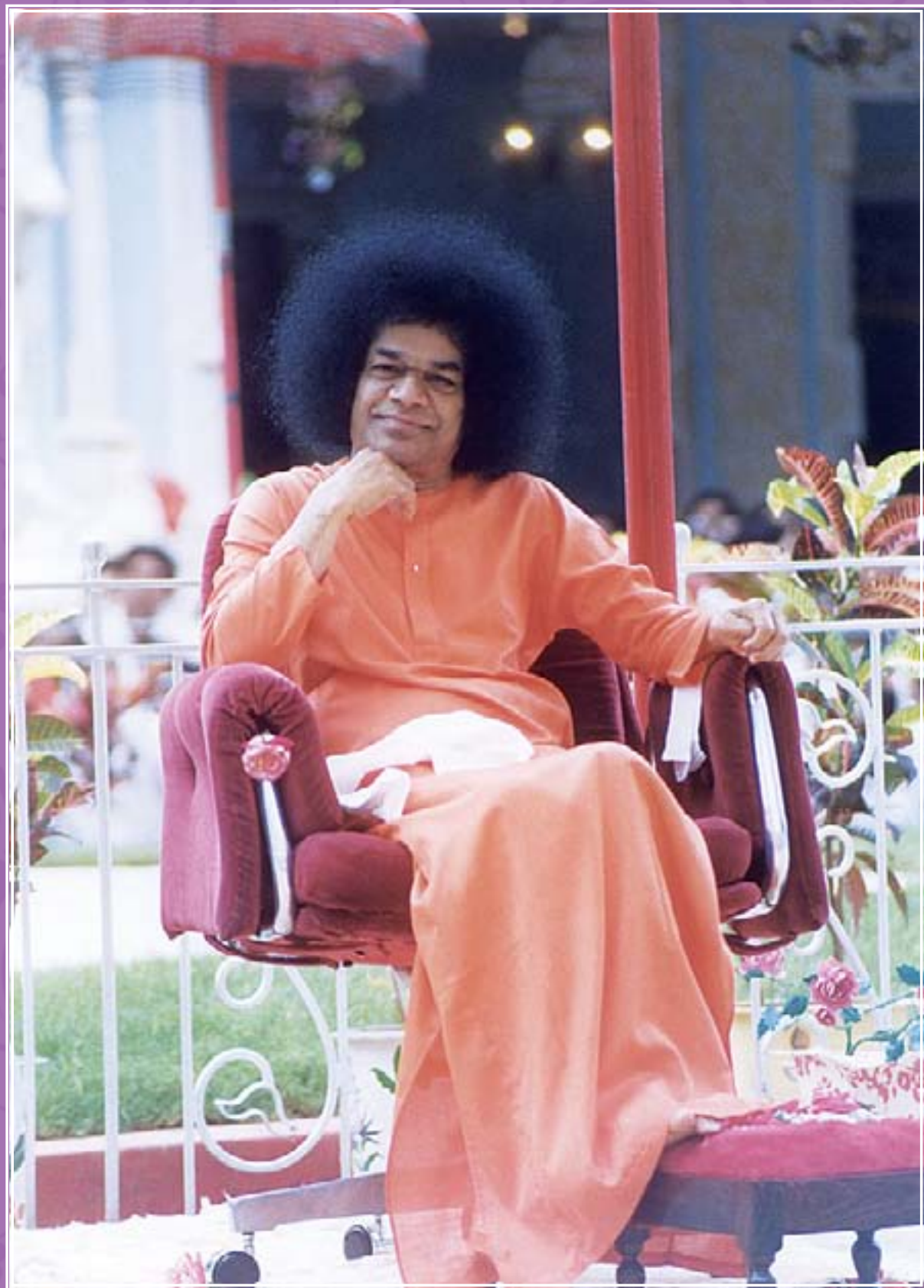


Sanathana Sarathi

AUGUST 2021



Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

Vol.: 64 Issue No. 8 Date of Publication: 1st August

August 2021

© Sri Sathya Sai
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division
Prasanthi Nilayam

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

On behalf of the owner, Sri Sathya Sai
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi
Nilayam 515134, Anantapur District (A.P.)
And Printed at Sri Sathya Sai Press,
Prasanthi Nilayam
And Published at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust,
Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam
515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

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STD Code : 08555
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Annual Subscription
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English India: (12 issues) ₹ 120
Other Countries: ₹ 1200
or US \$22, UK £17, €19,
CAN \$29, AUS \$31

Telugu India: ₹ 90 (12 issues)
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*"Devotion is the source of all
powers. But devotion should be
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and selflessness."*

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AVATAR VANI

GOD IS YOUR ONLY GOAL

INTENSE DESIRE FOR GOD IS TRUE DEVOTION

Embodiments of Divine Love!

IT IS BHAKTI (DEVOTION) WHICH proves the eternal sacred Truth stated in the profound Vedic dictum *Tattwamasi* (That Thou Art). It means that the devotee and God are one. But man forgets this Truth and becomes victim of many diseases and sorrows. The sorrows man suffers from are of three types: Adhiboutika refers to the diseases that are caused by man's attachment to the

physical world. Adhidaivika is related to the sufferings caused by natural calamities such as earthquakes and floods as also epidemics like cholera and plague. Adhyatmika refers to the sufferings that result from wrong food and bad habits.

Worldly Desires Cause Sorrow

Diseases related to the mind are more prevalent in the world today as man has many types of worries. The cause of his



worries is his attachment to worldly people and material objects. He has attachment to wife and children, property and wealth. These attachments weaken his mind and cause sufferings. Man today is beset with worries which he readily takes into heart and consequently suffers. He can get relief from these sufferings only through devotion to God, which can also lead him to liberation. Man should therefore overcome his attachments and develop devotion. Worldly attachments can give only temporary happiness. But he is deluded to think that worldly attachments will give him permanent happiness. All his desires are the cause of his sorrow. All his worldly relationships and material attachments are in fact the cause of his bondage. How long do wealth and worldly relations last? Having intense desire for God is true devotion. Wealth and wife are not permanent. Money comes and goes. So, do not focus on worldly objects and persons; focus only on God.

To Combine the Purified Mind with Actions is Dharma

You are attached to your wife and children. Your wife and children were not born with you. They came in between your life. They will not remain with you all your life. Similarly, the wealth you amass will not be with you all the time. But God is always with you. God was there prior to your birth, He would be there during your lifetime and will be there even after your death. So, God who exists before, during and after your life is the Truth and your only goal. To lead your life with this attitude is devotion. Your relationship with God is the only true relationship; all other relationships are false. Offer everything to God. Do your duty and please God. You are gifted with this body to transform every Karma (action) into Dharma (righteousness) through love. Karma is performed with hands and other organs of

the body. When you combine your actions with love, your actions become Dharmic and divine.

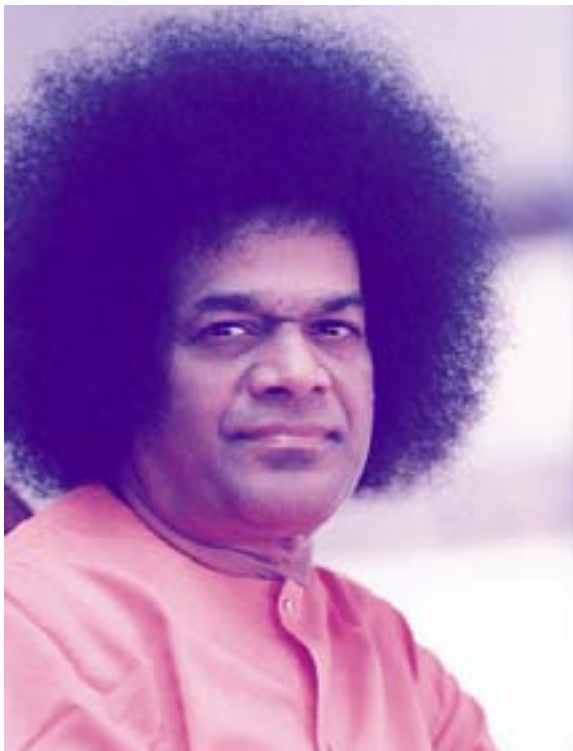
A car has many parts like engine, fuel tank, battery, etc. But it runs because of the battery. Similarly, human body is a machine with many organs, like ears, eyes, hands, etc. But they all function because of the mind. Each organ of the human body has a specific function to perform: the eyes only see; they cannot hear; the ears only listen; they cannot see. According to Vedanta, the mind is the cause of all the experiences of the world. For example, at this time, you are in the auditorium and listening to Swami's Discourse. But if merely your ears and eyes are here while your mind is elsewhere, you will not derive any benefit from the Discourse. When only your body is present and your mind is absent, you would not know what Swami said in His Discourse. To combine the purified mind with actions is Dharma.

Man requires food to provide Shakti (strength) to his body and clothes to protect it. From Bhukti (food), man derives Shakti (strength). He attains Mukti (liberation) through Bhakti (devotion). But for this, he has to leave Rakti (attachment) and develop Virakti (detachment). In the word Bhakti, 'bha' denotes brilliance, effulgence and transcendence. The first syllable in Bhakti is 'bha' and the last, is 'iti'. It connotes that devotion is the source of all powers. But devotion should be pure, steady and selfless. Therefore, man should always keep his heart pure and sacred. Then only can he attain Bhagavan who is the embodiment of purity, effulgence and selflessness.

Man should Display only Goodness and Purity

No one should look at the faults of others. Here is a small example. Once a Japanese lady was travelling by train from Tokyo to Kyoto. She was carrying with her a bundle of dirty clothes wrapped in a clean cloth. A person

sitting near her asked her, “Why have you put a clean cloth outside while all dirty clothes are inside your bundle”? She replied, “I have no right to display dirty clothes to anyone. The true meaning of human life is to display goodness and purity”. There are nerves, bones, blood, urine, etc., inside the human body. If people see this, they will have a feeling of fear and nausea. So, God has covered these parts with an attractive and beautiful skin. Similarly, man should not display all that is evil and dirty in him. Rather, he should sublimate all that is



bad in him and maintain purity and goodness. The best example of this is provided by Lord Siva who drank deadly poison which came out when gods and demons churned the ocean. So, he saved the universe from destruction. This is the lesson that God teaches man, “Oh mad man! If there is anything bad and harmful in you, keep it to yourself and do not cause harm to others by your words and deeds”.

Lord Siva dons moon on his forehead to shed coolness and comfort to all mankind. The compassionate Lord also provides the sacred water of the river Ganga to all. This conveys that God keeps all that is harmful with Himself and gives all that is good to others in order to teach them to give everything for the benefit of all.

At birth, a baby cries which causes blood circulation in its body. Though man begins his life by crying, he should end it in bliss. The Bhagavadgita begins with misery in human life

Your relationship with God is the only true relationship; all other relationships are false. Offer everything to God. Do your duty and please God. You are gifted with this body to transform every Karma (action) into Dharma (righteousness) through love. Karma is performed with hands and other organs of the body. When you combine your actions with love, your actions become Dharmic and divine.

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but ends in divine bliss. The life in the world has both good and bad. Share all that is good with others. But, unfortunately, man today behaves just contrary to it. He always finds faults in others rather than knowing his own faults and making efforts to remove them. If we remove our own faults through self-inquiry, we can advance on the path of spiritual progress.

(To be continued in the next issue...)

– **Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 10th April 1996.**

Chapters 8 and 9

TRANSFORMATION OF DHRITARASHTRA AND ASCENT OF KRISHNA

DHRITARASHTRA AND GANDHARI reached the forest along with Vidura.

Vidura searched for a site where they could practise austerities. He also advised them on the best means of seeking Self-realisation. They spent the days in holy company and holy thoughts.

Meanwhile in Hasthinapura, as soon as the sun rose, Dharmaraja woke up, finished his ablutions and performed the ritual worship of the “Household Fire”. He gave away in charity the usual daily gifts to the needy. He then proceeded on foot towards the palace of Dhritarashtra, his paternal uncle, as was his wont, for he never began his daily round of duties without taking on his head the dust of his feet. The king and queen were not found in their chambers. So, he waited for some little time expecting them to return thereto, searching for them all around, even while he was waiting anxiously for their return. He noticed however that the beds were not slept upon, the pillows did not bear marks of use, the pieces of furniture were undisturbed. He doubted for a moment that the rooms might have been reset by someone after use, but no, some fear got hold of him that they must have left; so, he hurried towards the room of Vidura to discover that he too had fled. His bed was unused.

The attendants reported that the sage did not return to his room from the king and queen to whom he had gone. As soon as he heard

this, Dharmaraja had a shock. He went back to the palace and searched every room with great care and his worst fears were confirmed. His hands and feet shivered in despair. His tongue became dry. Words did not emerge from his mouth. He fell on the floor, as if life had ebbed out. Recovering, he blabbered indistinctly. He called on Vidura more than once, and the officers around him became afraid of his future. Everyone rushed to the presence, asking, “What happened”? sensing some calamity. They stood in a circle, awaiting orders from the master.

Just then, Sanjaya came there, all of a sudden. Dharmaraja rose and caught hold of both his hands: “My parents have gone; alas, I found their chambers empty. Why did they behave like this? Have they disclosed anything to you, tell me. If I know where they have gone, I could fall at their feet and crave pardon for all my failings. Tell me quick, Sanjaya, where have they gone”? He too had no knowledge of their whereabouts. He only knew that Vidura must be at the bottom of the whole affair. He too shed tears, and holding Dharmaraja’s hands in his, he said in a voice that shook with tremor, “Lord and Master, believe me, I am speaking the truth. Of course, Dhritarashtra used to consult me and ask for my suggestions even in small matters; but in this affair he has acted without discussing with me or even informing me. I am struck with wonder at this act. Though I was near him, I

** Continued from July 2021 issue.*

did not in the least know about his journey. I cannot also guess why he should have done so. I never dreamt that he would deceive me thus. He showed me some respect and had some confidence in me. But he has played me false. I can only say that this is my bad luck.” Sanjaya started weeping like a child.

Dharmaraja consoled him, saying that it was really the consequence of his own sins, and not Sanjaya’s. “The extent of our bad luck can be gauged from this. Our father left us even while we were children. This uncle brought us up from that tender age. We were revering him and tending him as both father and uncle. I must have perpetrated some error out of ignorance. I am incapable of doing so, consciously. Both uncle and aunt were broiling in the agony of the loss of their hundred sons. I was eager to offer them some little peace, and so myself and my four brothers were wholeheartedly serving them so that they might not remember the anguish of their terrible loss. We took care that no little point was missed while serving them. There was no diminution of reverence or affection. Alas, that they should have left this place! What a tragedy, what a terrible blow!” lamented Dharmaraja.

“My uncle and aunt are both aged and weak; besides, they are blind. I cannot understand how they managed to leave this place. How they must be suffering now! Not even one attendant accompanied them. Of what benefit are these large numbers that I have? Groping along, they might have fallen into the Ganga, by now. Oh, how unlucky I am! I fostered them both like the apple of the eye and at last, I have allowed them to meet this tragic fate.” Dharmaraja was beating his chest and expressing his deep distress.

The brothers heard the lamentation and they flew fast to the side of the weeping Dharmaraja. Kunti, the mother, also enquired

anxiously the reason for the grief. She peeped into the chambers and not finding Gandhari or her brother-in-law, she asked Sanjaya what had happened to them. Sanjaya could not reply. He could only shed tears. “Where have they gone, in their aged and helpless condition? Tell me,” she cried; but no one could answer. Meanwhile, Dharmaraja called the brothers to his side and made some gestures which they could not understand aright. Then, he mustered courage and rose from the ground. He managed to narrate to them the happenings since sunrise. He asked Bhima to send forces in all directions to search for them and find them, for they would not have gone far, since they were blind and could not travel fast; they must be groping their way.

Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva obeyed their brother’s order and sent troops in all directions. They rummaged all the roads, lanes and by-lanes, peeped into wells, searched in all tanks and lakes, but could find no trace of the blind couple. Believing that they must have fallen into the Ganga, they got experts to scour the banks and even dive into the waters to discover their fate. All their efforts were in vain. So, the Pandava brothers were sunk in grief that they could not save the king and queen from that horrid fate.

Meanwhile, Dhritarashtra and Gandhari were joyfully contemplating on God, seated in prescribed postures with their minds rigorously under control. When they were thus lost in Divine Contemplation, and immersed in that supreme joy, a huge forest fire swept along, consuming them too in its fierce onslaught.

Vidura had a great desire to cast off his body at the holy centre of Prabhasaksethra, and so, he escaped the fire; and filled with joy at the immense good fortune of the couple, he continued his pilgrimage and reached the place which he had chosen as the scene of

his exit. There, he cast off his body, which was composed of the five elements, and which therefore, was material and momentary.

Dharmaraja who was reeling in agony at the departure of his uncle and aunt – Dhritarashtra and Gandhari – had another bout of unbearable pain which was like a needle thrust underneath the nails. Wherever he turned, he began seeing bad omens in his kingdom. He noted in every act around him the taint of falsehood, cruelty and injustice. It met him at every step and confused his vision.

As a result, an inexplicable anguish possessed him anew. His face became pale with apprehension. It was marked by constant agitation and anxiety. Seeing this and becoming agitated themselves, the brothers – Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva – approached their eldest and expressed their eagerness to delve into the reasons for his strange sadness. They stood before him with folded hands and enquired, “Lord and Master! Day by day we find your countenance rendered dimmer and dimmer; you seem sunk in unfathomable agony, sinking deeper and deeper with every passing hour. You have become too weak to stand firm. If any of us has caused you pain, please tell us. We shall guard ourselves against repetition, and we pray we may be pardoned. If all this is due to something else, you have only to tell us about it, we shall at the cost of our very lives set it right and restore your mind. When you have such heroes obedient as we are, to correct anyone, however high and mighty, it is not proper for you to give vent to grief. Inform us the reason and command us what to do”, they prayed.

Dharmaraja replied: “What can I tell you, dear brothers? I see ominous things all around. From the homes of ordinary citizens to the hermitages of the saints and sages, wherever my eye falls, I see only inauspiciousness,

ill-fortune, and the negation of joy. I argued within myself that this was only the result of my warped imagination and I tried my best to muster up courage and confidence. I did not like to fall a prey to my fears. But I could not succeed. Recollecting the scenes made my fear even more fearsome.

“To aggravate the sadness, I saw some scenes that are contrary to established morals and Dharma. Not only did they come to my actual notice, the Courts of Justice in this kingdom have been receiving petitions and pleas regarding wrongs, injustices, iniquities and misdeeds, which make me grieve deeply.

“I saw some situations which were even worse. Last evening, when I was returning after a tour of the kingdom, I saw a mother cow refusing to nurse and feed her newborn calf! This is quite strange and contrary to nature. I saw some women wantonly loitering in the bazaar. I hoped that they would rush into their homes when they saw me; but no. It did not happen so. They had no reverence for authority. They went on as if I was not in the picture. They continued to talk without restraint to the men folk. I saw all this with my own eyes. I simply proceeded further from that horrid place.

“Very near the Raj Bhavan, when I was about to enter it, I perceived a Brahmin selling milk and curds! I saw people emerging out of their houses and closing the doors behind them. I found them fixing some iron lump to them, so that they may not be opened! (The reference is, evidently, to locks which were strange things in Dharmaraja’s kingdom for no one had any fear of thieves). My mind was very much concerned with all these tragic transformations.

“I tried to forget this state of affairs and so started doing the Evening Rituals, the sacred rite of offering oblations to the consecrated fire

and shall I tell you what happened? The fire could not be lit, however hard I tried. Oh, what a calamity it was! My fears that these events foreboded some great catastrophe is fed by other happenings too. They are confirming my premonitions every minute. I find myself too weak to overcome them. Perhaps the Kali Yuga has begun or is about to begin, I believe.

“For, how else are we to explain such facts as this: a wife has quarrelled with her husband and is arguing before the judge in court that she should be permitted to go to her parents, leaving him to himself. How am I to face such a plea in court that she should be permitted to dissolve the marriage and leave for her parents’ home, deserting her husband? A petition from such a wife was admitted yesterday in the Court of Justice! How am I to ignore such abominations?

“Why go on recounting these occurrences? Yesterday, the horses in the royal stables started weeping, did you hear? They were shedding copious tears, the syces reported. Sahadeva tried to investigate the causes of their deep sorrow; but he could not discover why and he was struck with wonder and consternation. These are indications of wholesale destruction, not of any minor danger or small evil.” Dharmaraja placed his chin on his upright arm and rested a while in deep thought.

Bhima did not give way to despair. He laughed a scornful laugh and began: “The incidents and events you mention might have happened. I do not deny them. But how can they bring disaster to us? Why should we give up all hope? All these abnormalities can be set right by administrative measures and their enforcement. It is really surprising that you are so worried about these small matters which can be corrected by us. Or, is it the imminent breaking out of another war, that you fear?

Perhaps you are anxious to avoid the ravages that the revival of war might bring about. That contingency is impossible. For, all our foes have been exterminated, with their kith and kin. Only we five are left, and we have to seek for friends and foes only among ourselves. Rivalry will not break out among us, even in our dreams. Then, what agitates you? I cannot understand why you are afflicted. People will laugh at you when you take these little things to heart and lose peace of mind”. Bhima said this, and changing his mighty mace from the right hand to the left, he laughed a laugh which was half a jeer.

To this Dharmaraja replied: “I have the same discrimination and intelligence that you have, in these matters. Nor have I an iota of dread that enemies will overpower us. Have we not defeated the renowned warriors, Bhishma, Drona and the rest who could singly and with but one arrow destroy the three worlds? What can any foe do to us? And, what can agitate us who were bearing even the direst calamities with fortitude. How can any difference arise between us now, who stood so firm in the days of distress?

“Perhaps you suspect that I am afraid of anything happening to me, personally. No, I shall never be agitated by anything that might happen to me, for, this body is a bubble upon the waters, it is a composite of the five elements waiting to be dissolved back into its components. The dissolution must happen some day; it is bound to fail, to fall, to fester, to be reduced to ash or mud. I do not pay heed to its fate.

“My only worry is of one particular matter. I shall disclose it to you, without any attempt to conceal the seriousness. Listen. It is now more or less seven months since our brother Arjuna left for Dwaraka. Yet, we have not heard anything about the welfare and well-being of

the Lord of Dwaraka. He has not sent any messenger or message regarding, at least, his reaching Dwaraka. Of course, I am not worried in the least about Arjuna and his reaching or not reaching Dwaraka. I know that no foe can stand up against him. Moreover, if anything untoward had happened to him, certainly, Sri Krishna would have sent the information to us; of this there is no doubt. So, I am confident that there is no reason to be nervous about him.

“Let me confess that it is about the Lord Himself that I am feeling worried. With every passing minute, anxiety is increasing. My heart is suffering unbearable agony. I am overwhelmed by the fear that He may leave this world and resume His permanent abode. What greater reason can there be for sorrow?

“If this catastrophe has actually come about, I shall not continue to rule over this land, widowed by the disappearance of the Master. For us Pandavas, Vaasudeva was all our five vital airs put together; when He departs, we are but corpses, devoid of vitality. If the Lord is upon the earth, such ominous signs dare not reveal themselves. Injustice and iniquity can have free play only when He is absent. I have no doubt about this. My conscience is clear about it; something tells me that this is the truth.”

When Dharmaraja asserted thus, the brothers fell into the depth of grief. They lost all trace of courage. Bhima was the first who recovered sufficiently to speak! He mustered some courage, in spite of the wave of sadness that smothered him. He said, “For the reason that Arjuna has not returned or that we have not heard from him, you should not picture such a dire calamity and start imagining catastrophe. There must be some other reason for Arjuna's silence; or else, Krishna Himself might have neglected to inform us. Let

us wait, seek further light; let us not yield to the fantasies that a nervous mind might weave. Let us not clothe them with the vesture of truth. I am encouraged to speak like this, for, one's nervousness is often capable of shaping such fears”.

But Dharmaraja was in no mood to accept this. He replied: “Whatever you say, however skilfully you argue, I feel that my interpretation is correct. Or else, how can such an idea arise in my mind? My left shoulder is registering a shiver, see. This is a sign confirming my fear that this has actually happened. You know it is a bad omen, if the left shoulder shivers for men and the right, for women. Now, this thing has taken place in my body, and it is a bad omen. Not merely the shoulder, the entire being – mind, body, intelligence – all are in a shiver. My eyes grow dim and I am fast losing vision. I see the world as an orphan, having been deprived of its Guardian and Lord. I have lost the faculty of hearing. My legs are shaking helplessly. My limbs have been petrified. They have no life in them.

“What greater proof do you need to assert that the Lord has left? Believe me, dear brothers. Even if you do not, facts will not change. The earth is shaking under our feet. Do you not hear the eerie noises emanating from the agonised heart of the earth? Tanks and lakes are shaken into waves. The sky, air, fire, and waters and the earth all moaning their fate, for they have lost their Master.

“How many more evidences do you need to get convinced? News came some days back of showers of blood that rained in some parts of our kingdom.”

Hearing these words, streams of tears coursed down the cheeks of Nakula and Sahadeva, even as they stood before their brother. Their hearts were struck with pain; they could not stand, for their legs failed them.

To Hislap.

12.11.71.

at 9 A.M.

To try to meditate, to try to become quiet,
to try to relax. Keep trying. Every positive effort
that you make is not in vain. Every single
brick added to a temple made of bricks
brings that temple closer to completion.
So keep trying and one day all of a sudden
you will pierce the lower realms of your
mind and enter into Contemplation
and you will be able to say: "Yes, I know,
I have seen, now I know fully the path that
I am on". Keep trying. You have to start
somewhere. The self you cannot speak of,
you can only try to think about it,
if you care to, in one way: feel your mind,
body and emotions, and know.

With Blessings

Bah

12. 11. 71
at 9 A.M.

To Hislop

To try to meditate, to try to become quiet, to try to relax. Keep trying. Every positive effort that you make is not in vain. Every single brick added to a temple made of bricks brings that temple closer to completion. So keep trying and one day all of a sudden you will pierce the lower realms of your mind and enter into contemplation and you will be able to say: "Yes, I know, I have seen, now I know fully the path that I am on". Keep trying. You have to start somewhere. The self you cannot speak of, you can only try to think about it, if you care to, in one way: feel your mind, body and emotions, and know.

With Blessings
Baba

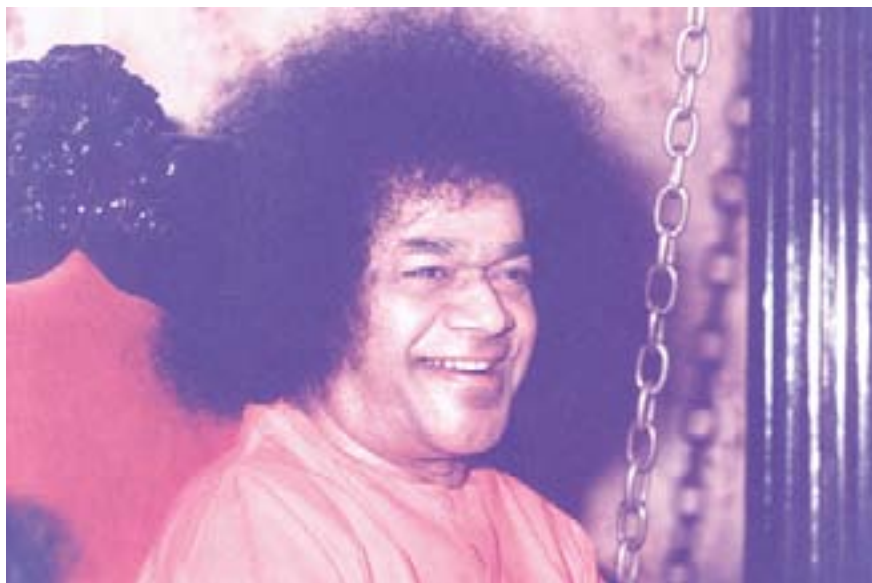
MY EXPERIENCES WITH BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA*

Dr. Goteti Saraswati

AFTER VISITING THE HOUSE OF Kolluri Somasekhara Sastri, Swami went to Rajamahendravaram. They don't generally allow vehicles on the anicut after 6 p.m. They kept it open for Swami. I got into the car with just the clothes I was wearing. No

have seen my altar, my Krishna there. There used to be a gold chain around Krishna's neck, with a large Omkaram locket. I wondered if someone had taken it when we were running around. But this matter should not be publicised because people who had come there were

very eminent persons. So, I told him, "Yes I brought it along". He replied, "Oh! That's a relief! There was so much chaos at home over the chain vanishing from Krishna's neck. Volunteers, their children, had all come to Madam's house. All of them were feeling bad". So, I told him, "I brought the chain along. Don't talk about it anymore to anyone". That was finished.



There, they had done a Yajna in Kasi Visweswara

bath. No brush. No change of clothes. How could I freshen up in the morning? Just like our Seenu, there was another boy called Verri. This boy got on a bus and arrived there early in the morning. "I have brought clothes, toothpaste, and brush for Madam," said the boy.

The Story of the Lost Chain

"Please come this way," the boy said. "What happened?" I asked. "Did you bring along the chain in Krishna's neck?" he asked. You might

temple for three days. Swami got that Yajna done by Sri Sathyam. After that Swami was to go to Razole. At Kadali, He was to go to Sri Kamavadhani's house. And from there, to Seetharam Babu's house at Razole. The date was 5th April 1965. He had not spoken to us. My brother had come in the morning with the car. Swami told him, "Lingamurthy, you have come in the morning. You had called someone for tonsil operation. The patient has come. You go and finish that tonsil operation. Start again

* Continued from June 2021 issue.

in the afternoon tomorrow; don't come in the morning." He finished that tonsil operation and came by car in the afternoon. Swami told us, "I will travel in your car to Razole". He gave us that opportunity once again. "I did not speak to you at Amalapuram, I did not speak to you here either. So many days have passed. Come, I will speak to you," He said. He sat on the bed. My brother and I were at His feet. He conversed on so many matters. My brother was making some gestures whispering, "Sister, ask Him". "Keep quiet." I signed back. Swami asked, "What is Lingamurthy saying"? "Nothing, Swami." After some time, Swami said, "Assume Krishna's chain is gone. Why create such a big scene"? Then, my brother got the courage to speak up, since Swami had opened the subject. He asked, "Who might have taken it, Swami"? "Why should you bother who has taken it?" Swami asked. "The chain will return just as it went. No need to worry." After conversing with everyone, He left at 5 p.m.

Once again, the one way traffic at Dowleswaram. After waiting for the traffic, we proceeded. Swami was in our car. Gogineni Venkateswara Rao's car alone remained there. The other cars had already gone to Razole. Swami was seated in our car. After Dowleswaram, we have to turn this way and then that way. There is a village Lolla Lakulu. We reached the road beyond that. Under the trees there, Swami said, "Yes! It has come"! "What has come?" I asked. My brother immediately stopped the car and asked Swami, "Swami, has the chain come back to Krishna's neck"? That was what he had in his mind. I was not thinking of that chain. "Lingamurthy, you keep worrying about it. All right. It will come now," He said. He waved His hand and took out the chain! Swami told us the chain's story as we came. We asked, "Swami, when did they take it"? "You were talking about Prasadam.

Lingamurthy was in the car. Whom did you assign to keep guard for the rear stairs?" He asked. Yes, nobody was there. Everybody was elsewhere. Someone had taken it along the rear stairs, it seems. We asked, "Where has it come from? "Nowhere else – it came from the house of the person who took it," He said. "What do you mean, Swami?" Swami explained, "He took the chain and buried it in the coconut grove, keeping a brick on top. Then when my brother asked when it would return, Swami said, "You don't have patience". He waved His hand, and brought it out shaking off the dust from it. Later, He narrated this incident to Sri Anil Kumar and said, "I had to put My hand to take it out from there because he had put the chain so deep inside. This is the chain"! He gave it to me and said, "Now put this around your neck. Don't take it off. Is Krishna only in that idol? He is also in you, in him, in everyone. You are Krishna. Put this on". On that road, after we passed Lolla Lakulu, He gave me this Omkaram locket.

The Bliss of Divine Proximity

When Swami was in our house, He was like one of us, our very own, asking when He felt like drinking coffee or talking about not drinking coffee. How much love He gives, I cannot describe in words. In our house, Swami would be freer than ourselves. His love is indescribable during such moments.

Since we had to go to Sri Kamavadhani's house, as we went along, Swami kept singing songs, poems. It is indescribable! I did not know the way to Kamavadhani's house. On the way, I asked someone, "Where is Kamavadhani's house"? "Keep quiet! I will tell you where the house is. Don't ask anyone," said Swami. "I won't ask," I said. We went straight to Kamavadhani's house, stayed there for some time and returned to the main road. Then He went to Gogineni Venkateswara

Rao's house at night. We were very well known to his grandmother, from young age. His grandmother loved us so much. She would treat me like her daughter. She said, "Both of you eat first". So, we ate. Later, Swami spoke to everyone, and after dinner, it was 11 or 12 at night, when we left their house.

In 1969, Swami moved through the entire East Godavari district. He went to 9-10 villages per day. By the time, He would return home, all that red dust covered Him like make-up. In 1969, he stayed one whole day and night. The next day, after breakfast in the morning, He spoke to devotees about Vedanta and so on. He would decide to whose houses He had to go. There was the house of Vijay Sai. They thought that He would come earlier, in 1965. My brother said, "Swami, the poor fellows are clamouring for You to visit their house. Please do". In 1965, He did not go. So, He went to their house in 1969. Something happened at their house. Keeping some clothes for Swami on a silver platter, they came out. I did not know whether Swami had blessed the clothes or not, since I was waiting in the car. Swami would tell me not to come in; He would go and return. They gave me that platter. Since it might have come from Swami, I took it. Swami came later and started scolding me! "Have you come here for grabbing these things? Did I tell you to take these things? Why did you take it?" It was a sudden outburst! "What do I know? Since You had been to their house,

and they brought it out, I thought You had sent it." I replied. "Do you think I take such things? Why did you accept it?" He asked. "I will not accept any more. Please forgive me." I said, and sat there with my mouth shut. We returned after lunch. Starting at 4 p.m., we came near a building at Bandarulanka.

N. Raju's mother had put up a Shamiana and a small platform in that place. When Swami got down there and went up to her, she said, "God has come to my house". There is a tree near the temple with a platform. Swami sang Nandalala there and made me also sing near that tree. After that, Swami had to go to Gannavaram. Devotees there thought: "We won't trouble Swami, we will come to the road". Everyone came up to the road. There, one devotee and his wife came up to Swami. Swami asked, "Yes, what do you want"? He said, "I want a son, Swami". "You want a son? All right. He will be born", Swami replied. That child turned out to be a son Sai Prasad. In this way, Swami satisfied the desires of people everywhere. As we reached Gannavaram aqueduct, I told Him, "I have become alone now. Swami, I will return". He agreed. Balaji's family received Swami and took Him to Razole taluk in 1969.

(To be continued...)

– The author, a gynaecologist by profession, was a devotee of Bhagavan for over five decades.

The mind should be filled with the nectar of pure love, not the poison of carnal desires. Only then can you experience real happiness. Every human being should try to understand how he has to change and correct himself and what he has to accomplish in this world. After knowing this, he should conduct himself accordingly. Only then can he realise true humanness.

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA IS ALWAYS WITHIN US

Dr. V. Balamohandas

DON'T CLAIM TO be a regular visitor to Prasanthi Nilayam, but I am a strong believer of Bhagavan Baba and His teachings. I try to practise what Bhagavan has preached and use His quotes, sayings, small stories, etc., in my lectures in the classroom and outside meetings. Help Ever – Hurt Never has been my life mission. His idol on a royal chair is part of the Puja Mandir in our home. I do my prayers in my morning walk, chanting the names of all gods and goddesses including Sri Sathya Sai. I feel that I am privileged and blessed to be invited to contribute this article.

A School Dropout Becomes Vice Chancellor

Before I list my experiences associated with Bhagavan Baba, I wish to briefly mention about myself. I was born in a middle class rural family with beliefs in spirituality and one of my parents offered regular Puja to the Almighty. I was exposed to the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas and Vedic stories from my childhood by my maternal grandmother and my father. My father was engaged in small business activities and had



a hobby of rendering Harikatha on invitations of cultural organisations. Sometimes, I used to accompany him and enjoy listening to the various spiritual stories. Being in a remote rural area in the childhood, my formal education up to my fifth class was not at all good. I was admitted to high school in a semi-urban town where the bad company of friends led me to get into the bad habits of collecting empty cigarette packets and playing on tamarind trees, bunking regular classes. Noticed by my father and subjected to discontinuation of studies as a punishment resulted in my being a school dropout at sixth class itself – those days, it was called First Form. I was made to assist in household work, rearing cattle and

so on for almost three years. Thanks to my elder brother's help, I was put under special coaching for Andhra Matriculation under the able mentorship of an occasionally practising advocate, who helped me to get through the examination in just eleven months. Since then, I did not look back and had an excellent college studies with ranks and university level postgraduate with State Government merit scholarship, securing second rank. Invited to join the teaching faculty of Andhra University immediately after my PG in 1968 by my teachers, I had the fortune of becoming a teacher to my juniors and even some of my classmates at graduation level. The Almighty blessed me to obtain Ph.D. and to reach higher echelons, becoming the Youngest Professor of India in July 1978 when I was selected as a Professor at the age of 31 years. Becoming the Vice Chancellor of Acharya Nagarjuna University in 2005 for a three year tenure was another milestone blessed by Bhagavan. A school dropout became a Vice Chancellor! I did my best there thanks to the continued blessings of the Almighty. Post superannuation, though retired, I am not tired. The AICTE and the UGC have given me the opportunity of being the Emeritus Professor for a total period of four years.

My Association with Bhagavan's Mission of Love and Service

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been the spiritual guide of crores of people all over the world. Born as Rathnakaram Sathyanarayana Raju, He declared at the age of fourteen years that He was the reincarnation of Shirdi Sai Baba, He left home to serve society and be an example to His followers. A small Ashram started by Him at remote Puttaparthi village, has now developed into world renowned Prasanthi Nilayam with three wings – Spirituality, Service

and Education, having more than 1,200 Sathya Sai Centres in 126 countries. Though not physically with us now, He is the guiding force for all of us. His followers are spread over 178 countries. Bhagavan Himself stated – “I have a Task: To foster all mankind and ensure for all of them lives full of bliss. I have a Vow: To lead all who stray away from the straight path, again into goodness and save them. I am attached to a Work that I love: To remove the sufferings of the poor and grant them what they lack. I have a reason to be proud, for I rescue all who worship and adore Me”. All of us have been witness to the grand manner in which His vision has taken shape. The world class super speciality hospitals that offer tertiary level medical care free of charge, schools, colleges and university level institutions that impart values-based education, the mammoth drinking water supply projects and so many numerous other service projects undertaken by Him and His devotees stand as testimony to His selfless Love and Compassion for humanity. The Sathya Sai Avatar has heralded a golden era of Divinity in the history of mankind and His devotees continue His mission of Love and Service. Now I present hereunder my experiences with His Divine Love and Blessings at different times.

- The best introduction I had about Baba was from Sri I. Ranganayakulu, Principal of the famous S.S.N. College, Narasaraopet, where I had my P.U.C. and B.Com. What I am today and what I could do in my teacher-administrative career are the result of the disciplined instruction I derived from my teachers there and the wisdom of the Principal Sri Ranganayakulu. He told us in several meetings about Baba's concepts of Love and Service. These ideas were planted by him not only in me but in several

students and teachers. As a Syndicate member of the Andhra University, he used to visit the university campus several times and whenever he went, he never missed to meet his alumni studying at the university. To my luck, I was on the faculty after I finished my PG there. I had several occasions to meet him. In all his meetings, he invariably used to mention about Sri Sathya Sai. Sri Ranganayakulu, after his superannuation, stayed all through his life serving Baba, effectively discharging his duties as the Correspondent of the Schools at Prasanthi Nilayam until his passing away.

- My first Darshan of Sri Sathya Sai Baba was at Whitefield, Bengaluru in 1976 when I took my Ph.D. viva voce examination conducted by a committee consisting of my Research Supervisor, Professor K.V. Sivayya of Andhra University and the external Indian examiner of my dissertation, Professor O.R. Krishna Swamy, Dean of Commerce, Bangalore University. Professor Krishna Swamy was an ardent devotee of Sri Sathya Sai. During the course of the viva voce, he mentioned about Baba and asked me whether I knew anything about Baba, apart from the research study. I mentioned about my association with Sri I. Ranganayakulu. After the completion of the viva voce, my teacher Professor Sivayya and I proceeded to Whitefield, knowing that Baba was camping there. We were part of the thousands that assembled there to have Darshan and listen to Baba. That was the first time I was so much impressed about His Mission of Love and Service.
- I was invited for an official meeting by Sri Krishnadevaraya University in 1978 after I became a Professor at Andhra University. The then HOD of the Commerce Department

of SKU was Dr. T. Subbi Reddy, who happened to be my Junior at M.Com and my student in his final year. We were good friends and at his suggestion I made my trip to Anantapur with my wife Vasantha on the condition that he will take us to Puttaparthi for Darshan of Baba. To my surprise, I came to know that he was not believing Sri Sathya Sai while his wife Anila (niece of President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy) was a devotee of Baba. We made our trip to Puttaparthi as promised by him. But he was sitting in his car for all the three hours while we three were listening to Baba's preachings. This is the second time I had the Darshan of Baba in close proximity. I wish to mention here a surprising development that happened in Dr. Subbi Reddy's life. In just two years' time later, he became an ardent devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and whenever we talked on phone, the first thing that was discussed was about Baba's service projects.

- My students at PG – R. Kumar Bhaskar and P. Subbarao, joined as the faculty at Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. While Subbarao joined later SKU, Kumar Bhaskar continued his teaching career until his superannuation. I had academic assignments from SSSIHL for paper setting and evaluation of MBA for almost 15 years until my superannuation. Prof. Nanjundaiah, the Controller of Examinations then, was the direct link for us. I always considered these assignments as the blessing of the Avatar.
- Since I became the Professor at a very young age, I had the privilege of associating with the academic assignments of over 95 universities in the country. In one of such assignments at Madras University, I met Dr. K. Hanumanthappa, Reader at Bangalore University in 1982. I was hardly 35 years

old, while he was in his fifties. I came to know that he was an alumnus of Andhra University long ago. We became very good friends both academically and personally. He was an ardent devotee of Sri Sathya Sai and our conversations naturally started with Sai Ram. Dr. Hanumanthappa became the Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University, and immediately after completing his tenure there, Baba blessed him to become the Vice Chancellor of SSSIHL.

Proximity with Bhagavan's Devotees

- When we were looking for a bridegroom for my daughter, Sandhya, one of my friends suggested an alliance from Vijayawada. They sent the photograph of the boy for our consideration. We were surprised to find that the photo of the groom was the one which was taken along with Sri Sathya Sai Baba. My daughter keeps Baba's photo in her bedroom. She started saying that she decided to marry this boy only as she felt that Baba is telling her to marry the boy. We invited the family. The boy's mother is Smt. Kamala Kumari, former Principal of Government College, Palakol. She was actively associated with Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas. They came to see my daughter on my 50th Birthday (15th August 1997). We were not interested in knowing their financial status since we were told that the boy had his education from 8th class onwards up to MBA in Sri Sathya Sai institutions. What else one wants? A groom endowed with values of Baba for so many years and even his placement at City Bank, Chennai was His Divine blessings. Their only condition was that all of us should go to Prasanthi Nilayam and if Baba blesses the bride, it would be confirmed.
- We reached together and were waiting in separate enclosures in Sai Kulwant Hall. Sri Sathya Sai, in His usual way, was walking through the devotees. He crossed the place where my wife, the boy's mother and my daughter were sitting. My daughter was holding the silk Sari and the gold Mangala Sutra in her hands. After crossing them, walking a little away, suddenly He turned and came back and blessed my daughter, touching the Sari and the gold chain. The marriage was performed on 25th December 1997. The boy named Katta Bhaskar, a Bank Executive in a senior cadre in Australia, invariably visits Prasanthi Nilayam in his every visit to India and is associated with Seva organisations too in his own way.
- My three years tenure as the Vice Chancellor of Acharya Nagarjuna University, thanks to the blessings of Sri Sathya Sai, brought me name and fame in academic circles as well as the University area of Guntur, Krishna and Prakasam districts. I had the fortune of addressing the Sai devotees of Guntur several times.
- I wish to mention a special incident that happened in my travel with my wife from Visakhapatnam to Guntur by Prasanthi Express to take charge as Vice Chancellor. The usual practice is when I am on travel, I wear Swami's Vibhuti. During this journey, we noticed that we forgot to take Vibhuti at my house. We were talking among ourselves about this and to our surprise a foreigner woman co-traveller (belonging to an African country) offered a Vibhuti packet stating that Sri Sathya Sai Baba had ordered her to pass on this Vibhuti to us. We felt it was a direct blessing from Baba.
 - **The author is former Vice Chancellor of Acharya Nagarjuna University and AICTE Emeritus Fellow at Andhra University.**

SWAMI IN MY LIFE

V. Janaki Ram Pai

IT WAS IN DECEMBER 1967 THAT I HAD my first Darshan of our Beloved Swami. The venue was the Durbar Hall Grounds in Ernakulam, where a huge crowd had gathered to have a glimpse of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The



two-acred ground was heavily barricaded to control the crowd which included both believers as well as non-believers. Melodious devotional songs were being sung while the people were eagerly waiting to see Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Suddenly, Swami appeared and

moved slowly among the people. I could not believe my eyes at the sight of His graceful frail figure, with hallowed crown of black hair and a bewitching radiant smile, captivating the audience. Immediate nearness to Him had the mesmerising effect on me which I could not resist. Let me confess my inability to describe Him, knowing fully well that any attempt I might make, could neither be complete nor perfect, yet these expressions are only a genuine effort to describe my understanding of the glory of the Lord who was standing before me. Just as a magnet draws iron filings towards it, I felt attracted to His Lotus Feet, as most of His devotees are, for sheer joy of His Darshan, Sparshan and Sambashan (vision, touch and conversation).

My first visit to Prasanthi Nilayam took place in 1971. Looking back, I now realise that the trip was made possible by Him only as nobody in my family wanted to go to Puttaparthi. However, by His grace no untoward incident happened and we reached Puttaparthi safely, though later on we came to know that the areas we passed through were infested with dacoits. And who could it be other than our Beloved Swami to ensure our safety!

A Blissful Interview

In those days, the crowds were thinner as compared to those of the later years. We attended the heavenly and soothing morning Bhajan session and then waited till around 3.30 p.m. for the interview session when Baba came out and walked among the people seated along the passages across the length and breadth of the entire packed area. Only

a few people were selected by Him for the personal audience. When I tried to get up, Swami patted on my shoulder and made me sit. At that point of time, I don't remember what passed through my mind. I felt as if He had abandoned me. Only He could know my agony and disappointment at being denied the interview. However, the merciful Lord never forsakes His devotees! Next day, when He selected me for the interview, my joy knew no bounds. Any material gift from Him might have lost its sheen by familiarity and proximity. He blessed me with in this most cherished interview. In the interview room, Swami kept looking at me for some time mischievously. Being closest to the Lord Himself physically, I burst into tears, not knowing what to do. Even today I have no words to describe my feelings when the all-merciful Lord took me in His arms and caressing me with motherly love consoled me and directed me to engage in Namasmara always. This lifetime blessing was His gift to me and even today after about 50 years, I relive every moment of that auspicious day.

Swami's Leelas During Festivals

During one of our subsequent visits, we happened to be at Prasanthi Nilayam on Guru Purnima day when Swami gave a spoonful of Amrit to devotees in Darshan lines, pouring it into their cupped palms, surprisingly, all the while without ever refilling the silver container.

Swami inspires His devotees to seek and individually experience His Leelas when time ushers in new meanings, interpretations and answers which get ingrained in us. At some point of time, He takes over our life, marking the end of our fear and anxiety. Baba has said, "You cannot understand My reality either today or even after thousands of years of austerity and inquiry even if all mankind joins in the effort".

On return from Prasanthi Nilayam after Guru Purnima, there was no rest, but a keen longing to attend the forthcoming grand Navaratri festival, which would be celebrated in the Divine Presence of our Beloved Swami. The festivities would go on for over nine days and it was a golden chance to be with Him. Prasanthi Nilayam was reverberating with soul-stirring Bhajans, led by Sri Raja Reddy, Sri Mohan Rao and Smt. Vijaya. The spiritually heightened atmosphere was surcharged by Swami's Divine Presence. Vedic hymns were being chanted by the priests. Yajnasala was set up on the stage in the auditorium and the fire required for the Yajna was produced in the traditional way by rubbing one piece of wood on another. Lost in this blissful heavenly atmosphere, we nearly lost sight of Swami offering Poornahuti in the sacrificial fire along with a stream of precious stones, which flowed from His palm.

Next year, we were there, again for the Sivarathri festival. Thanks to His blessings, we could witness Him performing the Vibhuti Abhishekam of the silver idol of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba which was an awesome miracle to behold. Sri Kasturi, a staunch devotee, held an urn upside down. As Swami thrust His arm into the vessel and churned, Vibhuti started flowing incessantly. Again, He repeated the action with the other arm causing an outpour of Vibhuti. To everybody's surprise, the flow stopped as soon as He took out His arm. Vibhuti was much more than the vessel could possibly contain. It was a revelation beyond the realm of science.

In the evening, in the presence of thousands of devotees who had gathered there in front of Santhi Vedika, our Beloved Swami, after frequent hiccups and sipping water now and then, brought out a crystal Lingam from His

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Mesmerising Moments with the Divine Master*

Rani Subramanian

MY DAUGHTER ONCE ASKED Swami a question: “Swami, You have been so good to our family; we want the same grace always; how can we continue receiving Your grace”? He used to call us very often for interviews, and would come and talk to us in our rooms. It was very special. Swami replied, “You see, you are not getting grace by coming to Puttaparthi or having My Darshan; but, if you hold on to My teachings, you will get Sampurna Kripa (complete grace). Hold on to My teachings and not to Me”.

You see, if we are sad, despondent, and upset, we cannot do our best – Sadhana-wise. He said, “You must have a cheerful and happy feeling all the time to do anything, and you must get inspiration to do that. When you get inspiration, you feel good. That is very necessary – always”!

Awakening the Inner Guru

In another interview in Prasanthi Nilayam, I had asked, “Swami, I don’t do any work for Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi in Chennai; is it right or wrong? As Your devotee, should I go and offer my services”? He replied, “Sathya Sai! Sathya Sai! You have not understood Me, Rani Maa! I am not just Sathya Sai. The whole world is Me. Wherever you do good work, it reaches Me! It is high time you realised it. Why do you limit Me to Sathya Sai only? Be wherever you want to be; but do good work. Wherever you are and whomsoever you do the good work for – Rama, Krishna or whatever – it does not matter at all. It will reach Me only”.

* Continued from July 2021 issue.



So, these are all very profound matters. People limit Him to His physical body which He is now trying to change. See, that is why we get disappointed. We feel “Oh! Swami did not talk to me”! Swami says, “One who has understood that I am Antarayami (the indweller) is really wise”. “I am listening. Don’t you believe it”? He asks. Though we don’t hear His voice, He is listening alright. When we are ready for Him, He will talk to us from inside. So many devotees have got that experience. It is up to us to work up to that stage of consciousness: “Follow Me implicitly. All the time, be aware of My presence everywhere so that you will not hurt anybody. When you are aware of My presence, I will start working through you and make you do the right thing”. Suppose I feel like being rude to somebody or I am not in the right frame of mind, before I actually react, my second thought will be: “No!

Mind your own business; do not say anything; be quiet”!

Swami has said: “The closer you are, the more distant I will become physically”! That is one of His signs. Baba says. “When I am close to you in the spirit, I will be very distant to you in the body because you have recognised My true nature. That is what I have come for. My main Mission is to awaken the inner Guru. It starts with the outside Guru, but the outside Guru leads you to the inner Guru”.

That is the purpose of Swami’s Mission! Being a Guru, it is His duty to lead you to that. He has not come to give you worldly things! He is removing you from the world. He is giving all that to you because you are not yet ready for what He really wants to give you. Gradually, He will bring about disappointments. And when you will get fed up, He will give you all sorts of experiences and you will say: “Oh! I don’t want these things; I am not getting anything out of all that”. That state of mind He will surely bring. He will make things very difficult for you in the world. So, you will not start liking the world. You will think: “I better get away from all this Samsara (worldly life)”!

That is one indirect way of teaching us Jnana (wisdom). The world cannot give us anything. Only sorrows, problems and disappointments. Why am I after it? These thoughts have to come from within. Swami will give everything we ask for, but the world cannot give us peace. If we think that the world can give us peace, that is ignorance. The world cannot give us peace is Jnana (wisdom).

If you have understood that, it is enough; then you should start to work on it. Swami had once told us: “You don’t have to read too much. Read whatever is necessary for inspiration”. He forbade us to read too many books. He instead said: “Different authors will only confuse you with their contradictions. Great philosophical and intellectual discussions are

of no use. If you want to read, read the lives of saints – Christian saints or Muslim saints or Hindu saints. They have gone on the path; they have done the spiritual journey; their path is very clear; they have known the pitfalls and the obstacles. Their life will indicate all the problems to you and how they ultimately came to be a good example”. So, while Swami has been constantly guiding us, we have to practise as much as we can. But I find that this path is difficult and we have a long way to go.

Prasanthi Nilayam – the Abode of Eternal Peace

I was once engaged in a conversation with a lady at Prasanthi Nilayam. She said her reason for coming to Puttaparthi was to be healthy. However, she was very dissatisfied with what she had received. I said, “You aren’t recognising what you are receiving here! Swami is giving you health – spiritual health”! He has promised peace that surpasses all understanding; peace that one derives from divine love. Such peace is permanent, unshaken by circumstances. This is not any temporary peace that makes you happy when somebody is kind to you and unhappy when he/she is not.

The same truth is recorded in our ancient scriptures. In the Bhagavadgita, the Lord said, “He is My true devotee who transcends the pairs of opposites” that is, one who is unaffected by the duality of good and bad, honour and dishonour. One must not pay heed to these because they exist in the realm of delusion. Swami says, “You are all in slumber, I have come to wake you up”!

Once He said to me: “Rani Maa, as far as I am concerned, there is no problem. Problem is an error in perception; you are seeing something that is unreal. You are above problems, but you are not realising this fact because you have not reached that state of consciousness yet. You are therefore day dreaming that you are

the body. All your experiences contribute only to your body consciousness. You are judging every experience from the level of the body. Swami has not descended to help us with problems related to your body consciousness. Tomorrow a certain illness or tragedy may befall you – it, however, belongs to your body consciousness”.

It is delusion or what we refer to in Sanskrit as Maya or Moha. What is this illusion or attachment that Swami alludes to? It is nothing but ignorance that happiness and sadness are related to our real self. It is this ignorance that Swami has come to uproot. He is an Avatara Purusha (divine incarnation); He is not like other Gurus. Once Swami told a group of devotees including me, “Don’t think that by coming to Puttaparthi, you are going to be very happy. But if you secure your victory here, you can go to any part of the world and nothing will ever disturb you. Lord Krishna gave the immortal message of the Bhagavadgita on the battlefield because life is a battle. And when you are victorious in battle, what do you get? Peace! Similarly, when you transcend the difficulties here with equanimity gained by the knowledge of who you really are and what the world really is, you will receive that permanent peace which I have come to give.” This is why He named it ‘Prasanthi Nilayam’ – the abode of everlasting peace.

Many years ago, my daughter’s mother-in-law wanted to settle down in Prasanthi Nilayam. She had become a devotee only after meeting us, and in a subsequent interview with Swami, she happened to be present. On that occasion, she expressed to Swami her wish to reside in Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami, then asked, “Why do you want to stay here? You have two sons, live with them. Who will take care of you here”? She replied, “Swami, here, I get peace”.

But Swami said, “No, no! There is no peace here. Do you know where peace is? It is in the inner self. Prasanthi Nilayam will help you struggle righteously to achieve that peace. Struggle is needed here as well. It is not as if once you come to Prasanthi Nilayam, everything in your life gets sorted out automatically. You have to work on yourself with your knowledge. Swami gives you that wisdom; but you have to practise it. It is similar to going to a school or college where the teacher teaches you but doesn’t do the work for you”.

Know that He is the Divine Master. The purpose of His advent is not to give us paltry things though He will give us whatever we desire. He once told me, “Rani Maa, I will give you whatever you ask for, but that will not give you peace. If you want peace, ask for peace itself; leave the rest to Me. Say, ‘God, I want permanent peace, I don’t want anything else’. That is surrender. True surrender is when you don’t want anything other than peace. You run after so many things – money, position, power, etc., because you think they will grant you peace. But despite this, you are perturbed. This is because Jnana (wisdom) is missing”.

That is why Swami calls the Ashram at Puttaparthi ‘Prasanthi Nilayam’ and not ‘Sri Sathya Sai Baba Ashram’. You have to make the effort, the Shrama. He can only help you and guide you to face the ups and downs effectively. All you have to do is ask Him for that guidance. He once warned me saying this will be difficult, and then added, “Don’t be scared. You pray to me: ‘Swami, don’t test me too hard, I may fail’. (How does He know my innermost prayers? I did not verbalise them anytime to Him!).

“Why are you so scared of the struggle? This is wrong. When I give you the challenge, I also give you the strength and wisdom to face it. You should say ‘Swami, test me as much

as you want, but give me victory'. When you are fighting a battle, what do you ask for? Do you say I want a gun, a sword and so on? You just say, I want victory! Therefore, ask for that peace."

You have come to Puttaparthi seeking that peace; so, ask for that peace. But being householders, something or the other keeps bothering us now and then, and we are forced to ask Swami to help us tide over those difficulties. Sometimes, Swami responds immediately to alleviate them, at other times He does not.

However, always ask for things that conform to Dharma or righteousness. Things which do not conform to this will not be entertained by Him at all. Even in the case of desires that are within the bounds of Dharma, He chooses whether the desire uplifts us or not because He is the Guru.

Once in an interview, He told us that whatever good you wish for, will be granted. But He decides the right time to grant our wishes, because He knows what is good for each of us, and knows our past, future and present. In the spiritual path, patience is a key requisite, so we should patiently wait for Swami to grant us our wishes.

I have a direct experience with respect to this. My husband was very reluctant to stay in Puttaparthi. He said that he could not relate to the place and wanted to leave the Ashram. During one visit, at the very last moment, in the evening, I said, "I will not leave Puttaparthi, and if you so wish, go and live with the children". I kept praying all night that it would be good for him to stay in Puttaparthi and imbibe His aura. I prayed to Swami saying that if He wanted to keep him here, He could; I completely surrendered the problem to Him. The next morning to my utter surprise, my husband said that he had decided to stay in Puttaparthi. He stayed in the Ashram till his last moments.

Leave the Results to Him

In the Bhagavadgita, it is said that you have only the right to act and not to the result. The result is in His hands and we don't control the result. So, the right thing to do is to leave the result to Him, so that He grants us the fruit of the action at the right moment.

The message that Swami conveys is this: "When you come to Puttaparthi, you will meet many people, some good and others bad. You might get a good place to stay for one day and an uncomfortable location the next day. But all these should not affect you. You have come to the Ashram for your inward journey. Do not look for peace outside. It is within you; so, look within. If you think there is peace freely available in Puttaparthi, it means you have not understood the subject. This is the Jnana, the knowledge that you should know".

Mind, sometimes, plays tricks on us but it is also helpful in acquiring wisdom. Therefore, we must train our mind. This is what is mentioned in Karma Yoga (the path of action). After mastering the mind, one can move to Jnana Yoga (the path of wisdom), and then to Bhakti Yoga (the path of devotion). Till then our devotion is not complete. Devotion is complete only when we have wisdom. This is pointed out in the Bhagavadgita as well. With Jnana (knowledge) you must perform Dhyana (meditation), and with Dhyana you must develop Phala Thyaga (renouncing the fruit of action).

Awakening our Conscience

Once in Whitefield, Swami said, "Rani Maa, I have come to awaken the inner Guru. Don't depend on the external Guru. Pray to me thus: 'Swami, please become my inner Guru. Tell me what I should do from inside and I will do it'. Then I will surely guide from within you". There should be no 'me' and 'my'. It should become Swami's completely. As soon as the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' arise, we enter the realm of ignorance in that instant.

Swami says, “There are to be no likes and dislikes. The duo of Raga and Dwesha (attachment and hatred) should be transcended”. Irrespective of whether someone is lovable or not, we must love everyone. We should understand that the person is acting ignorantly because of his/her body consciousness, and therefore, take pity on him/her as the one who has not yet understood the Atma principle. We must have compassion and pray for such people. We should understand that Swami is the indweller of every being, and therefore not hurt anyone.

We should not compare and judge people. By doing so, we are buying sorrow. When we take that path, even Swami will not help us because we are taking the wrong path. Once when I said to Him, “Swami, I want to be a good devotee”, He said, “It is very simple, all that you need to do is to obey Me. No books or scriptures can help. Only the Guru can take you through the spiritual path”. Obedience to the Guru is a very important trait in a spiritual aspirant. This can take a person very high. It should not be such that in some matters we obey Swami, and in others we take our own decisions. Surrender to Swami must be complete. He has promised us liberation if we practise this kind of surrender. Liberation is nothing but freedom from our body consciousness and ego. The feelings of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ constitute the ego.

The Bhajan Lesson

Two years after Swami moved to Prasanthi Nilayam, we were still in the Old Mandir and used to come to Prasanthi Nilayam for Bhajans. On one occasion, during the Bhajan session, He asked us to stop singing. I was sitting very close to Him. Looking at me, Swami asked, “Do you sing”? I replied in the affirmative, and added that I did not know Carnatic music and can sing only Hindustani. I was of the view that He liked only Thyagaraja Kirtans (based on

Carnatic music) and the like. But He said, “It doesn’t matter, you sing a Bhajan”. So, I began to sing a Bhajan that came to my mind at that moment.

The next day when I went, Swami wanted me to sing the same Bhajan again. The third day was no different. I was getting a bit frustrated of singing the same Bhajan because I was not paying heed to the meaning. So, I asked Swami in front of everyone, “Swami, I know many Bhajans, shall I sing another one”? He said, “No need! I want you to sing this Bhajan alone”. We can never understand Him of our own accord. He has to reveal Himself to us. Trying to understand Him is like counting the grains of sand on the beach.

After a few days, He called a few ladies upstairs to clean His room. About five of us went up and while I was busy cleaning, I heard Him sing, “Rama Nama Japanaaree...” the same Bhajan that He had asked me to sing a few days ago. I was a bit surprised and started to tell myself “I have had enough of that Bhajan. Why is He boring me with the same Bhajan”? I turned and looked at Him; my face was a question mark. He said, “You are wondering why I am singing the same Bhajan, right? I am singing this again and again because it has the essence of knowledge. If you can assimilate that knowledge, there is nothing more you would need to do. You would have attained your spiritual goal”. Till then, I had not realised that I had not paid attention to the meaning of the Bhajan. I did not realise it then, but later, while ruminating on it, I realised that Swami wanted me to take a great and profound lesson out of that Bhajan. The meaning of that Bhajan stressed on the Advaita (non-dualistic) principle, which is what Swami wanted to point out to me. The meaning is more important than how good the Tala (rhythm) is! The meaning of the Kirtan goes like this, “Chant Rama’s name always,

oh human! As long as you are breathing, this place is yours (Jab Lag Yah Swaas Tan Bheetar, Tab Lag Yah Jag Apna Re)! As long as you are breathing you say 'my money', 'my place', etc. But once breathing stops, nothing is yours"!

Then it says, "Mother, father, children, relatives, etc., are only your own imagination, Kalpana. The whole creation is only imagination; it is a projection of your mind which does not really exist. It is delusion. All relationships exist, but they are only relatively real, not in absolute terms. You are only playing a role". Kalpana means you imagine a role and play it. It is not true. It further goes, "You will have to leave your kith and kin. Jhooti Jagat, Kalpana Saari, Aakhir Yah Jag Sapna Rey! (In the end it is only a dream)". The end does not mean one is going to realise it after death. That took me a while to understand. He said, "You will awaken from that day dream when you realise life is a dream". Dream is

not always available; when you wake up, the dream is no more.

Similarly, when we awaken to our true self, the dream ceases to be. Swami says, "Awaken to your true self, the world which is bothering you, will cease to exist". It took me quite sometime to completely understand this song. Now, I repeat this song wherever I am asked to talk. This is the essence of what Swami taught me two-three years after I came to Puttaparthi. I came here in 1950. So, it has been more than half a century. This song I must have sung in 1954 or so. So, it has taken me a lot of Sadhana (spiritual effort) to go inward and really understand it completely.

(To be continued ...)

Courtesy: Sri Sathya Sai Media Centre

– The author, a devout and dedicated devotee for nearly sixty years, came to Bhagavan Baba as early as 1950. She was called 'Rani Maa' by Bhagavan. Her life was a treasure-chest of scintillating experiences of Swami's Divinity.

... Continued from page 22

mouth amidst a thunderous applause. Holding it in between His fingers, He showed it to millions standing in front of the Mandir. Thereafter, He sat down on the chair for some time. Bhajan was in full swing and after about 45 minutes, during which He regained composure, stood up and retired to His residence.

Swami's assurance 'why fear when I am here' is not a hollow promise as it has been evidenced by the experience of a number of His devotees. We had a harrowing experience in the year 2001. We were proceeding to Pondicherry (Puducherry) on a personal visit. In our car, my wife and I were seated in the back seat while our second son was in the front seat. It was a bright sunny day and there was no sign of impending rains. We were driving at a speed of 60-70 km/h when

suddenly it grew darker and heavy downpour started. Then I heard a strange creeky sound from the wheels. When I looked at my elder son, who was driving the vehicle, I realised that he had lost control of the steering and brakes had failed. The car overturned and we were hanging upside down. We all cried out to the merciful Swami for help in our desperate moment. Hearing our loud cries, natives came around and helped us get out of the vehicle. Strangely, all of us escaped unhurt and none of us was injured. Only Swami's Abhayahasta and abundant grace had saved us from what could have been a total disaster. He has told that He would not let down His devotees under any circumstances.

– The author is an old-time devotee of Bhagavan from Kochi, Kerala.

BHAGAVAN'S SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI MESSAGE

SRI KRISHNA'S LIFE AND MESSAGE

*Sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey is the Name of Rama.
Constant repetition of this sweet Name gives one the taste of divine nectar itself. Therefore,
one should contemplate on the Name of Rama incessantly.*

(Telugu Poem)

DEVELOP THE SENSE OF SPIRITUAL ONENESS

Embodiments of love!

IT IS EASY TO criticise or belittle the Leelas or infinite potencies of God. But it is very difficult to comprehend the truth about the Divine. The omnipresent Divine is present both in Truth and untruth. He is present both in Dharma (righteousness) and Adharma (unrighteousness). He is present in good and evil. With regard to such an all-pervading Divine, how can anyone determine what is good and what is bad?

From the earliest times, people have been proclaiming what is Divine. That the Divine has a form and possesses innumerable auspicious qualities was declared from their experiences.

The cosmos functions on the basis of three types of actions. Creation, sustenance and dissolution are the three processes. The truth



of this phenomenon cannot be denied by anyone at any time or place, whether he is a Vedantin or a scientist, an engineer or a man of the world. While this has enabled people to describe the Divine, it has not served to demonstrate God. But they were able to indicate the means by which one can experience God.

Experiencing the Power of the Divine

A distant star like the Dhruva Nakshatra (Pole Star) can be pointed to someone by reference to some nearby physical object like a tree. Likewise, the Vedas and scriptures, while not demonstrating the Divine, have helped to indicate the path leading to the realisation of the Divine.

The spectacle of a dense forest confers delight. The sight of a tall mountain excites wonder. Seeing the torrent in a river one rejoices. All these are evidences of the power of the Divine.

The stars shine. The planets revolve. The sun blazes forth. The wind blows. All these are signs of the Divine at work. When you see the spark of a fire, you can infer the nature of fire. If you know the nature of a drop of water, you can understand the nature of Ganga. Likewise, if you understand the nature of the atom, you can understand the nature of the entire cosmos. Recognising this truth, the Upanishads declared: “The Divine is subtler than the atom and vaster than the vastest”.

The human is indeed a manifestation of the Divine with numerous potencies. It is the Divine that shines effulgently in every human being. But, because of his attachment to the body, he is unable to develop attachment to the Atma.

Recognising the omnipresence of the Divine in all things, the quest for Truth should be undertaken. What is the Truth? Where is it? How to search for that which is everywhere? A distinction must be made between an apparent fact and the unchanging Reality. In daily life the sun appears to “rise” and “set” everyday, but in reality these apparent phenomena are due to the movement of the earth around itself and the sun. Likewise, what is apparently true about you, as is inferred from external observation, is not the real you. It is the effulgent Divine within you.

The spiritual quest involves the churning of the heart by meditation. The qualities like compassion emerge from the heart. The human heart, which should be an ocean of milk, has been turned into an ocean of brine now infested with creatures like hatred, lust and greed.

Krishna's Leelas

The childhood episodes relating to Krishna have an esoteric meaning. For instance, when his mother, Yashoda, chided Krishna for eating mud (as alleged by Balarama), Krishna

replied: “Mother, am I a child or a silly brat or a crazy fool to eat mud”? In this way Krishna, even though he was a child, was affirming His divinity indirectly. The Divine teaches profound lessons to mankind in this indirect manner. God's actions should be understood not by the external events but by their inner meaning. Moreover, many changes in the ordinary ways of living are necessary to understand the ways of God. Adi Sankara indicated in the Bhaja Govindam song how even a brief experience of the Divine by a devotee fills him with ecstasy. This bliss can be got only through the Atma. The experiences of the Gopikas and Gopalas of Brindavan during Krishna's early years at Gokulam have been misunderstood and misinterpreted. Krishna was in the village for five years only. It is absurd to suggest that a five-year child behaved in an objectionable manner. After going to Mathura, Krishna did not return to Repalle.

To ascribe anything improper to the pure and Divine life of Krishna is sheer blasphemy. The true nature of the Divine has to be fully understood. Divinity is the all-pervading Cosmic Consciousness present in all. The nature of this consciousness should be understood. It is Chit, which illumines every object in creation. Chit illumines what exists and thereby makes it cognisable. Existence is Sath. Cognisability is Chit. The combination of Sath and Chit confers Ananda (bliss). This Ananda is thus the very nature of every being. The Divine pervades everything inside and outside. Awareness of the Divine will confer bliss. But few are able to realise this.

Experience of Ananda

Man aspires for Ananda (bliss) in the world. Vedanta defines Divine Ananda as Yoga. Yoga is usually considered as some form of breathing or physical exercise. This is not the

true meaning of Yoga. Yoga means Ananda or bliss. Wherefrom can this bliss be got? Only from the One who is the embodiment of bliss. It cannot be got from possessions of any kind or from position or power. Bliss can only be got from God, who is the embodiment of Bliss.

How is this bliss to be got? This can be explained with reference to the single-minded devotion of the Gopikas and Radha. The Gopikas have been misunderstood and misrepresented by commentators. Gopikas symbolise thoughts. Radha symbolises the combination of all thoughts in the mind. So, thoughts and the mind should merge in Krishna, represented by Prajna in a human being. That is the significance of the Vedantic declaration, *Prajnanam Brahma*. This Prajnanam pervades every part of the human body, the mind and the intellect. It is constant integrated awareness. All our thoughts, desires and aspirations should be merged in this Prajna.

When this Prajna (constant integrated awareness) is present in all beings as the Divine (as Brahman), what is the need, it may be asked, for the descent of Avatars? There are reasons for the advent of Avatars. There are two kinds of perceptions, namely, Pratyaksha and Paroksha (direct and indirect). There are also two kinds of potencies: internal and external. For example, there is fire within a piece of firewood. It is only when the fire latent in it is brought out that it can be used for cooking. Likewise, everybody is like a piece of firewood. The Atmic principle is latent within it. To make it manifest, some form of love has to be practised. Just as you have to strike a matchbox to produce fire, Love has to merge in Love to experience the Divine.

If people today wish to achieve spiritual bliss, they have to follow three principles: First, they must know what has to be known. Second, they must give up what has to be renounced. Third, they must reach the goal

that has to be attained. By observing these three, bliss can be realised. What is it that has to be known? What is this world? How long will I live? We see many passing away. Coming and going are continually happening. When the transient nature of the physical world is understood, bliss will be realised.

Next, what is it that you have to give up? The delusion under which what is unreal is considered real and what is real is treated as unreal. People consider that they are in the grip of Maya and that they are caught up in misery. Misery has no limbs to hold you. It is you who are hugging misery. This is due to your ignorance. When you get rid of this ignorance, you will experience bliss.

We have to Go Back to our Source

What is the goal you have to reach? You have to go back to the source from which you came. You have come from the Atma and you have to return to the Atma. This is what the Upanishads sought to convey when they declared: *Asatoma Sadgamaya* (lead me from unreality to reality). Where there is truth, untruth exists as its shadow. *Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya* (lead me from darkness to light). What is darkness and what is light? Light alone exists. Darkness is only the absence of light. Discovering the light leads to the elimination of darkness. *Mrityorma Amritamgamaya* (lead me from death to immortality). Birth and death are incidental to the body alone. Your Self has neither birth nor death. What is born (the body) dies. Death relates to the body and not to the Atma. The Atma is eternal. It is the truth. You have to acquire this awareness to experience lasting bliss. To experience permanent bliss one has to develop firm faith in God.

The Distinction between Krishna and Rama

Today we celebrate the birthday of Krishna. Where was He born? In a prison. What were His possessions? Nothing. Born in a prison, He

was taken to the house of Nanda and then He went to Mathura. He owned nothing. But He became the greatest figure in the world. What does this show? Worldly possessions are not the secret of greatness. Krishna's greatness consisted in His permanent state of Ananda (bliss).

If you recognise the distinction between Krishna and Rama, you will appreciate better the nature of Krishna. Krishna always smiled at the outset and carried out his task later. For Rama, the deed came first and then the smile. Krishna made women cry. Rama wept for the sake of women. Rama went into the battle only after having a strong cause for it. Krishna first provoked the conflict and then determined its outcome. The Krishna principle revels in delight. The Rama principle is based on the concept of Badhyatha (obligation). The Ramayana is intended to promote the reign of Truth and Righteousness on earth. The Krishna Avatar was intended to give a perennial message to the world. He sought nothing for Himself. He kept nothing for himself. He gave away everything to the people. He slayed His maternal uncle, Kamsa. He installed on the throne Kamsa's father Ugrasena. He did not covet the kingdom. He befriended the Pandavas, defeated the Kauravas and crowned Dharmaraja as the emperor. He did not make himself king. He was a king without a crown. He was the king of kings. He had no kingdom of his own. But he ruled over the hearts of the millions. It is this profound truth that is proclaimed by the Krishna Tattwa (Krishna principle). If you enquire deeply, you will find that every Avatar has incarnated to convey a special message and carry out a particular mission.

Krishna's Divine Power

The Gopikas used to complain to Yashoda about Krishna's pranks. But whatever Krishna

said in fun or did as a prank was based on truth. Krishna never indulged in untruth even by way of a joke. But those who could not understand the inner meaning of His statements used to accuse Him of lying. This kind of misunderstanding has been a disease in all Yugas (ages).

When a Gopika complained to Yashoda that Krishna had entered the house of a cowherd at night and played some mischief, Krishna pleaded before his mother how he could have gone out anywhere when he was sleeping beside her. The truth was that Krishna was in both places because of His Divine power. Krishna displayed any number of such baffling miracles. (Bhagavan sang a series of songs about the complaints of the Gopikas to Yashoda against Krishna). Against each complaint Krishna had a convincing alibi. Indirectly, Krishna was revealing His Divinity. Krishna explained to His mother the ways of the Divine in a way she could understand.

Krishna used to visit the houses of the cowherds and drink curds and milk. The symbolic meaning of this action is Krishna's preference for Sattwa, represented by the pure white curds and milk.

Krishna explained to Yashoda the reason why He preferred the butter in their homes to the butter offered by Yashoda. The hearts of the Gopikas were pure and filled with selfless devotion to Krishna. Their devotion was superior to the maternal affection of Yashoda, which bore a taint of selfishness. Krishna told Yashoda: "I am attracted to the hearts of those who are pure and selfless".

Follow the Footsteps of the Lord

Krishna had always eluded the Gopikas after playing His mischief. But once, out of compassion for them, He wanted to provide a clue by which they could trace Him. One day,

they all lay in wait round their houses to catch Krishna. Krishna went into a house stealthily, broke a pot of milk and quietly hid Himself. The Gopikas found that He had broken the pot and tried to trace Him. The milk white steps which He had left revealed to them His hideout. Then, Krishna revealed to them the spiritual truth that if they cling to the feet of the Lord, they realise Him. "Follow My footsteps and you shall find Me," Krishna told the Gopikas.

In the Bhagavata, the lessons you learn are according to the state of your mind. To understand the glories of the Lord as related in the Bhagavata, you have to enjoy the Leelas (divine pranks) of Krishna and realise their inner meaning. For instance, the real meaning of the story about Krishna taking away the clothes of the Gopikas while they were bathing is that to realise the Lord they have to abandon the attachment to the body, which is the vesture of the Spirit. These stories should not be treated in a spirit of levity or profanity.

Krishna Dedicated the Flute to Delight Radha

In the case of Radha, Krishna churned her heart and gave her the nectar of Divine bliss. Radha had no attachment to any of her kith and kin. (Swami sang sweetly a song of Radha expressing her grief over separation from Him). Krishna appeared before Radha before she gave up her life and blessed her. God will give anything for the devotee including Himself. No one can equal Him in the sacrifice He will make for the sake of the devotees. Krishna asked Radha what she wanted at the last moment of her life. Radha said: "I don't want anything except to listen to the music of your flute once before I pass on".

Oh Krishna! Sing a sweet song, and fill my heart with nectarine words and bliss. Distil the essence of the Vedas, transform it into

divine music, play it on Your enchanting flute, and captivate me with Your melody. Sing, oh Mukunda! Sing for me!!

(Telugu Song)

Krishna took out His flute and played on it and when Radha closed her eyes, He threw it away. He never touched it again. He dedicated the flute to give delight to Radha.

Thus, all the mysteries of Krishna served to relieve the distress of the devotees. Krishna used all His powers to serve the devotees. When the purport of the Bhagavata stories is properly understood, one can realise the Divinity of the Lord.

In the life of Mirabai, for instance, when Rana sent to Mira a cup of milk containing poison, Mira drank it as an offering to Krishna. The result was Krishna absorbed the poison and left the sweet milk alone for Mira. By making an offering of all that you eat to God before partaking it, the food gets purified and sanctified.

The Gopikas were illiterate and totally innocent. But their love for Krishna was unalloyed and exclusive. Even while engaged in their daily activities, their thoughts were centred on Krishna. Hence, they experienced indescribable joy.

Devotees should cultivate unity, transcending all barriers of caste, creed and nationality. Krishna's mystery and miracles are beyond words. He was all things to all people. 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.

– **From Bhagavan's Sri Krishna Janmashtami Discourses.**

AN EVENING ON THE SANDS

IT WAS NINE YEARS AGO, ON A QUIET November day, that I had the first thrill of the "Evening on the Sands". All those who were at Prasanthi Nilayam that day gathered to follow Baba to "the sands" of the river Chitravathi a furlong away. Baba



Bhagavan materialising an object on the sands of river Chitravathi as curious onlookers including the author marvel at His creation.

came down from His room and spreading joy all around Him with a smile, or a quip or a pleasantry or a kind enquiry, He walked at the head of the little throng. He trudged along the sands, seeking a place to sit... and, at last, we all sat around Him, the men on one side, the women on the other, the children on the circumference, playing with their kind.

Having sat, and having graciously waited until all were comfortably seated, including the older among the devotees who took a longer time to plod through the sands, Baba, in reply to a casual question, began a Discourse on Karma, Bhakti. It was in such sweet simple Telugu, full of interesting parables taken from daily life. Bhakti without Karma He said "is like a basement without a wall". Karma without Bhakti is "a wall without a basement". He said, "In My view, there are no Nastikas at all; even those who deny God are not forsaken by God".

He said, "I am the servant of all", and I was really excited by His unbounded love. "You can call Me by any name, I will respond without anger, because, all names are Mine! Or rather, I have no name at all". Questions were asked about rebirth, about Pranava, Vairagya and for each question there was an immediate and satisfying answer.

Then, Baba taught us some songs which extolled the Lord's Name and which were saturated with spiritual advice for the practitioner. Afterwards, the Discourse was resumed; this time it roamed at random round Shirdi and the devotees who came for enlightenment to "My previous body" and Baba spoke of pictures, now current, of Shirdi Baba as spurious; while speaking thus, He dug His fingers into the sands and there was a picture in His hand, which He showed us all as "the authentic representation of Shirdi Sai Baba". Conversation naturally proceeded on Baba being the Avatar of Dattatreya and Lo, He dug into the sands again and out came a very beautiful metal image of Dattatreya, the symbol of unity in trinity. He announced that the image would be given to a devotee for worship and we all felt how blessed he must be to receive this unique gift from Baba. In their excitement, everyone had now drawn nearer to Baba and He felt that each of them should receive something from His hands. He therefore took out from the sands a thick flat block of sugar candy. He also took a handful of sand in His hands and while pouring it on to a plate it became sacred ash, Vibhuti, which could be distributed to all. Watching all these, I was overwhelmed by the supremacy of Baba's Will and by His all-comprehensive love and wisdom. When at last, we rose and followed Him to the Mandir, I was a transformed person.

– From Sri N. Kasturi's article published in March 1958 issue of Sanathana Sarathi.



REGD. WITH REGISTRAR OF NEWSPAPERS R.NO.10774/1958 REGN.NO. HDP/002/2021-2023
LICENCED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT No.PMGK/RNP/WPP-02/2021-2023

Date of Publication: 1st August 2021



Earn Supreme Bliss through Spiritual Discipline

I am showing you by My example how you must fill every moment with useful beneficial activity. You talk among yourselves, "O, Swami is having His rest hour; Swami is sleeping". But I have never craved for a minute's rest or sleep or relief. Shall I tell you at what time I feel restful, relieved, content? When I know that you are all earning supreme bliss through detachment and spiritual discipline, not until then.

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Printed by K.S. RAJAN Published by K.S. RAJAN On behalf of the owner Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur District (A.P.) And Printed at Sri Sathya Sai Press, Prasanthi Nilayam And published at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

Editor: G.L. ANAND