comprised Stotras (verses) and devotional songs propitiating Lord Siva and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Some of the compositions rendered in this programme included the Stotras: Bilvashtakam, Lingashtakam, Sivashtakam and devotional numbers "Subah Subah Le Sivaka Naam" (chant the Name of Siva), "Sai Mahadeva", "Om Namah Sivaya", "Devadi Deva Sada Siva" (Siva, the God of gods). Soulful rendition of these numbers, the melody and music of which mesmerised one and all, gave a magnificent start to the Sivarathri celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati.

The Sivarathri programme in the evening began at 4.20 p.m. with the ceremonial procession, in which the Sayeeswara Linga



*Ceremonial procession in Sai Kulwant Hall.*

and Bhagavan's palanquin were brought from Bhajan Mandir to Sai Kulwant Hall amidst Nadaswaram music, Veda chanting and Bhajans. After the Linga was placed on a decorated platform specially set up for this event in front of Bhagavan's Samadhi, the proceedings of the Abhishekam of the Sayeeswara Linga were started by the priests



*Abhishekam of Sayeeswara Linga in Sai Kulwant Hall.*

accompanied by the sacred Vedic Mantras. The elaborate Abhishekam ceremony comprised the Abhishekam of the Linga with



18 items, some of which were: curd, honey, milk, sugar, Vibhuti, etc. While the priests performed the Abhishekam with these items, a commentary in English and Telugu explained their significance. After the completion of the Abhishekam, the Linga was beautifully decorated and Arati was offered to it. Recitation of Bhagavan's Ashtottarashata Namavali (108 names of Bhagavan) followed this. The Abhishekam ceremony concluded with offer of Puja and Arati to the Linga and Bhagavan. After this, the sacred Abhishekam water was sprinkled on the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall.

The devotees thereafter were blessed with a Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, in which He dwelt on the significance of Sivarathri and emphasised the need for true devotion. Giving the example of Chataka bird which drinks only the water directly from the cloud, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to develop true

devotion and love for God. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, "Hey Siva Sankara Namami Sankara Siva Sankara Shambho". This Bhajan of Bhagavan marked the beginning of the Sivarathri Bhajans which reverberated in the Hall from 6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. A sizeable number of devotees took part in the Bhajans, observing the social distancing norms. At the conclusion of the Bhajan, devotees had the Samadhi Darshan of Bhagavan.

The Sivarathri Bhajans in the morning on 12th March 2021 began at 4.30 a.m. and concluded at 6.00 a.m. with two Bhajans "Siva Siva Siva Shambho, Hara Hara Hara Shambho" and "Hey Giridhara Gopala" in the golden voice of Bhagavan. After the conclusion of the Sivarathri Bhajan, Prasadam of tamarind rice and sweet rice was served to all the devotees.

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

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- 1) The publication and distribution of spiritual, religious, and educational Sai Literature and the production and distribution of audio and visual multimedia, photographs, calendars, and diaries for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- 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](http://www.sanathanasarathi.org).
- 3) Maintaining a reporting channel [www.theprasanthireporter.org](http://www.theprasanthireporter.org), which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
- 4) Providing library and Reading room for visiting devotees, with a very large collection of books written by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and books on Bhagawan besides various spiritual and religious books.

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## *Make Patent the Latent Divine*

The Bhakta who poses to be sincere has to exercise constant vigilance and practise the discipline of being ever in the Divine Presence. God who is now dormant in your consciousness has to be recognised and made resurgent so that every act of yours will reflect the Divine Splendour. Vyakta means patent; the individual is called Vyakti in Sanskrit; for, he has to make patent the latent Divine.

*– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

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