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*"If you offer yourself to God
unconditionally, you will develop
permanent relationship with Him.
You should develop this permanent
relationship. This relationship is not
about giving and taking. It is about
giving without conditions. Then God
will give you much more than you
expect."*

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A Report

**With Bhagavan's Divine grace and blessings, Veda Purusha
Saptaha Jnana Yajna conducted every year for the welfare
of humanity as part of Dasara celebrations will begin at
Prasanthi Nilayam on 24th September 2017 and conclude
with Poornahuti on 30th September 2017, Vijaya Dasami day.**

AVATAR VANI

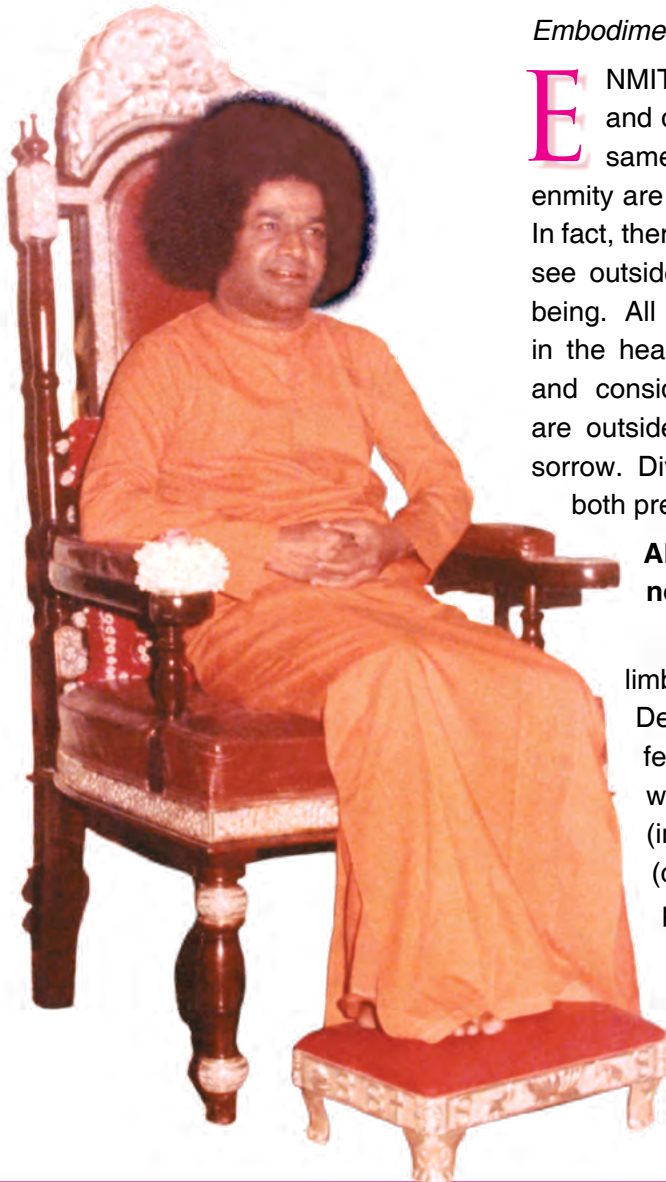
DEVELOP PERMANENT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

God does not exist in a foreign land, He is in you.

Sin is not elsewhere. It is there where a wrong action is committed.

(Telugu Poem)

OFFER YOURSELF TO GOD UNCONDITIONALLY



Embodiments of Love!

ENMITY, FRIENDSHIP, DIVINITY and demonishness are present in the same human being. Friendship and enmity are the result of one's own feelings. In fact, there is no enemy outside. What you see outside is the reflection of your inner being. All kinds of enemies are present in the heart of man. He forgets this truth and considers that friends and enemies are outside who give him happiness and sorrow. Divine and demonic qualities are both present in the same heart.

All Enemies are within Man, not Outside

Human body with its various limbs is like Sangha (society). Desires, greed, anger and other feelings within the body are Janga which constitute Jiva Tattwa (individual soul), whereas Linga (cosmic soul) represents Atmic principle in the same body. This Linga is the base for Sangha and Janga aspects. Just as there are opposing feelings and thoughts in society, there are opposing feelings within

oneself. One feeling may approve a thought saying 'yes' while another feeling may disapprove, saying 'no'. All these opposing feelings occur in our own heart. These are reflections emerging from the inner Sangha. Mainly, there are six enemies that distract the Sangha – Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (delusion), Mada (pride) and Matsarya (jealousy). Who is the first enemy within man? It is Kama (desire). Who is the second enemy? It is Krodha (anger). When the desire is not fulfilled, it leads to anger. Failure leads to anger while success prompts Lobha or greediness. Another enemy of man is Asathya (untruth). It leads one to wrong path. Where there is Asathya, there is Adharma (unrighteousness). Enmity that begins with desire culminates in unrighteousness. Therefore, enemies are not outside. They are all within man. External enemies may change. An enemy today may become friend tomorrow and vice versa. But internal enemies never change. Who is their leader? Mind is their leader. He who becomes a slave of these internal enemies, how can he face any external enemy? A wise person will strive to overpower these inner enemies and develop friendship with the mind which is their leader. Mind is very fickle, it wavers all the time. It is very difficult to subdue the mind. It requires intensive Sadhana (spiritual practice).

Achieve the Goal of Life with Good Qualities

In olden days, an elaborate spiritual practice known as Ashwamedha Yajna was in vogue. Ashwa means horse. Those who have observed a horse closely know that it never remains steady. The horse keeps on moving one limb or the other all the 24 hours. The horse runs very fast. So is the

When you go to a shop to buy a handkerchief, you must be prepared to part with ten rupees. How can you get the handkerchief without paying the money to the shopkeeper? When you give him ten rupees, he will give you the handkerchief. There ends the relationship. This is a temporary relationship bound by conditions. If you offer yourself to God unconditionally, you will develop permanent relationship with Him. You should develop this permanent relationship.

case with the mind. It keeps on wavering always. Nothing can beat the mind with regard to speed. At the physical level, Ashwamedha Yajna connotes extension of an emperor's empire wherever the Yajna horse goes. Ultimately, the horse is ritualistically sacrificed. What does the mind stand for? It stands for horse. So, the inner meaning of Ashwamedha Yajna is killing of the wavering mind. Also you can see the Ashwattha or peepal tree. Its leaves keep on shaking even in the absence of wind. Human mind also wavers for no specific reason.

Ancient Indian Rishis performed the spiritual practice of Yajna or sacrifice in order to stress the importance of conquering the mind. They did not send a horse to conquer territory. But the battle was true. What kind of battle was that? On one side were the evil players such as Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya and on the other side were noble players like Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa (truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-

violence). Life is also a game like football. Mind is the ball which is kicked hither and thither in this game. There are rules to be followed as in any other game. When the ball goes out of limits, the offending team is penalised; and when the ball is kicked into the goal, the scoring team is awarded a point. Intellect is the directing force as also the decision maker. There is a saying in Telugu, *Ihamuna Sukhimpa Hemataraka Vidya, Paramuna Sukhimpa Brahmataraka Vidya* (worldly education is for life here and spiritual education is for life hereafter). In order to win the match, the entire team has to follow the rules and must work in unison. In this match of life, the team of good qualities is on one side and the evil qualities on the other. The wicked players do not know how to score the goal. On the other side, good players station Sathya and Dharma near the goal which easily score the goal when the other player pass on the ball to them. Sathya will never change its position, whereas Dharma takes up various stances depending on situations. Dharma has Sathya as its support or base. The Upanishad says, *Sathyannasti Paro Dharma* (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). Good feelings are real friends. Bad feelings are the enemies. Nothing is gained by killing external enemies. Game of life reaches success when internal enemies are conquered.

Surrender all your good and bad desires to God. He will change your bad desires into good. How? Suppose you have an old crumpled and soiled 100-rupee note with you. Nobody will accept it. But when you take it to the Reserve Bank, the bank will give you a brand new note. God is like the Reserve Bank. Surrender all your bad qualities to Him. He will make everything good. He will reward you in ways more than you can imagine.

Surrender to God with Full Faith

Your body, senses, mind and intellect are the gifts of God. You should surrender them to Him. A true devotee should be able to say:

Oh Lord! I offer to You the heart You have given me. What else is there with me to offer at Your Lotus Feet in worship? Please accept this with my humble salutations. (Telugu Poem)

When everything is surrendered to God, no evil is left in you. When an ornament of gold becomes dirty, will you throw it out? You will struggle hard to make it pure by using several methods, won't you? When the dirt is removed, the gold becomes pure. Similarly, when you surrender your mind to God with a sincere prayer, He will remove its dirt and turn it into a priceless jewel.

But people are not prepared to surrender themselves to God totally. You go to a goldsmith and ask him to make an ornament for you; but you refuse to give him the gold. Someone may give the gold but tell the goldsmith, "Do not put it on fire, do not melt or hammer it". Then how can the goldsmith make the ornament? These days you find many people who ask God, "I give my mind. Do not give me troubles and difficulties. Bestow all comforts as also Moksha". Without reposing full faith in God, and without surrendering to Him, how is it possible? When you go to a shop to buy a handkerchief, you must be prepared to part with ten rupees. How can you get the handkerchief without paying the money to the shopkeeper? When you give him ten rupees, he will give you the handkerchief. There ends the relationship. This is a temporary relationship bound by conditions.



If you offer yourself to God unconditionally, you will develop permanent relationship with Him. You should develop this permanent relationship. This relationship is not about giving and taking. It is about giving without conditions. Then God will give you much more than you expect. Therefore, do not ask; oh mind, do not ask! King Dasaratha had a fond hope of dying in the presence of his most beloved son Rama. But eventually Rama was not present at the time of his death, whereas the bird Jatayu had the

clear the way for His sake, in anticipation of His arrival at any moment. She always engaged herself in tasting various fruits of the forest in order to find whether they were fit to be offered to Rama when He comes in hunger, as she would imagine. One day, Sabari found a rough rock on the way. She at once thought of Rama and felt that He might find difficult to sit on it. That was how Sabari diverted all her thoughts and feelings towards Rama. Whatever she did, she did with love. That is Seva. That is how she earned liberation by the grace of Lord Rama.



When everything is surrendered to God, no evil is left in you. When an ornament of gold becomes dirty, will you throw it out? You will struggle hard to make it pure by using several methods, won't you? When the dirt is removed, the gold becomes pure. Similarly, when you surrender your mind to God with a sincere prayer, He will remove its dirt and turn it into a priceless jewel.

rarest fortune of dying in the fondling hands of Rama. Sabari was an aged woman of short stature, who was poor. But her thoughts were always focused on Rama. She was living in a forest near Chitrakuta. As and when she came across a shrub or a branch of a tree obstructing the way, she would think of the tall figure of Rama and His prospect of being struck by it, and she would

In this present world, you will find everybody beset with various types of worries, especially with regard to money. People are afraid to carry money with them. But there is no worry when the money is deposited in a bank. God is the cashier who keeps your deposits safe and returns to

continued on page 13...



DEEP DEVOTION MARKS GURU PURNIMA

GURU PURNIMA



DEEP DEVOTION AND PIETY marked the celebration of Guru Purnima at Prasanthi Nilayam. The programme held in exquisitely decorated Sai Kulwant Hall on 9th July 2017 began at 8.00 a.m. with chanting of Vedic hymns followed by a beautiful display of



Percussion group of the Institute playing instrumental music.

instrumental music by the percussion group of the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL). The students of the Institute thereafter offered musical tributes to their Sadguru Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by their



Guru Vandana by Institute students.

presentation "Guru Vandana" (worship of Guru) comprising Stotras and devotional songs which began with Guru Paduka Stotra and concluded with popular Bhajan "Sai Naath Tere Hazaron Haath" (Oh Sai, You have thousands of hands). Some other melodiously sung numbers were "Satguru Nanak Pargataya Miti Dhund Jag Chanan Hoya" (darkness disappeared at the advent of Guru Nanak) and "Gurunathuduve Guri Chupithivi" (Oh Guru! You have showed us the goal).

Four eminent speakers addressed the gathering after this. The first speaker was Sri S.S. Naganand, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Elucidating on the Guru principle, Sri Naganand stated that the purpose of human life was to find the way to God, and it was the Sadguru who could show that path to man. Devotees of Bhagavan, he added, were most fortunate because they had the Avatar of Kali Yuga Bhagavan Baba as their Sadguru.

The second speaker of the session was Sri Alejandro Grana, Chairman of the Events Committee, Sathya Sai Organisation, who referred to Bhagavan's first Bhajan "Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam" and stated that Bhagavan revealed to man the path of liberation in this Bhajan. That is to hold on to His Lotus Feet, surrender to Him and become a part of His Mission of serving mankind through Sai Organisation which He Himself established. He also mentioned some service initiatives of Sathya Sai International Organisation.



The next speaker was Sri P. Manikyala Rao, Andhra Pradesh Minister for

Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 11.00 a.m.



Union Minister Sri Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurating Sri Sathya Sai Nithya Anna Seva.

Endowments who referred to Bhagavan's teachings on the service of mankind and said that Bhagavan not only taught the principle of Manava Seva is Madhava Seva (service to man is service to God), but also set up free educational institutions, hospitals and water supply projects as beacon lights for all to follow the ideal of selfless service to mankind.

The last speaker of the session was Sri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister for Law, Justice, Electronics and Information Technology. Speaking about the path of unity taught by Bhagavan Baba, the distinguished speaker observed that though people followed different paths, they all led to the same destination – God. He exhorted one and all to follow the path of love and unity as taught by Bhagavan to achieve the goal of life. Hailing the Sathya Sai Organisation as the biggest movement of man-making, he exhorted the Sai fraternity to keep the good work going for the sake of humanity.

After the conclusion of the morning programme in Sai Kulwant Hall, Union Minister Sri Ravi Shankar Prasad and other dignitaries inaugurated Sri Sathya



Sri Sathya Sai Nithya Anna Seva.

Sai Nithya Anna Seva (daily free food), for providing wholesome food to devotees visiting Prasanthi Nilayam, in the Ashram premises.

The programme in the evening began at 5.00 p.m. with the award of diplomas to 14 eligible candidates, men and women, who successfully completed the Educare Course conducted at Prasanthi Nilayam under the direction of Dr. B.G. Pitre, Director, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Education, Mumbai. Earlier, Dr Pitre gave the main details of the diploma programme. This was followed by the release of the first issue of a newly-started Kannada Bimonthly magazine "Sai Sevamrita". Sri Gangadhara Bhat performed the release ceremony.

The concluding programme of the Guru Purnima celebrations was a scintillating carnatic classical music presentation by a talented duo, Smt. Charumathi Raghuraman on violin and Sri Anantha R. Krishnan on mridangam. Exhibiting perfect

synchronicity, the musicians provided a sumptuous feast of carnatic music to devotees and concluded their programme with the Bhajan “Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin”. Bhajan followed next and concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

U. S. A. NATIONAL PILGRIMAGE

A group of 200 devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam on a pilgrimage from the U.S.A. on the holy occasion of Guru Purnima and made an excellent devotional music presentation titled “Spiritual Homecoming” on 10th July 2017 to offer their love and



*Devotional music presentation
by U.S.A. devotees.*

gratitude to their Sadguru Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The songs themed on the teachings of Bhagavan Baba comprised Christian hymns, Native American songs and Spanish songs which included “O La Ma Ma”, “Give Thanks to the Lord His Love Endures Forever”, “Swami Please Be with Me”, “Go out with Joy”, “Todah Todah”, “We Love You oh Lord Sathya Sai Narayana”. The spirited presentation conveyed the devout feelings of the devotees with great musical charm.

SARVA DHARMA INTERNATIONAL CHOIR

As part of Guru Purnima celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, the Sarva Dharma International Choir from north European Baltic countries comprising Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Finland and Lithuania presented a multi-faith multi-cultural music programme on 13th July 2017. Beginning with a Polish prayer “Our Father” and followed by a Ganesh invocation, the choir presented in all 18 songs in various languages of the world which included “Let us Play for the Lord” in Polish, “Silent Night our Palestine” in Russian, “Pie Dievina Gari Galdi” from



*Devotional music presentation
by Sarva Dharma International Choir.*

Slovenia and a number of Hindi songs and Bhajans, viz., “Allah Ho Akbar”, “Soham”, “Giridhara Govinda Gopala”, “Namo Sai Narayana” and concluded their excellent presentation with Sarva Dharma prayer “Om Tat Sat Sri Narayana Tu”. Marked by deep devotion of the singers, the entire offering was exquisite in taste and lively in melodic vitality which kept the audience spellbound for nearly one hour.

The universe contains innumerable objects. In all of them, the one unchanging, eternal principle is the Atma. That is Prajnana. That is Brahman. It is power of this eternal principle that sustains the evanescent and ever-changing objects in the universe.

– Baba

From our Archives

GITA IS KRISHNA KRISHNA IS GITA

SANCTIFY ACTIONS BY DIVINISING THE PURPOSE

THE REALITY WHICH SUSTAINS the cosmos and the cell is one only, the all-pervasive consciousness, named Brahman. When this infinite vastness is spoken of in relation to cosmos, It is the Paramatma (the Overself), and it is the Atma (the Self) when it is conceded as the core of individual beings. All three are one entity, but they 'appear' different and delude the short-sighted. This characteristic is known as Maya. The Reality is Sat, Chit and Ananda (being, awareness and bliss). The appearance or the power of diversification uses the three Gunas or modes to embody itself differently. The Gunas are Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas (serenity, passion and

sloth). The Gunas urge man towards either knowing or desiring or working.

The external is the creation of the internal. Brahman has manifested Itself as all this. How can an image occur with no object? How can a person be a father without a child? God created the world; the world conferred on God the glory of 'Creator'. Man, through his yearning, imagination and intensity endows God with a form and name, and a large bunch of attributes from which he hopes to benefit. But God is above and beyond human traits and characteristics known as Gunas.

Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita, "I have no need to engage Myself in any activity. Yet, I am busy acting, in order to promote the well-being of the world and its inhabitants." Through His works, He can be known. The Gita refers to each of its chapters as a yoga. Yoga means union, union of the Self with its source. How do the eighteen chapters, each a yoga, help man to fulfil the destiny? The Gita provides the answer. *Samatvam Yoga Uchyate* (equanimity is called true yoga). We can distinguish five fields in the attainment of this Samatvam.

Samatvam in five Fields of Activity

(1) *The field of natural ups and downs*: One has to welcome both summer and winter, for they are both essential for the process of living. The alternation of seasons toughens



and sweetens us. Birth and death are both natural events. We cannot discover the reason for either birth or death. They simply happen. We try to blame some person or some incident for the injury or loss we suffer but the real reason is our own Karma (action). When the background of the event is known, the impact can be lessened or even negated.

(2) *The field of social ups and downs:* One has to welcome with equal-mindedness fame and blame, respect and ridicule, profit and loss, and such other responses and reactions from the society in which one has to grow and struggle. Fortune is as much a challenge to one's equanimity as misfortune.

(3) *The field of knowledge with its ups and downs:* Until the summit of knowledge wherefrom one experiences the One which has become this vast make-believe, there are many temptations and obstacles that lead the seeker astray. The student is inclined to give up the climb altogether when he feels exhausted or when he feels that he has reached the summit. The Gita defines a Pundit or learned man as a Samadarshi (he who has gained the awareness of the same One in all beings). The Jnani has gained Samatvam when he is convinced of the One being the Truth of all and when his thoughts, words and deeds are guided by that conviction.

(4) *The field of devotion with its ups and downs:* Here too there is a great deal of fanaticism, prejudice and persecution, which arise out of ignorance of the One, the sameness of the God whom all adore, through various rites and rituals, modes and methods. There is only one God and He is omnipresent.

(5) *The field of activity with its ups and downs:* Actions must be sanctified

by divinising the purpose. When work is sublimated into worship, defeat and disappointment will not dishearten. Success will not promote pride; it will lead to humility and gratitude for grace. Work performed as duty, as due from us to society brings the reward of joy, for we have utilised the knowledge and skill, endowed by God through society, for serving society itself.

The Samatvam (equal-mindedness) that can sweeten and lighten life is best exemplified in Radha and her devotion to Krishna. It is the awareness of the unity of the river and the sea, the individual self with the Omniself, the Atma with Paramatma. Reaching the source is the destiny; desire to flow steadily and straight towards the source is devotion. The pang of separation, the agony arising from neglect, the yearning to overcome obstacles, the joy of contemplation, the ecstasy of self-annihilation – these add up to the supreme identification of Radha with her Lord, Sri Krishna.

Jayadeva's Portrayal of Radha Bhakti

"Gita Govinda", the Book of Songs of Govinda (Krishna) by the great mystic and poet Jayadeva of Odisha, is the immortal portrayal of Radha Bhakti in its manifold manifestations. Jayadeva could express it with such charm and clarity that even the man behind the plough sang those songs and filled his heart with divine delight. The ruler of the land, Lakshmana Sena, was stricken with envy. He prepared a parallel book of songs and ordered that they be sung instead of Jayadeva's outpourings, in the temples of the land, including the greatest of them all, the Jagannath Temple at Puri. When his order met with universal protest, the king laid both the books at the feet of Lord Jagannath, got the shrine locked and



kept under strict vigilance. When the doors were opened in the morning, the king saw the Lord having Jayadeva's "Gita Govinda" in His hand, while his rival book written out of envy and pride was thrown into a far corner. The Lord had announced that He showers grace on inner purity, not outer pomp.

Education for Samatvam

There are many assembled here, who have joined the university in search of knowledge and skill. They must endeavour to know the Atma resident in them in order that faith in Atma can grant them wisdom, which is knowledge of the Highest. Now, seekers of knowledge are concerned only with what they think they are and what others think they are, ignoring the genuine quest of what they really are. Therefore, they are their own enemies! They are caught in the coils of anxiety, fear and misery. They are fascinated by the trivial tinsel that they see. They believe in whatever is seen and waste their life struggling, succeeding and losing. Pashu (animal) is the name given to such beings who put faith in Pashyati (what is seen). People raise the clamour, "I want peace", but they do not discard the "I" (ego) and the "want" (desire). How then can they get 'peace'? They will only go into 'pieces.'

Though education by itself cannot confer Atmananda on you, you have to acquire education, in order to serve the world. It

should not be used for collecting monthly wads of bank notes and for selfish revels. The process of teaching and learning should not be reduced to vomiting what the teacher has learned and the student consuming what has thus been vomited. It has to be creative, positive and productive.

Give no Room to Religious Differences

Krishna is worshipped as Gopala. The word 'go' means Jivi (living being). So, when you serve fellowmen and other beings with selfless love and total compassion, you are offering to Krishna the worship He accepts most gladly and with full grace.

Krishna's mystery and miracles are beyond words. He is the indweller in the heart of everyone. There is no room for religious differences. Students should resolve themselves to restore the pristine glory of Bharat by leading ideal lives. Proclaim the message of unity to the whole world.

Today is Gokulashtami, the day celebrated as Krishna's birthday. But it is not this celebration that is important. What is important is the adherence to Krishna's teachings. Krishna is not different from His teachings. The Gita is Krishna and Krishna is Gita.

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Sri Krishna Janmashtami Discourses.

...continued from page 7

you when you need, on the basis of how much you had deposited with Him. You may keep your documents, jewellery and other valuables in a locker of the bank. You can take back only what you deposit, not more. They do not belong to God. You get only what you have deposited, either good or bad. So,

develop goodness. *Be good, do good, see good. This is the way to God.* Our enemies are within us. First and foremost, kill Krodha (anger) and Lobha (greed). Aspire only for God. Then you will have true bliss.

– Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 19th April 1993.



SERVICE IS THE EASIEST ROUTE TO REACH GOD

Sri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister for Law and Justice, Electronics and Information Technology, gave an illuminating talk as Chief Guest of Guru Purnima celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam on 9th July 2017. Referring to Sai Organisation as the biggest voluntary man-making movement, he called upon Sai devotees the world over to continue this noble task started by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

JUST NOW YOU HEARD MY VERY long introduction but let me make it very clear that I have not come as a senior minister here. I have come as a simple Bhakta (devotee) to offer my Pranams to Bhagavan Baba. Today I am singularly honoured and uniquely privileged that I have been invited here in this abode of Lord Sainath and I wish to personally

got the opportunity to visit here, and what a great day to offer my Sadar Pranams (reverential salutations) to Lord Sainath on the Guru Purnima day!

Learn to Love and Serve Others

How do I see the work and philosophy of Lord Sainath? The first is at the spiritual and philosophical level. What is the essence of India? The essence of India is as outlined in the Rig Veda – *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). You have your own perception of truth, I have my own. You follow your path, I will follow my own. I will respect your path; you respect my path because in the ultimate analysis your path and my path merge at the same destination – the ultimate Truth –

permanent, indivisible, eternal, perennial, inspiring, what we call the Parama Sathya (supreme truth). You all know the utterances of Lord Sainath. Ultimately, what He says: love one and all, serve one and all. How do I see the essence of this philosophy? My



Sri Ravi Shankar Prasad addressing the gathering in Sai Kulwant Hall.

thank Rathnakarji for having extended this invitation to me. In fact, I was looking forward to visit this great heaven on earth. I got the privilege once to have the direct Darshan of the Lord in Delhi. Now I have



understanding is that living body manifests itself in many ways. One can be an insect, a fish or an animal. But the day you are born as a human being that is the first blessing which God has given. You have come as a human being on this earth, because as a human being you have got the faculty to understand the pain and suffering, agony and ecstasy of your fellow people.

Develop the Spirit of Love and Mutual Respect

Bhagavan has always been teaching all the people to learn to love each other. And when you learn to love each other, there is no boundary of caste or religion or faith, because every faith leads to the same destination. I see this creative goodness in every human being as the biggest contribution which Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba has given to all of us. And just we heard about the work going on all over the world. *Yeh Sara Kaam Kyon Ho Raha Hai? Achchhe Insaan Ko Banane Ki Koshis Hai Yeh. Achchhe Insaan Bano* (Why is all this work going on? It is a conscious effort to make man good. Become good). Learn to become good human beings – free from anger, free from arrogance, free from jealousy. Just keep one spirit – the spirit of love, the spirit of accommodation, the spirit of reciprocity and the spirit of mutual respect. I think that is the biggest contribution and if I can say I will say with great pride and I wish to congratulate the Board of Trustees and all your team that world over the biggest voluntary movement of man-making is being organised by the Sathya Sai Organisation which I wish to compliment.

We are in politics, in public life. Just now it was mentioned that I had the privilege to work under Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee who visited Prasanthi Nilayam numerous times.

I know how much he had his devotion to the Lord here. And now I have the privilege to work under Sri Narendra Modi, another eminent leader who is seeking to change the country. We are very proud to work under him, but we work with authority because the people have given us the authority to work for the country. Even though our Prime Minister says that we are Pradhan Sevaks (chief servants), yet we carry some authority which the people of the country have given to us. But this great organisation is doing voluntary work without any authority all over the world just out of love. And today I would like to felicitate the Sai Organisation because my observations are also being webcast across the globe. I am also the Information Technology Minister of India and therefore it gives me singular honour to compliment the organisers for connecting the virtual with the real. Sitting far away in South India in Prasanthi Nilayam, I am talking to Sai Bhaktas all across the globe. Therefore, from this abode of peace and love, I wish to exhort all the Sai Bhaktas all over the globe to keep the good work going for the sake of humanity and development.

Live for Others

What is the second contribution of Lord Sai Bhagavan which is important for all of us? And this needs to spread more and more. Serve the poor, serve the underprivileged. Their service is the easiest route to reach God. *Garibon Ki Seva Karo, Vanchiton Ki Seva Karo. Unki Seva Mein Hi Iswar Ki Prapti Hai* (serve the poor and underprivileged. Their service will lead you to God). It is a great message He has given. And let me quote a very famous couplet of Kabirdas: *Sai Itna Dijiyee, Jame Kutumb Samaye; Mein Bhi Bhuka Na Rahun, Sadhu Na Bhuka Jaye*. (Hey Lord, give me this



much that I am able to take care of my family, but if a hungry human being comes in front of my house, I should not turn him away). This Sadhu is a symbolism. The symbolism is that do not live for yourself only, live for others. Take care of your family but also take care of others. And you know something very unique why I quoted this couplet? It begins with “Sai”. And after about 500 years, here comes Lord Sainath who actually concretises this couplet into extraordinary initiative. Yesterday, I was told, lakhs of operations have been done without charging even a single paisa in Bhagavan’s hospital. The best of quality education is being given in this NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) certified university without any charges.

So many schools are being run, thousands and thousands of villages in this water scarce land of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu are being provided drinking water all by the initiative of this great institution. How do you explain it? Yesterday, I was talking to an eminent Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. I asked, “How do you manage all this? Now the Lord is not there”. And he made one comment of the Lord which made me emotional. When he asked the Lord, should we charge even something little as a token, Lord Sai Baba told him one thing: “Does a mother charge her child for helping him in anything”? You understand the philosophy of it. There is a profound philosophy behind this. And what is the philosophy? Love, serve others as a mother serves the child without seeking any return. And if this has been the motto, I have not the slightest doubt if Lord Sai Bhagavan has given so much, not only in Prasanthi Nilayam but the whole world.

Surely, His divine blessings will be there and this great work will continue to spread to remotest part of the world and also India.

See Unity in Diversity

The profound slogan of ‘Unity in Diversity’ is the essence of India. Why I am saying so? The great Lord Sai revealed that this great land of India with the blessings of unity in diversity inspired by the philosophy of Sanathana Dharma and also respecting all the faiths must become a beacon of light. That larger vision to make India truly a great country for the world, not only economically, not only educationally, not only militarily but also spiritually is the calling of India – spiritually for the sake of service, spiritually to make better human beings. In my considered view, this is the real essence of Sai Bhagavan and He conveyed this in such simple language and by His own example.

Just now my lawyer friend was explaining how sitting with Bhagavan, he experienced that a lot of his doubts were removed. Let me share my own experience. The moment I entered this heavenly place, the moment I bowed my head before the Lord, I felt a different energy. I have travelled around the world to so many countries. I have seen India from my younger days. I have studied many scriptures but the living experience of powerful energy one experiences here is truly extraordinary. That I think is the message of Bhagavan – trust in Me, trust in My teaching, trust in My vision and My hand of blessings and guidance shall always remain there. I think that is the biggest blessings on the Guru Purnima Day.

– **From the talk of Sri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister for Law and Justice, Electronics and Information Technology, on Guru Purnima Day at Prasanthi Nilayam, on 9th July 2017.**



JUSTICE P.N. BHAGWATI

A DEVOTEE PAR EXCELLENCE

S.S. Naganand

AT THE RIPE OLD AGE OF 95 years, Justice P.N. Bhagwati took leave of the world to be at the Lotus Feet of his Master and God Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Born on 21st December 1921 as Prafullachandra Natwarlal Bhagwati, son of Justice Natwarlal H. Bhagwati who later adorned the Supreme Court of India as a judge, Justice Bhagwati had a brilliant academic career with a Honours Degree in Mathematics followed by a Degree in Law. He participated in India's Independence struggle and also spent time in jail.

Just after Independence, he started practising in Bombay High Court in 1948. When a new High Court was established for Gujarat State, at the young age of 38 he was elevated as a Judge of that court in July 1960 and rose to become the Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court. His career on the Bench in Gujarat High Court witnessed the blossoming of a humanist, a keen intellectual and a linguist. His celebrated judgments in the Gujarat High Court identified him for elevation to the Supreme Court in July 1973. He retired on 20th December 1986 as Chief Justice of India. Thereafter, he played a key role in the United Nations Human Rights Organisation as its chair for many years and guided it in its work and establishment of many International Human Rights Instruments.

Justice Bhagwati played a unique role in the development of Constitutionalism in India. He did not believe in trudging along



Justice Bhagwati with Bhagavan.

the trodden path. The interpretation of the Constitution so as to give it new life and vigour in keeping with the felt-need of the times was his philosophy. Human rights, social justice and the new dimension to Articles 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution are his contributions. His scholarly judgments in many fields of constitutional law bore the hallmark of a great judge and humanist. Narrow-mindedness and procedural limitations could not contain his liberal ideas which he translated into judgments. Compassion for the poor and the meek was his Mantra.

In the midst of such professional achievements at the Bar and on the Bench, Justice Bhagwati was a deeply religious person and a scholar in Indian scriptures. He was well-versed in Sanskrit and was fluent in the Bhagavadgita, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In the course of his conversations, he used to frequently quote from these great works with ease and confidence without having to refer to any book.



He was an ardent devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and came into His fold in 1969 when he was the Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court. His devotion was steadfast and deep. His devotion is reflected in the following words he wrote in an article in Sanathana Sarathi in May 2013: "I have been the Chief Justice of India and I have been engaged in the administration of justice which is a highly rational process. As a rational being, I can say without the slightest hesitation that there is something about Baba which is so deep and profound, so vast and limitless, so infinite and universal that it is not possible to describe it in words. It is something that words cannot describe and mind cannot reach".

He regarded Bhagavan Baba as the very embodiment of God on earth and showed his devotion in many ways. He was appointed by Bhagavan Baba as a Member of Council of Management of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, which was set up by Baba for public charitable activities. He was one of the Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning Trust along with Bhagavan Baba and the celebrated jurist Sri N.A. Palkhiwala. The said Trust set up a unique university where, in addition to academic excellence, students were exposed to the basic principles which Bhagavan Baba propounded, viz., Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Justice and Smt. Bhagwati had the unique privilege of anointing Bhagavan Baba on the auspicious occasion of His 85th Birthday in the year 2010. He also had the privilege of making

a public announcement of the expansion of the Board of Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust on the Telugu New Year Day, Ugadi, in April 2010.

After the Maha Samadhi of Bhagavan Baba on 24th April 2011, Justice Bhagwati was appointed Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, a Deemed University. Justice Bhagwati continued as a Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust for some years thereafter. Due to his failing health, Justice Bhagwati took leave of all his responsibilities in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

There were many occasions when Baba asked Justice Bhagwati to speak. Justice Bhagwati expressed his unfailing devotion and repeatedly asserted that it was Baba who was his guiding force and all positions he occupied were entirely due to Baba's grace and blessing. He often fondly remembered the affection with which Baba treated all the members of his family including his daughters, sons-in-law and grand children.

In the passing of Justice Bhagwati, India has lost one of its great sons in the field of law. The hallmark of Justice Bhagwati was his simplicity, his child-like-disposition and his reverence to Bhagavan Baba, which will be a beacon light for Sai devotees for all time.

– Sri S.S. Naganand is a Senior Advocate and Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

Every human being is a manifestation of God or Sat-Chit-Ananda. Every object manifests the Divine. There is nothing in the world that is not a manifestation of God. Do not have any doubt that the cosmos is permeated by God and everything is contained in Him. There is not an atom in the universe that is not permeated by the Divine.

– Baba

THE LEGACY OF BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

Sri V. Srinivasan, a long-standing ardent devotee of Bhagavan, attained His Lotus Feet on 25th July 2017. A powerful orator and untiring worker, Sri Srinivasan served in the Divine Mission of Bhagavan for about four decades in various capacities such as Seva Dal volunteer, All India President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and Sri Sathya Institute of Higher Learning Trust. We give here one of his insightful articles which he wrote in August 2011 after the Maha Samadhi of Bhagavan.

TO MILLIONS OF DEVOTEES all over the world, Bhagavan Baba has been God personified. They worshipped and adored Him; they prayed only to Him in times of joy and sorrow; He was their friend, guide and philosopher. Many still continue to have the same attitude towards Him and He still answers their prayers in His own unique way, which we cannot even begin to comprehend and understand. Bhagavan continues to manifest His miracles all over the world. Each individual has his own special experiences of Baba's Divinity. The greatest joy for Sai devotees is to share and listen to these Leelas. Through these conversations, which are in fact Satsangs, each one's faith and devotion is reinforced and strengthened.

All of us were greatly attached to Bhagavan's wondrous physical form. All of us eagerly looked forward to the daily Darshan and waited patiently for hours without caring for our bodily discomforts or inconveniences. The Darshan was everything, and if by chance Baba looked our way, or even more heavenly, spoke to us, we were transported to ethereal joy.



Sri V. Srinivasan with Bhagavan.

Baba had repeatedly told us that He was not this body, and we were also not this body which we carried. He wanted us to realise the Universal Atma which He personified and of which each one of us is also the container.

Today there is a sense of being lost for many devotees. The road ahead is not clear to them and they are also plagued by the reports of various controversies. They seek solace from each other but are not sure whether they should really exchange thoughts and news. They wonder whom to turn to for some guidance and what will happen to the future of all the institutions

and the Sai Centres, Samithis and Bhajan Mandalis. The time has come for us to understand what is the real legacy of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. To me, the legacy of Bhagavan consists of several parts.

First are the institutions that He has set up, such as the university, the hospitals, the schools, the Ashram, etc. These are mainly administered by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and the University Trust. With His vision and foresight, Bhagavan set up adequate corpus funds for His institutions to enable them to continue to function well on the income from these funds, which are all deposited in fixed deposits with nationalised banks. They will continue to offer free education and medical treatment to all, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, etc. Bhagavan set up these institutions to be models to prove that it was possible to offer free high quality education and the most modern medical treatment totally free of cost without seeking assistance from the Government for everything. The proof has been there for more than twenty years of working of these institutions. Lakhs of poor and needy people have benefited from these which are indeed the living proofs of Baba's compassion and love. These institutions are for those that need them and hopefully will motivate others as Bhagavan wished, to set up similar citadels of love and service to humanity. These are the material parts of His legacy, which are there for the whole world to see and experience.

The second part is the manifestation of the purpose for which the Sai Avatar came. He was love personified, love which transcended all barriers and limits, love which encompassed the entire creation.

He has lit the lamp of love in millions of hearts, the brilliance of which inspires them to transform their lives and engage in the projection of that love into their daily lives. This love makes those individuals caring and sharing persons, who collectively engage in a society, and by their actions motivate others also to be caring and sharing, leading to a general improvement of society, though this may be a slow process. Baba's inspiration of love to millions of individuals is translated verily into Love in Action all over the world. This love transforms lives every second. Life then acquires a new meaning. There is a new path of Prema Yoga, which to Sai devotees embodies all the other yogas of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana within itself. Bhagavan has said "Live in Love" and that is the way for our continuous communion with Him. Love is therefore Bhagavan's greatest legacy, which may not be touched but is real and universal and experienced by all. It belongs to all mankind, not to just a few. It cannot be appropriated by anybody but can only be shared and experienced, for the redemption of one and all.

The third part of His legacy is Education. While many others talked about it, Bhagavan postulated and introduced in His educational institutions Human Values Based Educational Curricula. The system of Integral Education implemented in the Sai University is unique and unlike any other. Education in Human Values has many concepts introduced by Bhagavan – 3-HV, Educare. The education given in His institutions is for life and not for a living. Right from the stage of childhood, such values based education is available in the Bal Vikas classes which are conducted throughout the length and breadth of India and in many other countries, the primary



and other schools and then in the university. This legacy of education is His gift to humanity for posterity.

The fourth part of His legacy is the Sathya Sai Organisation, which is active in all the States of India and in 125 countries of the world. The Sai Organisation is an instrument created by Bhagavan to enable all to perform their Sadhana through it. The Sai Organisation has three wings – the spiritual, educational and service. One can choose any one of them to do Seva and Sadhana. Today in India alone, there are 6,00,000 members who voluntarily serve with love and devotion. They include government officers and bureaucrats, doctors, engineers, judges, lawyers, professors, teachers, legislators, farmers and students. They work in over 2,700 villages, and in slums, hospitals, old age homes, jails, orphanages, in disaster areas, inspired by Bhagavan's teaching that service to man is service to God. Many of them have never even had a chance to talk to Swami, yet they have been supercharged by Him and have dedicated their lives to selfless service. We see Seva Dal volunteers from every State of India regularly in the Ashram, in the hospitals, and in all places at Prasanthi Nilayam. They come here at their own expense, giving lovingly their time and effort. For these volunteers, doing such Seva is their method of communion with Bhagavan Baba, since they know that Bhagavan is pleased when

we serve the poor and needy with love. Their faith is that Bhagavan is there where His work is done. This Seva has transformed their lives and they will continue to engage in it till the end of their lives. Nobody can take their Bhagavan away from them for He is always with them. Nobody need force them to do anything, since they serve with love and devotion. For those that are served, this Seva brings Bhagavan into their lives and in turn transforms them also to love and serve others.

The Sai Organisation's activities continue to increase and will do so continuously in future. The youth are giving a new dynamism and energy to the Organisation, using new tools and technology to improve the efficiency of their Seva. This legacy of Bhagavan created for human good and welfare is always His, never to be taken away by anyone but only to be shared and experienced by personal involvement. Bhagavan belonged not just to India and Indians but to all the citizens of this earth. They came in their millions for His love and inspiration. They will continue to do so for He has become a part of their lives forever.

This, therefore, dear brothers and sisters, is Baba's legacy of love. His legacy is His eternal message to humanity. Blessed are those who knew Him. Even more blessed are those who share His legacy of 'Love All, Serve All'.

– From **Sanathana Sarathi**, August 2011.

Nearness to Me is not acquired by physical nearness. You may be by My side, yet, far from Me. You may be far, far away, yet very near and dear. However far you are, if you but stick to Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema, you are close to Me and I am close to you.

– Baba



SIMPLE LIVING, HIGH THINKING IS a great ideal which makes man's life noble and exalted. It is worth recalling the early years at Prasanthi Nilayam and the early visitors who came there. Rain or shine, people cooked in the open and slept in the open. There was no electricity, no bathrooms, no cots, no fans, no coolers, etc. They had to go, before sunrise, to the Chitravathi River for bathing, washing clothes, etc. After cooking, stones would be placed on the vessels, but still dogs would manage to topple the vessels and usurp the food. Yet, even with little food, hunger was not felt. During the long hours in the prayer hall, no one would stealthily slip out

that enables all for achieving high thinking. It is from here that the Sai Family multiplied, massively, to all the corners of the world – without any family planning or limits. Today, in Parthi, people from all nations are found chanting Vedic hymns in one voice. This is really the greatest of miracles, something which has never happened in any previous Yuga. Under the loving guidance of Bhagavan Baba, spectacular transformation has taken place, and so many people are leading righteous lives – swinging on the cradle of bliss.

Our Lord of Simplicity, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was a striking and outstanding example of simple living and

Kuppam Vijayamma

SIMPLE LIVING, HIGH THINKING

to have some water, as no thirst was felt. Cool drinks and condiments were never to be seen. Only after many years did tents appear. In spite of all these inconveniences, how is it that no one requested Swami for better facilities? No one complained about the lack of infrastructure.

Simplicity Leads to Spirituality

This situation leads us to more contemplation, without diversion. Was it due to this simple living that they were closer to spirituality? Was the lack of distraction and disinterest for luxury that enabled them to go within and seek the Divine? The answer is a sure yes! Even to this day, life at Parthi, the abode of peace, is nothing but simple living

high thinking. His dress was simple. His food was simple – Ragi ball with peanut chutney. His habits, too, were very simple. Humble and ever-loving. No pomp and show. No jewels, no crown, no gold rings. No caste and creed. He moved in between the rows of devotees like an ordinary person. No demands. Always immaculate, polite and polished. He was humble, yet inspiringly noble. With one word – Love, He conquered the world and brought hundreds of thousands under one canopy of Love, which is really an indescribable feat.

In olden times, students lived in Gurukulams with less desires, anxieties and attachment. In the simple, sacred life of the Gurukulam, the minds of the students



were automatically drawn towards divinity, leading them to high thinking, where they would realise and experience Brahma Jnana (knowledge of divine reality). Was not the sole and soul purposes served? The disciples were without greed and pride and enjoyed their stay. Even Lord Krishna was sent to the hermitage of Guru Sandipani to learn. Kuchela, the friend of Krishna, also joined. Rich and poor were treated alike in all respects in Gurukulams. Because of simple living, with no stress or strain, the mind got engrossed in spirituality. The disciples achieved supreme knowledge in the proximity of the Guru. After completing the training, they left the Gurukulam as stalwarts of spirituality. Then they spread the message of peace and love to society.

Simple Life in Old Mandir

The Old Mandir was also like a Gurukulam. People from all walks of life visited: Sadhus, Sannyasis, heads of institutions, pundits, purohits, renowned singers, famous artists, intellectuals, agriculturists, etc. The first sight of the simple Mandir made them wonder what was in store for them. But when our Sai Krishna took the centre stage and enacted His play, it was beyond their imagination. Taking the role of the Sadguru, He swept over them like a storm once their false pride and immense ego took a beating. Appropriate lessons were then taught to them. All those who imbibed His lessons in the right manner became better people and thus helped in making a better world. They learnt a lot, having been engulfed in spirituality and immersed in His Divine Love. Since the Old Mandir was very simple, it can be considered as a unique Gurukulam for Higher Learning, with age, caste, creed and gender, no bar. People left the Mandir with their heads held high, filled with Dharmic



knowledge bestowed by Swami. Thus, they became capable of spreading His message and indoctrinating high values to all the people of the world. Slowly and steadily, this was the start of our international Sai family.

Our great leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Sivananda, Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Lal Bahadur Shastri led simple lives and are honoured even today, as such great examples of simple living and high thinking. Having explored the value and the essence of the challenging phrase – ‘simple living and high thinking’, by leading a simple life, we are advised to live in supreme knowledge of divine reality and achieve eternal peace. Our humble heartfelt salutations to the supreme souls of simplicity, divine guideposts for humanity. How fortunate, how lucky, how blessed we are!

By leading a simple life of ‘less luggage, more comfort’, one can derive unimaginable happiness and always enjoy peace and tranquillity. What else can one crave for? Always, by installing Swami in our hearts, as



we sail the boat of our lives through worldly waters, we can reach the truly coveted spiritual goal – Brahma Jnana – by living a simple life of peace and tranquillity, with God as our inner companion and guide in every situation, every minute, every second of every day.

Nature Elevates Human Mind

How does one attain this state of mind, especially in this modern day and age? Swami quoted a very simple yet profound phrase: “Hand in Society – Head in the Forest”. Serve the society and the world with your hands, because hands only can serve. But the saying ‘Head in the forest’, what does that mean? When you stay in the forest, you are away from the maddening crowd – no desires, no attachments, no worldly connections and attractions. You are left with yourself. Then, automatically the mind gets absorbed in the beauty of Nature and silently moves towards God and His splendid creation.

Remember the truth that you are born to serve society. Make no distinction whatsoever in rendering service. Divine grace will follow you like a shadow wherever you may be, be it in the forest or in the sky, village or city, river or mountain cliff.

– Baba (Discourse, 16th October 1999)

Then Swami answered why sages and seers went to live in the forest. For + Rest: for rest they went to live in the forest. Mental rest, mental peace. The deep silence removes the rust and dust of ego, fills heart, mind and thoughts with purity and divinity, teaches self-control and self-restraint and allows the body and mind to enjoy divine consciousness. Higher thinking takes you to higher realms of happiness. In the forest, with the crystal clear pristine beauty, fresh

air, chirping of birds and cool breeze, the body mind and soul are united, swinging and swaying in the cradle of bliss. One is drawn into deep whirlpools of thought and, eventually, is effortlessly elevated to a higher plane. The doors of the intellect open wide and the mind follows the path that leads to oneness. See how living the simple life moulds and allows one to taste the sweetness of higher thinking. Simple living is the source of everlasting joy.

In today’s world, living simply saves a lot of one’s precious time and hard-earned money, as well. Tension is eased and ego is suppressed, keeping one cool and calm. With simple dress, simple food, simple behaviour, the mind obviously finds peace and harmony and creates a similar atmosphere all around.

Whenever I had Padanamaskar at the Lotus Feet of Our Most Beloved Lord, I felt the divine bliss and divine energy saturating every cell of my body – a rare, precious boon and ever cherishable – which conferred on me peace and harmony, lifelong. Especially in times of crises, these cherishable blessings stand by one like a pillar and give courage to face the world happily and boldly. No need to worry.

When we make effort to simplify our life, having full faith and trust in God, we enjoy the result for ourself. When the body is entrusted to a simple lifestyle, the mind is easily susceptible to being engaged in high thinking. Alas! So many are not aware of the prime value, the richness of the benefits that can be derived from leading a simple life! But once tasted, one dare not lose it!

– **Smt. Kuppam Vijayamma is the author of the famous book “Anyatha Saranam Nasti” and many other books on Bhagavan Baba.**





VIVEK BABU GONDI

LESSONS OF GREAT VALUE

EVERY MOMENT SPENT IN HIS presence is an experience.
Every word of His is a potent message.

Every conversation with Him is a treasure to cherish.

It is a unique experience for any person who gets an opportunity to live and spend time in the immediate presence of Bhagavan. This is all the more applicable for His students since they get the opportunity to spend more time in His physical proximity. The relation that exists between Bhagavan and His students is something that can only be experienced and not expressed in words. The Institute that He has created is a marvel in many ways. It is indeed a gift to be a student in the Institute. The Institute's emblem and the motto *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness) were both designed and phrased by Bhagavan Himself. It would therefore not be superfluous to say that the educational institutions play a pivotal role in His Mission. The wonderful community of students and the cordial atmosphere that exists in the Institute is excellent for both types of learning – material and spiritual.

Profound Message of Mind Control

The transformation that happens with each student at the Institute is like the process that gold must undergo at the hands of a goldsmith to be made into an ornament.

The path is not an easy one but the lessons are well learnt and useful throughout life. In the following paragraphs, I would like to cite Bhagavan's messages that I imbibed through His Darshan and Sambhashan. Bhagavan's way of teaching differs from person to person. For some, He only gives suggestions, for a few others He demonstrates by His own example and for yet others He chastises and reprimands them if they don't follow His words. With students, I feel it is a combination of all. Of course, it is up to us to pick up the teachings and reap the benefits. In short, Sraddha and Saburi (steadfast faith and patience), are most important as Shirdi Baba used to fondly tell his devotees.

One of the interesting concepts that are elucidated by Bhagavan is that of Buddhi (intellect) and Manas (mind). He says that Buddhi has to be the master and not the mind. Mind consists of an endless stream of thoughts. Buddhi is the decision making faculty and has to be utilised in the right direction. Swami compares the mind to the horses of a chariot and the Buddhi to the charioteer who holds the reins. I remember during our second year of undergraduation course, one of the students posed a question to Bhagavan. "Swami, how do we control the mind? It is very difficult."

Swami responded with an analogy. He gave the example of a wall opposite to us in the interview room. He went on to say that the wall neither has good nor bad thoughts. It is an inert object. Can it be considered as good? He conveyed to us that we are not required to stop the thoughts but make an attempt to cultivate good thoughts. What a subtle and profound message in the age when there

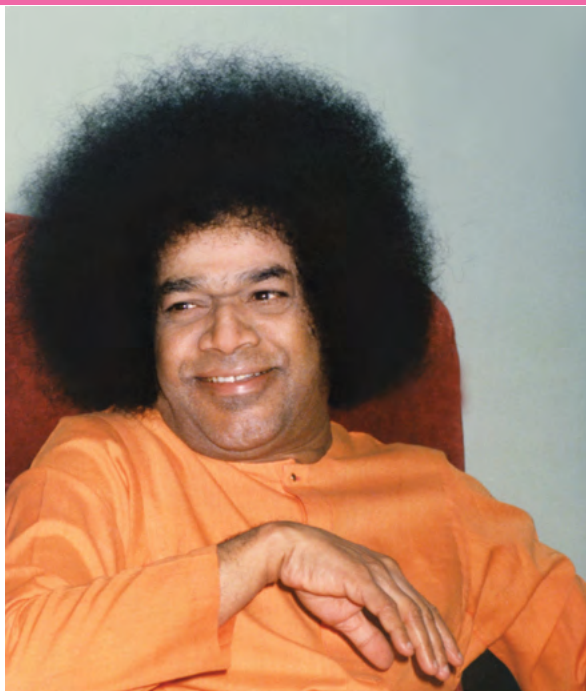


exist different schools of thought regarding mind control!

He is your Brother

How can anyone forget the conversations that went on in the portico of the Mandir after the interview sessions were over? “Bend the Body, Mend the Senses and End the Mind,” He used to tell us. Swami many times used to ask the students what games they played to keep themselves fit. If a student replied Table Tennis as his game, he used to tease him by calling it a ladies game. He used to quote Bernard Shaw’s words when cricket was the subject of discussion. Somehow he would consider football as a fitting game. Further, utmost importance would be given in his teachings of the role played by five senses. Bhagavan has spoken this in many of the summer courses. He would repeatedly emphasise: “Talk no evil, talk what is good. Hear no evil, hear what is good. See no evil, see what is good”. He used to give us the example of the mind being a camera. The shutter is compared to our senses. Whatever the shutter sees gets imprinted on our hearts and hence we should be careful to use the senses in a proper manner. In connection with this, let me narrate one of my experiences.

During my stay at the Institute, I had developed a complication in my eyes. This was giving me pain and trouble with regular work. I prayed to Bhagavan to cure me of this ailment. Bhagavan one day jokingly replied that I got this problem because I cast an evil eye on somebody! When I pestered Him with prayers on my birthday, to my surprise He materialised a ring for me. Thereafter, pointing to the ring, He asked me, “Who is he”? To which I replied, “Hanuman”. Swami then corrected me and made a statement which is again characteristic of Him alone.



He simply said, “He is your brother”. The relation that He created by using these words gave me more affinity and closeness to Hanuman. Hanuman seemed to be a fitting example of physical strength and mental firmness whose example was very much necessary for me at that point of time. Henceforward, I prayed to Hanuman in times of temptations and difficulties.

Inspiration to Learn Music

Worship is one of the many practices that we learn during our student days. The day starts with the morning prayer and closes with the night prayer. The essence of the night prayer is to forgive all our misdoings in the course of the day. The schedule is planned in a way to remember God at different times and thereby offer our worship to Him. Offering morning worship to God is a very good discipline. Keeping up the same practice, I find it rejuvenating every day to spend a few moments in worship. It gives me enough strength and energy to carry on with the hustle and bustle of everyday life.



It is said that God manifests wherever His devotees sing His glory. Anyone who visits Prasanthi Nilayam cannot help humming a few Bhajans even after returning to his home. Singing Bhajans is another important practice that is followed at the Institute. Music touches the heart of one and all. In our first year of postgraduation, students of our class decided to put up a small music programme during one of the moral classes that are conducted every Thursday morning. The programme consisted of rendering of instrumental songs on different instruments. I happened to play the flute for the programme. There were other brothers playing on the keyboard, violin and tabla. The programme went on well. In the afternoon, we were seated for Darshan in the Mandir. It was a pleasant surprise to us when Swami referred to the programme while walking past us. He said that I played the flute very well and the rest was noise! It was a compliment personally for two reasons: Firstly, it was totally unexpected that Swami spoke to me after many days and secondly the appreciation that Bhagavan showed for such a small programme. I feel inspired and happy whenever I recall this occasion. What was important for me was the encouragement I received and the omnipresence I experienced. The spark that Swami ignited in me during this incident made me pursue the flute even after I left the Institute.

The ways of destiny are unpredictable and beyond our comprehension. When I got my first placement at Mumbai, I was not very happy about the place since it seemed to be distant from all my people and of course Parthi. However, the moment I stepped out of the Dadar station in Mumbai I saw a Best transport bus displaying the words:

Help Ever, Hurt Never. This was another indication of His presence and guidance. The really interesting thing that happened during that time was that I happened to meet a person who was a student of the great flute exponent – Pandit Hari Prasad, whose audio tapes I listened and whom I wished to emulate! During this time, I developed great interest and flair for learning music. My flute teacher, whose name incidentally happened to be the same as mine, helped me gain more insight in playing the instrument. Practising music everyday at the end of day's work would give me immense satisfaction and pleasure. I am thankful for being able to learn from such talented people.

Lessons of Unity and Self-sacrifice

Yet another important message that is constantly emphasised by Bhagavan is that of brotherhood of man and the need to show concern for others. He urges every student to consider his fellow mates as brothers and sisters. He emphatically puts forth that God is the only true friend who is there with us at all times and all places. The spirit of brotherhood instils a feeling of oneness and is very essential in today's world of conflict and misunderstanding. Whenever Bhagavan used to show attention, speak or give some material objects or gifts to any student He would often remind others that they should also feel happy about the opportunities others receive. He says that we need to develop a broader heart and feel that all people belong to the same family.

I learnt about the following incident from one of the students who spoke to us about the selflessness shown by one of our teachers. During the initial days of a new academic year, Bhagavan announced to all students that He would take all students for a picnic provided they secure 'O' (outstanding)



grade in their examinations. This was a good goal to be worked upon due to the reward it offered. During one of the routine check-ups that were done in the hostel, the Warden (Prof. A.V. Lakshminarasimham) noticed one of the students upset about some issue. He enquired about the reason from the student. The student explained to the Warden that although he had secured 'O' grade, he was not shortlisted for the picnic. The Warden was moved with the student's yearning and informed Bhagavan about this. Bhagavan replied that there was place just enough for 25 people for the trip and it was impossible to accommodate any additional person. What turned out later was that the Warden decided to withdraw his nomination from the trip and allowed the student to go along in his place. When Bhagavan came to know about the proceedings, He was immensely pleased with the sacrifice of the Warden and extolled him for the act. He also expressed His view to the people around him to imbibe such noble qualities.

Even during the course of the picnic (at the Bandipur Sanctuary), Bhagavan was seen remembering the Warden and missing his presence.

All the above incidents are simple in nature, but the lessons they give are very profound. The lessons that are delivered here are of great significance and meaning to our lives. There have been incidents when Bhagavan would spend time in a very casual manner and during other times He would have profound teachings for us. But all said and done, we have to hold on to His teachings and continue to practise them in our life. Only then, knowledge does not remain a burden but becomes a blessing. Only then, the teachings are not in the books and souvenirs but remain in our hearts and everyday life. It is then that our lives will be touched, healed and inspired by the Divine.

– The author joined Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School and did M.Sc. (Physics) from Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in 1998.

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Humanness

ONE DAY, WHEN ABDULLAH WAS sleeping in the mosque, he suddenly woke up and found two angels talking to each other. They were discussing about the people whom God loved most. One



On hearing the talk of the angels, Abdullah wanted to know how Mahboob became deserving of God's love.

of them said, "Mahboob of Sikandar city received God's grace in full". Soon the two angels left the place. Abdullah became intensely eager to see Mahboob and to know how he could obtain God's love and grace. The very next day, he set out on his journey to the city of Sikandar.

Abdullah enquired about Mahboob at Sikandar, and came to know that he was a poor cobbler. He thought of checking his activities and watching his coming and going closely.

One day, Mahboob went to the market, bought some tasty sweets, filled them in a pot and started going fast to his house in order to fulfill the long-standing desire of his wife for these sweets which he purchased out of his hard-earned money.

As Abdullah closely followed Mahboob on the road, Mahboob saw a beggar lying on the side of the road in semi-conscious state obviously due to hunger. Mahboob's heart was filled with compassion on seeing the beggar in this miserable condition. He rushed towards him, raised him up and offered the pot of eatables to him. The beggar grabbed the pot from him and started eating the sweets happily. Seeing the beggar's face glowing with satisfaction, Mahboob left the place happily. Abdullah was closely watching all this. Mahboob considered a hungry man's satisfaction as



Mahboob gave the pot of sweets he was carrying for his wife to a hungry beggar.

his own satisfaction, because he sincerely believed that real happiness lay in helping the needy. Love towards fellow beings is true love for God.

Abdullah now came to know how Mahboob became deserving of God's love. As his heart was full of compassion, he happily gave away to a poor needy beggar the eatables he bought for his wife. This was the high level of his humanness! That is why it is said: A heart filled with compassion is the temple of God.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

ASHADI EKADASI

SRI SATHYA SAI SEVA Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa organised music and cultural programmes from 2nd to 4th July 2017 to celebrate the sacred festival of Ashadi Ekadasi at Prasanthi Nilayam, in which nearly 3,000 devotees from these two States came to participate. The programme also marked the Parthi Yatra (pilgrimage to Puttaparthi) by the youth of Maharashtra and Goa.

Rudram Chanting

The celebrations began on the morning of 2nd July 2017 with Rudram Chanting. Sai Kulwant Hall reverberated with sacred



Sai Youth from Maharashtra and Goa engaged in Rudram Chanting.

Vedic chants when more than 1,500 youth, both ladies and gents, collectively chanted the Vedic hymns with deep devotion.

Folk Dances of Maharashtra and Goa

The evening programme began with a procession of Sai Youth from all the districts of Maharashtra and Goa. They came up to the Samadhi of Bhagavan and offered their reverential salutations to Him. This was followed by a scintillating programme



A dance number "Jai Ganesh".

of folk dances entitled "Lokadhara of Maharashtra and Goa" by the Sai Youth of these two States. Beginning their dance presentation with a dance number "Jai Ganesh", the youth presented a popular harvest festival dance of Goa followed by a vibrant Siva dance. The dances which came alive with excellent multimedia support, not only showcased the rich folklore of these States, but also depicted some unique forms of their dances. The last item of the programme was a musical



"Taal Rudra", a unique musical presentation on huge drums.

offering "Taal Rudra" performed by the youth on huge drums, which captivated one and all by its vigour and vibrancy.

Bhajans led by the singers of Maharashtra and Goa followed next and concluded with the Bhajan “Rama Rama Rama Sita” in the golden voice of Bhagavan.

Twameva Sharanam Mama

On the morning of 3rd July 2017, the second day of the Youth Parthi Yatra of Maharashtra and Goa, Sai Youth (ladies) of these States presented a very illuminating musical presentation “Twameva Sharanam Mama” based on the main teachings of the Bhagavadgita. As the relevant Gita Sloka was depicted on the LED screen, the ladies singers described the scene in the related song while the children enacted the scene illustrating the surrender of illustrious devotees of God which included Kunti, Sabari, Sakkubai, Rukmini and Suguna.

A Devotional Music Concert

An eminent Hindustani classical vocalist, Sri Srinivas Joshi along with his son Viraj gave a blissful and enriching experience of devotional music to the devotees in the evening. Beginning his presentation with a Hindustani classical composition, the talented musician followed it with the Kirtan “Jai Jai Ram Krishna Hari”, the heart-throb of Varkaris of Maharashtra. He then sang a Marathi Abhang and a Sai Bhajan which his father, the legendary musician Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, used to sing “Majhe Maher Pandhari” and “Jai Panduranga Prabho Vitthala”. He and his son Viraj sang some other Marathi Abhangs also. Bhajans led by Maharashtra and Goa singers followed next and concluded with Arati at 6.30 p.m.

Ashadi Dindi Procession

Sounding of conches at 8.30 a.m. on the holy Ashadi Ekadasi morning heralded the arrival of the Dindi (palanquin) of Lord Sai Vitthala. After a colourful and vibrant



The procession of Varkaris in Sai Kulwant Hall.

dance by Sai Youth to propitiate Lord Ganesh, the Dindi procession entered Sai Kulwant Hall. The hall then resounded with the Kirtan of “Jai Jai Ram Krishna Hari” while the Varkaris exhibited their talent in exuberant and captivating dances, after which they offered their salutations at the Samadhi of Bhagavan.

An Offering of Devotional Songs

A rhythmic stream of devotional songs followed next presented by the ladies singers of Maharashtra and Goa. They enthralled the audience for half an hour with Marathi Abhangs, Hindi devotional songs and Kirtans, which included “Ganapati Bappa Moriya”, “Easwar Ya Allah”, “Oh Sai Ram Mere Dil Mein Ajana” (Oh Lord Sai! Install Yourself in my heart), “Vitthal Vitthal”.

The Divine Number 9: A Drama

The concluding programme of Ashadi Ekadasi was a musical presentation “Divine Number 9” by Bal Vikas children of Maharashtra and Goa. The significance of number 9, which Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba called divine number, was presented by the children by depicting Nava Durga (nine forms of the Divine Mother), Nava Rasas by Adi Sankara, Nava Vidha Bhakti by Shirdi Sai Baba, Nava Ratnas by





Nava Durga dance.

Annamacharya, illustrating the relevant stories through beautiful dances and skits with multimedia support. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati, bringing the three-day Ashadi Ekadasi celebrations to a happy conclusion.

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM TAMIL NADU

On the eve of Guru Purnima, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Tamil Nadu organised a pilgrimage of Tamil Nadu devotees to Prasanthi Nilayam and presented music and cultural programmes on 8th July 2017. On the morning of 8th July, two eminent violin artistes Dr. M. Lalitha and M. Nandini presented a lively instrumental music concert comprising Bhajans, carnatic classical compositions and Sanskrit Stotras which included “Vanamali Radha Ramana”, “Kurai Ondrum Illai” (no regrets have I), “Lingashtakam” and a couple of



*A scene from the drama
“Sai Rama – Sai Krishna”.*

carnatic classical numbers. In the evening, Bal Vikas children and Sai Youth of Tamil Nadu performed a dance drama entitled “Sai Rama – Sai Krishna”, which depicted some episodes from the lives of Rama and Krishna to illustrate that Sai is both Rama and Krishna.

SRI SATHYA SAI EASWARAMMA WOMEN'S WELFARE TRUST

A function was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Easwaramma Women's Welfare Trust in Sai Kulwant Hall on 11th July 2017 to distribute keys of sanitation units to villagers and notebooks to students. Highlighting the



*Keys of sanitation units being distributed
to beneficiaries.*

significant milestones achieved by the Trust, Smt. Chethana Raju, Managing Trustee of the Trust stated that the Trust had so far constructed about 3,000 sanitation units under its Sanitation and Hygiene Project and had covered over 150 villages under its Mother and Child Programme. Keys of 500 sanitation units to villagers from 26 villages and 10,000 notebooks to school children from over 1,600 schools were distributed on this occasion.



PILGRIMAGE OF VIZIANAGARAM DEVOTEES

Devotees from Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh came to Prasanthi Nilayam on a two-day pilgrimage from 15th to 16th July 2017. As part of this pilgrimage, Bal Vikas children and Sai



A beautiful dance of Bal Vikas children of Vizianagaram district.

Youth of this district presented a dance drama entitled “Love only Can Transform the World” on 16th July 2017. Beginning with a beautiful dance of Bal Vikas children, the drama showcased through a debate between worldly people and Sai students how the Divine Mission of Bhagavan Baba was bringing about transformation in the world through the powerful weapon of love. The drama concluded with another thrilling dance of Bal Vikas children.

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM MIDDLE EAST AND GULF

More than 400 devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam from Middle East and Gulf countries, namely, Bahrain, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Sharjah, Kuwait and Doha on a pilgrimage from 14th to 21st July 2017 and presented a number of music and cultural programmes during the period.

Their first presentation was a devotional music programme entitled “Madhura Spandanam” (sweet divine reverberations) which Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) children of these countries offered on 18th July 2017. Beginning their programme at 5.00 p.m. with a prayer song to Lord Ganesh “Jai Ganesh Gananatha”, the



A devotional music presentation by SSE children of Middle East and Gulf countries.

children, both boys and girls, poured out their hearts in sweet and melodious songs which included “Sri Rama Chandra Kripalu Bhaja Mana” (Oh mind, chant the Name of Rama), “Madhura Mohana Ghana Shyama” (Krishna, the embodiment of sweetness), “Sai Nama Hi Madhuram” (the Name of Sai is sweet) and “Sai Prem De” (in Arabic). Melody of the rendition and sweetness of music cast a spellbinding effect on the audience who expressed their appreciation by a thunderous applause at the conclusion of the programme.

On 19th July 2017, the adult devotees of these countries offered a bouquet of soulful devotional songs in Hindi, Arabic and Telugu. Beginning their presentation entitled “Sai Vandanam” (worship of Sai) with a song of total surrender “Anyatha Sharanam Nasti” (there is no refuge except You), the singers, both ladies and gents, sang uplifting songs of prayer and surrender which included “Mana Mein





A devotional music presentation by Middle East and Gulf devotees.

Basse Hain Sai Mere” (Sai is the resident of my heart), “Deena Dukhiyon Se Prem Karo” (Arabic) (love the destitute and oppressed), “Mein Gulam Tera” (I am Your servant) and concluded their presentation with a Telugu song “Ashirwadinchu Maa Swami” (shower Your grace, oh Swami).

On 20th July 2017, SSE children of these countries presented a drama “Sabka Malik Ek”, depicting the life story of Shirdi Sai Baba as revealed by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in His Discourse on 28th September 1990. Beginning with the birth of Shirdi Sai Baba, the drama presented anecdotes relating to Baba’s coming to



The drama “Sabka Malik Ek” depicted the life story of Shirdi Sai Baba.

Shirdi, meditating under a neem tree, taking sojourn in a dilapidated mosque and revealing his divinity to his devotees. Excellent acting of the children, beautiful dances, melodious songs and good multimedia support made the drama an

impressive presentation which showcased beautifully the life and teachings of Shirdi Sai Baba. Bhajans followed next which concluded with the Bhajan “Om Sivaya Om Sivaya” sung by Bhagavan.

SAI: SO AM I - A DRAMA

The true journey of man from non-self to Self was depicted through an elevating drama entitled “SAI: So Am I” enacted by the postgraduate students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (Prasanthi Nilayam Campus) on 23rd July 2017. Beginning with a theatrical award function wherein the protagonist wins an award, the drama showcased the evolution of man, represented by the protagonist, from his egoistic perspective to his real Self by peeling off layers after layers of ignorance and delusion caused by ego, attachment,



The drama “SAI: So Am I” depicted man’s evolution to his real Self.

desire, greed, etc. The drama ultimately reverts to the award function, heralding the victory of man when he realises his oneness with Divinity and knows the ultimate truth that he is none other than the Divine. Then only can he say: So Am I. A couple of episodes from mythological texts illustrated the theme of the drama. Uplifting theme, excellent direction and good acting of the cast made the drama an excellent presentation.



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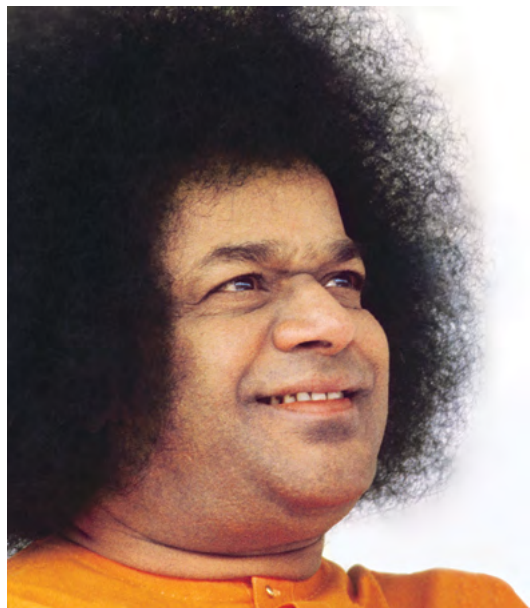
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- 1) The publication and distribution of spiritual, religious, and educational Sai Literature and the production and distribution of audio and visual multimedia, photographs, calendars, and diaries for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
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Journey to Bliss

The pilgrim must traverse and overstep the vast wastes of worldly desires and overcome the thick slushy growths of anger and hate and negotiate the cliffs of hatred and malice so that he might relax on the green pastures of concord and love. Having thus become master of his inner foes, he has to rest in the silence of his own heart, as a yogi, with all the agitations of his inner realm stilled.

– Baba

