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*"It is love alone that brings unity in
everyone. When there is love, there
will be no differences on grounds of
race, nationality, etc. Where there is
no love, there is hatred. When there is
hatred, there can be no relationship even
between the child and the mother. When
there is love, there is no difference of
mine and thine."*



CONTENTS

- 4 **Develop Devotion, Surrender and Faith to Realise God**
Bhagavan's Discourse: 26th April 1993
- 10 **Bhagavan's 92nd Birthday Celebrations**
A Report
- 17 **Nothing is more Divine than Love**
From our Archives
- 19 **First Sri Sathya Sai International Veda Conference**
A Report
- 24 **Experiencing Swami's Divinity**
Dr. D.J. Gadhia
- 26 **36th Annual Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute**
of Higher Learning
A Report
- 28 **An Unshakeable Bond of Love**
Geetha Mohanram
- 29 **Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam**
A Report

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DEVELOP DEVOTION, SURRENDER AND FAITH TO REALISE GOD

Religions are many but goal is one.

Clothes are many but yarn is one.

Jewels are many but gold is one.

Cows are many but milk is one.

Flowers are many but worship is one.

Beings are many but Atma is one.

Unable to understand this reality out of his ignorance,

Man has become a victim of many troubles

For the sake of his mundane existence.

What else is to be conveyed

To this assembly of noble souls?

(Telugu Poem)

YOUR EVERY BREATH REPEATS, I AM GOD

Embodiments of Divinity!

THE UNIQUE CULTURE OF BHARAT has been imparting highest lessons in morality and spirituality to mankind since time immemorial. First and foremost, it has taught man to realise divinity present in the mother and the father. Its sacred texts proclaim, *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava* (revere your mother and father as God).

Recognise your Inherent Divinity

Truly speaking, human life is full of sweetness. Bereft of sweetness, it is a mere waste. Man is running after worldly, mundane and sensual pleasures. But the sweetness that is present in the love of the mother is much beyond all these. This is the priceless gem of the culture of Bharat. It is the mother who sacrifices everything to foster, nurture and protect the child. The sweetness that is there in

motherhood cannot be found in anything else in this world.

Forbearance is the real beauty in this sacred land of Bharat. Of all the rituals, adherence to truth is the greatest penance. The nectarine feeling in this country is the feeling of love towards one's mother. Character is valued

What do you do with the material that is tasteless, that is not palatable? You throw it out.

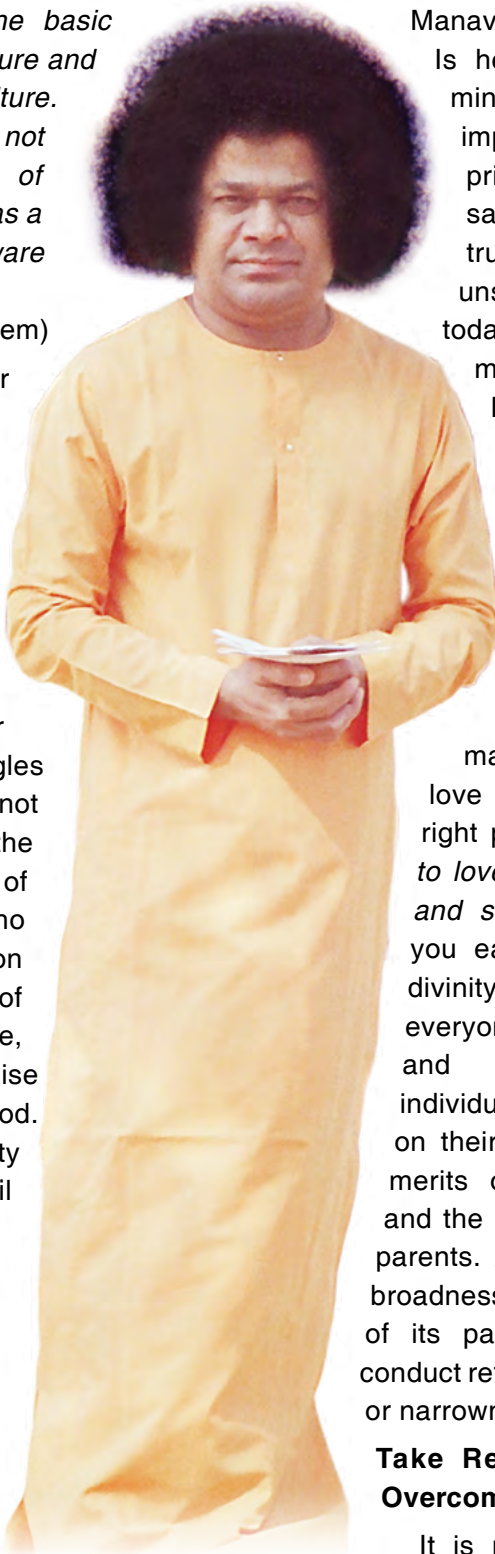
Similarly, when you don't act appropriately, society will reject you. So, you should be one with society. That is the first step towards unity. When there is unity, then you will have purity within. When purity is established, only then will you have divinity.

far higher than the very life itself. People have forgotten the basic principles of this great culture and are imitating Western culture. Alas! The Bharatiyas are not aware of the greatness of their cultural heritage just as a mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength.

(Telugu Poem)

It is most essential for one and all to recognise the divinity of the mother. When Lord Rama was leaving for the forest, He said to Sita, "Oh Bhujata (born from earth)! There is no God greater than mother and father on earth. The mother knows our mind, knows our likings and constantly struggles for our welfare. If we do not recognise the divinity of the mother who is right in front of us, how can we know God who is beyond our comprehension and beyond the reach of speech and mind? Therefore, it is essential for us to recognise mother and father as God. Hence, it is My bounden duty to obey My father and fulfil the promise given by him".

To understand Divinity, which is beyond human level, man should also rise to that state which is beyond human level. First of all, man should live like a true human being by practising human qualities and recognising



his inherent divinity. Who is Manava (human being)? Is he the body or the mind? No, no. Manava implies the Atmic principle which is sacred and divine. A true human being has unshakeable faith. But today, unfortunately, man's faith is not firm.

Faith is like the eyes of man. But man today has become blind because he has lost the eyes of faith. Where is the need for man to search God?

Offer service to mankind and receive love of God. This is the right path. *The best way to love God is to love all and serve all.* As I told you earlier, even though divinity is the same in everyone, the capabilities and potentialities of individuals vary, depending on their level of evolution, merits of their past lives and the background of their parents. A child inherits the broadness of mind and heart of its parents. Man's daily conduct reflects the broadness or narrowness of his heart.

Take Refuge in God to Overcome Maya

It is necessary for man to perform good actions

constantly in his daily life. As the proverb goes, "If you go on singing, you can sing well; if you go on chewing neem leaves, even they will taste sweet; if you go on rubbing stone, it will become smaller". The value of a diamond increases after grinding and cutting. Similarly, divinity shines forth in a person, after passing through trials and tribulations, and upon constant practice. Fire is produced when two logs of wood are rubbed against each other. Soft butter comes out by churning of curd. Similarly, man can attain divinity by constantly thinking of God. It is said, the more you rub the sandal log on stone, the more is the fragrance it gives. When you crush the sugarcane hard, it gives only sweet juice. When gold is put on fire, it sheds all its dirt and shines brilliantly. Similarly, a spiritual aspirant should face all problems and difficulties, develop the spirit of renunciation and sacrifice and experience divinity. He should learn from the mother how to endure sorrows, blames, losses and hardships and realise his divinity by emulating her.

How can you think of God that is beyond human level? What is it that God loves? What is it that God expects? How should you conduct yourself, so as to be acceptable to God? If you want to have the power beyond your level, if you want to have the strength beyond what you have, you should take refuge in God who is beyond everything. Man may have enormous wealth and great power and position. But Maya (illusion) has much more power than him. In order to overcome Maya, man has to take the help of God who has higher power than Maya.

The story of Sugriva in the Ramayana is a good example in this regard. The

elder brother of Sugriva was Vali, who was endowed with great strength, far superior to that of Sugriva. There was enmity between the two brothers. Knowing that he might be killed by Vali in a combat, Sugriva was looking for someone mightier than Vali as support. One day, Sugriva noticed two persons walking towards Rishyamuka mountain, where he was hiding for fear of Vali. In apprehension, Sugriva sent his minister Hanuman to find out the intention of these two people who were looking like great warriors. Rama and Lakshmana were very much pleased with Hanuman's noble demeanour and scholarly talk, despite being a monkey. Hanuman explained Sugriva's plight to Rama and offered to take them to Sugriva on his shoulders, as they looked tired due to long trek. Rama thought it was not proper to use Hanuman as a vehicle. But one has to act in accordance with circumstances, using proper discrimination. Soft butter can be cut with a finger, but a hammer is required to beat an iron block. Rama and Lakshmana got on to Hanuman's shoulders and reached Vali. After duly testing Rama's abilities as warrior, Sugriva fell at His feet and placed the services of his army of monkeys at His command.

In this episode, Sugriva sought Rama's friendship as He was more powerful than Vali. Similarly, man has to seek the power of God in order to conquer Maya. Until then, Maya makes man dance to its tune. Maya can be compared to a Nartaki (dancer). When you gain full control over this Nar-ta-ki, your life becomes a Kir-ta-na (the reverse of the word Nartaki). Chanting of the Divine Name is the best means of man's liberation in Kali Yuga.

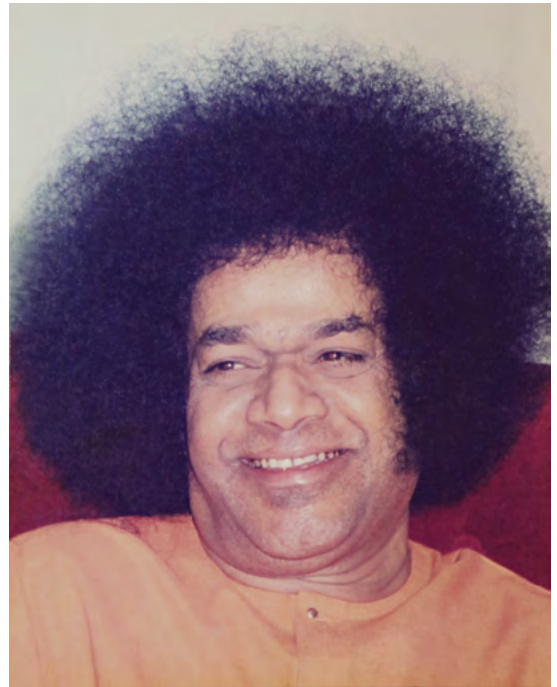


Combination of Sat and Chit is Ananda

One may seek the help of God through any one of the three paths propounded by great saints – Advaita (non-dualism), Visishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) and Dvaita (dualism). Adi Sankara propounded the path of Advaita which enunciates that Divinity is present everywhere like juice in sugarcane. What do you mean by non-dualism? *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha*

willed to become many). It is only unity that manifested into multiplicity. It is only One that exists, but it manifests into many. This unity in diversity, this oneness, is non-dualism. You collect many sugarcanes. When all the sugarcanes are crushed, you get the same sweet juice. Sugarcanes are many, but sweetness is one. Beings are many, but breath is one. Nations are many, but earth is one. Jewels are many, but gold is one.

You should have strong Viswasa. It is not Viswasa (faith), but your Swasa (breath). With every breath, you repeat Soham, Soham (That I am). Have this firm faith that you are God. So means God. Ham means I. Your every breath repeats, I am God, I am God, I am God. I am no different from God. When you have that feeling "I am God", you become God.



Vadanti (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). Truth is only one, not two. There is no second. But we see two. Not two, we see two lakh! Not two lakh, two crore! Then how can we find oneness? For this, here is a very good example. Keep 1 at one place and 9 at a different place. Out of these two, which is bigger? Naturally, we say nine is bigger. No! One is bigger. One, plus one, plus one, plus one, plus one, plus one... will make a big number. *Ekoham Bahusyam* (the One

Advaita tells that Divinity is present everywhere like juice in sugarcane. But, how long does the juice last? It cannot last long. Sugarcane juice could be converted into a different form, so that sweetness could be enjoyed in different ways. That was the theory of Visishtadvaita of Ramanuja. He said, sugarcane juice can be converted into sugar. Juice is non-dualism. Sugar is qualified non-dualism. What is the use of sugar? Sugar can be mixed with rice flour, wheat flour or Dhal.



Then the flour does not have the taste of flour. When the flour and sugar are mixed together, you will be able to prepare several sweets like Laddu and Jilebi.

So, sugarcane juice is non-dualism, sugar is qualified non-dualism and sugar mixed with flour is dualism. Sankara stands for non-dualism, Ramanuja for qualified non-dualism and Madhava for dualism. They were great Acharyas who spread spirituality in the entire world. However, the sweetness of divinity is present in dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism. Divinity is one, but bodies are different. However, there is non-dualism in the realm of feelings, not in action. There is God in tiger and there is God in man. But you cannot hug or embrace a tiger. No! You should give appropriate place to the tiger. You should have your own position. But have full faith, that divinity is one and the same in everyone.

Divinity has three aspects: Sat, Chit, Ananda. Sat means Being, that which is changeless; that which has no change in all the three periods of time. That is Divinity. Chit means Awareness. It is all-comprehensive awareness, not fragmented awareness. (Swami demonstrates holding a handkerchief and showing only a tip of it). If a small thing (tip of handkerchief) is shown, you will say this is a piece of cloth. It is not total awareness. You have to unfold the handkerchief. Then you will say it is a handkerchief. (Swami shows the whole handkerchief to the audience). The Awareness is that which proves and demonstrates complete, comprehensive, total knowledge. That is Chit. The combination of Sat (Being) and Chit (Awareness) is Ananda (Bliss). This Bliss is changeless. Brahmanandam (supreme

bliss) – It is like sugar, the sweetness of which does not change.

Sat (Being) is sugar. Chit (Awareness) is water. When you mix them together, it is not sugar, it is not water. It becomes syrup. That is Ananda (Bliss). Therefore, Being-Awareness-Bliss is Divinity. Names and forms are momentary. The form of the tiger is momentary. The form of the snake is momentary. As names and forms are momentary, take them as such. However, the principle of non-dualism should not be misconstrued. In your pocket, you have a pen. The other man has also a pen in his pocket. You cannot take other man's pen from his pocket. Is it proper? No! At worldly level, your pen belongs to you, My pen belongs to Me. If you slip, you sustain a fracture of your leg. Then you may have bandage. Your mother has intense love for you. Your mother may feel sad, because you are suffering. But it is not possible for her to have the bandage on her leg. Individuals are different but the pain may be same to both. You will have the pain of a fracture; your mother will have the pain that you are suffering. But mother is not having pain of the fractured leg. Mother is feeling sad because of the suffering of the son, not of the fracture. So, you can follow non-dualism in feeling, but not in action.

Though Sankara propagated the principle of non-dualism, he also prescribed the worship of God. Why should he prescribe worship of God? The reason is that different people have different levels of awareness. One has to follow a path that suits one's level of awareness. Until you reach higher level, worship is necessary. Until you reach the level of Sankaracharya, you must discharge your duties. You may be highly educated; you



may be a man of high position, an I.A.S. But when you teach A, B, C to your son, you have to come down to the level of your son. Right from that level, you should start teaching. Similarly, until one reaches the level of Sankara, one should have all forms of Upasana, all forms of worship. Therefore, Sankara also propagated prayer and worship. He composed many Slokas on the worship of God. Sankara stands for non-duality, but we should not go along for that reason. We should know our position and start practising from that level.

Consider Faith as your very Breath

A disciple should have full faith in his Guru and a devotee should have full faith in God. But disciples today follow their Guru on the basis of their needs and convenience. This is the effect of Kali Yuga. When they are not satisfied, they go away from their Guru. When their desires are fulfilled, they go on extolling him. When their desires are not fulfilled, they go on accusing him. This is not good. Whether the desires are fulfilled or not, one should not lose faith in the Guru and God. A disciple should always desire "I wholeheartedly desire that merger. I should never allow this love to waver." Love will never change at any time. Love always gives, never receives.

So, let us receive, whatever God gives. Whatever He gives, it is for our good. We should have that strong faith. Krishna wanted to test the faith of Arjuna before the Mahabharata war. One day, while going to a forest, Krishna pointed towards a bird perched on a tree and asked Arjuna, "Arjuna, on that tree, what bird is that? Is it a peacock?" "Yes, Krishna, it is a peacock", said Arjuna. "No, no! It

is a crow", said Krishna. Then Arjuna also said, "Yes, Swami, it is a crow". Krishna then said, "Oh mad man, you say 'yes, yes' to whatever I say. Don't you have discrimination?" "Swami, what is the use of my discrimination in front of You? If I say, it is not a peacock, You may transform it into a peacock. Whatever You say, it is the truth." Then Krishna said, "Now you deserve"! Only then Krishna imparted the knowledge of the Bhagavadgita to Arjuna. Therefore, God's teaching begins with faith. What is it that Arjuna ultimately said? He said, "I obey Your command".

You should have strong Viswasa. It is not Viswasa (faith), but your Swasa (breath). With every breath, you repeat Soham, Soham (That I am). Have this firm faith that you are God. So means God. Ham means I. Your every breath repeats, I am God, I am God, I am God. I am no different from God. When you have that feeling "I am God", you become God. Tat-tvam-asi (That Thou Art). That is wisdom of Brahman. I am wisdom, I am Brahman. That is the vision of non-duality.

But man does not realise the secret of non-dualism. He practises duality. He thus goes far away from truth. Not only truth, he goes far away from society as well. What do you do with the material that is tasteless, that is not palatable? You throw it out. Similarly, when you do not act appropriately, society will reject you. So, you should be one with society. That is the first step towards unity. When there is unity, then you will have purity within. When purity is established, only then will you have divinity. Therefore, the divine teaching in human life is the combination

continued on page 18...



BHAGAVAN'S 92ND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

A MAMMOTH GATHERING OF devotees from all parts of the world thronged Prasanthi Nilayam to offer their reverential tributes to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on His 92nd Birthday. Besides, a large number of music and cultural programmes, two historic events of the weeklong celebrations were the inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Archives by the Vice President of India, Sri Venkaiah Naidu and two-day Sri Sathya Sai First International Veda Conference which was inaugurated by the Governor of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan. As part of these celebrations, free sumptuous meals were served to all the devotees from 18th to 23rd November 2017 in a specially erected Pandal.

SITA RAMA KALYANAM AND RATHOTSAVAM

The Birthday celebrations started on 18th November 2017 with auspicious Sita Rama Kalyanam (celestial marriage of Sita and Rama) and Rathotsavam.

The programme of the celestial wedding began at 7.30 a.m. on 18th November 2017

amidst the chanting of hymns accompanied by the performance of the rituals of the wedding by the priests which included the worship of the idols, Upanayanam (the sacred thread ceremony of the bridegroom), Kanyadan (giving away the bride), exchange of garlands and tying of Mangal Sutra around the neck of Sita. A Yajna was also performed to mark the sacred fire ritual of the marriage. Poornahuti (final oblations) was offered in the Yajna at 9.20 a.m. followed by Arati to the idols which marked the conclusion of the celestial wedding for the welfare of the world.

The proceedings of Rathotsavam started after the conclusion of the celestial wedding. The idols of Rama, Lakshmana,



Sita Rama Kalyanam.



Venugopal Swami idol on a grand bedecked chariot.

Sita, Hanuman and Venugopal Swami (Lord Krishna) were taken out of Sai Kulwant Hall in a grand procession led by Nadaswaram musicians and Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of students. At the Gopuram Gate, the idol of Venugopal Swami was mounted on a beautifully decorated chariot while the idols of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman were carried on a palanquin. As the chariot procession proceeded towards Pedda Venkama Raju Kalyana Mandapam, residents of Puttaparthi joined it in large numbers. Many people broke coconuts in front of the chariot and offered Arati to the idols. On reaching the Kalyana Mandapam, the idol of Lord Krishna was mounted at the Kalyana Mandapam and the procession with Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman idols returned to Sai Kulwant Hall. Meanwhile, Bhajans continued in the hall and concluded with Arati at 10.00 a.m.

As part of the celestial marriage of Sita and Rama, a devotional music concert was organised in the evening presented by a renowned singer Ms. Mahathi. Commencing the concert with "Mahaganapatim", the versatile singer presented an array of melodies, some of which were "Sai Natha Sai Mahesha" "Endaro Mahanubhavulu", "Sai Raghunandana Raja Rama". She concluded her soulful concert with the Bhajan "Mana Bangaru Parthi Baba". Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati.



Akhanda Bhajan at Prasanthi Nilayam.

Earlier Akhanda Bhajan for 24 hours was held in Sai Kulwant Hall from 6.00 p.m. on 11th November to 6.00 p.m. on 12th November in which a large number of devotees took part. Sai Kulwant Hall reverberated with Divine Name when devotees sang the glories of God with great devotion all the 24 hours.

LADIES DAY CELEBRATIONS

Ladies Day was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 19th November 2017 as part of Bhagavan's 92nd Birthday celebrations.

The programme in the morning began at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting by the students of Anantapur campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. While Veda chanting continued, a procession of ladies led by the brass band of Anantapur campus and bagpipers band troupe of girls students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School



Procession of ladies in Sai Kulwant Hall.

came to Sai Kulwant Hall from Yajur Mandir with auspicious Poornakumbham. This was followed by lighting of ceremonial lamp before the portrait of Mother Easwaramma which adorned the dais amidst colourful floral decorations.

In her introductory speech, Smt. Chethana Raju, Managing Trustee, Sri

Sathya Sai Easwaramma Women's Welfare Trust introduced the three speakers of the morning session and underlined the need for empowerment of women. She also stressed the need for women to put Bhagavan's teachings into practice in their life. The first speaker of the session was Smt. Kamala Pandya, a new Trustee of Women's Welfare Trust and National Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, India. Referring to women as repositories of many noble qualities, Smt. Pandya urged them to engage themselves in service activities of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, as selfless service was the first step on the spiritual path. The second speaker was Ms. Urvi Widhani, Managing Director, First Abu Dhabi Bank, UAE's largest bank, who narrated her experiences of Bhagavan's Divinity and stated that it was the guidance and grace of Bhagavan which helped her in her personal and corporate life to become what she was today. The last speaker of the session was Ms. Kothapalli Geetha, Member of Parliament from Araku, Andhra Pradesh who narrated how Bhagavan transformed her life when she had the opportunity to give Him her letter in 2001. She stressed the significance of collective efforts of women themselves to bring about empowerment of women. After these talks, sanitation kits of Sanitation Project of SSSEWWT were distributed to 500 beneficiaries.

The last item of the morning session was a carnatic music concert by Mambalam Sisters, Ms. R. Vijayalakshmi and Ms. R. Chitra from Chennai. Beginning their presentation at 9.45 a.m., the noted singers enthralled the devotees with an array of carnatic music compositions for nearly 30 minutes and concluded their concert with the Kirtan "Sai Ram Hare Sai Krishna Hare".

Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 10.10 a.m.

The evening session started at 4.30 p.m., with Rudra chanting by the girls students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School followed by invocatory Vedic chants by the students of Anantapur Campus. Ms. Mallala Prashanti, Joint Collector, Hyderabad was the speaker in the evening session. Calling her visit to Prasanthi Nilayam a homecoming as she was born here and christened by Bhagavan Himself, Ms. Prashanti narrated her one-to-one interactions with Bhagavan during her childhood-school days. Quoting from the Bhagavadgita, the distinguished speaker urged the ladies to attain perfection in life on the ideals of the Gita.

The singer of the evening was Dana Gillespie who kept the audience spellbound for nearly 45 minutes with her thematic songs in her melodious voice. The songs sung by her were: "I have Some Questions, You have the Answer", "More than a Mother's Love", "Start the Day with Love", and "Shower the Rose Petals". The evening programme also included a felicitation ceremony, in which the renowned singers P. Susheela and Dana Gillespie were felicitated.

The last item of the programme was the dance drama "Pure Love" presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School. Beginning with the story of the creation of the



A dance number in the dance drama "Pure Love".

universe, the drama portrayed the life story of Bhagavan and showcased His Divine glory through selected episodes of His life. Excellent make-up and costumes, perfect choreography, apt multimedia support and scintillating dances of the children made the drama an impressive presentation. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati which marked the conclusion of Ladies Day celebrations.

INAUGURATION OF SRI SATHYA SAI ARCHIVES

It was an historic day when the Vice President of India Sri Venkaiah Naidu



Front view of Sri Sathya Sai Archives.



*Inauguration of
Sri Sathya Sai Archives.*

inaugurated Sri Sathya Sai Archives at Prasanthi Nilayam on 22nd November 2017. This ultra-modern fire proof, water proof, pest proof and dust proof archives building houses 7,000 handwritten manuscripts of Bhagavan Baba, 9,000 audio cassettes, 5,50,000 films, 5,000 CDs / DVDs, 10,000 video tapes and 1,50,000 photos and negatives which form a priceless legacy of this Avatar of Kali Yuga for posterity. In fact, this is the first time in the history of mankind that an Incarnation of God has graciously given access to His life and teachings to mankind through audio and video recordings, photographs, films and handwritten manuscripts so that future generations can perceive the message of the Avatar in an undiluted form.

Speaking on this occasion, Sri Venkaiah Naidu commended the noble work being



*Vice President of India, Sri Venkaiah Naidu
addressing the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall.*

done by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Dwelling on the teachings of Bhagavan, the eminent speaker exhorted one and all to emulate the noble example of Bhagavan and serve mankind as He did in His life by setting up educational institutions, hospitals and water projects. The real tribute to Bhagavan Baba, he said, was to follow His teachings, to

spread His message of love and service in the world and transform the minds of people through the practice of the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa.

BHAGAVAN'S 92ND BIRTHDAY FUNCTION

Bhagavan's 92nd Birthday function was held in fabulously decorated and brilliantly lit Sai Kulwant Hall on 23rd November 2017 with great devotion and reverence. The morning programme began with instrumental



Instrumental music by students on Bhagavan's Birthday.

and vocal music offerings to Bhagavan by the students of His educational institutions. First, the Nadaswaram, Panchavadyam, brass band and bagpipers troupes of boys and girls students took turns to present brilliant and exhilarating devotional songs on



An exhilarating devotional music presentation by students.

their instruments. A soulful vocal devotional music presentation of students followed next. Beginning with a birthday song in Telugu, the students surcharged the entire milieu with devotion and piety by their soul-stirring songs which included "Jeena Hai To Sai Tere Liye" (Oh Sai, we live for You), "Tu Pyar Ka Sagar Hai" (You are the ocean of love) and a couple of classical compositions. They brought their programme to a close with the famous Qawali "Tere Dar Pe Jo Bhi Aaya..." (whosoever came to Your door, You showered bounty on him).

After these musical offerings of students, Sri S.S. Naganand, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust offered the Annual Report 2016-17 of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan and gave some highlights of service activities performed by the Trust during the last year. A book release ceremony was thereafter performed in which a new book "Sathya Sai Baba Lives On" written by Dr. V. Mohan, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust was released.

Two eminent speakers addressed the gathering after this. The first speaker was Sri Leonardo Gutter, Member, Prasanthi Council, Sathya Sai International Organisation, who exhorted the devotees to remember the Divine Presence of Bhagavan all the time and apply His teachings in life to earn His grace. The second speaker was Sri Kamaraju Anil Kumar, renowned translator of Bhagavan's Discourses, who reminded the devotees to follow the path of devotion and spirituality to redeem their life. Bhagavan, He said, is the embodiment of compassion who will not forget us even if we forget Him.

After these two talks, the devotees were blessed with a Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, an audio clip of which was

played on the public address system. In His Discourse, Bhagavan advised the devotees to develop equal-mindedness to experience peace. Man, He said, should keep God first, world second and himself last in his life to understand the secret of happiness. He should adhere to Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti (love for God, fear of sin and morality in society), Bhagavan added. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin". Bhajan followed next and concluded with Arati at 11.00 a.m.

The evening programme began at 5.00 p.m. with a magnificent chariot procession. This grand procession of Bhagavan's golden chariot started from Ganesh Mandir, went round the Yajur Mandir and came back to Sai Kulwant Hall, where Arati was offered to it. A large number of devotees participated in this procession with great devotion.

The grand finale of Bhagavan's Birthday function was Jhoola Mahotsava, a magnificently decorated Jhoola (swing) for which was set up in front of Bhagavan's Samadhi with a beautiful photograph of

Bhagavan on the Jhoola. As the Jhoola was rocked, a renowned carnatic music exponent Sri Abhishek Raghuram and his team of musicians rendered soul-elevating devotional music classical compositions, which cast a spell on the audience by the depth and range of his rendition. He brought his presentation to a close with a brilliant rendition of the famous composition of Tulsidas "Sri Ramachandra Kripalu Bhaja Mana" (oh mind, contemplate on Rama, the compassionate Lord). Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

The Third Annual Graduation Ceremony of the Sathya Sai International Leadership Programme was held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 24th November 2017, in which certificates



Award of certificates to Young Adults.

were awarded to 456 young adults from 59 countries of the world on their successful completion of the Leadership Training Programme.

The programme of the Graduation Ceremony began at 5.00 p.m. with talks of two members of Sathya Sai International Organisation. The first speaker was Sri Devesh Tankaria, Chairman, Sathya Sai International Leadership Programme, who



Jhoola Mahotsava in Sai Kulwant Hall.

gave an overview of the Young Adults Leadership Programme and urged the graduands to seize the rare opportunity of becoming an instrument of Bhagavan's Divine Mission of love and service of mankind. The second speaker was Ms. Concepcion Avila Benitez from Mexico who described her experience of Leadership Programme and observed that it could help Young Adults to imbibe the teachings of Bhagavan Baba and inculcate in them the qualities of love, service and sacrifice so as to become ideal leaders in society. This was followed by a short video by Sai Young Adults and children of Thailand which presented a video song titled "Our Love", giving a glimpse of unity of people from various countries of the world.

The last item of the programme was a musical offering of Young Adults. Beginning

to Serve All", "Make me a Channel of Your Peace", "Truth is Thy Breath", "Love and Peace is what we Need".

As the Bhajans started after this, senior leaders of the Sai Organisation awarded the certificates to the qualified Young Adults. The programme concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: A DANCE DRAMA

Marking the final presentation of weeklong 92nd Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan, Sathya Sai International Organisation of Indonesia presented a beautiful programme of dances titled "Unity in Diversity" on 25th November 2017.

Scintillating dances in traditional costumes aptly aided by the beautiful video backdrop showcased the rich cultural heritage of Indonesia which enraptured



An elevating musical presentation by Young Adults.

their presentation with a prayer song in Hindi dedicated to Lord Ganesh, the singers and musicians transported the audience to a higher plane by their sweet and soul-stirring rendition of elevating songs, some of which were: "One Heart to Love All, Infinite Hands



A colourful dance showcasing the rich culture of Indonesia.

one and all. The beautiful show of art and culture of this island nation, presented by the Bal Vikas children and devotees of Bali, concluded with the depiction of Lord Narayana on Garuda while the singers sang the Bhajan "Garuda Vahana Narayana" (Lord Narayana who rides Garuda).

Know that Sai's love is the love of a thousand mothers. Naturally, you will find it impossible to gauge the intensity of My love. And understand this. If you place yourselves outside that love, you place yourselves outside the love of all mankind.

– Baba

From our Archives

NOTHING IS MORE DIVINE THAN LOVE

BODY IS GIFTED TO MAN TO SERVE OTHERS

MAN TODAY IS DOMINATED BY three evil qualities: anger, hatred and envy. These three qualities poison his mind. Consequently, every action of man gets poisoned. Every word he utters is venomous. All actions done by the promptings of the mind are tainted. All



sensory actions are equally polluted. To transform these evil thoughts and actions into good ones, it is necessary to infuse love into all our thoughts. When the mind is filled with love, all actions will be suffused with love.

Fill the Heart with Love and Render Service

Many people imagine that to divinise man and make him a godly being is a superhuman exercise. This is not so. Divine Love is within the competence of man. It is natural to man. He is entitled to possess it. Divine Love should not be considered as something transcendental or alien to man. But people tend to debase this love by giving it different forms and names and degrade themselves. The defect lies in the perversion of love; it is not inherent in it. Convert anger into love. Turn hatred into love. To effect this change what is needed is a change of heart – filling it with love. When the heart is filled with love, the whole world becomes loveable.

All are one! Be Alike to Everyone

There were controversies regarding Jesus. These differences were the cause of the ordeals he had to go through. But Jesus was prepared to face any trouble or any penalty. He considered compassion as the supreme quality. At first, he declared, “I am the Messenger of God”. Then, he announced: “I am the Son of God”. Ultimately, he declared: “I and my Father are One”. You must take note of this oneness. You must proclaim your oneness and not your diversity.

Today people talk about unity but do not practise it. In every Discourse, Swami speaks about love. How many practise it?

How many have tried to understand the love principle? Who has this love? Love is not to be seen anywhere. Where there is love, there is no room for hatred. Do not be envious of anyone. When this evil quality appears, love takes to flight. A pure heart is the abode of Love. Where there is Purity, there is Unity. Unity leads to Divinity.

Today Purity is absent. How, then, do you realise Divinity? You must offer everything to God without any desire. This was the teaching of Jesus. He considered everything as an offering to God. When he was being nailed on the cross, people around were weeping. At that moment, an ethereal voice declared: "All are one, my dear son, be alike to everyone". Jesus declared: "Death is the dress of life". Just as we change our clothes, we also change our bodies. The bodies are vestures (for the indwelling spirit). Hence, bodies should be considered ephemeral. We should not worry about the body.

Love is God, Live in Love

Buddha also, before he attained Nirvana, expounded his teachings clearly. His stepmother's son, Ananda, was in tears at that time. Buddha told him: "Ananda! You

should not shed tears like this. Why are you weeping"? Ananda said: "I am grieving over your imminent passing". Buddha declared: "I am not dying. Nor are you living. All have to give up this body. Therefore, you must not shed tears". How many heed such sayings? You must learn to lead ideal lives. That is the right way to observe the birthday of Christ. You must realise that there is nothing more divine than love. Love is God. Live in Love. This is your duty. Fill your heart with love. You will then be free from all afflictions. You may feel that you are suffering because of love. But that suffering is due to constricted love. When your love is all-embracing, there will be no room for suffering.

Christ was the victim of envious persons who were opposed to His teachings and who levelled accusations against him. Devotees of God should not mind the criticism of envious persons. All good people have to face such troubles. They should treat everything as meant for their good. This was how the Pandavas looked upon all the troubles they experienced.

– **Excerpted from Bhagavan's Christmas Discourses.**

...continued from page 9

of these three: unity, purity, divinity. It is love alone that brings unity in everyone. When there is love, there will be no differences on grounds of race, nationality, etc. Where there is no love, there is hatred. When there is hatred, there can be no relationship even between the child and the mother. When there is love, there is no difference of mine and thine. So, through love we can accomplish everything.

As said by Sinclair, they could have all those experiences because of love, faith

and strong divine feelings. Without love, without strong faith, you cannot have any experiences. Bhakti, Prapatti, Viswasa (devotion, surrender, faith). These are the three steps. All these are necessary. Then only can you have experiences. Transcendental experiences are based on devotion, surrender and faith.

– **Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 26th April 1993.**





FIRST SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL VEDA CONFERENCE



ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT events of Bhagavan's 92nd Birthday celebrations was the First Sri Sathya Sai International Veda Conference organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of India at Prasanthi Nilayam from 20th to 21st November 2017. Other events of far reaching importance which formed part of the Veda Conference were a Multi-faith Symposium, Multi-faith prayers for Global Peace and Harmony and Mass Recitation of Vedas.

Renaissance of the Vedas is the main objective of Bhagavan's Avataric Mission as He Himself declared that Veda Poshana and Vidwat Poshana (fostering of the Vedas and the Vedic scholars) were the main tasks of His incarnation on earth. As the Vedas are universal and belong to the entire mankind, the central theme of the Conference was the Vedic declaration, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (world is one family). The Chief Guest of the function was Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Talks by Eminent Speakers

The proceedings of the conference began at 8.00 a.m. on 20th November 2017 with Veda chanting by the students of Sri Sathya Institute of Higher Learning. This was followed by a presentation "God is One", by the Institute students which comprised musical rendering of prayers of different religions, conveying the message of unity of all faiths. A grand rally on the theme of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam followed next, the participants in which



A grand rally of participants of First International Veda Conference.

were representatives of 42 countries of the world, 20 States of India, students of Sathya Sai Schools, Bal Vikas students and alumni.

Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation then delivered his Welcome Address. Conveying Bhagavan's message of unity of all faiths, Sri Pandya stated that love was the foundation of all faiths and the same God was present in all irrespective of the different religions, castes and nationalities of people. He urged one and all to follow the message of Bhagavan who said: There is only one caste of humanity and one religion of love.

The next speaker was Sri Subramanyam Gorti, National Veda Coordinator, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Presenting an overview of the Conference, Sri Gorti observed that the Vedas transmitted to humanity the secret of happy life here and liberation hereafter. He pointed out that this Conference was an initiative of the Sai Organisation to spread the awareness of



the Vedas among the masses and give the message of unity of all faiths to the world.

A book release ceremony followed after this, in which the Governor, Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan released a book “Sri Sathya Sai Vedamrutham” containing 92 nectarine messages of Bhagavan.

Dr. V. Mohan, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, addressed the gathering before the Inaugural Address of the Chief Guest Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan. Referring to the converging of representatives of all faiths to participate in the Conference, Dr. Mohan observed that it was necessary for man today to accept and respect all from all religions as all religions, according to Bhagavan, were equally true. The essence of all religions, he said, was what Bhagavan declared: Love All Serve All, Help Ever Hurt Never.

Inaugural Address of the Chief Guest and Divine Discourse

Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan then gave his Inaugural Address. Quoting the Vedic dictum “Ekam Sat Viprah Bahuda Vadanti”, the distinguished speaker observed that unity of mankind was most important, and

that was what the Vedas propounded. Quoting Bhagavan, Sri Narasimhan said that Veda was like ‘Kalpa Vriksha’ (wish-fulfilling tree), which would give whatever one desired. Therefore, fostering of the Vedas was most essential, he said. That was what Prasanthi Nilayam was doing by organising Veda Conference, he added.

Bhagavan’s Divine Discourse followed next which was played on the public address system. In His Discourse, Bhagavan described the Vedas as repositories of Sathya (Truth). Sathya, He added, came from Dharma. Truth and Atma, He said, were one. Bhagavan exhorted one and all to follow the path of Veda and be free from all troubles. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, “Rama Kodanda Rama”.

Mass Recitation of Vedas

After the Discourse of Bhagavan, there was mass recitation of Sri Rudram and Mantrapushpam. As thousands of participants, students and devotees joined the mass recitation, the entire Sai Kulwant Hall reverberated with sacred Vedic chants, sending out spiritual vibrations in all directions. This most elevating mass Veda chanting continued for about 30



Chief Guest, Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan, Governor of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, delivering his Inaugural Address.



Mass recitation of Vedas in Sai Kulwant Hall.

minutes and came to a close with Sarva Dharma prayer “Om Tat Sat Sri Narayana Tu”. This was followed by Sarva Dharma Bhajans which concluded with Arati at 11.00 a.m.

The deliberations the Conference thereafter continued in Poornachandra Auditorium where an excellent exhibition “Veda Tattwa” was inaugurated.

MULTI-FAITH SYMPOSIUM

The programme in the evening comprised a Multi-faith Symposium in which representatives of different faiths came to participate. The programme began with recitation of prayers of major religions of the world by their representatives. As the representatives of different faiths were seated in Sai Kulwant Hall, Sri Kalyan Ray, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, West Bengal introduced the speakers, Air Chief Marshal, Dr. Nirmal Suri presided over the deliberations and Sri Jitendra Cheema, State President of Delhi-NCR moderated in the symposium. There were three topics

“Help Ever Hurt Never – the Persona of Followers of all Faiths”. The participants of the symposium were: Swami Shantatmananda from Ramakrishna Mission, Hon. Karma Gelek Yuthok from Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, Ven. 7th Chungpo Gyalton Rinpoche from Palpung Sherabling Monastic Seat, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, Sri Shereyar Vakil representing Zoroastrianism, Md. Shafique Qasmi representing Islam, Prof. Ali Mohd. Naqvi from Aligarh Muslim University, Father Felix Jones representing Christianity, Giani Gurbachan Singh of Akal Takht, Golden Temple, Amritsar, Rabbi Ezekiel Isaac Malekar of Judaism, Acharya (Dr.) Lokesh Muni of Jainism, Haji Syed Salman Chisty of Dargah Ajmer Sharif, Maulana Abdur Rahaman Molla of All India Imam Association, Sri Dinesh Rao of the Baha’i Faith, Sarvasree Kunalbhai Bhat and Bharatbhai Mehta of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Sanstha, Bengaluru.

All the participants who spoke in the symposium endorsed the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as the basis of unity of all faiths. Some of the views expressed by the participants were: One who knows the pain of others is a real devotee of God; service of humanity is service of God; good thoughts, good words and good actions are most important in the life of man; what Bhagavan Baba has done for mankind is



Representatives of different faiths participating in Multi-faith Symposium.

for discussion, namely, “Service as a Unifying Factor in all Religions”, “Love All Serve All, the Bedrock of all Faiths” and

ideal for all; the same Atma is present in all; service is the best means of progress on the spiritual path; each individual is

potentially divine; the goal of man is to manifest his divinity; Zakat (charity) is an essential part of Islam; share joy and have happiness; Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha Vadanti; Sathyam Vada Dharmam Chara.



Group photo of the participants in the Symposium.

All the participants spoke in one voice that such multi-faith gatherings create amity and understanding between different faiths. The symposium was a rare sight of unity and camaraderie between representatives of all the faiths. This showed the right path for global harmony and oneness.

A Divine Discourse of Bhagavan followed the deliberations of the symposium. In His Discourse, Bhagavan said, the Vedas propound the truth that the Atma in all beings is the same. Man, Bhagavan said, should understand this truth clearly and lead a life of service and sacrifice as these were the means of attaining immortality.

Thanking all the participants for their active participation in the symposium, Sri Nimish Pandya stated that love was the greatest means of unity of all mankind. The Sai Organisation, he said, emphasised the practice of unconditional love for one and all so that all could come

together as witnessed in this symposium. All the speakers were then felicitated. Sarva Dharma Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING OF VEDAS

The theme of the ongoing International Veda Conference on 21st November 2017 was “Scientific Understanding of Vedas”, wherein six distinguished speakers shared their valuable insights. The speakers were Dato Jega Jagadeesan of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation (SSSSO), Malaysia, Dr. N. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Indian Institute of Scientific Heritage, Kerala, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman, Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO), Dr. Anuradha Choudry, Asst. Prof., IIT, Kharagpur, Sri George Bebedelis, National Council President of Greece, Director of ISSE, South Europe and Prof (Dr.) Mohammed Hanif Khan Shastri, Professor of Sanskrit, Rashtriya Sanskrit University, New Delhi.

The first speaker of the session was Data Jega Jagadeesan who deliberated on the theme “Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Call for Interfaith Unity ... From Conference Halls to Community”. Narrating Malaysian Sai Organisation’s efforts in the area, he said that Interfaith Unity was a living reality, and not confined to air-conditioned rooms of deliberations. The best way to effect Interfaith Unity was to translate the talks into action, he emphasised. In conclusion, he wished the Sathya Sai Organisation in India to take the Vedas to a global scale to make greater impact in the area of Interfaith Unity.

Delivering the Keynote Address of the Conference, Dr. N. Gopalakrishnan deliberated on the topic “Discovery of



Vedas as the Source of Wisdom and Great Relevance in Modern Times with its Scientific Understanding for the Benefit of Mankind". Delivering his talk with profound Vedic wisdom, the erudite speaker delved into the quintessence of the Vedas for living a useful, fruitful and meaningful life practising the dictum, "Asato Ma Sadgamaya, Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya, Mrityor Ma Amritangamaya". Quoting from the vast scriptural Vedic treasure house, Dr. Gopalakrishnan exhorted the audience to experience Divinity in life and do good to others.

Addressing next, Dr. Narendranath Reddy shared nuggets of wisdom that he learnt at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan over the years of close association with Him. Quoting Swami and His teachings, with referential wisdom from the vast Vedic ocean, Dr Reddy concluded, identifying the modern four Mahavakyas of Bhagavan, namely, Love All, Serve All. Help Ever, Hurt Never. His topic was "Vedanta In Daily Life".

Dr. Anuradha Choudry then spoke on the quintessential human puzzle of man's journey from Being to Becoming and reverse. Her topic being "Transformative Power of Vedic Sounds: An Aid to More Peaceful and Healthier Individual and Collective Living", she took the audience through a practical 'classroom' demonstration involving sounds and movements, giving the audience a glimpse of the answer to the eternal human question, Who Am I?

Sri George Bebedelis spoke on the topic, "Importance of Vedic Ideals and their Connection with Ancient Greek Wisdom", and shared with the audience the most priceless wisdom that he learnt directly from

Bhagavan in the confines of His interview room, that 'He is God'. Narrating his beautiful learning experiences with Bhagavan, he also spoke on the Vedic wisdom, tracing its connectivity with the ancient Greek wisdom as promoted by Plato and Socrates.

The final speaker, Prof (Dr.) Mohammad Hanif Khan Shastri, chose to speak in Hindi. Identifying Vedas as the root principle of entire universal wisdom, he deliberated on the topic "Essence of Sanathana Dharma and Quran" with great conviction. Quoting the sacred Bhagavadgita verses at ease, the erudite speaker stated that the quintessence of the Bhagavadgita and the Holy Quran was the same.

In the end, the speakers were felicitated. Bhajans continued and the session ended with Arati.

VALEDICTORY SESSION OF THE FIRST SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL VEDA CONFERENCE

The valedictory session of the Veda Conference held on 21st November 2017 was marked by three talks, mass recitation of Sri Rudram and Mantrapushpam followed by a thematic dance drama.

The session commenced at 4.30 p.m. with the talk of Sri Vedanarayanan Kollengode, faculty at Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam. Speaking on the topic "I have Come to Foster the Vedas and the Vedic Scholars – Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba", the speaker observed that the Vedas were universal, beyond the boundaries of countries, and belonged to all. They gave the message of unity and

continued on page 25...



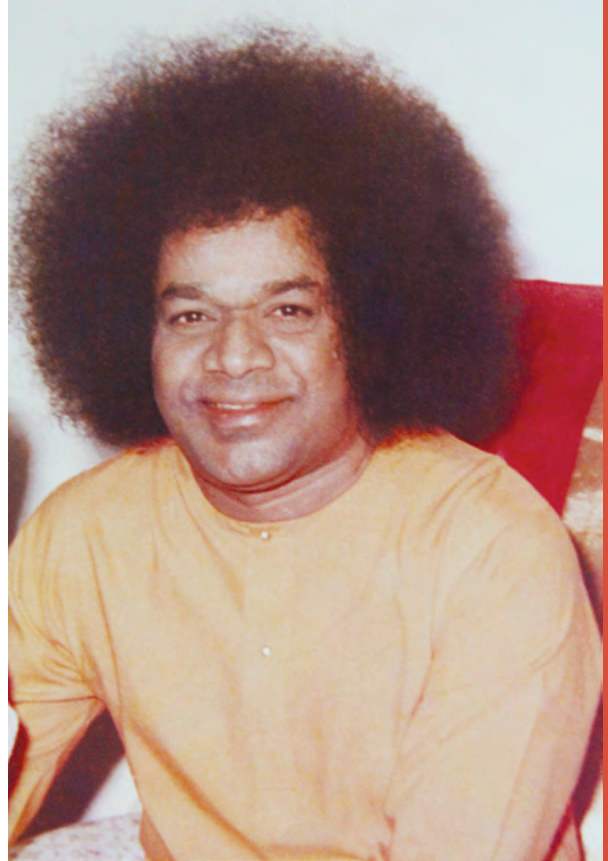
Effulgence of Divine Glory

EXPERIENCING SWAMI'S DIVINITY

*M*ADHAV DIKSHIT LEFT THE Ashram to return to Mangalore (now Mangaluru), but I stayed on as it was my long vacation. During this time, Beloved Swami showered His choicest blessings by giving me the most amazing experiences.

Swami was most compassionate and gave interviews to devotees in the morning and in the afternoon. The afternoon interviews were usually between 4.30 and 7.30 p.m. To my great surprise, Baba one day sent a volunteer to call me at exactly 2.30 p.m. (two hours earlier). I was alone with Swami in the interview room. He said: "Take out your diary and write down today's date and the time. At this very moment your mother is undergoing an operation in Kampala, Uganda, East Africa. Two European surgeons are expecting severe post-operative complications; as a result, your mother's pulse count will go down to a dangerous level. But Swami will reverse the situation and will give her a long life!"

I was very surprised by this statement because, just two days before, I had received a letter from my brother saying that everyone was well and happy at home. How could I believe this to be true? I thought myself to be too clever and felt that Baba was just trying to impress me. But, Swami is Antaryami (He knows everything about our affairs and whatever is going on in our mind). He immediately cautioned me and said:



"You are leaving this room with doubts, but you will soon come back with total faith"! He added: "By the way, do you know the time difference between India and Kampala"? I replied, "It is now 12 noon in Kampala".

What really happened was that my beloved mother suddenly developed gangrene of the small intestine due to intussusception (passage of one part of the intestine into another). It was a very serious case and the doctors decided to operate at

12 noon. Just as Swami had said, her pulse rate dropped after the operation and her condition was so critical that all our close family relations were called to her bedside as it seemed she was nearing her final moments of life.

Just then, my sister remembered the packet of Vibhuti I had sent and she quickly smeared it all over mother's body. Lo and behold! Miraculously her pulse rate slowly started to stabilise and within half an hour she opened her eyes and started talking to everyone! The doctors were totally surprised and wanted to know what that white powder was! My sister explained to them the power of Vibhuti!

...continued from page 23

showed the path of immortality to man, he added.

Speaking next, Sri S.S. Naganand, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust commented on Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation's yeomen effort in organising the two-day event. Elucidating on Bhagavan's directions to make the Vedas universal, the speaker observed that God never had any caste or creed restrictions. He then spelt out the role of Sai Organisation in promoting the Vedas, as per the guidance received from Bhagavan. Before concluding, Sri Naganand read out a personal message received from the Prime Minister of India, Sri Narendra Modi, hoping the best for Veda Conference and Multi-faith Symposium.

In his concluding remarks, Sri Nimish Pandya spoke on the universal growth of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and observed that SSSSO is an inclusive one, belonging to all. Two main messages of Bhagavan, the Vedas and Interfaith Unity, were going to be the focal points of the organisational

When I returned to Kampala, these doctors were very keen to know more about Swami. Later, I heard that they too developed faith in Beloved Baba and even pledged to visit Prasanthi Nilayam when time permitted!

Through this incident, my family members started having faith in Swami and decided to visit Prasanthi Nilayam on their next visit to India! By now I too had started to believe in Baba as God because He had proved to me that He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent!

– Excerpted from “Sai Smaran” by Dr. D.J. Gadhia.

activity in the future, declared Sri Pandya amidst thunderous applause. Prasanthi Nilayam should take the lead to carry the message of the Vedas to the world, he said in conclusion. Mass recitation of Rudram and Mantrapushpam by thousands of participants then reverberated in the hall.

Rudra Tattwam - Ekatwam: A Drama

The last item of the valedictory session was a dance drama “Rudra Tattwam – Ekatwam” (the principle of Rudram is oneness) which was presented by Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare, Chrompet, Chennai. The drama explained Sri Rudram stanza-wise through Lord Ganesh and depicted Lord Siva as Rudra, which had its root in love. The drama also emphasised Bhagavan's eternal message of love through which man would achieve Ekatwam or oneness. Flashback scenes from the illustrious lives of Kannappa Nayanar and Markandeya depicted the glory of Lord Siva. Bhajans followed next and ended with Arati at 6.50 p.m. to mark the conclusion of the Veda Conference.

36TH ANNUAL CONVOCATION

SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF Higher Learning (Deemed to be University) held its 36th Annual Convocation in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 22nd November 2017.

The Academic Procession and the Vice Chancellor's Speech

The event began at 10 a.m. when the SSSIHL convocation ceremonial procession, led by the university brass band and two students carrying the University Standards on either side of the Registrar (who carried the Ceremonial Mace) entered Sai Kulwant Hall. The members of the

In his speech, the Vice Chancellor introduced the Chief Guest of the Convocation, Prof. Anthony R. West, Professor of Electroceramics and Solid State Chemistry, Department of Material Science and Engineering, University of Sheffield, U.K. Prof. West has dedicated his professional life to the field of solid state chemistry with special interest in the synthesis of new oxide materials, their crystal structures and electrical properties. He a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Institute of Physics, the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, and the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Highlighting the growth of the University in the past thirty-six years, and how Bhagavan Baba Himself shaped the unique model of values-based education, the Vice Chancellor detailed the achievements of the University during the past academic year. This included the outstanding student teacher ratio of 8:1 (one of the best in India), the recent growth of interdisciplinary research (including substantial funding of ₹ 70 million rupees received for research from various government agencies like DRDO, ISRO, DAE, DST, DBT, BRNS and UGC) and other relevant statistical highlights. He also mentioned the SSSIHL Central Research Instruments Facility (CRIF), a new, high-quality research facility at SSSIHL that houses major equipment and infrastructural resources required for the University faculty, doctoral research scholars and postgraduate students to gain high quality training for pursuing directed research in frontier areas.



SSSIHL convocation ceremonial procession entering Sai Kulwant Hall.

procession included the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor, the Chief Guest, Deans and the Heads of Departments, and members of the Board of Management and Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

Following the invocatory Veda chanting, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. K.B.R. Varma, prayed to the Revered Founder Chancellor to declare the convocation open. The convocation was then declared open in the Divine voice of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.



Graduands Admitted to their Degrees

Following this, 457 candidates for the various programmes of study were admitted to their various degrees (undergraduate, postgraduate and professional programmes) by the Chancellor, Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of India. The convocation pledge was then administered by the Vice Chancellor, after which the four All-Round Medallists, 18 Gold Medallists and 12 Ph.D. students of the University were honoured.

Chief Guest's Speech

Prof. Anthony R. West then delivered his Convocation Address. He recalled his humble beginnings in a hard world as a baby boomer back in the 1950's and 1960's, and how that shaped his career of almost 50 years. He based his message on three major pieces of advice to the students:



*The Chief Guest of the convocation
Prof. Anthony R. West delivering his
Convocation Address.*

Find your niche in life; make the most of the resources and facilities available, and be inventive and have the courage of your conviction (be a leader, not a follower). He advised the graduates to be positive, believe in themselves, not to be afraid of the unknown, and seek out new challenges and opportunities. He encouraged them to dream big, reminding them that it was

remarkable how all the big developments that we see around us in technology, transport, communications, healthcare and so on, had very small, humble beginnings. He illustrated this by the old English saying, 'from little acorns, tall oak trees grow'!

The Divine Benediction

Finally, the graduands were blessed with the Divine Convocation Benediction by the Revered Founder Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He stressed on understanding the value of education, which was beyond the upkeep of physical body and materialistic needs. What man needed most was character, He said. This was most essential for modern students who should eradicate anger, ego and other bad qualities to attain immortality through sacrifice, He added. He ended His benediction by telling students that Love was their greatest property! The morning session came to a close at 12.15 p.m. following the national anthem and Arati.

Convocation Drama

In the evening, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning performed a drama "Sankeertana Saaram" (the soul of singing) which showcased the importance of Sankeertana as the best means of attaining Divine grace in Kali Yuga. The drama also depicted through the story of a Bhajan Sankeertana Samithi that what mattered most in Sankeertana was devotion. Good acting of the students, powerful dialogues and excellent stage management made the drama an impressive presentation.

Following Prasadam distribution and Bhajans, 36th Convocation of SSSIHL concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m.



AN UNSHAKEABLE BOND OF LOVE

Geetha Mohanram

“YOU ARE MY HANUMAN,” with these momentous words, Swami materialised a chain and a pendant for my father Dr. R.S. Padmanabhan in the interview room in Prasanthi Nilayam on the occasion of His 80th Birthday in 2006. What an incredible blessing to earn such a comparison from the same Lord Rama who had known the matchless devotion of Hanuman in Treta Yuga! As Swami sweetly reminisced about my father’s service to Him over the past 60 years, the unshakeable bond of love between Jivatma and Paramatma became apparent.

Dr. Padmanabhan was 18 years old in November 1944, when he first had Darshan of 17 years old Sathya Sai Baba. For years after, Swami would joke about how He had to ‘listen’ to Padmanabhan as he was a year older! The young dental student had reluctantly accompanied his aunt, Smt. Sunderamma, to see Swami in a devotee’s home in Bangalore (Bengaluru), and was standing near the door. When Swami beckoned him, my father remembered going closer, but then lost awareness of his surroundings for some time. When my father “regained” consciousness, his heart and mind told him he had found God.

At that time, Dr. Padmanabhan had not yet graduated from dental school, but Swami told him that he would be married in a few months. Sure enough, my father was married to my mother Kamala, on 14th



February the next year. Thereafter, much of the family’s time, especially during festivals and holidays, was spent in Puttaparthi; Swami was always with us, teaching us, guiding us in everything, showering us with His divine love.

When my father started his dental practice, Swami came to open his clinic in Basavanagudi, Bengaluru and then suggested he set up one in Malleswaram as well. Dr. Padmanabhan felt that would be too expensive, but Swami said, “Wait,

continued on page 32...



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

RAMA KATHA RASA JHARI: A DRAMA

A S PART OF HOLY Navaratri celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam, Rajamahendravaram enacted a beautiful drama entitled "Rama Katha Rasa Jhari" on 21st September 2017, presenting selected episodes from the life of Lord Rama to highlight the glory of His Name and the magnanimity of Thyagaraja's devotion for Him which earned him unbounded grace of Rama and granted him final liberation. The story of Rama

62ND ANNIVERSARY OF GENERAL HOSPITAL

The 62nd anniversary of Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Prasanthi Nilayam, the first service institution set up by Bhagavan Baba in 1956 for the service of the masses,



Devotional music presentation by the General Hospital staff.



A scene from the drama "Rama Katha Rasa Jhari".

was narrated through dialogue between Thyagaraja, Narada and Hanuman which brought forth the nectarine essence of Rama's love for mankind. Noble theme, impressive dialogues and melodious songs made the drama an interesting presentation.

was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 1st October 2017. The programme began at 4.40 p.m. with the opening remarks of Air Marshal (retd.) Dr. Vinod Kumar Varma, Medical Superintendent of the hospital, in which he dwelt upon the phenomenal growth of the hospital and stated how the best quality loving healthcare was being provided to patients by the hospital. What followed next was a beautiful mix of short speeches and devotional songs by the hospital staff. The staff members who narrated their experiences of Bhagavan's love and guidance were: Dr. Ravi Dabir, Dr. Chaya Himadri, Smt. Vijaya Bose, Ms. Easwari and Dr. Hema Gopinathan. Melodious and heart touching songs presented by the staff members included "Humko Mana Ki Shakti Dena" (Oh Lord!



Give us the power of mind), “Janula Madhya Tirugaade Jagapati” (the Supreme Lord walks among the mortals), “Deena Dukhiyon Se Prem Karo Mera Sai Prasanna Hoga” (Sai will be happy when you love the destitute and poor).

A Divine Discourse of Bhagavan followed this, in which Bhagavan emphasised the importance of the harmony of heart, head and hand for the prevention of diseases and exhorted the doctors to consider work as worship and duty as God. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan “Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin”. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati.

PILGRIMAGE OF TELANGANA DEVOTEES

More than 1,000 devotees came on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from Medak, Sangareddy and Siddipet districts of Telangana on 8th and 9th October 2017. As part of their pilgrimage, they presented music and cultural programmes on both the days.

The first presentation made by them on 8th October 2017 was a dance drama “Divya Leela Vinodam” which showcased how Bhagavan Baba as Sadguru guides

mankind to take to the path of love and service to redeem their life. Beautiful dances of the children and use of folk art form of Burra Katha made the drama lively and interesting. A garland of devotional songs entitled “Sangeeta Vibhavari” was their second presentation which they made on 9th October 2017. The devotional songs sung by them with hearts full of devotion included “Madhurashtakam”, “Jai Sai Ram Sai Ram”, “Govinda Govinda Govinda”.

CULTURAL PRESENTATION OF VIDYA VAHINI SCHOOLS

A drama was performed by the students of Vidya Vahini schools of Chikkaballapur district of Karnataka on 14th October 2017, which depicted that real education was that which taught the students the values of kindness, honesty and service



A scene from the drama by the students of Vidya Vahini schools of Chikkaballapur district, Karnataka.



Welcoming the Lord with a dance in the dance drama “Divya Leela Vinodam”.

leading them to the path of spirituality and wisdom, and not merely to earn their living. Citing many examples from scriptures, the drama emphasised that this was the type of education that the universal Guru Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba gifted to the children in the form of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini, the drama delineated in conclusion.

DEEPAVALI AND GUJARATI NEW YEAR

A large number of devotees came from Gujarat to celebrate the twin festivals of Deepavali and Gujarati New Year in the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam. On this occasion, they presented excellent music and cultural programmes on 19th and 20th October 2017.

The programme on the morning of 19th October 2017 began with a melodious Gujarati folk song which was presented by Sai Youth (girls) of Gujarat. This was followed by a devotional music concert by a noted vocalist Sri Dipak Kansara and his team of fellow musicians who enthralled the devotees with melodious Kirtans and Bhajans which included “Badley Yuga Ki Dhaara” and “Govind Bolo Gopal Bolo”. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati.

In the evening, the students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Surat made a beautiful drama presentation “Sabse Oonchi Prem Sagai” (devotion is the highest form of



The drama “Sabse Oonchi Prem Sagai” highlighted the greatness of devotion as a means of man’s liberation.

Sadhana). The drama portrayed the life story of Surdas, one of the greatest devotees of Lord Krishna, highlighting the truth that faith, devotion and surrender lead man to God. Bhajans followed next

and concluded with the Bhajan “Om Sivaya Om Sivaya” in the golden voice of Bhagavan. Soon after the programme concluded in Sai Kulwant Hall, there was a grand display of fireworks in Yajur Mandir in celebration of Deepavali.

The programme on the morning of 20th October 2017 began with a Gujarati folk song sung melodiously by the Sai Youth (girls) of Gujarat. What followed next was a touching drama entitled “Antaryami Sai” (Sai, the Indweller). Through the story of a small Sai Samithi of Gujarat which undertakes a huge Seva activity on Bhagavan’s Birthday, the drama showcased how the unseen hand of Indweller Sai comes to the help of devotees who perform Seva activities with faith and earnestness.

77TH ANNIVERSARY OF AVATAR DECLARATION DAY

To commemorate the historic day of 20th October 1940, when Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba declared at the age of 14 years that He was Sathya Sai Baba, the Avatar of Kali Age, an excellent music and cultural programme was organised at Prasanthi Nilayam by Daughters of Mother Sai (a group of 200 alumnae of Anantapur Campus of the Institute) on 20th October 2017. The alumnae presented soulful devotional songs interspersed with narrations of their divine experiences with Bhagavan. Beginning with a prayer song dedicated to Lord Ganesh, the alumni presented an array of devotional songs which included “Darshan Do Bhagavan” (Oh Lord, give me Darshan), “Ram Ka Guna Gaan Kariye” (we should chant the Name of Rama), “Baje Muraliya Baje” (the flute gives sweet music). They concluded

their presentation with the song “Hum Tere Hain Sai Hum Tere Hain” (Sai, we are Yours). Besides the devotional songs and narration of their experiences, the alumnae screened a beautiful documentary as an



A soulful devotional music presentation by the Daughters of Mother Sai.

expression of their love and gratitude to Bhagavan. The programme also included

...continued from page 28

someone will come”. Just as He foretold, Dr. Padmanabhan soon met a property owner who was glad to rent him the perfect space at a nominal fee. But at that time, the young dentist could not even afford a dental chair. Again, Swami helped by directing my father to ask a particular person for the forgotten dental chair stored in his garage! On an auspicious day, Swami inaugurated Dr. Padmanabhan’s clinic in Malleswaram. But His love for His devotee did not stop there – Swami Himself insisted on being the first “patient” and even insisted on paying ₹100 for the service!

Whenever Swami came to Bengaluru, He would stay with us. My father would be His constant companion, except when his clinic patients were waiting! Even the Lord had to wait when patients called, and Swami always appreciated my father’s dedication to his work. After Swami established His Ashram in Whitefield, my father would accompany Him during Darshan, always a few steps behind His Lord, ready to hold devotees’ letters or provide a handkerchief,

talks by two alumnae. The first speaker was Ms. Padmasree Guduru from Singapore who dwelt on the significance of Swami’s first Bhajan “Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam” which she considered a profound Mantra of life. The second speaker was Ms. Sai Sudha Narayan from Mumbai who narrated her experiences with Bhagavan and exhorted one and all to earn His grace by making Him the main focus of their life.

The alumnae continued their devotional offering to Bhagavan on the morning of 21st October 2017 also by narrating their experiences of Bhagavan’s Divinity along with an excellent band music presentation.

anticipating His needs, alert to Swami’s every look or softly-spoken word. Swami would always ask Dr. Padmanabhan to stay with Him in Brindavan, and the Lord and His devotee would spend many an hour together. My father was always very protective of Swami, and of His time; he would never ask Him personal questions and forbade us from doing so either! And despite our pleas, he would never recount their conversations or the experiences he had with Swami.

Over the years, Swami appointed Dr. Padmanabhan to fulfil ever-increasing roles in the growing Sai Organisation. As He grew busier, Swami’s visits to our house gradually reduced, but the deep bond with my father only grew in sweetness until his passing in December 2008.

– The author is an inspiring orator, who has been delivering talks on Swami since 1996 in many parts of the world. She is the daughter of Dr. R.S. Padmanabhan who served Swami for over 60 years.



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– *Principal*

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Make your Heart Sacred

The yearning for bliss is the best proof of our holy nature. Man is bliss, he seeks bliss; bliss is blessedness for him. Since God is bliss, *happiness is union with God*. Nothing else can award that joy, which is unaffected by whatever happens or does not happen. The heart of Jesus was pure and calm. Hence, it is honoured as sacred. We must make our hearts sacred so that either we merge in Jesus or Jesus merges in us.

– *Baba*



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