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SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

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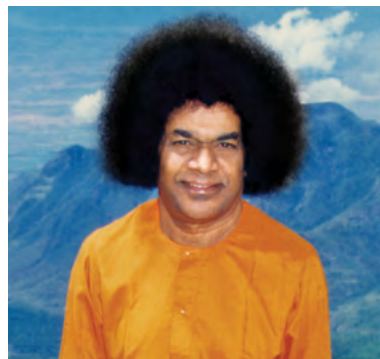
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*"Everyone should love God.
God is love, love is God.
Live in love. Whatever
you do without love is useless.
Contemplate on God with love.
Realise that you are God.
Realise that God is in you."*



CONTENTS

- 4 **Unity of Thought, Word and Deed is True Humanness**
Bhagavan's Discourse: 29th April 1997
- 9 **Sri Sathya Sai Educational Institutions**
Annual Sports and Cultural Meet 2016
A Report
- 15 **God Sees only Inner Purity of Man**
From our Archives
- 17 **Experiencing Swami's Divinity**
Yasmin Sibal
- 22 **Grace Unbounded**
Effulgence of Divine Glory
- 26 **Haridasa**
Chinna Katha
- 27 **Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam**
A Report
- 32 **News from Sai Centres**

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AVATAR VANI

UNITY OF THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED IS TRUE HUMANNESS

Devotion is the basis to attain the knowledge of the Supreme Being. Devotion is the panacea to get rid of the disease of birth and death. It is devotion that leads man to the knowledge of eternal truth and confers on him liberation which is the ultimate goal of life.

(Sanskrit Verse)

DEVELOP FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

Embodiments of Divine Love!

DEVOTION IS THE ROYAL ROAD to reach the supreme state of spirituality. Devotion is also

the way, if one wants to get rid of worldly difficulties and sorrows and attain happiness. Removal of sorrows, achieving fullness in happiness and bliss is liberation which can be attained through devotion.

The Path of Devotion

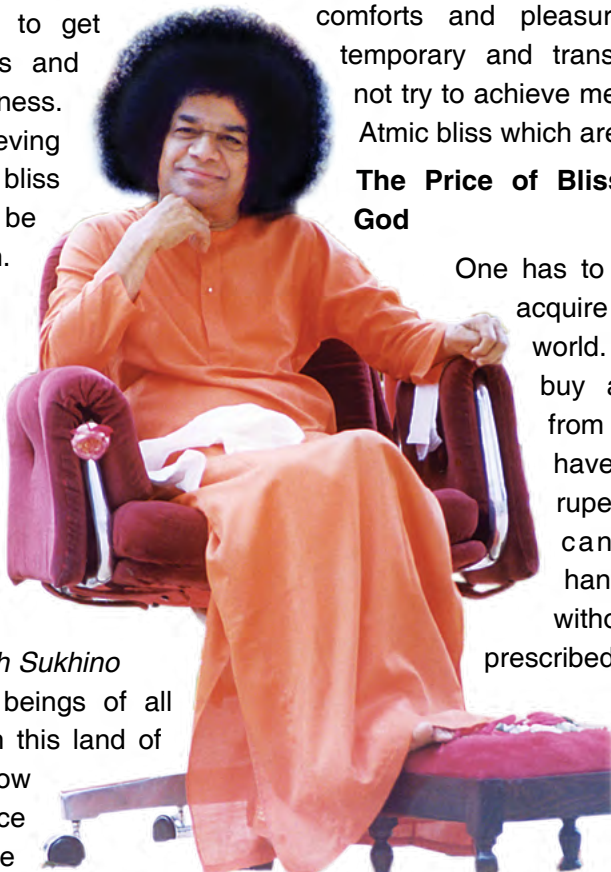
The country of Bharat has been imparting peace and security to the world since ancient times. The traditional prayer in Bharat is that everyone in the world should attain happiness and bliss. *Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the beings of all the worlds be happy!) In this land of spiritual eminence, we now find restlessness, injustice and untruth which are

increasing day by day. What is the reason?

The lack of devotion and surrender to God are the main reasons for this. Man is struggling all the time only to obtain worldly comforts and pleasures which are temporary and transient. He does not try to achieve mental peace and Atmic bliss which are eternal.

The Price of Bliss is Love for God

One has to pay a price to acquire anything in this world. If you want to buy a handkerchief from a shop, you have to pay ten rupees for it. You cannot take the handkerchief home without paying the prescribed price. When you have to pay a price even for an impermanent and transient



object, you have naturally to pay the appropriate price for obtaining permanent bliss. What is its price? Its price is pure love which is sacred, ever new and divine. This is not worldly love. It always unites, it has no ups and downs; it never waxes and wanes. This love always gives and never takes. Everybody should understand the difference between worldly love and divine love. Worldly loves only takes, never gives, whereas divine love only gives, never takes.

The Heart of a Bhakta

Here is a small example. Once Lord Vishnu asked Narada, which among the five elements was the greatest. Narada replied, "Earth is the greatest". Then Vishnu remarked, "Three-fourth of the earth is enveloped with water. In such a case, which among the two is greater"? Narada agreed that water was greater. Vishnu said, "But Sage Agastya drank up the ocean in a single gulp. So, is Agastya greater or water"? Narada replied, "You are right, my Lord, Agastya is greater than water". Vishnu asked again, "But, this Agastya is a tiny star in the Akasa (sky). Now, is this star greater or the sky"? Narada replied, "It is the sky that is greater". The Lord agreed and said, "Your understanding is correct. The sky indeed is greater. In His incarnation as Vamana, the Lord asked for three steps from King Bali. And in the course of taking the gift of three steps, Vamana assumed the form of Trivikrama and covered the entire earth in one step, and the sky in the second. There was no room for the third step. King Bali had to offer his head for the third step. So, now, is God greater or the sky"? Narada replied, "Swami, when the mere foot of the Lord covers the entire sky, how much greater His full form would be? God indeed is greater".

***Develop friendship with God.
When you are a friend of God,
you are one with Him. Then, it
becomes easier to reach the next
stage of self-surrender. Try hard to
have friendship with God. He is the
only real friend. The world is the
book, time is the teacher and God
is the true friend. Your worldly
friends will stay with you so long
as you have power and position.
Nobody will talk to you when you
lose these.***

"God, who envelops the entire cosmos dwells in the heart of His Bhakta (devotee). So, now, is the devotee greater or God?" asked Vishnu. Narada replied, "Indeed, the devotee is greater than God".

Sankara's three Sins

What is sin and what is merit? Once Adi Sankara went to Varanasi in the course of his tour of the country with his disciples. Standing before the altar of Lord Vishwanath, he said, "I have committed three sins. Oh Lord, tell me the way to atone these sins".

"Oh Lord Vishwanath! My first sin is that in spite of my knowing and also teaching others that God is beyond mind and speech, I have tried to describe you through several Stotras (hymns) composed by me. This betrays lack of conformity between my thoughts and words. Next, having been convinced of the scriptural sayings that God pervades and permeates everything in the manifested universe, I have been preaching this truth to one and all. Nevertheless, I have come to Varanasi to have your Darshan. This



shows that my thoughts, words and deeds are at variance with one another. This is my second sin. Thirdly, I have firm belief in the teachings of the scriptures that one and the same Atma is immanent in all beings and there is no difference between Jivatma (individual soul) and Paramatma (universal Self). While I have been proclaiming this truth in all my discourses, I have now come here to stand before you as if we two are separate and different from each other. This is my third sin. Hence, I pray that I may be absolved of all these three sins, of which I am guilty."

Thinking one thing, saying something else and doing what is totally different is not correct. *Manasyekam Vachasyekam, Karmanyekam Mahatmanam; Manasyanyath Vachasyanyath, Karmanyanyath Duratmanam* (Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked).

Unity of thoughts, words and deeds is the underlying principle of true devotion and surrender. If you have staunch faith and love for God and if you dive deep into the depths of pure love, you will realise the nature of divinity. To facilitate this, God comes on earth in human form, walks among humans and interacts with them. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God is in the form of a human being). Yet, it is not possible for all to recognise Him.

Unity in Diversity

People attain different types of education in this world. There are any number of educated persons who see diversity in unity. But those who see unity in diversity are very few.

We read scriptures and chant Vedic Mantras without understanding their

real significance and inner meaning. We constantly repeat Mantras like a tape recorder, but do not recognise the meaning implied in them. Worldly education is for life here and spiritual education is for life hereafter. We think that the worldly happiness is all that we need. No doubt, worldly education is necessary to live in this world. But we need spiritual education to realise the Atmic principle. Man's life is made up of both of these. On the one hand, you have tendencies like Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya (desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy). On the other, you have virtues like Sathya (truth), Dharma (righteousness), Santhi (peace), Prema (love) and Ahimsa (non-violence). Life is like a football field, where the ball gets kicked in both the directions. We should kick the ball into the goal post. Where should the ball go to attain victory? The ball should go between two poles, the worldly education and the spiritual education. That is victory. If the ball goes outside these two poles, it is not a goal. Man should have right perspective of both Karma Marga (path of action) and Dharma Marga (path of righteousness).

People say, God is Ardhanareeswara (a composite form of Shakti and Siva). He has both male and female characteristics. In fact, every human being has these characteristics. Man is the combination of matter and energy. What is matter and what is energy? Human body is matter and the Atma inherent in it is energy. Body is Prakriti (female principle) and Atma is Siva (male principle). Man is the combination of both. World itself is a combination of matter and energy. God permeates the entire Nature.

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



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

(Telugu Poem)

The same principle exists everywhere. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). Truth is one, God is one. You can call Him by any name you like: Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Nanak, Allah. The names and forms may be different, but Divinity is the same. One person may like Jilebi, another Gulab Jamun, a third Badam Kheer. Names and forms of sweets are different, but the sugar in all of them is the same. Nobody

Difficulties, in fact, are the steps which take us to a higher plane. It is only after we face difficulties that we get the result. Even a realised person attains that state only after undergoing a lot of difficulties. What is the use of a diamond that is not cut? However pure gold may be, it has to be put into fire and beaten with a hammer to make jewels. Bear all difficulties with a view that these are steps to take you to a higher plane.

should think that God is different. You are God. God is in you, around you. You should contemplate on God who is within you with pure devotion. You have forgotten yourself. Your true spiritual endeavour is to look within your own heart. Then you will see your image in the mirror of your heart.

Follow the Path of Jnana and Bhakti

Try to recognise the difference between Jnana and Ajnana (wisdom and ignorance).

Suppose, there are mirrors everywhere in a room, on all the four sides. A man enters that room and finds that whichever mirror he looks into, he sees his own image. He feels satisfied that he is everything. This is Jnana.

When a dog enters that room, it sees many dogs there. Thinking that those other dogs want to attack it, it attacks them. As a result, several of the mirrors break into pieces. Actually the dog fights with itself. When it sees a way to go out, it feels relieved and goes away. This sort of state is Ajnana (lack of wisdom). Ajnana is the cause of man's bondage. Man thinks that



he is different from the Atma. Though he is the Atma, he is deluded to think that he is the body.

Man is bound by the chains of bondage. There are two ways to escape from these chains. Either he can grow big, break the chains and get free or he can escape by becoming very small. To say, Sivoham, Sivoham (I am Siva, I am Siva) and grow



very big and break the chains is the path of Jnana. To say, Dasoham, Dasoham (I am God's servant), you become very small. To become very small and escape is the path of Bhakti (devotion). So, there are two paths of man's freedom, the path of Jnana and Bhakti. The path of Jnana is difficult, whereas the path of Bhakti is easy. Bhakti is total love. Have firm faith in your heart and fill your life with love. There is no path better than this.

Difficulties are not Permanent

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Human life we see is full of hardships, difficulties and all types of sorrows. Without trials and tribulations, man cannot attain exalted state in life. Both individuals and nations are beset with many problems. We should understand that pleasure is an interval between two pains. Difficulties, in fact, are the steps which take us to a higher plane. It is only after we face difficulties that we get the result. Even a realised person attains that state only after undergoing a lot of difficulties. What is the use of a diamond that is not cut? However pure gold may be, it has to be put into fire and beaten with a hammer to make jewels. Bear all difficulties with a view that these are steps to take you to a higher plane. Only then will you experience peace and happiness. If you keep on worrying about your difficulties always, the difficulties will increase. When difficulties arise, do not treat them as problems.

The Pandavas lived incognito for one year after 12 years of exile in the forest. Krishna felt sympathy with them and always enquired about their welfare. It is not that He did not know how they were leading

their life; He knew everything. All this was done to elevate them to a higher spiritual level. Once Dharmaraja went for a walk with Krishna after telling his brothers to stay back. It was the custom in those days that the younger brothers obeyed their elder brother. During the walk, Dharmaraja said to Krishna, "Krishna, we are men and we can put up with all difficulties. But Draupadi is suffering too much; she does not see the sunlight even. I cannot bear it. Kindly give her Your advice". Krishna said, "There is no need for that". Taking a leaf from a tree, Krishna wrote something on it, folded it and gave it in the hand of Dharmaraja, saying, "When you face insurmountable difficulties, see what is written on this". What was written on it? Once when the Pandavas faced a grave problem, Dharmaraja opened that leaf and read: "These difficulties are not permanent".

Develop Friendship with God

Spiritual practices like Japa, Dhyana, Tapa, Bhajan, etc., are all subsidiary practices. The basic spiritual practice is love. Love should be the undercurrent of all these. Any one practice is enough if you have love. There are nine paths of devotion. *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender). *Sneham* comes before *Atmanivedanam*. So, develop friendship with God. When you are a friend of God, you are one with Him. Then, it becomes easier to reach the next stage of self-surrender.

continued on page 25...





SRI SATHYA SAI EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ANNUAL SPORTS AND CULTURAL MEET 2016



ERSEVERANCE AND TENACITY are the basic traits of success.

When combined with dedication and teamwork, the result is outstanding. Over two thousand students of Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions wore these very traits on their sleeve. Together, they put up a spectacular display of courage, hard work, skill and brilliance during the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet, a stand-out event of their annual academic calendar, held on 11th January 2016.

The event is a major part of the values-based integral education system practised in these institutions for over thirty-five years. The prime motivation for this offering is to please the Revered Founder Chancellor, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. In fact, during a public Discourse on 14th January 2003, Bhagavan said, "Here, people have to understand the difference in the sports activities of our students and the students elsewhere. The students outside have only one goal in their mind, i.e., to win a prize or a medal, whereas our students' only aim is to please Swami".

The venue of the sports and cultural meet was Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium which was beautifully decorated for the occasion. As Bhagavan's car with His beautiful photograph entered the stadium at 7.30 a.m. escorted by a motorcycle squad, brass band of Anantapur

Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) offered welcome notes. This was followed by an escort by the slow march squad, a special contingent that was led by the brass band of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute. When this grand procession reached Shanti Vedika, the house captains of the university made a canopy of flags, a group of Veda chanting students offered a ceremonial welcome to Bhagavan, and the Vice Chancellor, SSSIHL along with senior members of Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions offered salutations to Him. This was followed by presentations by each educational institution over two sessions, morning and evening.

Morning Session of Sports and Cultural Meet

The morning session of the Sports Meet started with March Past, wherein smartly dressed contingents of various educational institutions marched in front of Santhi Vedika and offered their salutes to the



March Past by various contingents of students.

Divine Chancellor, Bhagavan Baba. The ceremonies of flag hoisting, administration of oath to participants and lighting of the Sports Urn on the Hanuman Hill followed next.

The first programme of the sports events was motorbike events by the students of Muddenahalli Campus of the Institute,



Display of excellent manoeuvring skills on motorbikes.

who showed their marvellous manoeuvring skills and performed incredible stunts on motorbikes.

The students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School (boys), Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music and Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute made a spectacular display of their sports events next which included a dragon dance, a boomerang game, gymnastics, ramp jumps, somersaults, performance on skates



Colourful dragon dance by Prasanthi Nilayam Campus students.



A daring display of ramp jump.

and ladders and dances with beautiful formations. The entire performance presented a magnificent show of courage, confidence, balance and tenacity of the students. Brilliant commentary and good musical support added to the richness of the programme. The morning programme came to a close with Arati at 9.45 a.m.

Evening Session of Sports and Cultural Meet

The programme in the afternoon started at 4.00 p.m. with the entry of ceremonial procession of Bhagavan's car in the stadium. The first presentation was made by the students of Smt. Easwaramma English Medium School who displayed their agility, flexibility and strength through rhythmic dances, daring gymnastics and synchronised movements to the delight of the viewers.

The entire performing area of the stadium presented a riot of colours when the students



Synchronised movements by the students of Smt. Easwaramma English Medium School.



Primary School students as Santa Claus.

of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School came to perform their sports and cultural events. Besides colourful dances with eye-catching formations, they displayed gymnastics and martial arts. Some of the most attractive events were: a dance with mirrors, merry Christmas dance by students dressed as Santa Claus and colourful dance with rings in hand.



Yakshagana by Nursing College students.

Another spectacular display of sports events was made by the students of Nursing College and Allied Sciences who first performed martial arts with wonderful dexterity and then presented Yakshagana bringing out the nuances of this traditional folk art. Another display of martial arts was presented by the students of Brindavan Campus who performed next. They also presented a beautiful show of basketball



A colourful dance formation with rings in hand.

The next performance was made by the students of Anantapur Campus, who displayed wonderful balance and dexterity on bicycles and performed dances with enchanting beauty of various formations.



Basketball game on skates.

with somersaults. Their final presentation was blazing warriors, wherein they made beautiful formations lighting up the dark



Balance and dexterity on bicycles by Anantapur Campus students.



Blazing warriors item by Brindavan Campus students.

sky. This magnificent display of sports and cultural events came to a close with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

Music and Cultural Programmes

Besides the sports and cultural events held in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium on 11th January 2016, music and cultural programmes were organised in Sai Kulwant Hall by the students of various Sai educational institutions from 12th to 15th January 2016 as part of Sports Meet celebrations.

Our Lives Your Message: A Drama: The first presentation was a drama entitled “Our Lives Your Message” which was performed by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam on 12th January 2016. As conveyed by the title of the drama, it depicted how resolute



Make your life His Message was the profound theme of this drama.

adherence to righteousness of Sai students working in a reputed corporate house changed the work ethics of the company and enhanced its reputation. Superb direction, excellent acting of the students and realistic story of the drama made it an admirable presentation, conveying the message of Bhagavan Baba to His students and devotees that they should make their life His Message by practising His teachings.

Bhakta Ramdas: A Drama: The second drama entitled “Bhakta Ramdas” was presented by the students of Brindavan Campus on 13th January 2016. The drama portrayed the illustrious life story of this great



A scene from the drama “Bhakta Ramdas”.

devotee of Lord Rama, depicting how Rama and Lakshmana paid the money spent by him on constructing Rama’s temple to King Tanisha and got him released from his prison, highlighting the power of devotion which redeemed his life overcoming all trials and tribulations. Earlier, the students enthralled the devotees with thrilling band music which was marked by commendable clarity of notes.

Atma Vidya: A Musical Presentation: A breathtakingly beautiful presentation on the theme of Atma Vidya (knowledge of the Self)



A sublime musical presentation by the students of Anantapur Campus.

was made by the students of Anantapur Campus as part of the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet on 14th January 2016. Using a refreshingly innovative technique which combined expressive gestures of a group of students in exquisitely designed costumes on the stage, band and percussion music, thematic commentary, dialogues and devotional songs, the presentation depicted man's journey from Koham (who am I?) to Soham (That I am) in a most impressive and admirable manner. Offering themselves at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan, the students echoed their sublime feelings in chorus in conclusion "We are Now and Ever More Thy Property".

Tere Pyar Ke Liye: A Dance Drama: The next presentation was a dance drama entitled "Tere Pyar Ke Liye" (for Your love) which was staged by the students of Muddenahalli Campus. Set in the backdrop of hostel life of students, the drama depicted how the



A scene from the drama "Tere Pyar Ke Liye".

protagonist Prem regained self-confidence and earned the grace of Bhagavan when he developed firm faith in Him and totally

surrendered to Him. Embellished with sweet songs and beautiful dances of the students, the drama illustrated the importance of these values through the episodes of Sabari and Arjuna.

Ramo Vighrahan Dharma: A Drama: The grand finale of the Sports and Cultural Meet celebrations was provided by the illustrious life story of Lord Rama in the



The drama "Ramo Vighrahan Dharma" showcased the lofty ideals practised by Lord Rama.

drama "Ramo Vighrahan Dharma" (Rama, the embodiment of righteousness) enacted by the students of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute on 15th January 2016. Presenting selected episodes from the Ramayana, the drama showcased the shining ideals and tenets of Dharma practised by Lord Rama in His personal and public life which became beacons of light for the future generations of mankind. Illuminating dialogue between Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, Hanuman, the ideal devotee of Rama and celestial sage Narada beautifully illustrated the theme of the drama and enhanced its impact. The drama befittingly concluded with grand coronation ceremony of Lord Rama.



Valedictory Function

The valedictory and prize distribution function of the Sports and Cultural Meet was held on the auspicious day of Makara Sankranti, 15th January 2016. The proceedings of the function began at 8.30 a.m. with the grand procession of flag bearers squad and Veda chanting group which majestically marched into Sai Kulwant Hall from Yajur Mandir led by the brass band of Prasanthi Nilayam campus. At the outset, Sri Sanjay Sahni, Controller of Examinations of the Institute, delivered an introductory talk in which he dwelt on the significance of Makara Sankranti and the uniqueness of the Sai System of Education.

A very illuminating talk thereafter was given by Prof. Siva Sankar Sai, Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, in which he recalled some of the invaluable lessons learnt by him during sports meets over the years in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan. Quoting the words of Bhagavan, the learned speaker stated that Bhagavan wanted the organisers to create opportunities to bring forth the latent talent of each student. Five students from various Sai educational institutions then made brief speeches, in which they narrated their experiences and enunciated the lessons learnt by them in the performance of sports and cultural events.

In the prize distribution function that followed, Divine Chancellor's trophies were awarded to the participating institutions and



Distribution of trophies and prizes.

prizes were given to the winners of individual events. The Divine Sankranti Message of Bhagavan was then played on the public address system, in which Bhagavan said that love, unity and cooperation between the students and teachers that was witnessed in the sports and cultural events of Sai educational institutions was unique and exemplary. There would be no problems in the world if everybody performed his duty with such unity, cooperation and harmony, said Bhagavan. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin". The function came to a happy conclusion with Arati at 10.40 a.m.

When the moon is mastered, Sivam illumines the night, and it is transmuted into Sivarathri. Or else, it is Shava-rathri (the night of death). When man sleeps unaware of himself, and of his divinity, he is as a corpse.

– Baba

From our Archives

GOD SEES ONLY INNER PURITY OF MAN

DOING YOUR DUTY IS THE GREATEST YOGA

IN A YEAR, THE SUN PASSES through the 12 houses of the zodiac in 12 months. The sun's entry into each house of the zodiac is described as a Sankramana. Kranti means change. Sankranti means a sacred change. The sun's entry into every house in the zodiac is

spiritual significance relating to the Makara Sankramana.

Significance of Sun's Entry into Capricorn

The sun's entry into capricorn takes place in mid passage between the months of Margaseersha and Pushyami. In the Bhagavadgita, Sri Krishna has declared: "Among the months I am the month of Margaseersha". The Margaseersha month is the crown among the 12 months. What is the reason? Among the planets of the solar system, the sun is the presiding deity. Without the sun, the life process in the world will cease. During the month of Margaseersha, the world experiences the abundance of the harvested food grains, which sustain and confer joy on the people. Every farmer's granary is filled with grain. The weather during the season is cool and pleasant. It is an appropriate time for enjoying peaceful rest. It is the time when man is free from the burdens of daily toil and can devote his time to enjoyment with

his children and his cattle.

Every Experience is Reflection of the Inner Being

However, what is the connection between these physical comforts and the spiritual significance of this season? Man



not considered as equally holy. What, then, is the reason for giving special importance and sacredness to Makara Sankramana, the entry of the sun into Makara (capricorn)? Besides the physical qualities associated with the sun's movement into each house of the zodiac, there is an inner



is a lover of the beautiful. He rejoices at the sight of good food. It may be asked whether this joy, which he experiences is related solely to physical things or has it an inner spiritual basis? It is not the body that experiences joy. It is the Atma (Self). The joy that one derives from looking at others is not related to the body but the Atma. What the eye sees, the ear hears, the mind thinks, or the heart feels, all of them are experiences of the Atma. The senses are only instruments. Every experience is a reflection of the Inner Being. Only when this truth is recognised will it be possible to comprehend to some extent the nature of the Divine.

For all actions, the inspirer, the performer and the experiencer is the sun god. For man, caught up in a meaningless existence and going through an endless round of futile activities, the sun god stands out as the exemplar of tireless and selfless service. He enjoys no respite from work. He is above praise and censure. He carries on his duties with absolute equanimity. Everything he does is only for the well-being of the world and not for causing any harm. It is only man's senses which prove helpful or harmful to him. When man submits to his senses, they become his enemies. When man masters the senses, they become his friends. Friends and enemies result from the strength or weakness of men.

All that is taught or learnt today appears to consist of pompous verbiage concerning the external world. Doubtless, there is a great deal of talk about divinity and spirituality. But one cannot notice in these preachers any sacred mark of truth, love or peace associated with godly men. Are men to be esteemed for the clothes they wear,

the speeches they make or the pedantry they display? No. The only person worthy of esteem as a wise man is the one whose actions correspond to his thoughts and words. The Divine judges men by their thoughts and motives. God sees only the inner purity of man's motives and not his external appearance or the power and pelf he possesses. Valmiki, Kuchela, Gajendra (the Lord of elephants), the child Dhruva, the illiterate Sabari, Vidura and Hanuman are all examples of beings who enjoyed God's grace only through their devotion and not because of birth, wealth, scholarship or any other accomplishment.

Do your Duty like the Sun

The sun god in entering his northward journey hailed the Himalayas in the north as the beautiful abode of Lord Siva. The heart should be regarded as the abode of the Lord and the vision should be turned to experience the Divine. The human heart itself symbolises the Himalayas as the abode of purity and peace.

The sun's northward journey is a pointer to the path man should take to realise God. The sun is the supreme example of selfless and tireless service. The world cannot survive without the sun. Life on earth is possible only because of the sun. The sun teaches man the lesson of humble devotion to duty, without any conceit. The sun is the supreme example for everyone that he should do his duty with devotion and dedication. Doing one's duty is the greatest yoga, as pointed out by Krishna in the Gita. Let your actions and thoughts be good. You will then experience the bliss Divine.

— Excerpted from Bhagavan's Sankranti Discourses.



I WAS BORN IN A PARSI FAMILY reputed for its Dharmic ways and observance of the tenets of truth, righteousness and goodness. After the age of five, I was sent to live with my maternal grandmother in Bombay (Mumbai) because Surat, where my father was stationed as a senior police officer, did not have a suitable school for young children nearby at that time.

Swami Comes in my Life

In granny's house I was happy, surrounded by kindly old people. One old uncle in particular, Kama Kaka took

that man"? He replied smilingly, "He is Sathya Sai Baba". On asking a few more questions, the doctor told me that Baba was born in the south of India, and was widely acknowledged as God, including himself and family. This sent a thrill in me. I remembered Kama Kaka's words years ago. The doctor asked me to read Howard Murphet's book, "Man of Miracles". He also gave me a Vibhuti packet and said, he would tell me more, if I was interested.

That book has changed the lives of thousands of people... Howard has earned the gratitude of all those who have come to

Yasmin Sibal

EXPERIENCING SWAMI'S DIVINITY

a keen interest in my physical and moral development. Once I asked him, "Where is God"? He replied with a knowing smile, "In the south of India, there is a boy, who they say, is God"... The five year old child looked at him and asked, "What is his name"? Uncle replied, "He is called Sathya Sai Baba"... Little did I know that one day, this God would be my father, mother and friend, and will guide me with the love of a thousand mothers. As I grew up, I married a Punjabi boy in Mumbai, and we got two daughters. One day, I took my daughter Rubi for dental work to Dr. Eruch Fanibunda's clinic. The place was very peaceful and calm and on the wall was a lovely picture of a holy man in orange robe, holding a jasmine garland. Seeing this, I asked him, "Doctor, who is

Baba after reading it. Thank you Howard. I got the book and read it all night. I slept and dreamed that a holy lady I had been visiting handed me over to Shirdi Baba. On waking up, I felt happy and peaceful.

Describing the miracles of Baba to my two daughters, we vowed to see Him as soon as possible. But it takes the right time for Baba to call us. On Dr. Fanibunda's advice, we went to attend Bhajans in the house of Smt. Ratan Lal. At first my husband was reluctant to come. Smt. Ratan Lal's old mother-in-law, who was blind and stayed in a separate room, took a liking to us as a family. She asked us many questions about our life; a Parsi girl marrying a Punjabi intrigued her! Bibiji, as she was called, made my husband Sham promise





that he would come for Bhajans and meet her. This he did as he was very fond of old people. Every Thursday we went to the Bhajans and also participated in other programmes like Seva at various places, slums, poor feeding. We followed other devotees with whole-hearted enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, I became a vegetarian. My husband was a vegetarian since childhood. I also stopped the printing of my very popular book "Favourite Parsi Recipes" written by me. I refused the requests to resume printing as in a series of very vivid dreams, I got instructions that cooking and eating non-vegetarian items was causing bad Karma to me.

It was sometime in 1972 that I had reached the lowest ebb of my life. I had married very early in life. The stress and strain of responsibilities had weighed heavily on me mentally and physically. I had two daughters, Anita and Rubi, both very helpful, supportive of me, yet I was worn out.

During those years of struggle to change, I avidly read all the books written by Baba. No more newspapers, novels or TV for me. I was bound as it were to concentrate on my development. I meditated regularly twice daily.

In Swami's Divine Presence

Soon came a chance to go to Puttaparthi with Sri Ratan Lal's sister Gunaji and her daughter Achala. My husband was very reluctant to let me go. Asking Swami for a sign, I opened my purse and got a bus ticket. Reading the letters on top, I saw the word "Go". Now with confidence I went to Puttaparthi. Swami looked at me from the balcony as I entered the compound. It was such a great thrill! Baba gave me several good looks and soon called me for the much-longed-for interview. There in the hallowed room, Baba asked me, "What do you want?" "Baba, I want to learn something", I replied. He was very pleased and putting His hand on His chest Baba said, "I will teach you". In the private interview room Baba said, "You struggled a great deal in the past year to come to Puttaparthi". He also said that He would make everything all right, as I was confused, depressed and worried about the future. I had not discussed any personal problems with Baba. He was pleased that the girls and I attended weekly Bal Vikas classes held at Himmat Nivas by Smt. Roshan Fanibunda, then Roshan Parekh. After giving me blessings and materialising Vibhuti, He gave me Padanamaskar, and I came out blissfully happy.

Soon after, a second interview followed. Baba said I was not feeling well, and it was true! How did He know what went on inside my body? I wondered at His omniscience. More revelations on my life's problems

and solutions came and after blessings the interview ended.

Gunaji was glad at the outcome of my visit. I told her that I had conveyed her old mother Bibiji's Pranams (salutations) to Baba and He had said He knew her, she was blind and very old. Gunaji said she would happily tell her mother the news of Baba receiving her Pranams.

This is Siva Shakti

Soon interviews were stopped and the Sivarathri festival began. Being my first visit, I was overawed by the massive crowds. I decided not to go into the Poornachandra Auditorium on Sivarathri and wait outside the side door to get Baba's Darshan, as He went in. Suddenly, a lady came out from the hall, grabbed my hand and took me inside the hall, on the stage, past the Jhoola, and down the stage steps. She made me sit in the very first row amongst the VIPs. That angel I later came to know was Prithvi, Rani of Jind. I got some curious looks from the silken clad and bejewelled ladies, as I was dressed in a simple cotton Sari! The function started. There were Bhajans and Swami's Discourse. Then with great effort, Swami took out a shining Lingam. He showed it to the rapt audience from the stage. Afterwards, Swami came down the stage and showed it to the ladies in the front rows. Then, wonder of wonders, Baba came to me, held the Lingam about 6-7 inches from my face and pointed to a bright shining light inside the greenish Lingam. He said, "This is Siva Shakti"! I was so thrilled and said with folded hands, "How lovely, Swami"! I was thus blessed by Baba in my first Sivarathri function there.

In Anantapur with Swami

After a few days, Gunaji said that Swami would be going to the newly-opened

We three washed and washed till work was complete and no more dishes remained. Now the canteen manager came to me with three large Laddus in a plate, which, he said, Swami had sent for us, saying, "There are three people still working in the canteen; give them these Laddus from Me"! Very happily we ate the Laddus and thanked Baba, the Omniscient Lord of the universe. There is nothing that He does not know.



Anantapur college, and I should also try to go. After that, I could go to Mumbai. I packed and went to Anantapur. I shared room with three ladies in the college, which Swami graciously gave us. We had meals in Swami's company, heard Him talk and enjoyed Bhajans. All this was truly blissful. Then one night there was a play by the girls of the college. We were out on the lawns, and the girls all dressed up in their costumes. I talked to a girl in a king's costume. She had huge moustache which I felt with my fingers. Swami saw me and made the girls make a pathway for Him. He came and said, "Kitna Achchha Hai, Na Amma! Costumes Bhi Unhonne Banaya" (how nice, isn't it, Amma! Even the costumes were made by the girls). We saw the play happily in Swami's holy company.

Fragrance of Jasmine Flowers

Next, Swami was to leave for Puttaparthi. The three ladies were also returning to the Ashram and I was to go alone to Bengaluru.



With many grateful thanks to Swami for all His kindness and consideration, I boarded a bus early next morning for Bengaluru. Throughout the journey, I had a jasmine scent surrounding me. At Bengaluru when I got down, the scent continued all around me. There were no jasmine flowers in either the bus or anywhere near me. It was my first visit to Bengaluru. Taking an auto rickshaw I reached my aunty's lovely bungalow near Ulsoor Lake. The jasmine scent followed me. My aunt and uncle and cousins made me very welcome. Next day, I visited Brindavan Ashram, where Swami stays when He visits Bengaluru. At the Ashram, I went to the old house of Swami and asked Dr. Gokak who was sitting there if I could see the house from inside. He said it was not allowed. I went out in the garden and again jasmine fragrance came from nowhere. There were no jasmine flowers anywhere near.

Grant of Boon Unasked

Soon I was to go back to Mumbai. Wishing aunty and family grateful thanks, I went to the airport. In the plane I had a fleeting thought about the flat we owned. It was leased to a big firm. Those days a draconian law made it possible for people and companies to carry on staying in flats even when the lease was over. The only course was litigation! Who had the means and patience for years to fight big companies? I had not asked Swami about any personal problems. May be I should have mentioned this to Him, I thought briefly. Landing at Mumbai, soon I got down at the airport. As everyone knows, one is in a very high state of being after Swami's Darshan, a very blissful state. My father and my two daughters Anita and Rubi came to meet me at the airport. My father said, "You are looking so different!"

I asked where Sham was. Dad replied that he had gone to take possession of our flat in Cuffe Parade as the company had suddenly decided to release it back to us! This boon was granted by Swami alone. No company does this for anyone. My husband got the keys back to our flat and we all thanked Baba for His blessings. Thus ended my first memorable trip to Baba in Puttaparthi with His blessings.

The Omniscient Lord

Baba's omnipresence in our lives helps us always. Here are a few instances of His Divine omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. Once in Puttaparthi, I went to the canteen for Seva. There were many helpers for serving, making chapatis, cutting vegetables, but hardly any volunteers for washing dishes. I decided this was the place to help. There was no soap or scrubber at that time. Sometimes coconut husk was there and one had to simply wash with water. Luckily there was plenty of tap water and the dishes were cleaned nicely. Thousands of plates had to be washed daily. As soon as one lot was washed, another large lot was flung in the trough to be cleaned.

One evening, I was very tired. It was late and I was hungry, but the dishes kept coming to be washed. Suddenly, the manager of the canteen came with two young girls from a village and said that they would help me to complete the washing up. We three washed and washed till work was complete and no more dishes remained. Now the canteen manager came to me with three large Laddus in a plate, which, he said, Swami had sent for us, saying, "There are three people still working in the canteen; give them these Laddus from Me"! Very happily we ate the Laddus and thanked Baba, the



Omniscient Lord of the universe. There is nothing that He does not know.

Once my daughter Anita invited me to go with her to Paris, France. She had to attend some official work there. I was very happy and wrote to Swami for His permission and blessings. Time passed quickly and the day of our departure to Paris arrived. We reached the airport after two hours drive. Formalities were almost complete. Unexpectedly, the customs officer wanted me to open my suitcase. I opened my handbag to get the keys of the suitcase, but I could not find them at all! Emptying the bag on the counter, there was no sign of the suitcase keys. The customs man grew more impatient. He said that unless he checked my suitcase he would not let me board the flight. My daughter had gone ahead and she was wondering what was holding me back. The boarding sign was on. Panic set in as the customs man asked me to go home and get the keys which was impossible. Home was two hours away! Then I prayed to Baba for help and once more opened my handbag. There, on top of everything were the keys! Hurriedly opening my suitcase, I thanked Baba fervently. The customs man took a quick look and told me to go ahead. I joined my daughter, told her the miracle and we boarded the flight to Paris. We had a wonderful time in Paris, thanks to Baba for His timely help.

One more instance of instant help. Baba had just given us a flat in Brindavan Ashram. This was the greatest boon conferred on us by Lord Sai. We were ecstatically happy. I set about putting things in place. Most important, I was searching for the right place to put Baba's chair and carpet in the

room. As I was cleaning out the bookshelf; suddenly, a coloured photo fell out from one book. I had never seen it before. The book had not been lent to anyone also. The photo showed a lovely chair on a carpet, with a lamp and table on each side. On the carpet were musical instruments, cymbals, etc. It was a right arrangement for daily meditation and Bhajans in the room. Baba showed me in the photo, how to set it up. A few days later, we went to Puttaparthi. There I showed the photo and told its story to Sri Kasturi. He liked it very much and laughed heartily. Sri Kasturi kept the photo on his notice board, where all could see Baba's help in even mundane matters.

Once I came to Brindavan for the Summer Course, and bought a mobile phone. I used it in the room only and as quietly as possible. It was available only just recently in the market. I phoned my family in Mumbai and some friends too. I did not realise how costly it was to do so. One evening, Swami came for the evening programme on the stage in Sai Ramesh Hall as usual. But suddenly, He looked at me and put His hand to His ear and pretended to speak! He kept speaking and looking at me. I got a few curious glances from the ladies seated around me, but I knew what it was that Swami was doing. He was showing me that I was using the mobile phone too much in the room. I did not use it as much after Baba's staging its use. The bill for its usage would have been much greater had I not stopped unnecessary calls. What does Baba not know about us? He is everywhere.

– The author is an ardent old-time devotee of Bhagavan.



Effulgence of Divine Glory

GRACE UNBOUNDED

BABA HAS SAID, "FOR every act of My grace known to you, there are a thousand others you do not know". There are many instances on record where Baba transfers the disease of a devotee to His own body. He has been doing this, both in this body and in His previous one at Shirdi. He permits His body to suffer the disease for a certain period of time, like any other human body and then cures Himself in a trice. He calls a halt to the disease, as and when He decides the time is ripe for it to be eliminated. During the Summer Course at Whitefield in 1973, the author had seen Baba deliver His hour-and-a-half long spiritual Discourses to students everyday, even though He was running a continuous temperature of 105° for a number of days. At that time He told the author, "If I pamper this fever, then it will sit on top of Me. I am not affected by the fever". The only so-called treatment He took for the fever was cold baths during the day.

A most remarkable instance of Baba taking on an illness occurred in the author's presence, during the Navaratri celebrations and continued right through till December 1974. Baba developed high blood pressure and His body showed the familiar signs and symptoms of the condition. Dr. C.G. Patel, a physician of Baroda, was given the privilege



of attending on Baba, by Baba Himself. Not that He required a physician, but as explained earlier, Baba has to play the role of an ordinary human being and allow His body to suffer, until He Himself calls a halt to the disease. In this Leela or play of His, the presence of a doctor was necessary to complete the picture. Dr. Patel kept detailed notes of Baba's progress everyday, including the data collected from a series of pathological examinations and tests. It is not the purpose of our story to chronicle the total case history of this assumed illness, but rather to narrate what the author actually saw himself and what Baba told him in connection with the illness.

Throughout His illness, Baba carried on with all the normal activities of the Navaratri and Dasara celebrations, gave interviews, held meetings with various

office bearers of the Sai Organisations, gave many Discourses during the Yajna and also during the Deepavali and Birthday festivals, including a non-stop marathon one at Bukkapatnam. Without going into details, it will suffice to mention here that the author during all these activities had detected various signs and symptoms of very high blood pressure, gravely affecting Baba's body. The final events leading to the climax of our story began on 27th November, when Baba decided to leave for Bangalore (now Bengaluru) from Prasanthi Nilayam.

That morning, the author had been sitting for Bhajans under the porch outside the prayer hall. The Arati was over and Baba went into His room. Normally, the author would have retired now, but some instinct prompted him to approach the door of Baba's room. Immediately, the door opened and out came Baba with a basket full of Vibhuti packets. He gave a handful of packets to the author and gave him instructions to follow His car closely on the way to Whitefield, Bengaluru. Then He distributed packets of Vibhuti to a few other people and retired to His room.

In the afternoon at about 4.15 p.m., we started on that memorable journey. The front seat was occupied by Karunyananda, Shrinivasan, a college student, and D.V. Rama Rao was driving Baba's car. Baba, Dr. Patel and Dr. Bhagavantam were in the rear seat. The author was accompanied by his wife and two other ladies, besides the driver in his car. The author followed Baba's car, and a dozen other cars also joined the procession. In the early stages of the journey, Baba's car would stop now and again to distribute sweets to the poor villagers and their children. The author would

see Baba's hand shoot out of the partly open car window, drop food into eagerly awaiting cupped hands of old men and women, who would be craning their necks to catch a glimpse of Baba sitting in the car. Sometimes, there would be just a couple of small children, waiting to see their Baba and they would be rewarded not only with His Darshan, but also unexpected Laddus. Their faces beamed with joy. The thrill and joy experienced by these poor children is something which cannot be described in words. To observe that in Baba's company is akin to experiencing it in one's own Self. When the route passed through villages where prior word had reached of Baba's arrival, the cavalcade of cars would wend its way through rows and rows of people lining the roadside, shouting Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaji Ki Jai.

One and a half hour after the commencement of the journey, the author noticed that Baba had been resting His head on the back of the car seat, which was something very unusual for Him to do. The ladies also noticed it and said, poor Swami must be feeling very tired. Then Baba put His head on Dr. Patel's shoulder and the ladies began to suspect that there was something more than Swami just being tired. The author became aware of their feelings by the various comments issuing from the back seat. After some time, Baba's car stopped and Dr. Bhagavantam moved to occupy the front seat together with Shrinivasan, who now took the wheel. Karunyananda and Rama Rao were transferred to another car. Baba lay down on the rear seat with Dr. Patel on one side. The cars started again within a matter of minutes and a few occupants in the other cars knew what had happened in

Baba's car. The author said to the ladies in his car that Swami's blood pressure must have risen high and so He was resting. But the ladies suspected the worst and were afraid that something dreadful had happened to Swami. One of them was nearly in tears. Another one said that Swami must be feeling faint due to travel sickness, in the same way as she often did on a long car journey. The author explained that it was Baba's Leela (divine play) they were witnessing and that everything will be alright very soon. As devotees it was our duty to be concerned, but at the same time we should be aware within ourselves of the Divinity that Baba is, and thereby derive strength and confidence to remain calm. After all, what can happen to Divinity? Nothing, nothing at all.

The sun had set and a faint twilight showed up the Nandi Hills in the distance as ghostly silhouettes against a dark orange sky. Chikkaballapur was a few miles away. Suddenly, Baba sat up and was seen talking to Dr. Patel. After a few moments, the cars stopped. Baba got out of His car and walked straight to the author's car. An oncoming truck was approaching with full headlights and Baba quickly ducked his head into the car window. Baba explained that He did not want to be seen by the occupants of that truck. Then He began chiding the ladies in the rear seat for harbouring fear regarding the safety of Swami. He declared, "I am Ghosha" and repeated it many times over and over again. "I am Ghosha, so how can anything affect Me? No disease can touch Me. For the past few days, I have had blood pressure ranging from 110 diastolic up to 280 systolic. Why were you afraid? Nothing can happen to this body. I am Ghosha." Then Baba looked at the lady (who had earlier remarked about

Swami feeling faint) and with a twinkle in His eyes He said, "Sometimes the doctors and others say that Swami feels giddy and faint, but Swami never feels faint. Don't be afraid. Just now I have numbness of My arm, but I am not worried over much about this body. Nothing can affect Me. I am Ghosha". With that parting shot, He left us and went back to His car. The above monologue was carried on by Baba in English.

Rama Rao took out a tiffin carrier of gigantic proportions from Baba's car. It was packed with sweets and savouries of all sorts, which were distributed to all those present in the various cars.

Baba reached Brindavan, Whitefield late that night. Next day He rested. Towards evening His blood pressure shot up to 260 systolic and His body suffered the symptoms of a stroke. Of course, the author was not surprised as Baba Himself had given an indication of the future course of events the day before, when He had mentioned the numbness in His arm. However, He was again alright the following day, and His blood pressure was normal by the end of December. That day, Dr. Patel told the author, what Baba had said when He sat up in the car after lying down for sometime, during the journey the day before yesterday. Baba said, "The ladies in the car behind are afraid and in tears, thinking that something terrible has happened to Swami". This remark of Baba and the one about Swami never feeling faint in the car, are small examples of His omniscience and omnipresence.

Ghosha means sound or movement or vibration. It also means the Pranava or Aum – which is the primeval word or sound of creation. All creation in its ultimate form

consists of movement or a vibrating mass of energy. When Baba said, "I am Ghosha", it means that He Himself is the primeval energy which assumes various forms and constitutes that which is known as matter. This is His aspect of Shakti or Mazda. With reference to His body, the statement implied that He Himself was the primeval vibration through which His body had come into being; so how could this primeval vibration be affected by disease? Even disease in whatever form it manifests is also perforce born out of this primeval energy itself, and therefore the disease is merely an appearance superimposed temporarily, on the basis that is Ghosha. By declaring "I am Ghosha", Baba also proclaimed His

Shakti aspect, which itself is the manifest universe.

To contemplate this truth is to know the relationship of man to man and the mystery of the universe, *Ekoham Bahusyam* (the One willed to become many). To understand and grasp this truth is to understand one's own Self and know in a small measure the Divinity that is Baba. To practise and live this truth is to tread the path of love which leads one to the experience of Divinity within one's Self verily, that is the kingdom of heaven. It is His kingdom without a name, measureless to man and eternal beyond time. The star of heaven, alias one's own Self, abides there for ever and ever.

– Excerpted from "Vision of the Divine" by Eruch B. Fanibunda.

...continued from page 8

Try hard to have friendship with God. He is the only real friend. The world is the book, time is the teacher and God is the true friend. Your worldly friends will stay with you so long as you have power and position. Nobody will talk to you when you lose these. As long as you have money in your pocket, they will say, "Let us go to the hotel, let us see a cinema". They will go away as soon as your pocket becomes empty. This is the nature of friendship. Make God your best friend; do not waver. Only God is your eternal friend. He will never leave you; He will never let you down. You should merge with Him.

All are incarnations of God with different names and forms. Lord Krishna said, "All are sparks of God". Not only humans, even the insects and other organisms are sparks

of God. There are some persons who do not believe in God. They are called atheists. They say, "There is no God". But first they say "There is", and then say, "no God". When they say "There is", it connotes the existence of God. Atheists say, "God is nowhere". If you attach w to no, it becomes "God is now here". This is a simple modification. Both the theists and atheists are the creations of God. So, both are close to God. Everyone should love God. *God is Love, Love is God. Live in Love.* Whatever you do without love is useless. Contemplate on God with love. Realise that God is in you and you are God.

(At the end of the Divine Discourse, Swami sang the song, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*")

– Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 29th April 1997.

Haridasa

TANSEN WAS A FAMOUS musician in the court of emperor Akbar. There was so much power in his singing that when he sang Megh Malhar Raga, thick clouds would gather in the sky; when he rendered Amritavarshini Raga, there was rainfall, and when he sang Deepak Raga, lamp would get lighted.

Once Akbar went out of his palace on foot early in the morning. As he went quite far from the palace, he heard the sound of a sweet song coming from somewhere. Attracted by the sound of the song, he went in that direction and found a Haridasa (mendicant) singing the glory of God, deeply

the mendicant to Tansen in the court on that day and said, "Tansen! I have a doubt. You are a great singer and sing melodious songs. But I was transported to a higher plane while listening to the song of that mendicant. I was very much moved by it and my heart was suffused with bliss. But I have



Tansen told Akbar that while he sang to please him, the mendicant sang to please God.



Akbar was lost in the melody of the song.

engrossed in it. Akbar also forgot himself while listening to it. Lost in its thoughts, Akbar returned to the palace. He narrated his experience of listening to the song of


never been moved like this while listening to your songs. What is the reason"? With due courtesy and humility, Tansen said smilingly, "Oh emperor! I sing to please you and to enhance the prestige of your court. But that mendicant gets lost in the contemplation of God and sings to earn His grace. He is the servant of God, not wealth". The emperor recognised the truth of Tansen's statement.

We should think of nothing else except God while doing Namasankirtan (singing the glory of God).



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PREMA BANDHAM MEET 2016

 A LARGE NUMBER OF FORMER students of Bhagavan's educational institutions came with their families from all parts of the world to participate in the Annual Prema Bandham Meet held at Prasanthi Nilayam at the beginning of the New Year 2016. On this occasion, they presented music and cultural programmes to express their love and gratitude to Bhagavan who guided and nurtured them in their formative years with loving care.

The first musical offering to Bhagavan was made by the alumni of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music on 30th December 2015. With their hearts full of deep devotion for Bhagavan, the alumni rendered a variety of vocal and instrumental compositions which included "Siva Siva Siva Ganaraya" followed by a beautiful Jugalbandi, "Panduranga Baro Sriranga Baro" (come Panduranga, come Sriranga) and the evergreen Mira song sung by Anup Jalota "Aisi Laagi Lagan Mira Ho Gayi Magan" (Mira was lost in the love of Krishna). They concluded their mesmerising concert with an enchanting Veena recital and instrumental Bhajans.

The next presentation was made by the alumni of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School and Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School on 31st December 2015. Commencing their programme with the recitation of Sai Gayatri Mantra, the alumni followed it by an enrapturing band music display. Two speakers thereafter narrated how they experienced Bhagavan's love and

grace when they were students of Primary School. The first speech was made by Smt. A. Sai Venkatalakshmi, Senior Scientist at Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The distinguished speaker narrated how Bhagavan used to come in the class everyday, interacted with students and assumed the role of their parent, guide and Guru all in one. The next speech was made by Sri A. Raghavendra, Vice President, IndusInd Bank who expressed his deep gratitude to Bhagavan for providing the students the best education and close proximity and spent so much time with them in their early years.

These speeches were interspersed with a beautiful Odissi dance by the children of the alumni and group songs and Qawalis by the alumni which included "Tera Saath Kabhi Bhool Na Sake" (we never forget Your proximity), "Sai Ke Pyaar Ki Surat Bayan Nahin Hoti" (the love of Sai cannot be described). Their last song was "Hawa Mein Khushboo Pyaar Ki Hai" (there is fragrance of love in the air). As they sang



A group song by Primary and Higher Secondary School alumni.

this group song, the rest of the alumni in the hall waved lighted candles, which presented an enchanting spectacle.

The programme on the morning of the New Year day, 1st January 2016, began with an scintillating musical presentation by the brass band of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, comprising seven musical pieces which included “The Tempest”, “Beethoven’s 5 Secrets”, “The Rise of the Warrior”. It concluded with the number “Happy” conveying Bhagavan’s profound message “Be Happy, make others happy and Swami will be happy”.

What followed next was a very educative and informative speech by an Institute alumnus, Sri Abhimanyu Kaul. Sharing with the audience the valuable lessons learnt by him under the guidance of Bhagavan, the learned speaker observed that Bhagavan’s real mission was to impart Atma Vidya (knowledge of the Self) to man. He described how Bhagavan instilled in students this profound knowledge in day-to-day conversations with them in His inimitable style.

The programme in the afternoon began with offering of salutations at the Samadhi of Bhagavan by a group of Institute alumni who marched into the hall in a procession carrying colourful flags. Thereafter, the alumni offered New Year cakes, new issue of their magazine “Vidyullekha” and the 25th volume of the their Bhajan collection “The Bridge Across Time”. An excellent musical offering by the alumni brass band followed this which included a prayer number to Lord Ganesh “Vakratunda Mahakaya”, “Allah Bhi Tum Ho Ishwar Bhi Tum Ho” (You are both



A musical offering by the alumni brass band.

Allah and Ishwar) and “Pyare Sai Hamare” (our Beloved Sai).

The final presentation of the Institute alumni was a superb drama “The Perfect Flute” which conveyed the profound message of Bhagavan that man should get rid of his ego and become hollow like a flute to enable the Divine to handle it and breathe divine music into it. The drama depicted this message of the Lord through the story of a flute seller who offered all his talent to Lord



The drama “The Perfect Flute” by the Institute alumni.

Krishna to attain perfection and ultimate goal of the vision of Krishna. Sublime theme, excellent acting of the cast and illuminating dialogues perfectly conveyed the lesson of the drama and made it an outstanding presentation. With this, the Annual Prema Bandham Meet of the alumni came to a happy conclusion.

NATIONAL CONVENTION OF SRI SATHYA SAI BAL VIKAS ALUMNI

A two-day Bal Vikas National Convention was held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 16th and 17th January 2016. The theme of the event was “Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas – The Path Divine”. The first session began in the morning of 16th January 2016 in Poornachandra Auditorium with Veda chanting and group singing. Two students, Drishti Thapa from Manipur and Fanindra Reddy from Andhra Pradesh then shared heart warming incidents from their lives, a reflection of their endeavour to tread the path divine laid down by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Vibrant and colourful dances performed by the Bal Vikas students of Odisha and Sikkim were a visual delight. Bhagavan’s omnipresence was witnessed when the garland adorning the photo frame of Bhagavan broke into two and cascaded down in the form of divine blessings.

The second session commenced at 4.30 p.m. in Sai Kulwant Hall with Veda chanting and group singing, surcharging the atmosphere with love and devotion. At the outset, Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, hailed Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas programme as the most precious gift bestowed on mankind by Bhagavan Baba. He advocated this value-based programme as the panacea for all problems ailing mankind and society. Two Bal Vikas alumni thereafter addressed the gathering. First, Sri Rajeev Karmahe, Additional District Sessions Judge from Madhya Pradesh lauded Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas programme as a merit of thousand births and shared his experiences on how the programme

had helped him to meet challenges on the professional front and emerge victorious in the game of life. Ms. Vibhuti Malhotra from the State of Punjab attributed her virtues of patience and equanimity to the foundation laid by Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas programme. A compendium titled “Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas – The Path Divine” featuring the articles penned by the Bal Vikas alumni was released by Sri K Chakravarthi, Member Secretary, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Further, Ms. Arunima Prakash from Uttar Pradesh enlightened the audience on Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Logo, sharing its symbolic significance. A musical treat entitled “Sai Arpan” by the alumni of Pune, Maharashtra and a delightful fusion of instrumental melodies by the alumni of Tamil Nadu filled one and all with divine bliss.

The highlight of the second day of the convention, 17th January 2016, was the benediction ceremony. A smart music band led a procession of State Presidents, State Mahila Coordinators, dedicated Bal Vikas Gurus, Achievement Awardees and office bearers, escorting the symbolic ‘Wand of Transformation’, into Sai Kulwant Hall to the lilting song “Sarvaroga Nivarini Gayatri” as a tribute to Mother Gayatri. Master Avinam from Sikkim while explaining the



Bal Vikas students who completed the 9-year programme taking the pledge.

significance of the Wand of Transformation drew a parallel to Bhagavan's unconditional love that transformed the human mind. Smt. Sasi Bala, National Deputy Coordinator, administered the pledge to the students who had completed the 9-year programme. Delivering the keynote address, Sri V. Srinivasan, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, elucidated the role of the Bal Vikas students in the Divine Mission and exhorted them to be change agents for the transformation of mankind.

Achievement awards for multifarious excellence were given away to 16 outstanding alumni by Sri K. Chakravarthi, Member Secretary and Sri G.S.R.C.V. Prasada Rao, Secretary of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and Smt. Kamala Pandya, Deputy National Coordinator of All India Bal Vikas. Showcasing the future of Bal Vikas and as a standing testimony to the eternity of Bhagavan, Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, presented two young mascots (Group I Bal Vikas students) Atharva and Zigmesh Thapa before the august gathering. The tiny tots regaled the audience with their innocent tweets on what Bal Vikas meant to them, a reflection of the promise they hold for tomorrow.

The alumni of Karnataka made a soulful musical presentation. Ms. Aishwarya Mohanraj from Mumbai, Maharashtra, while delivering the vote of thanks, expressed her heartfelt gratitude to Bhagavan for the gift of Bal Vikas. Reminiscing her journey of Bal Vikas, she cited her experiences to substantiate the fact that making Bal Vikas an integral part of one's life helped to achieve all-round excellence.

The concluding session of the convention was held in Poornachandra Auditorium. Sri

Krishnamurthy and his puppet Sai Sanjeev thanked the Bal Vikas Gurus for their valuable contribution to the programme. Sri R.J. Rathnakar, Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, who had the greatest privilege of growing up at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan, inspired the audience with his words of wisdom and blessed the students with Bands of Friendship. The programme ended with promises for the beginning of a new dawn...

SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORTHOPAEDIC CONFERENCE - 2015

A three-day conference on "Ilizarov – Evolution and Applications" was organised by the Department of Orthopaedics, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences at Prasanthigram, Puttaparthi from 18th to 20th December 2015. The conference was attended by six eminent faculty members from Russia, Italy, Brazil and Bangladesh and seven faculty members from India, all experts in the Ilizarov method of treatment. Besides, there were 135 delegates from different parts of the country, which included 24 Professors, 35 Consultants, 24 Senior Residents, 46 Junior Residents and 6 Physiotherapists.

The highlights of the conference were a pre-conference hands-on workshop, four live surgical demonstrations, instructional course lectures and focused discussions on difficult orthopaedic problems. All the live surgeries were streamed on You Tube channel of SSSIHMS-PG.

The main focus of the conference was complex limb deformities, infections, trauma and principles of Sai Ideal Healthcare





Delegates at Sri Sathya Sai International Orthopaedic Conference.

which are universal, free, loving and compassionate. The conference was awarded 6 (six) CME credit hours by Andhra Pradesh Medical Council.

Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Sri K. Chakravarthi and Sri R.J. Rathnakar and Secretary SSSCT Sri G.S.R.C.V. Prasada Rao in their inspirational talks stressed on the need to follow the principles of Sai Ideal Healthcare and to understand the spiritual aspect of the medical treatment. The Director of SSSIHMS-Whitefield and Chairman of Orthopaedics Dr. Sundaresh and the Director in-charge, SSSIHMS-PG Dr. Gurumurthy stressed on the need of such technical advancements in view of the suffering caused to humankind because of these orthopaedic problems.

The proceedings of the conference were well covered by media in national and local newspapers giving an added impact to the success of the conference.

PILGRIMAGE OF MEDIA PERSONNEL AND ADVOCATES FROM KERALA

About 200 media personnel and advocates came with their families on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from Kerala from 23rd to 24th January 2016 and participated in programmes in the Ashram. On this occasion, Sri Sathya

Sai Seva Organisation, Kerala organised a music programme in Sai Kulwant Hall on 23rd January 2016, in which musical presentations were made by two talented young vocalists from Kerala. The first presentation was made by Kumari Janaki M. Nair who offered a bouquet of Carnatic numbers including a scintillating “Nagumomu Kanaleni” followed by “Jagadodharana”. Her other songs included a couple of Tamil compositions and a famous Malayalam song dedicated to Lord Krishna of Guruvayur. She concluded her concert with the Bhajan, “Vanamali Vasudeva” in which the devotees also joined with deep devotional fervour. Singing next Kumari Abhirami Ajay made a spellbinding presentation which included a devotional number dedicated to Lord Srinivasa, a lullaby on Sri Sathya Sai, a popular Marathi number “Panduranga Vitthale Bhaktajana Vatsale” (Lord Vitthala who loves His devotees) followed by two Bhajans “Chittachora Yashoda Ke Baal” (the son of Yashoda who steals the hearts of devotees) and “Bho Shambho”.

15TH ANNIVERSARY OF SSSIHMS, WHITEFIELD

On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield, Bengaluru, the staff of the hospital presented a cultural programme “Sri Rama Saranam Mama” (Sai is my refuge) on 24th January 2016 to express gratitude to Bhagavan for the opportunity of making them a part of His Divine Mission of service to mankind. Depicting a few episodes from the Ramayana, the presentation brought out striking similarities in the life, mission

continued on cover page 35...

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

BRAZIL

THE BRAZILIAN SATHYA SAI Foundation participated in an interfaith meeting promoted by the municipality of Petropolis (City of Peter) – a hilly town near Rio de Janeiro and summer residence of the last Emperor of Brazil, Peter II. The meeting held at the historic Crystal Palace from 1st to 4th October 2015 was called Arati and highlighted Indian culture and spirituality. An estimated 9,500 people attended the meeting. Institutions represented at the interfaith meeting included the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the Ramakrishna Mission, Tibetan Buddhists, the Catholic Church and other local faith organisations. The City Council also declared 2nd October as Krishna Day, to be



Books and audio-visual material displayed by the SSIO of Brazil.

celebrated annually henceforth. Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO) volunteers displayed books and audio-visual material on Sathya Sai Baba, and distributed about 400 booklets and leaflets on His teachings. The volunteers also interacted lovingly with the public and shared Bhagavan's message. Sathya Sai members participated

in interfaith discussions, human values education and musical programmes.

GERMANY

Traditionally, the SSIO of Germany organises a summer camp for children every year. In the first week of August 2015, 45 Sathya Sai devotees – children, female youth and teachers – came together at the youth hostel of Linsengericht, a beautiful village in the Spessart mountains of central Germany. The event focused on three aspects of Love: the Source, the Path and the Goal – the same topic as the Tenth World Conference in 2015.



Summer Camp, Germany.

Concurrently with the children's summer camp, male Sathya Sai youth held another summer camp in Hohenprießnitz, near Leipzig, where a centre for service, Atmaseva, has been established. A volunteer team of 31 male youth and teachers performed construction work and gardening. They removed the floor of an old building, helped with laying bricks, and cleaned and worked in the garden. In addition, study circles were held, along with devotional singing.



SERBIA

On 4th October 2015, SSIO volunteers from Serbia offered loving services to refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq who were fleeing their homeland, ravaged



Service to refugees in Serbia.

by war and strife. With no place to call home, the displaced people were living in tents, sleeping on park benches and using public fountains for washing. About 10 Sathya Sai members, along with international youth volunteers, distributed food and clothing to the homeless refugees staying at a park near Belgrade's main bus station. The food was donated by local residents as well as the SSIO of Germany. Sathya Sai volunteers from Serbia also shared homemade sweet cakes and fruits with the refugees. The clothes were collected by volunteers locally and in Bosnia / Herzegovina, for distribution. The volunteers experienced a heart-to-heart connection with the refugees through the act of selfless service.

– Sathya Sai International Organisation

BHARAT

Gujarat: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat organised a Zonal Level Youth Conference on 3rd January 2016 at

Bhavnagar on the subject “Youth for Social Transformation” for Saurashtra zone, which covers Bhavnagar, Rajkot, Surendranagar and Jamnagar districts. Over 200 devotees including 90 youth attended the conference. In his welcome address, the State President Sri Manohar Trikanad spoke about the theme of the conference and the role of youth in the transformation of their life and society. Thereafter, the keynote speaker, Dr. Shashank Shah addressed the gathering. Starting with Swami's teachings for daily disciplined life, he emphasised that there were two basic requirements for the youth today, viz., love for God and service to society. Dr. Shah also answered the questions of the audience. Joint State Youth Coordinator, Sri Avinash Rao then briefed on the activities conducted by the youth and devotees of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat in different districts, making the audience aware of Swami's Mission and organisational activities to enable them to take part in them.

Kerala: As part of 90th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Sai Samithis in various districts organised



Devotees attending a public meeting.

spiritual and service activities which included Nagar Sankirtans, awareness programmes,



Narayana Seva, medical camps, distribution of sewing machines to needy persons and public meetings.

A Sai Mahotsavam 2015 was organised in Kasargod district on 26th and 27th November 2015 to commemorate Bhagavan



90th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Baba.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba's 90th Birthday and Sai Organisation's golden jubilee year. Workshop for office bearers, active workers and devotees were organised on the first day. The second day dedicated to Bal Vikas which included talks by eminent personalities of the district from various religions.



A visually challenged person expressing his gratitude after receiving smart cane.

As part of 90th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Kollam district organised an innovative programme in which visually

challenged people were given smart cane that can enable them in walking without a third party support. Smart cane uses ultrasonic sensors to detect obstacles at up to three metres. The range of the detected obstacles is conveyed to the user using vibratory signals with differentiated characteristics.

Tamil Nadu: Seva Dal members of Chennai Metro and Kanchipuram districts along with youth and alumni numbering about 150, carried out a massive cleaning service



Massive cleaning service at Besant Nagar Crematorium, Chennai.

(Shramdhan) at Besant Nagar Crematorium on 27th September 2015 as part of a variety of activities being undertaken in commemoration of Bhagavan's 90th Birthday. All the places within the crematorium complex as also the open areas in the complex were cleaned and accumulated rubbish was removed. Four new trees were also planted in the cleaned up open area. The entire crematorium looked like a new place in a matter of just three hours. Officials of the Corporation of Chennai besides graciously according approval to this Seva also extended all necessary support to our Seva Dal team.



...continued from page 31



Cultural programme on the 15th anniversary of SSSIHMS.

and message of Lord Rama, the Avatar of Treta Yuga and Sai Rama, the Avatar of Kali Yuga. Speaking on this occasion, Dr. Sundaresh, Director of the Institute, quoted

statistics to show all-round growth of the hospital and remarked that this progress was achieved without compromising in any manner with the quality of patient care. There was another illuminating talk by Sri K. Krishna Kumar, Finance Controller of the hospital, who narrated his personal interactions with Bhagavan and stated how Bhagavan taught him invaluable lessons on true devotion. The presentation also included a couple of group songs and a video clip of Bhagavan's Discourse which highlighted Bhagavan's Divine Mission of providing quality healthcare totally free of charge to the poorest of the poor.

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Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield, Bengaluru is offering 4 years course leading to Bachelors degree in Nursing (**for Girl Students only**) and 3 ½ year courses leading to Bachelors degree in Anaesthesia Technology, Cardiac Care Technology, Imaging Technology, Medical Laboratory Technology and Perfusion Technology (**for Girl Students only**).

Applications are invited from candidates who fulfil the eligibility criteria as given below.

1. **Age:** Candidates should have completed minimum 17 years and maximum 25 years of age on or before 31st of December in the year of application for admission.
2. **Qualification:** 10+2, PUC or any other qualifying examination conducted by Boards / Councils / Intermediate Education established by State Governments / Central Government and recognised as equivalent to two year Pre-University examination by the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences / Association of Indian Universities (AIU).
3. **Subjects in 10+2 / PUC:** Candidates should have passed subjects of Physics, Chemistry, Biology and English (PCBE) individually and must have obtained a minimum of not less than 45% marks put together in all these subjects. **For B.Sc. Imaging Technology, the candidate should also have passed with Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry and English with an aggregate of 45%.**

Candidates desirous of applying can download the application form from the website and send the same by post. Incomplete applications, applications in a different format and applications not meeting the eligibility criteria will be rejected. The applications will be entertained from 1st March 2016 to 30th April 2016. The date of entrance exam will be intimated separately.

For further details log on to www.wfd.sssihms.org.in

— Director

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

The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

- 1) The publication and distribution of spiritual, religious, and educational Sai Literature and the production and distribution of audio and visual multimedia, photographs, calendars, and diaries, educational software etc for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- 2) The publication and distribution of Bhagawan Baba's monthly spiritual journal - Sanathana Sarathi - in English and Telugu languages. Since 2011, e-version of the magazine is also released simultaneously and is available in the popular Interactive PDF format on www.sanathanasarathi.org.
- 3) Maintaining a reporting channel, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
- 4) Organising and conducting seminars and conferences on spirituality, religion, education, and human values.
- 5) Providing library and Reading room for visiting devotees, with a very large collection of various spiritual and religious books.

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Music programme by alumni of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music.



Girl students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School making beautiful formations.



Students of Brindavan Campus presenting band music.

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Responsibility of Devotees

People ask sneeringly, “Where is your God? How does He look like? What does He do?” etc. They sneer because those who have experienced the majesty and glory of God are very few. God is truth, goodness and beauty, but only those who have had experience of Him can assert so and convince others. You may have a pot full of Amrita, but unless you place a drop on your tongue, how can you assert about its fragrance and sweetness? Through you, Sai devotees, a transformation has to be brought about in the minds of people; so your responsibility is very great.

— *Baba*



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