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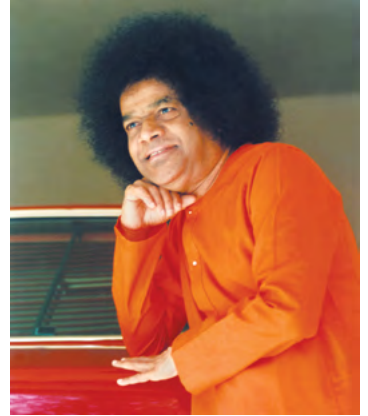
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*"It is not the knowledge of the Vedas,
the scriptures and the Puranas which is
important. Whatever you do with purity
of heart is good, pure, sacred and divine.
Do not perform any action with the
desire for fruits. Love everyone with the
feeling that the same Atma is present in
you and them. That is the principle of
true love. Taking such love as the basis
of his teachings, Sankara propagated the
philosophy of Advaita to the entire world."*



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AMRITA DHARA

BHAGAVAN'S DISCOURSE:
9TH SEPTEMBER 1996


ATTACHMENT TO THE SELF IS TRUE LOVE

*Noble souls are least affected when wicked people criticise and ridicule them.
Does the elephant lose its might and majesty just because dogs bark at it?*

(Telugu Poem)

HOLD ON TO GOD FIRMLY

*Embodiments of
Divine Atma!*

 **EVERY** object in this creation appears to have a colour. You think that these colours are natural to these objects. But this is not so; they only appear to have a

particular colour. For example, sky appears to be blue in colour and so is the ocean, and you say, sky is blue, ocean is blue. But it is not correct. Neither the sky nor the ocean is blue in colour. As the sky is far away, it appears to be blue to our eyes. Similarly, the ocean appears to be blue because of its infinite depth. When you go near the ocean and take its water in your hand, you will see it has no colour.

Sankara Fulfilled the Promise he Gave to his Mother

The good and bad that you experience in this world depend on your feelings, thoughts and beliefs. You cannot see the true form and colour. Electricity is produced from water and is put to many uses, but it cannot be seen with the naked eye. Likewise, all the living beings originate from the divine principle of Atma. But the principle of Atma cannot be seen. You can only visualise the behaviour, good or bad, of the living beings that originates from it.

Sankara's philosophy of Advaita became popular among the scholars. Once he was presiding over a large congregation of scholars. As he closed his eyes, he saw his mother in distress. The heart of a noble soul is like a mirror. He at once stopped the proceedings of the assembly and went to Kalady. He came to his mother and poured sanctified Tulasi water in her mouth before she breathed her last. In this way, he kept up the promise he gave to his mother.

In the prevailing circumstances those days, people of Kalady were opposed to any Sannyasi (renunciant) performing the funeral rites of his near and dear ones as they believed it was against the tradition. One who takes to Sannyasa is supposed to have given up all his worldly relationships. But Sankara in spite of being a Sannyasi came to perform his mother's final rites to fulfil his promise. None in the village came forward to help him in the performance of his mother's funeral rites. Nambudiri Brahmins strongly objected to this. According to them, Sankara was acting contrary to Dharma. As he had no other option, Sankara carried the body of his mother on his shoulder and cremated it in the backyard of his house. The same practice is followed even to this day in Kerala. If some person in the family dies, they cremate the body in the backyard of their house. If you go to Kerala, you will find houses having spacious backyards.

I am explaining this in a little more detail in order to make the students understand this. Before taking up Sannyasa, one is supposed to perform Viraja Homa. What is

Viraja Homa? In Viraja Homa, one performs one's own final rites, giving up all worldly relationships and one's name. From that moment onwards, he takes a new name and dons ochre robes. All those who take to the path of Sannyasa assume names such as Satchidananda, Nityananda, etc. However, we don't see even a trace of Ananda (bliss) in many of them. When one performs his own final rites in Viraja Homa, one starts a new life. Then where is the question of having worldly relations? Therefore, it is prescribed that a Sannyasi should not take part in Karma Kanda (ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites).

Here, I would like to give you a small example. When we went to Rishikesh, Burgula Ramakrishna Rao made arrangements for the accommodation of devotees in guest houses and in the houses of a few individuals. That day Swami Sivananda and his disciples came and requested Me to preside over the 75th Birthday celebrations of Swami Sivananda. I told them it was the 75th Birthday of Kuppuswami and not Sivananda. Kuppuswami was his name prior to taking to Sannyasa. After taking to Sannyasa, Kuppuswami ceased to exist. His name and status changed. Sivananda was the name given to him at the time of taking to Sannyasa. By then thirty-seven years had passed. Therefore, I told them it was the 37th Birthday of Sivananda and not 75th Birthday. Sivananda said that he had not met anyone in his life who imparted a spiritual lesson in such a forceful manner. People today rely only on physical name



and status, but they don't recognise the fundamental basis. It is possible only for the divine incarnations to have the same name and stage in life right from birth till the end. There are many who make the mistake of associating and identifying themselves with their earlier name and status even after taking to Sannyasa.

Devotion of Burgula Ramakrishna Rao

Burgula Ramakrishna Rao was a great devotee. He was also a great linguist knowing twelve languages. He was highly intelligent. He had the desire to perform pilgrimage to Badrinath, Kedarnath with the Avatar Himself. When he was the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, he wanted to undertake this sacred pilgrimage with Swami. Having come to know about this trip, nearly 200 devotees from all parts of India joined us and became part of our entourage. Burgula Ramakrishna Rao and his wife had a sacred heart. They used to partake of food only after feeding those devotees. Such was their spirit of sacrifice. They used to personally serve water to all the devotees. When his ADCs requested him, "Sir, you also have your food, and we will serve water to devotees", he told them, "I am not the Governor now, I am the servant of Swami".

On another occasion, when Burgula Ramakrishna Rao was the Chief Minister of erstwhile Hyderabad State, Swami went to Malakpet in Hyderabad. Thousands of devotees were standing in the queue to have Swami's Darshan. The devotees were supposed to have Swami's Darshan

one after the other without wasting a moment. The volunteers were nudging the devotees as is the practice in the sanctum sanctorum of Tirupati. Here students should understand how pure-hearted Ramakrishna Rao was. He also stood in the queue to have Swami's Darshan. The Inspector General of Police came and requested him, "Sir, you are the Chief Minister; therefore, you should not stand in the queue. Please come in the front". Then Ramakrishna Rao said, "I may be the Chief Minister from political point of view, but I am an ordinary devotee from spiritual point of view. I am not such a great devotee to have the Darshan of the Lord straightaway". Such was his nobility.

Physical Beauty is Perishable

After fulfilling the promise given to his mother, Sankara went to Kasi accompanied by his disciples. On the way, he saw some young men and women moving together. Then he cautioned his disciples to beware of physical attractions. He told them, "These days young men and women are attracted by the physical body which is filled with all sorts of filth and gives out foul smell. They are carried away by the physical beauty, but they don't see the beauty of the indwelling Atma. This does not behove a human being. Why so much infatuation for the body which changes from moment to moment"?

The physical body is bound to disintegrate and get reduced to ashes. In this human birth, youth is like passing clouds that come and go. Describing the



ephemeral nature of the body, Sankara tried to develop a sense of detachment in the hearts of people. In this regard, young men and women should behave with great caution. They should not have attraction for the physical body which is made up of flesh, blood and bones and emits foul smell. Where is the question of beauty in such a body? It is only an illusion and not the reality. (In this context, Swami related the story of a prince who wanted to marry a merchant's daughter for her beauty. The girl, who was devoted to God and wished to remain single, devised a plan to rid the prince of his infatuation. She sent word that she would agree to marry the prince if he approved of her after a week. Meanwhile, she took a series of purgatives, collected all the purgings in vessels and went to meet the prince. By that time, she was so emaciated that all her youthful charm had gone. She told the prince that the beauty he saw in her was all contained in the vessels. The prince learnt the lesson and decided also to remain single and devote himself to serve God.)

Body is like a water bubble, mind is like a mad monkey. The body follows the mind. Adi Sankara taught young people not to have attraction for sensual pleasures.

The body which is made up of five elements is weak and is bound to disintegrate. Though hundred years of life-span is prescribed, one cannot take it for granted. One may leave one's mortal coil at any time, be it in childhood, youth or old age. Death is certain. Hence, before the body

perishes, man should make efforts to know his true nature. (Telugu Poem)

At the same time, Sankara never advocated that all young people should become Sannyasis. He advised them to discharge their duties earnestly and spend their time in the contemplation of God. He taught what he himself practised. Young men and women today have become slaves to their senses and are leading their lives like animals. That is why Adi Sankara taught the youth the philosophy of Advaita in a way they could understand.

Brahman is the Fundamental Principle of Creation

Children – Boys and Girls!

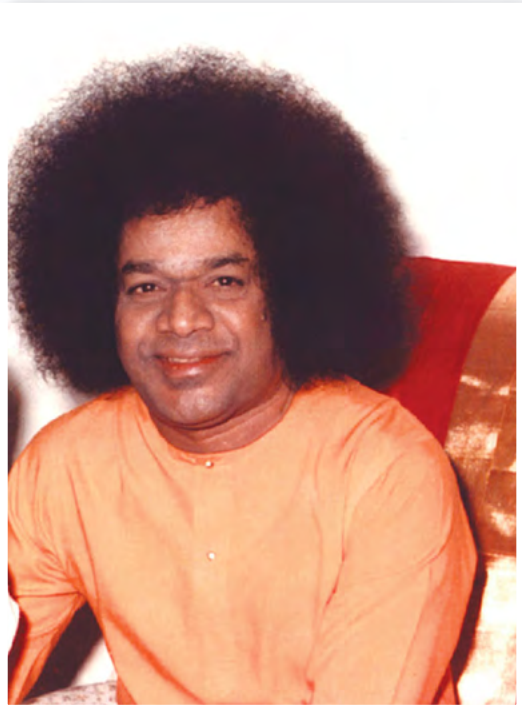
You would have watched movies in a cinema hall. You can learn Advaita even from cinema. When you enter the cinema hall, initially you find only the white screen. You will not be satisfied just by watching the white screen all the time. You eagerly wait for the pictures to be projected on the screen. When the pictures appear on the screen, you are happy to watch. Does the same picture permanently appear on the screen? No. It comes and goes. But the screen neither comes nor goes. It is always there. The screen is permanent, but the picture is temporary. Similarly, the Jagat (world) which comes and goes is temporary. Brahman who neither comes nor goes is eternal. That is why Adi Sankara declared, *Brahma Sathyam Jagan-mithya* (Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal). In the word Jagat, 'Ja' means 'to come' and 'Gat' means 'to go'. Just as pictures appear and disappear on the screen, likewise the



world also comes and goes on the screen of Brahman. Brahman is the truth; it is like the white screen. But nobody likes to see only the screen all the time. People see the screen only when pictures appear on it. Sankara also declared, *Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat* (Vishnu pervades the

(Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death; time and again, I am experiencing the agony of staying in the mother's womb. It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life. Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.)

What is the essential teaching of Advaita? One should take the fundamental principle as the basis while carrying on his life in this physical and ephemeral world. This fundamental principle is the screen of Brahman. This unreal world is projected on the screen of Brahman. The entire creation is based on this fundamental principle. You can experience the principle of oneness only when you realise the fundamental basis of the creation.



entire universe). Hearing this, the scholars were confused because earlier Sankara had declared that the world is unreal. Later he said, the entire world is permeated by Vishnu. The scholars wondered which of these statements was true. But Sankara said, both are true. Pictures come and go.

*Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam,
Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam,
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare,
Kripayapare Pahi Murare.*

Everything is unreal except Brahman. Here is an example. On the cinema screen, you see the pictures. You see only the pictures but not the screen. But where is the screen when pictures are projected on it? It becomes a part of the pictures. Without the screen, you cannot see the pictures. Therefore, the screen is in the background. Similarly, the eternal principle of Divinity permeates the entire universe. It is on this basis that it is said, *Sarvam Vishnumayam*



Jagat. The same truth is declared by the Vedic statement *Isavasyam Idam Jagat* (the entire world is permeated by God). The same Atma is present in all the names and forms. Without the screen of Atma, you cannot see the picture of the world. This is how Sankara propagated the principle of Advaita to the world.

What is the essential teaching of Advaita? One should take the fundamental principle as the basis while carrying on his life in this physical and ephemeral world. This fundamental principle is the screen of Brahman. This unreal world is projected on the screen of Brahman. The entire creation is based on this fundamental principle. You can experience the principle of oneness only when you realise the fundamental basis of the creation. This oneness is denoted by the Atma which is present in everyone in the form of consciousness.

This Atmic principle is given various names such as Rama, Krishna, Buddha Jesus, Nanak, etc. All these names and forms are attributed by man to Divinity. They have birth and death but not Divinity. Divinity is all-pervasive. Sankara taught this principle of Advaita to all the scholars in an elaborate way. However, it is not easy for all to understand this Advaitic philosophy because every individual appears to be different from the other. But the fundamental power is the same in all. That is the life force which is also called Aham (I). What is this life force? The process of our inhalation and exhalation is denoted by Soham principle. This is our life

force. It is due to the presence of Soham principle that the body exists. 'So' means 'That', 'Ham' means 'I'. That Thou Art is the teaching of the Soham principle which is also called Hamsa Gayatri.

There are three subtle channels in human body – Ida, Pingala and Sushumna which are associated with life force. Inhalation is denoted by Puraka, exhalation by Rechaka and retention by Kumbhaka. These three form the essential aspects of Pranayama. Pranayama is one of the steps of Yoga propounded by Sage Patanjali, which consists of eight steps, namely, Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi. The process of inhalation is denoted by 'So' and exhalation by 'Ham'. Between inhalation and exhalation, there is retention of breath at the centre of eyebrows. This is the place where Yogis focus while performing meditation. This is the source of Atmic knowledge. Ancient Yogis have exhorted man to focus on the fundamental basis of everything, i.e., Atma.

The confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati is called Prayag in the worldly sense. But the real Prayag is where the nerve channels Ida, Pingala and Sushumna meet. That is the place of Bhramadhya (centre of the eyebrows). Adi Sankara compared the path of sacred and selfless work to Ganga, the path of worship to Yamuna and the path of wisdom to Saraswati. Saraswati is Antar Vahini (unseen). Similarly, wisdom is the Antar Vahini of work and worship. We travel either by train or car to reach Prayag. But the real



Prayag cannot be reached by these modes of transport. The same truth was declared by Mira when she was forced to leave her house. Then she sang, *Chalo Re Mana Ganga Yamuna Teer, Ganga Yamuna Nirmal Pani Sheetal Hota Sarir* (Oh mind! Go to the banks of the Ganga and Yamuna; the water of Ganga and Yamuna is pure; it will make the body cool and serene). Lord Krishna resides at the confluence of sacred Ganga and Yamuna in the form of Atma. How does Krishna appear to be? *Mora Mukata Pitambara Shobhe Kundala Rajata Sarir* (He is wearing yellow silk robe and is adorned with a crown of peacock feathers and glittering ear rings). Such are the sacred feelings of pure-hearted devotees. Mira experienced oneness with Krishna by her deep devotion. Such principle of oneness was taught by Sankara to young and old alike. In this manner, gradually the philosophy of Advaita was accepted by everyone.

Sankara's Atonement

When Mandana Misra was defeated in the debate, Sankara insisted that he should take to Sannyasa as per the condition of the debate. Ubhayabharati, the wife of Mandana Misra, was a great scholar. She told Sankara, "You have full knowledge of all scriptures. I am the Ardhangini (better half) of my husband which means I am half of his body. Therefore, it is only when you defeat me also in the debate that you can ask him to take to Sannyasa". Sankara agreed to her proposal and entered into a debate with her. During the course of

the debate, she asked him a question relating to the Dharma of a householder as stated in Kama Sastra (a treatise on marital love). Sankara had no knowledge of this. Therefore, he requested her for one month's time to find out an answer to this. At that time, a king named Amaruka died and his dead body was lying in the palace. Seizing the opportunity, Sankara entered his body through the power of yoga. Seeing their king coming back to life, the people of the kingdom were overjoyed and took him to the palace. But, in fact, it was not the king but Sankara who had entered the king's body. He started leading the life of a householder just like the king. But very soon he realised that he had done an unsacred act and his conscience did not accept this. At once he left the king's body, went to Ubhayabharati and answered her question.

Afterwards, Sankara set out on his journey to Kashmir. In those days, Srinagar in Kashmir was also a place of great scholars and intellectuals. The king of Kashmir patronised them. The moment Sankara entered Srinagar, the doors of the temple of the divine mother got closed at once. People tried in vain to open the doors. Many Vedic scholars went to the temple and started singing hymns in praise of the deity and praying to her to open the doors. The goddess was moved by their devotion. Then an ethereal voice was heard, saying, "Sankara is a great scholar and an Acharya (one who practises what he preaches). However, he has acquired



a blemish now. Only when he atones for the mistake he has committed that has caused this blemish will the temple doors be opened". Then Sankara started praying to the divine mother intensely. He admitted that it was his mistake to have entered

worldly love. But even that he did not do with any bad intention. His intention was only to give an answer to Ubhayabharati. If your love is associated with Atmic feeling, you will not acquire any blemish. True love is related to the Atma and not to the body.



Hold on to God firmly. He is your true and eternal saviour. You should develop strong determination to hold on to Him. Only then will your life be redeemed. There is no point in developing detachment for some time and getting attached to worldly things again. Having given up the worldly desires once, give them up for ever. Divinity will manifest in you when you have such supreme sense of detachment. This is the truth, and nothing but the truth. The teachings of Sankara on detachment have done great good to humanity.

the body of the king and led the life of a householder in the royal palace. In order to atone for the sin he committed, he undertook deep penance for eleven days foregoing food and sleep. On the twelfth day, the temple doors opened on their own. Such was the determination of Sankara.

The earlier speaker said, "Everyone should love Swami, and it is only through love will life be sanctified". But what type of love you should have? It is not worldly love. Sankara acquired blemish because of such

Attachment to the Self is true love. *Love is God. Live in Love.* Such love will confer purity of heart. I told yesterday:

*One may have mastered the Vedas
and Vedangas,
One may have the expertise to
compose prose and poetry,
But if one lacks purity of heart, one will
ruin oneself.*

Never forget these words of wisdom.

(Telugu Poem)



It is not the knowledge of the Vedas, the scriptures and the Puranas which is important. Whatever you do with purity of heart is good, pure, sacred and divine. Do not perform any action with the desire for fruits. Love everyone with the feeling that the same Atma is present in you and them. That is the principle of true love. Taking such love as the basis of his teachings, Sankara propagated the philosophy of Advaita to the entire world. He paid special attention to youth and children while imparting his teachings. However, you should be aware that one cannot develop the spirit of detachment by merely listening to spiritual discourses.

A big businessman used to go everyday to listen to lectures on mythological texts delivered by a learned holy man. The holy man once announced publicly, "All of you must listen to these talks on all the seven days of the week. This will bestow full merit on you". The businessman attended the talks on five days regularly. On the 6th day, he had to go out for an urgent work. He therefore called his son and said to him, "The holy man has told me that I would earn great merit if I attend his talk sessions on all the seven days. But it is urgent for me to go out tomorrow. Therefore, you should go and listen to the talk of the holy man in my place because I do not want to lose the merit by my absence". Soon after, the businessman went to his room and started thinking, "The holy man is imparting Vedic teachings that man should renounce the world and focus only on God. He is exhorting everyone not to develop body

attachment and get trapped in Samsara. What will happen if my son becomes a renunciant after listening to the teachings of the holy man"? Immediately, he went to the holy man and said to him respectfully, "Tomorrow I am sending my son to listen to your talk. Kindly do not emphasise the value of renunciation in your talk. Rather, speak about the significance of love for the world". The holy man then remarked, "You have attended my talks for five days. Tell me how much detachment and renunciation have you developed? Then, how is it possible that your son may develop the spirit of renunciation by listening to my talk only for one day? This is out of question".

True Meaning of Renunciation

It is not easy to get rid of mountainous sins that one has acquired over a number of births. Therefore, Sankara was determined to develop a sense of detachment in children thereby cleaning their hearts by exposing them to his teachings repeatedly. The vessels that are used for marriages may be cleaned once in a while. But the tumbler that is used everyday has to be cleaned daily. Likewise, youth should undergo this cleaning process repeatedly to develop detachment. In this way, Sankara developed the spirit of Vairagya (detachment) in the youth. What is meant by Vairagya? I have told you earlier. Will anyone want to eat the food he has vomited? You should develop as much aversion to worldly pleasures as you have to the vomited food. Don't say, I shall

continued on page 18...



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

THE RAMAYANA IN BURRA KATHA

THE STORY OF THE RAMAYANA was depicted through the folk art form of Burra Katha by three students of the Institute on 11th July 2015. Beginning their presentation at 5.00 p.m., the students enthralled the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall for more than one hour, covering the entire story of the Ramayana through narration, dialogues and devotional songs. Excellent delivery of dialogues, melodious rendition of songs, perfect choreography and sweet music made the presentation lively and absorbing to the delight of the listeners.

PILGRIMAGE OF ASSAM DEVOTEES

A group of devotees from Assam including Bal Vikas children of this State came on a two-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam on 13th and 14th July 2015, and presented beautiful cultural programmes on both the days. Their first programme was "Usha's Dream and Raas Leela" which was presented by Bal Vikas children of Assam on 13th July 2015. Beginning their presentation at 5.00 p.m., the children first performed excellent dances comprising Raas Leela of Krishna and Gopikas, and thereafter they presented a dance drama depicting the mythological



The scene of the drama showing the marriage of Usha with Aniruddha.

story of the marriage of Usha, the daughter of demon king Bana, the ruler of Sonitpur (modern Tezpur), and Aniruddha, the grandson of Lord Krishna. Excellent acting and dialogue delivery along with thrilling dances of the children had a spell-binding effect on the audience who expressed their joy through a loud applause at the end of the drama. While Bhajans followed this, the participants in the drama were felicitated.

The second programme of the Bal Vikas children of Assam was also a dance drama



A thematic dance by the Bal Vikas children of Assam.



which they presented on 14th July 2015. Beginning their programme with a dance and song dedicated to Lord Ganesh, the children followed it up with a prayer song to Lord Siva “Om Namah Sivaya” accompanied by an enrapturing dance. After this, the children danced to the tune of the patriotic song “Vande Mataram” (I offer salutations to Mother India). What followed next was three thrilling dances of the children to the tune of three immortal songs of music maestro Dr. Bhupen Hazarika on the themes of controlling the mind, helping the downtrodden and empathy for the exploited. Nimble footwork and expressive gestures of the children and perfect rendition of songs amply conveyed the values contained in the songs. The programme which began at 5.00 p.m. came to a close at 6.15 p.m. after a brief session of Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam.

ID UL FITR FUNCTION

On the holy occasion of Id Ul Fitr, the students of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus

of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning performed a drama entitled “Sathyam Sivam Sundaram” on 18th July 2015. Based on the “Chinna Kathas” of Bhagavan, the drama delved into the



Students performing Namaz in a scene from the drama “Sathyam Sivam Sundaram”.

inner deeper meanings of these stories to reveal the profound truths contained in them. Excellent acting of the students and talented direction successfully demonstrated the values of true devotion, charity and brotherhood of man as depicted in the stories.

Education sans wisdom, mere wisdom bereft of discrimination, action without discretion, erudition lacking sagacity, power not justified by credentials, statements not based on truth, music wanting in melody, adoration not sustained by devotion, a person devoid of common sense and character, a student not endowed with humility and a discourse that fails to inspire – these serve no useful purpose.

- Baba

MY DIVINE SAVIOUR

Capt. (retd.) C.L. Pradhan

Swami assigned me security duty in the Ashram. I picked up the duty slowly and earnestly with Swami's grace and guidance. I believe that faith in God is the most appropriate security in these ups and downs of life. God is omnipotent and we are only instruments in His hand.

I CAME TO KNOW ABOUT SAI BABA in 1967 through the Blitz newspaper but never tried to find anything more about Him due to my ignorance. I had a Christian neighbour named Dr. Ghosh, who lived with his family in the same government quarters where I stayed in Odisha. I used to accompany him occasionally to a nearby small church for prayers. There was a good congregation of people where spiritual sermons were given and prayers were offered for the well-being of all. In the end, the Father of the church always stressed, "Lord Jesus is the only Saviour as per the common belief".

In the Fold of Swami

The word "Saviour" lay dormant in my mind as gold mine, but there was no further discussion or comment on it. One day one of my staff members greeted me and informed that there was a regular Sai Baba Bhajan on every Thursday near our

residential complex. He requested me to spare some time to go there. Next Thursday, I visited that house and attended the Sai Bhajan. There was perfect silence and devotees were well disciplined. The room was full of sweet smell of incense sticks. Starting with Omkaram, the devotees sang Bhajans dedicated to gods and goddesses of all faiths which was very pleasing. The

He circled His hand in the air and produced something like butter. He then massaged my body up and down with His finger tips. He created Vibhuti for me and blessed me and assured me, stating, "I am always near you and protecting you". I was thrilled with His love and blessings which I needed for my flying career.



melodies permeated my inhalation and exhalation process and my heart was very deeply engrossed in Bhajans. A hot spring of tears started oozing from my eyes and my tongue was dancing to the tune of clapping in Bhajans. The body was still and the mind was focused on Sai Baba inviting and blessing me.

I am Always Protecting you

Two weeks after this, I rushed to Puttaparthi without railway reservation with my wife and two little children Mamta and Raksha as my mind was excited and yearned to see Sai Baba. Sri Krishna Janmashtami festival was being celebrated there in August 1975. I was sitting outside the Mandir on the sand in the open ground

in the first row with my two daughters waiting with throbbing heart for the arrival of Sai Baba. Aha! He was there floating above the ground with agile steps. His every step was rhythmic with soft touch on the ground like tender fall of flower petals. As He came near me, I had eye contact with Him. He blessed me with Abhaya Hasta Mudra (blessing posture) and gently touched my cheek, cleansing my body and mind with powerful vibrations. A thrill ran through my body and I felt that I was sanctified with His holy and loving touch. I then realised that Living God is moving among us. After this visit to Puttaparthi, I started taking part in Sai activities which transformed me and strengthened my faith in Sai Baba.

I again visited Puttaparthi in 1977. One early morning, I was seated in the first row ruminating on the name of Sai Ram. Soon background devotional music started and Bhagavan Baba appeared outside His room. After some time, He moved directly towards me and picked me up for the interview. There were about 12 people in that room both ladies and gents. Swami materialised watches, gold rings and Vibhuti for many people. He consoled the sick people and conferred blessings on all. At last, He looked towards my side and said, "Swami has not forgotten you". He took me inside the small room and pointed out my shortcomings and wrong habits. He circled His hand in the air and produced something like butter. He then massaged my body up and down with His finger tips. He created Vibhuti for me and blessed me



and assured me, stating, "I am always near you and protecting you". I was thrilled with His love and blessings which I needed for my flying career.

My Divine Saviour Comes to my Rescue

On 22nd January 1998, I was detailed on duty to ferry Super King Air aircraft to Juhu Airport. I had piloted this aircraft many times and had landed many times on Juhu Airport before. Landing on this airport was always tricky as there were high buildings and trees on the approach path of the runway. I was finally to land at about 13.00 hours. The wind was gusty and tailwind compound (headwind is favourable for early landing on runway). My aircraft crossed half of the runway floating due to tailwind and finally it touched down on the runway. I used full engine reverse power to slow down the aircraft as well as applied gentle foot brakes, but it was not effective. My co-pilot also used the brakes and it was not holding as he shouted, "Sir, brakes failed". But I was cool and composed with Swami's blessings. Only 50 feet runway was now available for me. I swung the aircraft towards right side using the right rudder within the runway. In my last action, I opened the full power of the right engine and closed the left engine power back, with the result that the aircraft turned sharply towards left on one wheel to the desired heading back track on the runway. But due to the opening of full powers of the engine, the dust lying on the ground rose so high and thick that visibility of runway

and aircraft was reduced to nil from the ATC (Air Traffic Controller). The Controller could not observe properly and transmitted SOS crash message to Santa Cruz airport that the aircraft had overshoot and crossed the runway and it was heading towards Kutcha (rough land) end on the Juhu sea beach side.

As I was taxing back slowly, I observed that three-four fire tenders were rushing towards us on the main runway. When the ATC sighted and observed our aircraft, he shouted, "How the hell you are on the runway? Your aircraft had crossed the runway in Kutcha". In fact, my aircraft did not go out of the runway as the aircraft tyre marks were there on the runway edge and finally the Controller had to accept it. After some official enquiry and incident report, the matter was settled down. My co-pilot captain Thomas who was a Christian exclaimed, "Sir, today, your Sai Baba has saved us".

Both of us were very happy. We settled down in sea side hotel and took full rest after all the tension we had faced. It was my birthday that day and I visited nearby Sai Baba temple to offer my gratitude to Swami who had saved my life.

Security Duty in the Ashram

In 1999, I resigned from the flying job and settled down in Puttaparthi near Gokulam. Swami assigned me security duty in the Ashram. I picked up the duty slowly and earnestly with Swami's grace and guidance. I believe that faith in God is the most appropriate security in these ups



and downs of life. God is omnipotent and we are only instruments in His hand.

One day Swami asked me, "How is your health"? I just nodded with folded hands. He looked at me directly with His piercing eyes like screening my body for about 10 minutes and nodded His head, "Everything is well".

After a week, at about 12.30 p.m., I was going on my scooty very slowly on the main road to Gokulam where I stayed. As I crossed Sai Geeta shed, one big branch of a tree fell upon me and I fell unconscious. The passing students of Swami's college took me to General Hospital. After a few minutes, I gained consciousness and was

sent to SSSIHMS hospital for screening and other tests. The result was all normal and I was detained in the hospital for observation for two days and finally discharged. I thanked God from the core of my heart for granting me a new life. The word "Saviour" which was dormant in my mind as a gold mine reflected, illuminated and enlightened me as to who is my Saviour. Today I can climb on the top of the Himalayas and declare in high pitch, "Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is my "Saviour".

– Capt. (retd.) C.L. Pradhan is serving in the Ashram at Prasanthi Nilayam as Security Officer.

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try. 'Try is dry'. You must do, you must do. It is only for your good. There is no happiness in worldly things and relations. Whatever may be your earnings, whatever may be the happiness you experience in this world, all that you have to leave and go from this world. Therefore, hold on to God firmly. He is your true and eternal saviour. You should develop strong determination to hold on to Him. Only then will your life be redeemed. There is no point in developing detachment for some time and getting attached to worldly things again. Having given up the worldly desires once, give them up for ever. Divinity will manifest in you when you have such supreme sense of detachment. This is the truth, and nothing but the truth. The teachings of

Sankara on detachment have done great good to humanity. Today many scholars propagate the principle of Advaita but they themselves do not practise it. It is not enough if you merely teach, you should practise. Your mind should immerse in the feelings of Advaita and your body should translate it into action. That is the true sense of detachment. Then only can you attain Brahman who is Sathyam, Jnanam and Anantam (truth, wisdom and infinity). Only God is real, all else is unreal.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan "Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma...")

– Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 9th September 1996.



From our Archives

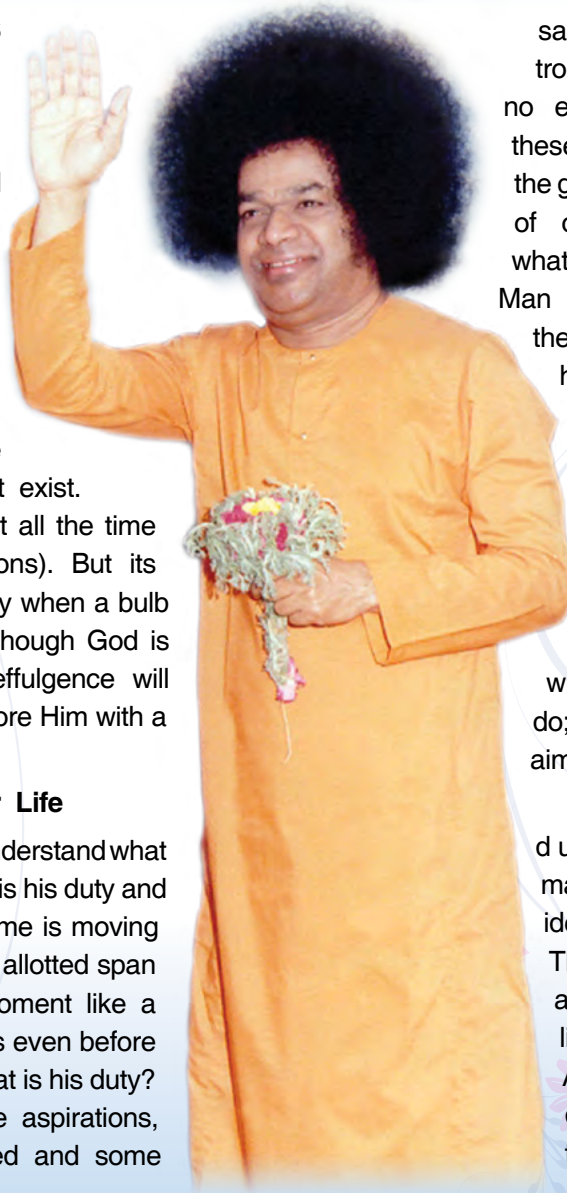
MANIFEST A DIVINE IDEAL IN YOUR LIFE

DIVINISE ALL YOUR THOUGHTS

THE COSMOS is the creation of the Divine. It is surcharged with energy. This energy is not localised at a particular point in space or in time. Though this energy is all-pervading, man is not able to recognise its divine nature. As he cannot recognise it, he presumes that it does not exist. Electrical energy is present all the time (in the electrical installations). But its presence is recognised only when a bulb is switched on. Likewise, though God is omnipresent, His divine effulgence will shine only in those who adore Him with a pure heart.

Realise the Aim of your Life

Man today is unable to understand what is life, what is its goal, what is his duty and what should be his aim. Time is moving fast like a whirlwind. Man's allotted span of life is melting every moment like a block of ice. Man's life ends even before he is aware of his duty. What is his duty? Every individual has some aspirations, some ideals to be realised and some



sacred paths to be trodden. He makes no effort to pursue these aims. What is the goal and purpose of one's life, and what is its secret? Man hardly puts these questions to himself. He is deluded to think that the aim of life is to indulge in sensuous pleasures. This is not what he should do; this is not the aim of life.

Every individual should manifest a divine ideal in his life. This ideal should absorb his entire life and activities. Alas! man today does not follow this sacred path.

Total Devotion of the Gopikas

Whatever you do to please God must be in harmony with the perfection of the Divine. Your words should be absolute truth; your actions should be totally God-oriented. All thoughts should be divinised. It should be realised that God is the Indweller in all beings. Because man has failed to realise this truth, he leads a double life and is a prey to troubles and worries. Only by leading a godly life can man redeem himself.

The Gopikas (cowherd women) are perfect examples of total and pure devotion. They were totally absorbed in Krishna. They ignored the message brought to them by Uddhava. They told Uddhava that they were so totally immersed in the adoration of Krishna that they had no time or inclination to do anything else. They had totally identified themselves with Krishna.

Human Life is Precious

The incarnation of Krishna proclaimed the doctrine of divine love as manifested by the Gopikas. Man today is like an earthen pot filled with nectar. His body may be made of clay, but his spirit is eternal. The Divine has to be experienced through the body. Hence, human birth should not be treated as something trivial. Human life is worth living; it should be cherished as something precious. But such a precious gift is being treated as trash today. It is essential to realise the value of human existence. What is the goal of human life? It is to go back to the source from which we came. Our duty is to return to our primordial, original home.

All of you who are here have come from different parts of India and the world. After

your stay here, you have to go back to your native places. Likewise, human beings have come to the planet earth as pilgrims. They have to return to their original home. You have come from the Atma. You have to go back to the Atma. You have come from Brahman (Supreme Self). You have to merge in Brahman. You have incarnated as a spark of Brahman. You have to become Brahman. In between, there may be many impediments. You should ignore them. Have unshakeable faith. That is true devotion.

Cherish Krishna Consciousness Every Moment

Whatever you do, remember the omnipresence of the Divine. Do every act to please God, out of love and not out of compulsion. Divinise every act. The Lord declares in the Gita: "Having been born in this transient and unhappy world, worship Me". The great teaching of the Gita is: "Put your trust in God, carry on your duties, be helpful to everyone and sanctify your lives". Dedicate all actions to God. That is the way to experience oneness with God. God is in you. You are in God. This oneness is the basic truth. Chant the name of the Lord and render social service in a spirit of selflessness and devotion to God.

In the Treta Yuga, Rama came as the very embodiment of Sathya and Dharma (truth and righteousness). In the Dwapara Yuga, the Lord incarnated as Krishna, the embodiment of Santhi and Prema (peace and love). Today the Avatar has come as

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TEMPLE OF HEALING - PALACE FOR THE POOR

Sunita Ratan Kanal

WHILE INAUGURATING SRI Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield, Bengaluru in 2001, Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister of India called this hospital “a palace for the poor and the temple of healing”. This hospital is absolutely free, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, religion; in short, irrespective of anything. There is no billing section, cash counter or donation box in this Institution. It has a magnificent architecture of 3,54,000 square feet, a 333-bed Super Speciality Hospital with lustrous gardens. It is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and the doctors hone their skills with perpetually updating of the latest developments in the medical field.

Loving Care of the Patients

Two major parts of the patient's body that are taken care of in this hospital are the heart and the brain, i.e., the hospital specialises in Cardiac Sciences and Neuro Sciences. What one can see here in the hospital is the latest equipment imported from all over the world. But, what is not so apparent is the dedication, devotion and discipline which is the undercurrent of its day-to-day functioning.

The hospital is not cramped for space and claustrophobic. It does not have the usual ‘hospital’ smell; instead it has the

sweet fragrance of incense sticks. It has granite flooring which is kept spic and span 365 days a year. The lobby with its grand chandelier far exceeds that of a pompous five star hotel.

There are hygienic canteens which serve subsidised food to the attendants accompanying the patients. This is because Sai says Manava Seva is Madhava Seva (service to man is service to God). All this happens only because of Beloved Bhagavan. He gave a lot of His time, infinite love, grace and blessings to the entire staff of the hospital. The staff on their part strives to serve the patients with love, care, compassion and affection.

Showering His Divine Benediction on the hospital staff and doctors, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba lovingly advised them, “Please treat My patients with love, care and affection. Don't make them feel that you are doing them a favour. Please talk to them softly, lovingly and treat them compassionately. They are poor and they come with a lot of hope from far off places. Please treat them well”. The staff, nurses, technicians, doctors, paramedical staff, follow this guiding principle. Attention to the minute detail is the hallmark of this Divine Temple of Healing.

This is the place where the doctors get to translate the words of their oath into





action. Passion for perfection in whatever they do and excellence in every sphere of activity is a daily routine for the entire team.

Stringent quality control and external quality benchmark services are used to ensure accurate lab test reports. Cases where only a miracle could save the patient are treated with love and His Divine grace ensures that such miracles can occur. A young girl of 18 years who was wheelchair-borne and paralysed from her neck downward came to this hospital after multiple doctors had given up on her. One of our dedicated neurosurgeons took up her case, operated on her and put her on physiotherapy. She was back on her feet after four months.

Facilities and Conveniences to Patients

The staff treats each case with utmost love, care and affection. Take the case of a Lab Technician who has to do a blood test. The pricking of the needle is so gentle that the patient doesn't even know

that the test is over. The doctors reassure the patients with utmost compassion that their ailments will be cured. This in itself relieves the patients of half of their worries. The proof of this can be seen in the eyes of the patients who come for cure in this Institute with tears of grief, pain, suffering, and go back with tears of joy, happiness and gratitude. The counselling department of the hospital is virtually the backbone of the Institute. All patients going for surgery are given counselling to allay their fears regarding the surgery. Even post surgery, they are given counselling regarding do's and don'ts to take care of them in a comprehensive manner.

The hospital has a Telemedicine Department which offers consultation services with the help of satellite connectivity provided by ISRO. Our nodal centres at Barrackpore in Kolkata and Bhubaneswar in Odisha enable diagnosis timely and prompt follow up. Post-procedure follow-up is thus simplified and consolidated to a time frame, making follow-up and



recovery more focused, regulated and effective. Travel and other expenses are thus avoided and convenience is provided to the patient nearer to their home towns in these regions. Real time communication leads to core patient satisfaction. The service provided through these centres is also absolutely free.

All records are completely computerised so that the flow of information is instantaneous. This facilitates the doctors to be posted with the latest results of the various tests of the in-house and OPD patients. All patients in OPD are given discharge summaries to facilitate proper documentation. This also helps the local

physician in their respective areas to understand the history and the investigation of the patients.

The Institute has a Nursing college imparting free education to the nursing and paramedical students. The Institute also has a programme called Diplome of National Board (DNB) for Cardiology, Cardiac Surgery, Radiology, Anaesthesia and Neurosurgery.

Mankind will be eternally grateful to our Beloved Lord Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for setting up this Temple of Healing in the medical world, for posterity to emulate to serve mankind.

“Love All Serve All”

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the embodiment of all the four – Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema.

Embodiments of the Divine!

Do not think that celebration of the birth of Krishna relates to what happened some millennia ago in the Dwapara Yuga. Everyone has to cherish Krishna consciousness in his heart every moment ceaselessly.

Unfortunately, it is a sign of the Kali age that people are eager to listen to bad tales about others and do not seek to listen to the holy name of the Lord. You are given eyes to seek a vision of the Lord of Kailasa. You are endowed with feet for going to the Lord's temple and not to loiter in lanes and bylanes. All organs and limbs have been given to man for adoring the Lord.

Every Avatar is an amazing phenomenon. Not to recognise the Avatar is equally a matter for amazement. Even more astonishing is the incapacity to experience the presence of the Avatar. However, the most astonishing of all is to be in the presence of the Lord and feel miserable. To be in the proximity of the Avatar, to move about with the Avatar, to sing and sport with the Avatar and yet fail to understand the truth of the Avatar is indeed a remarkable phenomenon. When the Avatar principle is understood, you experience real bliss.

When you have faith in the Divine, life becomes a victorious journey.

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Sri Krishna Janmashtami Discourses.



Ostentation

HERE LIVED IN A village a poor old woman who somehow saved some money by undergoing a lot of hardship. With the hard-earned money, she was tempted to buy gold bracelets which she wore on both her arms. She then harboured a burning desire that all should see her bracelets and praise them, but none took notice of them. In her desperate bid to attract the attention of others, one day she foolishly put her hut on fire. When the hut was engulfed in flames, she



No one noticed the gold bracelets of the old woman.



When neighbours came running, the old woman wailed aloud, showing her bracelets, "Everything has turned into ashes except these bracelets".

sat in the street, raised both her arms so that others might see her bracelets and shouted, "Alas, my house has burnt down". Hearing her shouting, her neighbours came running. However, they all looked at her burning hut; no one looked at the bracelets she wore on her raised arms. The old woman then started wailing aloud, "Oh! What a tragedy! Everything has turned into ashes except these bracelets". Her only concern was to show her bracelets to all; she had little concern for her hut which was burnt to ashes. Actions done merely to attract the attention of others can cause one's ruin.

In the word-maze given below, trace ten words which have been used in the given “Chinna Katha”.

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

Note: See answer on page 32.

However long you may live, whatever scientific knowledge you may acquire, whatever positions you may hold, sometime or the other you have to know the truth about your Self. Start knowing it from now. You have to be on the alert all the time. You can never know when the Lord's grace, His love and benediction will be showered on you – at what time and at what place and in what circumstances. You cannot see what is happening in the spiritual world nor can you understand the workings of the Spirit. When you go on performing your duty and enjoying what you do, that itself will confer bliss on you.

- Baba

Table Top Product (Spiral)

Sri Sathya Sai Nitya Vagvibhuti (Telugu). Message of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba with multi-colour photos for every day of the year. For sale at Rs 95 (Code 13455).

– Convener



G. VIDYANATH

THE LAP OF MOTHER SATHYA SAI

EVERY YEAR, FORMER STUDENTS of Sri Sathya Sai institutions try to reach Prasanthi Nilayam, the Divine Lap of Mother Sathya Sai, for the New Year blessings. To seek Bhagavan's blessings for the New Year 2008, I reached Puttaparthi on 29th December 2007. When I approached one of the members of the coordinating team of old students, I was told that Bhagavan had not yet given any directions regarding the accommodation for the old students and their families. I was therefore advised to stay outside till Bhagavan gave directions.

Seeking the Divine Lap of Mother Sathya Sai

With a lot of reluctance, I checked into a free accommodation available on Gopuram Gate road outside. I finished my morning routine quickly and rushed back to Mandir for Bhagavan's Darshan. Before going to Sai Kulwant Hall, I went to Ganesh Temple and prayed Bhagavan to shower His blessings for the coming New Year and permit us to stay inside the Ashram.

After Bhagavan's Darshan, I went to Double Decker Building to register myself and just picked up the ongoing Prasadam packing work. Then the same old student, who had directed me to

take accommodation outside, came to me and told that Bhagavan had given directions regarding accommodation to the old students inside Prasanthi Nilayam. Those who came alone were to stay in the hostel adjacent to Gopuram Gate (which is normally given to the students of Brindavan Campus whenever they come to Puttaparthi), and the students who came with their families, separate rooms would be given. As I had come alone, I ran and brought my luggage to the hostel. Then I remembered my student days and felt that Mother Sathya Sai had taken me back into Her Divine Lap.

The task of transforming the whole humanity is spread over three Sai Avatars, Sri Shirdi Sai, Sri Sathya Sai and Sri Prema Sai. These Sai Avatars are armed with Mother's Love. Sri Shirdi Sai Avatar is described as the Mother cooking food, Sri Sathya Sai Avatar is described as the Mother serving food and Sri Prema Sai is expected to be the Mother feeding food with love. We are fortunate to be the contemporaries of Sri Sathya Sai Avatar.

The Divine Tests

The Divine Lap of Mother Sathya Sai is such a broad one that it can accommodate all the creatures of the universe. Whoever





Former students of Bhagavan seeking His blessings on 1st January 2008.

turns towards Mother Sathya Sai, She takes all of them into Her Divine Lap. All those who came into the fold of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba found a place and a role to play in the Divine Lap, of course, depending on the good deeds done in their previous births. For every slot in that Divine Lap, people would be waiting behind to get in. Stay in the Divine Lap is renewed periodically, for which everyone has to pass through different divine tests. As we pass one test after another, Mother Sathya Sai would be drawing or hugging us closer and closer to Her in the Divine Lap. The Divine tests would be on six inner enemies of man, viz., Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (delusion), Mada (pride) and Matsarya (jealousy). Whoever got infected by these, would feel restless and would not be able to stay in the Divine Lap. Whenever we fail in one test, we would be in the same level till we pass. Attaining Moksha is to pass through all the divine tests and get merged in the Divine Lap.

Worldly Temptations Cause Illusion

The problem of all of us is that whenever we look from that Divine Lap, we feel that the outside world is smoother than the Divine Lap. Getting carried away by that, I was also one among those who tried to get off the Divine Lap and go away. After reaching the outside world, I found that the Divine Lap was more compassionate, holier, cozier, softer and safer than the outside world. Then I repented and tried to get back to the Divine Lap. But I found that my earlier slot and role had been granted to someone in the line behind me.

Again depending on the intensity of prayers to Mother Sathya Sai to take back into Her Divine Lap, some people were successful in getting back and some are still on their way back while some are yet to start return journey. Among those who got back, some are fortunate ones for getting back in only a few days or weeks or months. For some, it took a few years

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GRACE AT GOD'S DOORSTEP

MEDITATING ON THE verandah of the Mandir is like no other hallowed place I have had the good fortune to enjoy. There is a sweet blissfulness that permeates every breath taken in.

Then there is that highest of high happiness just knowing you are at the very doorstep of the Lord. And when you catch glimpses of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba lovingly tending His flock, the view from the verandah assumes an ethereal vantage point.

It is here that the wonder of the Abode of Highest Peace settles deeper and deeper within one's heart of hearts as time without end becomes yours. You know you have arrived at the place you have always longed for. Yes, the verandah of the Mandir at Prasanthi Nilayam is a very very sacred place to be.

One can wonder just what extraordinary happenings take place there where the Lotus Feet of the Lord make such a Divine impression, where devotees in a high state of bliss have their dreams come true.

I believe that on this sanctified verandah the sweetest of miracles happen day after day, for our Lord knows our every desire and to our joy of joys oftentimes by His loving grace quietly grants them.

Those glorious soul-searching days just before and after Baba's 55th Birthday were

very special to me as I was able to worship the Lord at His front door and also in the Mandir at Bhajan time.

Baba showered His grace upon me granting many boons or wishes during those precious days in November 1980 when the whole world sent representatives to participate in the Third World Conference and the Divine Birthday events.

It was on one of those beautiful mornings that I found a place in the verandah next to the area occupied by college boys who all looked so crisp and pure in their very white creaseless jackets and open neck white shirts.

I have always known that Baba is nestled in my heart. This sweet knowledge, I am sure, you, dear seeker, also have. I had been away from His Divine concrete Presence, all too long, ever since His 50th Birthday.

On this particular soft sunny morning, I glanced at my digital wrist watch and noticed that the number read 10:04. Almost unwittingly I leaned forward and drew a heart shape on the floor with my forefingers. The space in front of me was narrow, just wide enough to be used as a pathway to the area where the college boys silently sat in rows.

Perhaps I was feeling how for years I contended with thoughts and day dreams of my Beloved from afar, when I looked



at the time and made a very happy wish. I whispered to myself, "Swami, the time reads 10:04 on my wrist watch. 10:08 is such a precious number. How I would love that You would step into my heart". I was thinking of the imaginary heart I had "drawn" moments before on the floor of the verandah. My inner prayer continued, "Swami, if you stepped into my heart, this would give me such happiness". Through my mind wafted the sweet thought of Padanamaskar this early morning.

At that moment, Baba was not in view. I was also quite unaware whether He was near the Mandir or giving Darshan over towards the Poornachandra. Momentarily, my fanciful but loving prayer vanished from my mind. Then I felt a stir among the devotees and caught a brief glimpse of Bhagavan's red robe as He came towards the Mandir. At the far end of the verandah,

He paused near the beautifully carved door.

Quietly, He turned and began to walk between the two rows of devotees. He came closer and closer. My eyes fell upon the unseen "heart" I had drawn. Next instant, His Lotus Feet were there right in the centre of the heart. I had that precious moment to touch His Feet and allow my fingers to brush His gown. I was filled with His Love as He stepped down to the area among His college boys. I took a quick glance at my digital watch which read 10:08.

Baba has said "Prayers are always answered, that is the rule". I have never doubted this and especially since the love and grace He gave to me that November morning.

– Excerpted from "My Beloved" by Charles Penn.

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and it took me nearly 15 years to come back and 22 years to get Bhagavan's Padanamaskar. When I returned to Her Divine Lap after 15 years for the first time in 2001, it was Mother Sai who shed tears of happiness for me. However, I could not go back to my earlier slot and role. Still I realised that I was more fortunate than those for whom it would be taking a few births to get back to Her Divine Lap.

During a span of nearly 25 years, I understood that whenever I was slipping away from Her Divine Lap, only Mother Sathya Sai tried to hold me to Her. Even

though I had gone physically away from Bhagavan, He was the only one worried about me and felt sorry for me for getting into all sorts of illusions. Even after going away, as long as I was wearing "Sainess", He was protecting me from evil forces, accidents, etc., by keeping up His promise, "Wherever you are you are Mine, I will not give you up and you cannot go beyond My reach".

– Sri G. Vidyanath is a former B.Com (1978-81) student of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

U. S. A.

MORE THAN 400 SATHYA SAI devotees from Canada, Israel, West Indies and U.S.A. joyfully participated in a Pre-World Conference in Orlando, Florida from 17th to 19th April 2015. Senior SSIO leaders discussed Bhagavan's teachings on love and selfless service, which was the conference theme. Dr. Narendranath Reddy gave an overview



Pre-World Conference in U.S.A.

of the global initiatives undertaken by the SSIO in 2014 and 2015. Sathya Sai youth presented highlights of youth initiatives and the upcoming International Youth Festival to be held in Prasanthi Nilayam in July 2016. One of the conference highlights was an exhibition on the history of Sathya Sai Organisation in Zone 1, presented by the youth. Exhibits displayed memorabilia, pictures and commemorative citations with timelines, starting with the establishment of the first official Sathya Sai Centre in U.S.A. in the 1960s. Sathya Sai youth also presented a colourful cultural programme, which blended humour and music with Bhagavan's teachings.

LAO PDR

The SSIO of Lao PDR started a village improvement programme in 2014 for three villages in the Dakchung province. These villages were located in a remote area and were inhabited by the poorest people in the country. In partnership with the Lao PDR Government, community leaders and others, the SSIO organised health screening camps from 19th to 21st March 2015 and provided training to trainers to improve sanitary conditions in the villages.

Three medical camps were organised in the villages of Ban Dakvor, Ban Dakvang and Ban Nongdone by six doctors, three nurses, two pharmacists and Sathya Sai volunteers, including two Sathya Sai doctors from Singapore and Malaysia. A total of 841 people were examined, and the doctors visited bedridden patients at home. Patients in critical conditions were transported to the district hospital, and the SSIO arranged to follow up on cases requiring specialist treatment at provincial or tertiary hospitals in Laos.

Human values-based educational material on water quality, sanitation and hygiene were distributed at the health camps. Lunch was provided to 1,200 people. A programme was initiated to train the trainers on the construction of sanitary toilets and latrines. Artisans from the three villages were trained, and one toilet was installed in less than half a day, as a first





Pamphlets on hygiene to improve sanitation in villages.

step towards elimination of faecal-borne illnesses. The SSIO of Lao PDR plans to provide sanitary toilets for all three villages, serving 1,200 people.

EL SALVADOR

In April 2015, the Sathya Sai Centre of El Salvador held a three-day retreat in San Salvador, focused on Jesus Christ and Sathya Sai Baba. Participants began the day with devotional singing and recitation



Audience at retreat, El Salvador.

of the Gayatri Mantra under the trees, followed by light meditation, talks and workshops. Activities were organised daily for Sathya Sai youth and SSE students. The event was also broadcast live on the web.

The Sathya Sai Institute of Human Values in El Salvador will be helping the Government of El Salvador in training all teachers in the country at the request of the Minister of Education. This request was made after the Institute trained about 30 teachers in Santa Tecla, San Salvador. In appreciation of the outstanding results, the Institute was then requested by the Government to assist with countrywide training of teachers in human values.

COLOMBIA

In Colombia, the Government has granted a licence for elementary education to the Sathya Sai School of Funza, Colombia. A ceremony was held on 26th April 2015 to commemorate this achievement and to lay the foundation stone for the new headquarters of the Sathya Sai School. The new school building will have an area of 1,600 square metres that will accommodate 200 students, starting in early 2016. Students, parents, teachers and school staff gathered with Sathya Sai devotees to share their gratitude and exchange ideas. The foundation stone of the school building actually contained a



Gratitude ceremony at the Sathya Sai School site.



few pieces of consecrated material from Sai Kulwant Hall in Prasanthi Nilayam. Sathya Sai volunteers also buried a box containing jewels and other offerings, with the foundation stone, in a symbolic offering. The programme concluded with the singing of the school anthem which was written a few years ago by a Sathya Sai devotee.

RUSSIA

From 4th to 7th May 2015, the Zone 8 Pre-World Conference and the annual meeting of Zone 8 countries were held near St. Petersburg, Russia. Over 200 SSIO members from 57 Sathya Sai Centres and Groups in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan attended the event. A special announcement was made about the establishment of a branch of the Institute of European Sathya Sai Education. On 5th and 6th May, two magnificent concerts were presented, a drama was staged on the life of Saint Procopius of Ustyug, and a puppet show was presented.

- Sathya Sai International Organisation

BHARAT

Gujarat: A grand function was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Gujarat to celebrate Bheema Ratha Santhi (spiritual marriage) of 35 elderly couples on 7th June 2015. Elaborate arrangements

were made to seat the couples comfortably on chairs in an air conditioned hall which was beautifully decorated for the occasion. Every couple was provided two chairs and a small table to keep the Puja materials in a separate enclosure in the hall which had a festive look and jubilant atmosphere. When the auspicious moment arrived for the Mangal Sutra to be placed round the wife's neck, there was a rousing sound of Nadaswaram and the intoning of Vedic Mantras. The couples reaffirmed their vows to each other and exchanged garlands. The main priest sprinkled sanctified rice grains on the couples thus sanctifying their marriage.

After the ceremony, the couples were offered a feast along with their family members, friends, relatives and all devotees who were fortunate to attend this grand function.

Jammu and Kashmir: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Jammu and Kashmir organised a veterinary camp in village Tikri Khani in June 2015 in which 150 cattle were examined and treated by qualified veterinarians. Free medicines and cattle feed were also provided to enable the villagers to keep their livestock healthy. This village on the border of Pakistan is inhabited by 38 families and has been adopted by the Sai Organisation for its development.

Answer to word-maze given on page 25: village, hut, bracelets, neighbours, flames, hardship, gold, money, everything, concern.

Pathway to Peace (Prasanthi)



**PATHWAY TO PEACE
(PRASANTHI)
Prof. N. Kasturi**

Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana
Trust, Publications Division,
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AT ONE TIME OR THE other, that is after trudging mile after mile, year after year; the loose-footed man seeks to have a firm footing on the seemingly fluid conscience of his own being, and starts searching for the road to Prasanthi or lasting peace. But with his head swollen with the poisonous vapour of ego, so much that is about to burst, and with eyes that are blurred by razzle dazzle of the make believe world, it is well nigh impossible to get on to the right

path. Only those who have realised the truth, and those who have pure love in their heart will be able to guide him on to the right royal road to Prasanthi, the everlasting peace and bliss, says the Gita.

Anchoring on but one Sloka (stanza) of the Bhagavadgita's fourth chapter, Prof. N. Kasturi, the author, who had a long and close proximity with Bhagavan Baba, has deftly woven a beautiful web of reasoning and ideology based on Indian metaphysical directions vis-a-vis Bhagavan Baba's practical spiritual philosophy on the subject concerned.

Prof. Kasturi, using a lively blend of poetic expressions, terse Upanishadic dicta and Western philosophical reasoning, leads the reader onto the divine path shown by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba towards the goal of life.

This paperback is written in four chapters, starting with a brief and to the point description of Swami's advent and mission, followed by stepwise logical methods, to the inward path, that are essential to reach the goal of Prasanthi. The blazing torch of Upanishadic wisdom, rekindled by Swami had been held forth by Prof. Kasturi in a very concise form.

The major topics dealt in this book under various subtitles may be summed up as follows: (1) The Avatar's Advent (2) Efficacy of Namasmarana and Sankirtan (3) Japa and Dhyana (4) The nature of Maya (illusion) (5) Dialogue with devotees (6) Aspect of Seva (service) in various angles (7) Streamlining mind for illumination, etc.

— P.P.S. Sarma



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– *Convener*

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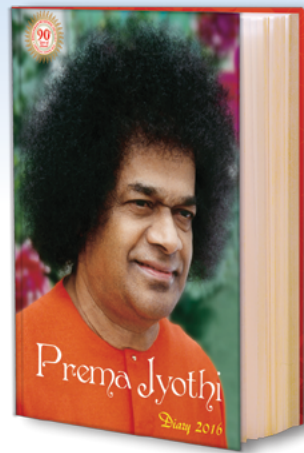
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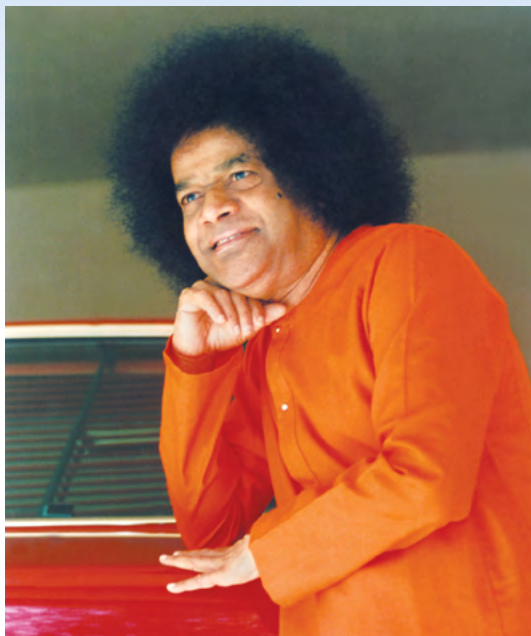
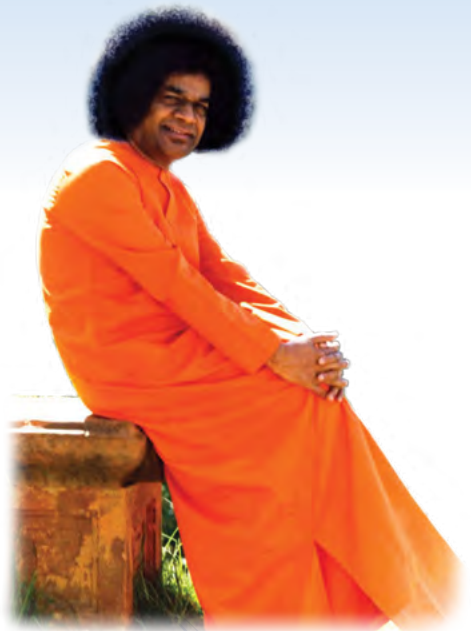
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The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

- 1) The publication and distribution of spiritual, religious, and educational Sai Literature and the production and distribution of audio and visual multimedia, photographs, calendars, and diaries, educational software etc for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- 2) The publication and distribution of Bhagawan Baba's monthly spiritual journal - Sanathana Sarathi - in English and Telugu languages. Since 2011, e-versions of the magazine are also released simultaneously and are available in PDF and EPUB formats on www.sanathanasarathi.org.
- 3) Maintaining a reporting channel, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
- 4) Organising and conducting seminars

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

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