



# Sanathana Sarathi

JUNE 2015

*Cover Story*  
**Vata Vriksha**



# Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

Vol.: 58 Issue No. 6 Date of Publication: 1st June

June

2015

© Sri Sathya Sai  
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division  
Prasanthi Nilayam

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

On behalf of the owner, Sri Sathya Sai  
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division,  
Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur  
District (A.P.)

And Printed at M/s Rajhans Enterprises,  
136, 4th Main Road, Industrial Town,  
Rajaji Nagar, Bengaluru 560044,  
Karnataka

And Published at Sri Sathya Sai  
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division,  
Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur  
Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

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*Annual Subscription*  
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Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka ₹ 600

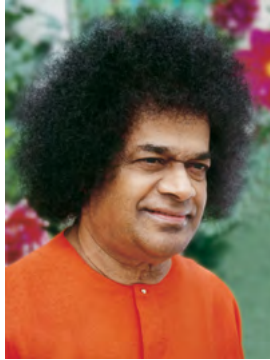
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*"So long as you remain distant from  
God, you will not be able to understand  
the principle of Divinity. As you go  
closer to God, all the mysteries of life  
will be revealed to you. Not only that,  
you will develop a sense of detachment  
without any effort. Your heart will be  
filled with divine feelings and your life  
will be sanctified."*

## CONTENTS

- 2 **Knowledge of the Self is Real Knowledge**  
**Bhagavan's Discourse: 7th September 1996**
- 11 **Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam**  
**A Report**
- 14 **Let God be your Guru**  
**From our Archives**
- 16 **Divine Mystery and Miraculous Cure**  
**Basant Kumar Rai**
- 20 **The First Church St. Francis Rebuilt**  
**Effulgence of Divine Glory**
- 22 **Vata Vriksha**  
**Cover Story**
- 24 **The Love of my Life**  
**Alumni Forum**
- 27 **Students Corner**
- 29 **News from Sai Centres**

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AMRITA DHARA

BHAGAVAN'S DISCOURSE:  
7TH SEPTEMBER 1996

# KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF IS REAL KNOWLEDGE

*When the branches of a tree rub against each other incessantly, fire is produced. When you churn curd continuously, butter comes out of it. Similarly, continuous enquiry will lead to the realisation of Reality. Listen to this, oh valiant sons of Bharat!*

(Telugu Poem)

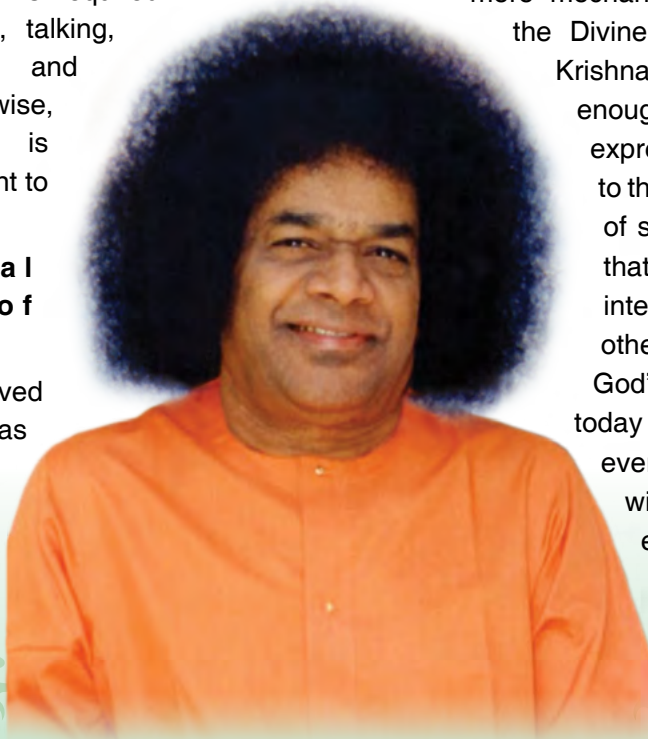
DIVINITY IS IMMANENT IN EVERY BEING

**P**RACTICE IS NECESSARY TO perform any task in this world. Human effort is required for anything. Practice is required even for walking, talking, eating, writing and reading. Likewise, proper effort is required if you want to attain Divinity.

## Fundamental Principle of Divinity is One

If the food served in the plate has to reach your stomach, don't you have to put your hand and mouth to work? On the other hand, if you go

on repeating the names of the food items served in the plate even for hundred times, your hunger will not be satiated. Similarly, mere mechanical repetition of the Divine Names, Rama, Krishna, Govinda is not enough unless you express your devotion to the Lord in the form of service. Any work that you do with the intention of serving others becomes God's work. But man today wants to have everything easily without putting any effort. Divinity is immanent in every being just as there is oil in sesame





seeds, fragrance in flowers, juice in fruits and fire in wood. It is only with proper effort that you can get butter out of milk, oil out of seeds, juice out of fruits and fire out of wood. Similarly, due effort is required to experience divinity that is immanent in man. But in the present circumstances, students and youth have forgotten Divinity which is true and eternal. Due to their misunderstanding, they consider truth as untruth, untruth as truth and waste their time, effort and energy. Forms may appear to be different, and you may give different names to these forms. The experiences arising out of the diversity of names and forms may also vary, yet the fundamental principle of divinity which is the basis of all names and forms is one and the same. This is the principle of Advaita propounded by Adi Sankara.

You sow a mango seed, and after sometime it grows into a tree with branches and sub-branches. The tree may have thousands of leaves and flowers, and hundreds of fruits. The fruits and flowers appear to be totally different from each other. Similarly, nothing appears to be common between branches and leaves. Not only that, the leaves, flowers and fruits may be put to many different uses. You may prepare pickles out of unripe fruits. Leaves may be used to make festoons to decorate houses. The dried branches can be used as firewood and the ripe fruits may be eaten. But it is the same seed that is the basis for all the branches, sub-branches, leaves, unripe fruits and ripe fruits. Without seed, there can be no tree;

***Understand this clearly. Yanna Bharate, Thanna Bharata (what is not there in Bharat cannot be found anywhere else). Bharat is the master of all nations. That is why people from many foreign countries come to Bharat. Bharat is Karma Bhumi, Punya Bhumi, Yoga Bhumi and Thyaga Bhumi (land of righteous action, merit, spirituality and sacrifice). Even with a small income, you can lead a peaceful life here.***



without tree, there can be no branches and without branches, there can be no fruits. Lord Krishna declared this truth in the Bhagavadgita when He said, *Beejam Maam Sarva Bhutanam* (I am the seed that is the origin of all living beings). The principle of Advaita demonstrates the underlying oneness of everything.

This visible world appears with varied names and forms, but when you enquire deeply, you will realise that the underlying principle of divinity is the same for all diverse forms.

### **Knowledge is Meant to Attain Wisdom**

Yesterday, I told you the story of Adi Sankara who took to Sannyasa with the permission of his mother after the death of his father. After acquiring the knowledge of the Vedas, Sastras (scriptures), Itihasas (epics) and Puranas (mythological texts), he approached Govindapada, who was the



disciple of Gaudapada for initiation into the order of Sannyasa. *Sraddhavan Labhate Jnanam* (one with steadfast faith attains wisdom). As Sankara was endowed with great Sraddha, he could master the four Vedas and six Sastras at the young age of sixteen years. Age is not the criterion to learn something if one has the required Sraddha.

For everything, time is important. It is with the passage of time that a child grows into an old person. A child becomes a boy at the age of ten; he becomes man at the age of thirty and a grandfather at the age of seventy-five. But the child, boy, man and grandfather are one and the same. All these changes in the names and forms occur as a result of change of time.

In order to test the skill and knowledge of Sankara, one day Acharya Govindapada decided to engage him in a debate. Sankara being one of humility and obedience offered his salutations to his Guru and sought his permission before entering into debate with him. This debate was a wonderful demonstration of Sankara's knowledge wherein he gave befitting replies to the questions raised by his Guru in consonance with the teachings of the Vedas and Sastras. He explained how one could follow the path of Nivritti (spirituality) while leading a worldly life.

In those days, there were many eminent scholars but they were using their knowledge for the acquisition of wealth. They ignored the truth that knowledge was meant to acquire wisdom and not wealth.

Even today students think that all their education is meant to earn money. It is a misconception. Agriculture is for food and education is for knowledge. Therefore, Sankara strived to show the right path to scholars so that they make proper use of their knowledge and not waste it in mundane pursuits. What is the use of worldly education?

*Oh man! You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields. Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness have you achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth while forgetting God.* (Telugu Poem)

*Oh man! Do not feel proud of your education. If you do not offer your salutations to God and do not think of Him with devotion, all your education will become useless.* (Telugu Poem)

Sankara felt deeply distressed to see such a scenario. His preceptor Govindapada saw how sad Sankara was. Gaudapada also understood his feelings and observed that Sankara, being endowed with all knowledge and noble feelings at such a young age, was capable of driving away all the injustice, untruth and impropriety prevailing in the world and firmly imprint the teachings of Vedas and Sastras in the hearts of people. Both of them called Sankara and told him, "Dear one! You don't need to be here any longer. Tomorrow itself, you embark on your



journey to Kasi (Varanasi). Teach all those eminent scholars of Kasi the great truth of Advaita and propagate it to the entire world. There is none else more capable than you to achieve this task". Likewise, students today should also realise this truth that they are most capable of driving away injustice, impropriety and other evils from society.

### **Sankara Propounded the Principle of Advaita**

As per the command of his Guru, Sankara set out on his journey to Kasi. In those days, there were no such modes of transport as aeroplanes, trains and buses. Therefore, he travelled on foot along with his disciples. When he came near Kasi, he saw a person sitting under a tree and repeating the rules of Panini grammar *Dukrun Karane, Dukrun Karane*. In order to put this person on the right path, it was here that Sankara recited the first Sloka (verse) of his famous composition "Bhaja Govindam":

*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam,  
Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe,  
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale,  
Nahi Nahi Rakshathi Dukrun Karane.*

(Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda; the rules of grammar will not come to your rescue when the end approaches.)

What do you achieve by learning the rules of grammar? Will this grammar come to your rescue when you are to depart from this world? Therefore, sing the glory of God and contemplate on Him. When you leave this world, none of your friends, relatives

*Sankara was also a student like you, but even at the young age of sixteen years he earned such a great name and fame that it will continue to shine Age after Age like a precious jewel whose splendour never diminishes. Every student should emulate his ideal and lead an exemplary life. Give happiness to your parents. Earn a good name in society, uphold the great name of motherland and thus sanctify your human birth.*

or wealth will come with you. It is only the Name of God that will be with you and will protect you always. Thus, Sankara taught the importance of reciting God's Name.

Just as the light of moon goes on increasing day by day in the bright fortnight, the teachings of Sankara started spreading far and wide day by day radiating light of knowledge. Once there was a conference of scholars in Kasi. Many scholars came there donning thick gold bracelets, gorgeous shawls and garlands of beads showing their high status. There was no dearth of pomp and show in the conference. Only Sankara came to attend the conference in all simplicity wearing only an ordinary Dhoti and a small towel covering his shoulders. Many scholars looked down upon him thinking, "What sort of a scholar is he? He doesn't have even a single garland of beads. What can we expect from him"? However, there were some scholars who



knew the level of Sankara's scholarship and started extolling him, "Sankara, we have heard so much about you. You have mastered the Vedas, Sastras, Itihasas, Puranas, Brahma Sutras, grammar and logic. You are the one who propounded the principle of Advaita". When his turn came, Sankara smilingly ascended the stage and offered his salutations to the assembly of scholars and began his speech.

Sankara said that knowledge of scriptures should not be used to earn money. He said to the scholars, "Why do you crave for money? *Pandita Samadarshina* (A Pandit is one who is equal-minded)". Though he was young in age, he declared this truth emphatically in the presence of scholars that they should yearn for God and not crave for money.

*Oh man, give up your thirst for money.  
Give up all your desires by proper  
discrimination. The wealth you have  
is nothing but the result of your past  
actions. Therefore, be contented with  
whatever you have.* (Telugu Song)

What you earn with hard labour is true wealth. When you work with both hands, you will certainly get food to sustain yourself. How compassionate God is! He has given you two hands and one stomach. Are two hands not enough to fill one belly? But today, you don't work with both hands. That is why you are not able to fulfil all your needs. Do not give room to laziness. Give up thirst for money and develop thirst for God and righteousness. Sankara gave a wonderful exposition of the doctrine of Advaita and exhorted the august gathering

of scholars to realise the divine principle of oneness of all creation. The scholars and their disciples were wonderstruck listening to profound words of Sankara. Just as the saying goes, a small sparrow chirps loudly, the young Sankara started imparting great moral teachings to one and all. Not only his teachings, his behaviour was also exemplary. This is the hallmark of noble souls. *Manasyekam Vachasyekam, Karmanyekam Mahatmanam* (Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones).

Man should develop purity of thought, word and deed. First and foremost, purity of mind is essential. When the mind is pure then speech will be pure. Pure thoughts and pure words will lead to sacred actions. This is described as *Trikarana Suddhi* which was very much evident in Sankara. Many scholars started asking him questions, "What is the principle of Advaita"? "It is nothing but the vision of oneness. *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* (experience of non-dualism is wisdom)". What is this knowledge? Is it physical knowledge, worldly knowledge or secular knowledge? None of these. It is the knowledge of the Self. That is the fundamental knowledge. But no scholar is making efforts today to recognise this fundamental principle. Understand this truth clearly. Jewels are many, but gold is one. Likewise, the fundamental principle of the entire creation is only one although it manifests in various names and forms. A gold ornament worn on the wrist is called a bracelet. When it adorns the ear, it is called an earring. When

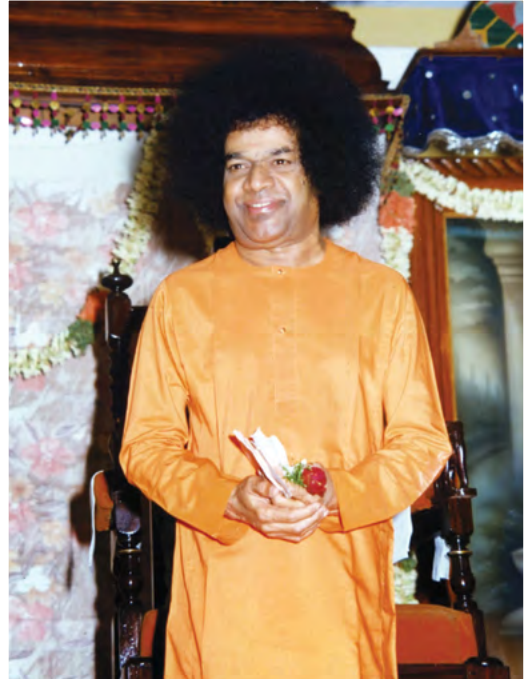




you wear it on your finger, it is called a ring. When it is worn around the neck, it is called a necklace. Though the names and forms of these ornaments are different, is not the gold same in all of them? Sankara spoke about this principle of oneness in the assembly of scholars. Why do you observe differences based on name, form and use? Heart is the basis for everything. Therefore, follow the dictates of your heart. This is

When you enquire deeply in this manner, you will visualise the underlying unity in everything. Yesterday also I spoke about the fundamental principle of oneness. *Mritpindamekam Bahubhandarupam* (pots are many, but clay is one). The Vice Chancellor also mentioned this in his speech. Pots have emerged from clay. There is clay in the pot but not pot in the clay. There are many people gathered

*First of all, you should understand that you yourselves are divine. There is nothing greater than divinity. Your innate quality of love is a divine quality. That is the true human quality. You should develop this human quality of love. You will be called a human being in the true sense of the term only when you have the qualities of compassion, love, tolerance, empathy and forbearance.*



called conscience. In this manner, Sankara propounded great truths in simple words.

*Jewels are many but gold is one.*

*Cows are many but milk is one.*

*Beings are many but breath is one.*

*Castes are many but humanity is one.*

*Flowers are many but worship is one.*

(Telugu Poem)

here. Their names, forms and feelings may be different but the same five elements are present in all of them. This principle of five elements is the principle of Divinity. This is present in all. You, he and I are all the embodiments of Atma. You are all the embodiments of Brahman. That is why the Upanishads have declared, *Tattwamasi* (I am that thou Art). *Aham Brahmasmi* (I



am Brahman). Who can deny this? What does Brahman signify? It signifies expansiveness. That is why there is the quality of expansiveness in man. Though you are here, your mind travels to Chennai, Mumbai or Delhi in an instant. This power of expansiveness is termed Brahman. This power is latent in every man. But he is unable to develop it because of his desires and greed for wealth and power.

### **Greed Ruins Man**

There was a farmer who had a small piece of land. He wanted to acquire more land so that he could be called a Zamindar (landlord). His friends told him, "You want to acquire vast land, but you don't have sufficient money for that. Therefore, we will give you an idea following which you can have as much land as you want". A greedy person listens to evil talk not with two ears, but with twenty ears.

*Oh ears, you are interested in listening to vain gossip and tales about others, but you pay least attention when the wonderful stories of the Lord are narrated.*

(Telugu Song)

Man does not give ear to good talk but he is all ears for evil talk. The farmer listened to the advice of his friends with great interest. They told him that in this region of Andhra Pradesh, one could not get a big piece of land with a small amount. They asked him to go to the Himalayan region where he could get as much land as he desired.

As per the advice of his friends, he went to meet the king of a Himalayan region and

requested him for a huge piece of land. The king told him, "My dear, since you have come from such a far off place like Andhra Pradesh, I will certainly fulfil your wish". The king promised to give him all the land that he could walk around from sunrise to sunset on a single day. So, in his uncontrollable greed, he rose with the rise of the sun and without wasting a minute for breakfast, he walked fast. Indeed, he ran very fast in order to cover as much land as he could. He never took a second's rest; he was happy that he could get a pretty vast area free when the sun was about to set. He was within a few paces of the point from where he had started. He was too exhausted to take even the few steps he needed; he fell down on the ground he coveted so much and breathed his last. His heart could not stand the strain of walking so fast, so long, with such hurry and tension. The people gathered there told the king, "Alas, he breathed his last in his greed to acquire hundreds of acres of land. Now what he requires is only six feet of land".

### **Acquire Education to Serve Society**

What a great misfortune the farmer met with because of his greed! Therefore, there should be a limit to your desires. Limitless desires will lead to danger. That is why Sankara taught mankind, "Give up your thirst for money". But students today make preparations to go to foreign lands to earn more money as soon as they get their degree.



## Students!

Understand this clearly. *Yanna Bharate, Thanna Bharata* (what is not there in Bharat cannot be found anywhere else). Bharat is the master of all nations. That is why people from many foreign countries come to Bharat. Bharat is Karma Bhumi, Punya Bhumi, Yoga Bhumi and Thyaga Bhumi (land of righteous action, merit, spirituality and sacrifice). Even with a small income, you can lead a peaceful life here.

*What is the use of acquiring high education if one is found wanting in virtues? What is the value of such education? What is the use of ten acres of barren land? Instead, a small piece of fertile land is good enough.*

(Telugu Poem)

Students are wasting their time, energy and money in their craze to go to foreign lands. You are born and brought up in Bharat. You eat and drink the food and water of Bharat and call yourself a Bharatiya. But what is it that you will achieve by giving up this sacred land and going to foreign countries? Give up this greed for money. Serve your motherland. Serve the poor and destitute in this land. Not only for your self-interest, work for the interest of others too. Acquire your education with a view to serve and strengthen society. There is no point in acquiring merely high degrees. Many educated people go abroad, and when they don't find proper employment they do even menial jobs like cleaning of cups and plates in hotels. They think, nobody from here would know even if they

sweep the roads or clean plates in a hotel. But the same people don't want to wash their own tiffin plates in their house. Why should one be ashamed of doing work in his own house? The sacredness and glory of Bharat is diminishing because of such false sense of prestige of students.

## Love is a Divine Quality

You should develop love for the motherland, not attachment to the body. However, do not belittle or criticise other nations. *Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the beings of all the worlds be happy!). This is what the culture of Bharat teaches. After slaying Ravana, Rama wanted to crown Vibhishana as the king of Lanka. At that time Sugriva, Jambavan, Angada and other prominent warriors approached Rama and requested Him, "Swami, now that Ravana is killed, it will be better if You take over the reins of Lanka which is full of affluence and riches". Lakshmana also said, "Brother, anyway Bharata is ruling over Ayodhya. Therefore, it will only be proper if You become the king of Lanka and sanctify this place". Then Rama said, "*Janani Janma Bhumishcha Swargadapi Gareeyasi* (the mother and the motherland are greater than heaven even). Can we call some other beautiful woman as our mother just because our own mother is not so beautiful? Even if she is not so beautiful, our mother is our mother".

Students should develop such exalted feelings of love for motherland. They should work for the honour of their country.





**Students!**

*He is verily a living corpse who does not declare with pride that this is my motherland, this is my mother tongue and this is my religion. (Telugu Poem)*

Sankara, who was born in Kerala, brought great name and fame not only to Kerala but the entire country with his profound teachings of Advaita. It is goodness that brings good name. Goodness is godliness. Without goodness, man becomes godless. First of all, you should understand that you yourselves are divine. There is nothing greater than divinity. Your innate quality of love is a divine quality. That is the true human quality. You should develop this human quality of love. You will be called a human being in the true sense of the term only when you have the qualities of compassion, love, tolerance, empathy and forbearance. Man today is human only in form but not in practice. He appears only as human but he lacks human qualities. One can clearly say, he is human only in form but not in practice.

**Students!**

Sankara was also a student like you, but even at the young age of sixteen years he earned such a great name and fame that it will continue to shine Age after Age like a precious jewel whose splendour never diminishes. Every student should emulate his ideal and lead an exemplary life. Give happiness to your parents. Earn a good name in society, uphold the great name of motherland and thus sanctify your human birth.

You should not think it otherwise. Sankara tried to develop a sense of renunciation in everyone through his composition "Bhaja Govindam". Some people may say, "Sai Baba is teaching renunciation to students". Let people say, what they want. I am not afraid. Why should one be afraid to speak the truth? Is it so easy to attain renunciation? It is not possible for everyone. There has been no transformation even in those who have been listening to My Discourses for a number of years. Such being the case, can we expect a sudden change in you by merely listening to this Discourse? It is only the most fortunate few who can develop the sense of renunciation. What great good fortune can there be other than developing the spirit of renunciation naturally? That is why I repeatedly tell you, *Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaike Amrutatthwamanasu* (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice). It is only the spirit of sacrifice that ensures your well-being. What is meant by sacrifice? If you don't exhale the air that you inhale, your lungs will get spoiled. Your stomach will be upset unless the food you eat is digested and excreted. Similarly, blood has to continuously flow in all parts of the body. If it remains in one place, it develops into a boil. The same can be said of money also. The money that you earn should be spent for righteous purposes. Only those

*continued on page 19...*



# CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

## BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI AVATARA VAIBHAVAM: A DANCE DRAMA

*M*ORE THAN 250 YOUTH CAME on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from the villages of Himachal Pradesh and presented a dance drama entitled “Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai



*Dance drama by the youth of  
Himachal Pradesh.*

Avatar Vaibhavam” (glory of Sri Sathya Sai) on 26th April 2015. Beginning their presentation at 5.20 p.m., the youth portrayed the life story of Bhagavan through various incidents from His life. The narration of the story was embellished with beautiful songs and thrilling dances of the youth which highlighted different facets of Bhagavan’s life and His Divine Message for mankind. Bhajans followed next. Meanwhile, the participants were felicitated and Prasadam was distributed. The programme came to a close with Arati at 6.30 p.m.

## BUDDHA PURNIMA CELEBRATIONS

The holy festival of Buddha Purnima was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 3rd and 4th May 2015 to commemorate the birth, enlightenment and Nirvana of Lord Buddha. The theme for this year’s celebrations was “Metta – Loving Kindness”. A large number of devotees came from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Brunei, Singapore, Indonesia, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan to participate in the important event.

The programme commenced on 3rd May 2015 with traditional Buddhist chants by devotees from Thailand. Thereafter, Dr. V.K. Ravindran, Chairman, Zone 4 of Sri Sathya Sai International Organisation spoke in brief on the teachings of Lord Buddha and exhorted all Buddhists to become better Buddhists. He narrated how Emperor Ashoka was transformed from a conqueror to a good Buddhist, and stressed the need to discover the Buddha within. He also introduced the two speakers for the evening. The first speaker was Sri Gehan Talgodapitiya of Sri Lanka. Narrating the illustrious story of Siddhartha turned Buddha, he dwelt on the need to practise ‘Loving Kindness’ and selfless love following Bhagavan’s teaching of “Love All Serve All”. Bhichhu Shanta Maitria representative from the Buddhist



Association of Kathmandu, Nepal, was the second speaker. He spoke on Buddha's teachings, highlighting the three essentials, viz., avoid doing evil deeds, cultivate good and wholesome deeds like loving kindness and tame the mind. A choir from Japan comprising about 40 members then

the second speaker, highlighted the great importance of looking within to know the unchanging truth which was the main message of Buddhism.

The Kandyan folklore dancers from Sri Lanka then presented half-an-hour of traditional cultural dancing to rhythmic



*Bhajans by Japanese Choir.*



*Kandyan dance by dance troupe of Sri Lanka.*

rendered soulful Prasanthi Mandir Bhajans in the Japanese language.

The programme on 4th May 2015 began with an introductory speech by Sri Billy Fong, Central Coordinator of Zone 4, who introduced the two speakers who spoke after him. The first speaker was Venerable Pra Khamhoung Toulavanh, the Chief Monk of the Pho Sai Pagoda in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Hailing the Sathya Sai International Organisation's efforts in spreading Buddha's teachings and its path-breaking, revolutionary value-oriented education, the venerable speaker called it symbolic showers of 'Metta – Loving Kindness' from Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Lord Buddha and Bhagavan Baba are the embodiments of loving kindness, concluded the erudite speaker. In his soul-searching talk, Dr. Art Ong Jumsai,

drum beats, showcasing great acrobatic skills. The team led by Kala Suri Lionel Sirisena, an internationally acclaimed Kandyan dancer, enthralled the audience with a mix of artistry and acrobatics.

The final item for the evening was a sketch entitled "The Heart of Buddha" performed by youth from Malaysia. The sketch involved the story of Buddha and his teachings, introduced in the form of a 'Radio Sai Interview', showing interludes of episodes, expanding the theme with informative skits. Presenting the story of the making of the Buddha, the sketch had the story of Quan Yin, apart from discussion on 'Metta – Loving Kindness' leading into an insight into the modern-day social media as a tool in spreading the message of Buddhism.





## ANNAMACHARYA KIRTANS

A contingent of 600 pilgrims consisting of 400 teachers and 200 devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam from East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh on a pilgrimage and presented soulful Kirtans (devotional songs) dedicated to Annamacharya on 5th May 2015. The teachers in the group would later conduct Bal Vikas training in their respective schools as part of an initiative by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Andhra Pradesh.

## EASWARAMMA DAY

Mother Easwaramma stood for the oppressed, for the suffering and the forlorn and the Sai saga is replete with tales galore of her unbounding compassion.

As in the previous years, Easwaramma Day was observed at Prasanthi Nilayam with great piety and solemnity. The morning programme was organised at the Samadhi of the Divine Parents, Mother Easwaramma and Sri Pedda Venkama

Raju, who gave to the world the Avatar of Kali Yuga, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. A large number of devotees and dignitaries thronged the premises to offer their homage to the Divine Parents. The Samadhi was beautifully decorated and offerings were made at it by dignitaries and family members. Meanwhile, Bhajans were held dedicated to the memory of Divine Mother Easwaramma and Bhagavan Baba. The programme at the Samadhi concluded with Arati and distribution of Prasadam to all.

The evening programme was held in Sai Kulwant Hall, which featured a special presentation on the unmatched glory of the Chosen Mother. The programme with soulful renderings and recountals, especially by Smt. Vijayamma and Prof. (Smt.) Jayalakshmi Gopinath through audio visual presentation illustrated the legend of Mother Easwaramma, her story from being a doting mother to an ardent devotee of Bhagavan and many of the fascinating untold tales of the Revered Mother. A riveting fast-paced Bhajan medley on Easwaramma followed next, immersing the august assembly in devotion.

On the sacred occasion of Easwaramma Day, a TV set was installed at shed no. 29, for the benefit of aged devotees under the Ashram care. The new facility would feature live coverage of all Mandir programmes facilitating the aged inmates of the sheds 29, 30, 31 to watch the Mandir programmes.



*Offerings made at the Samadhi of Divine Parents.*

From our Archives

## LET GOD BE YOUR GURU

REGARD YOURSELVES AS THE INSTRUMENTS OF THE DIVINE

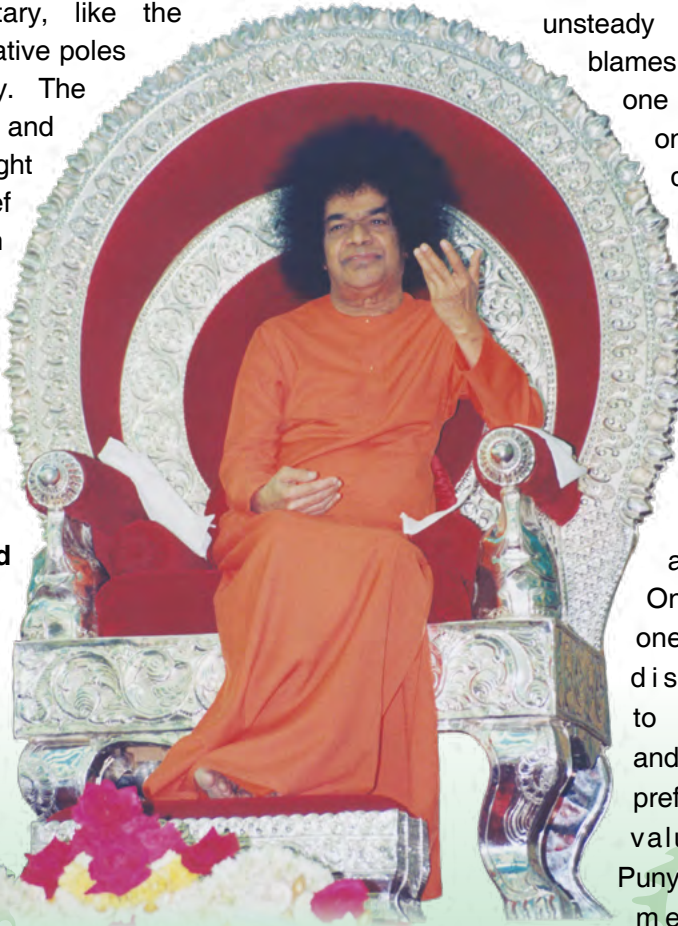
*J*UST AS GOD PROJECTS HIMSELF as man, man too can concretise God, and persuade God to become man by sincere prayer and intense yearning. Prahlada's prayer induced the Avatar of Narasimha. Prayer and personification are complementary, like the positive and negative poles in the electricity. The dark fortnight and the bright fortnight alternate like grief and joy, pain and pleasure, by God's decree to foster equanimity, to lead man towards reality beyond both.

### Adore God and Obey His Command

The Reality is cognisable everywhere; why, it is evident most in you, when you earnestly

seek it. You can experience it, even while performing selflessly your duty to yourself and others.

When one does not attempt to transform oneself thus, one blames God for one's sorrows, instead of blaming one's unsteady faith! One blames God because one announces oneself as a devotee too soon, and expects plentiful grace. Grace cannot be claimed by such; God must accept the devotee as His own. One has to use one's talent of discrimination to sift the trash and discard it in preference to the valuable. Doing Punya (good deeds) means doing



selfless service to others. We have to flee from bad persons to search for and win the friendship of the good, who can cleanse us and heal us.

Man is consumed by time; God is the master of time. So, take refuge in God. Let God be your Guru, your path, your Lord. Adore Him, obey His commands, offer Him your grateful homage, hold Him fast in your memory. This is the easiest way to realise Him as your own reality. This is the one and only way.

### **Make your Life an Offering to the Divine**

Wherever you may be and whatever you do, regard yourselves as instruments of the Divine and act on that basis. You need not wait for a whole year to observe Guru Purnima. Treat every moment of your life as being intended for dedication to the Lord. This is the way to experience the Divine all the time at all places. This is true Sakshatkara (vision of Reality). Serve all and love all. Firmly believe that the Divine is in everyone and constantly act on this

belief. Only by constant practice can you develop this sacred attitude. Fill yourself with self-confidence and courage. Make your life a complete offering to the Divine, who is the real source of all that you are and all that you have.

Everyone must develop the spirit of Thyaga (sacrifice). You must serve the people with your body. You have to cherish good and noble thoughts in your mind. You must use your wealth for supporting educational and other institutions to help the people. Give food to the starving. This is the way to lead a purposeful and sublime life. Life has been given to you not to fatten yourself. The body is the basic instrument for the practice of Dharma.

Dedicate your entire time to service and the discharge of your duties. Your Sadhana must not be for selfish ends. It must promote the good of others. Give up selfishness, cultivate selfless love for others and sanctify your lives.

– **Excerpted from Bhagavan's Guru Purnima Discourses.**

*The man who is filled with love has great peace of mind, is pure at heart and is unruffled by any adverse circumstances, failures or losses. This fortitude is derived from love of the Lord, which endows him with self-confidence. Self-confidence generates an immense internal power. Everyone has to develop this power. Everyone has to develop this self-confidence so that Atmananda (bliss of the Self) may be experienced.*

– Baba



# DIVINE MYSTERY AND MIRACULOUS CURE

*Basant Kumar Rai*

**M**ORE THAN TWO DECADES back, when my wife, my elder son and I were in Bengaluru in 1990 as tourists, we took the most important step of our lives. At Bengaluru City bus stand, we came across some Sai devotees from Darjeeling and learnt that Sai Baba was staying at a place called Whitefield, a short distance from Bengaluru. We had heard a little about Sai Baba and His miracles, and out of curiosity we boarded a bus and reached Whitefield.

With other devotees, we sat around a Banyan tree and after a while Sai Baba came and went round giving Darshan to devotees. He briefly spoke to some and accepted letters from others. I was disturbed to see that He received a letter from a middle-aged western woman and straightaway threw it back to her. The lady broke into tears.

Much later, I came to know that when Sai Baba throws a letter back to the presenter, it actually contains instantaneous reply. Anyway, it was our first Darshan and He performed no miracle for us to see and I was not at all impressed. The reactions of my wife and son were also the same.

## **A Step towards Spirituality**

After we had a nice holiday at the sea beach at Mangalore (now Mangaluru), we started our journey back home from the Bengaluru City railway station. In the train, I was deep in thought about my reaction to the Darshan of Sai Baba and I felt that, may be, I missed to notice the reality of Sai Baba. There must be some power in Him which attracted so many people including a large number of foreigners. I decided to find out soon after I reached Darjeeling. Hence, spiritual reaction of my first visit to Sai Baba began.

A Sai devotee lent me Howard Murphet's famous book on Baba, "Sai Baba – Man of Miracles". My urge to know about Sai Baba was so intense that I finished reading that book in one go, and at the end I realised that Sathya Sai Baba is God! Thenceforth, He became our family God, the one and only God!

The impact of the knowledge that God actually lived on earth immediately reflected on my life. From that very day, I gave up drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and eating meat. It was a huge step forward towards spirituality that gradually

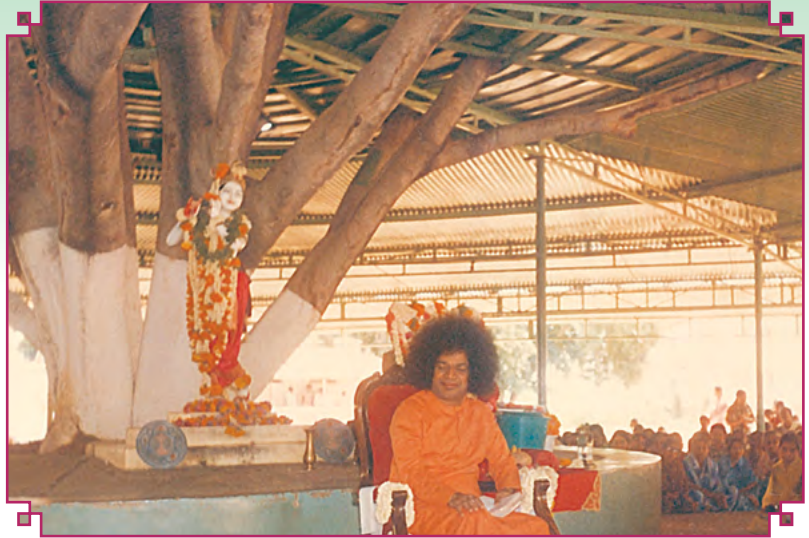


reflected on my family members as well. After a few years, my whole family became vegetarian. My grandchildren are born vegetarians. It was a positive step towards spiritual progress.

Two years later, the chronic problem of my nose bleeding became very serious. I suffered from almost continuous nose bleeding and a very unstable state of mind and body. One moment I could not bear even a whiff of air which tended to choke me, and the next moment I felt claustrophobic and demanded all doors and windows be opened despite the cold weather of Darjeeling.

### A Mind-boggling Mystery

One day, in this state of helplessness and uncertainty, I was lying in bed at home when a friend of mine from England came to visit me. He was carrying a long six-celled torch which was very powerful. My friend said it was used in tiger hunting. After he left, I noticed that my friend had forgotten to take his long torch, and it was standing beside my bed. That night, I was both physically and mentally restless and could not get sleep. The room was dark and I did not want to put on the light for fear of disturbing my wife, who had not slept



*Bhagavan giving Darshan in Sai Ram Shed, Brindavan (Bengaluru).*

many nights because of my condition and was fast asleep in bed beside me. I felt an urge to know the time and I remembered the torch that my friend had left behind. In the dark, I groped for it beside my bed and I was surprised at its heavy weight. I switched the torch on and discovered that it was 1 a.m. on the wall clock.

As I had been constantly praying to Sai Baba, I directed the powerful beam of the torch on the photo of Baba hanging on the opposite wall. It is a coloured photo of Swami with right palm raised in blessing. In the photo, Baba is smiling and his eyes are small. It is a very pleasant photo and one from my early collections.

As I kept focusing the light on the face of Sai Baba, I suddenly noticed a change in His eyes, which gradually opened up increasing in size and turned blood red. The eyes emitted such an intense light



that the intensity of the powerful torchlight gradually diminished to an insignificant dim light similar to that of a flickering lamp at the point of extinction. The eyes were so dazzling and scary that my whole body shook with fear and it was impossible to look at them.

I immediately put off the torch, closed my eyes and covered my face with the quilt. After a long interval, I took long breaths, controlled myself and began to reflect on the incident. My common sense and rational mind refused to accept what I had seen. How could that be real? It was impossible. Since I was seriously ill and my mind was not stable, I thought it might be a figment of my imagination, and I being a sensible person should not be scared of such delusion. I am not a coward and I intended to put myself in right senses.

I removed the quilt from my face and once again switched the powerful torch on to focus it on the face of Sai Baba. The smiling face of Baba was pleasant and I was happy to see that it was calm and still. I said to myself, "See! What you had seen was only imagination".

Just as I was relaxing, the small eyes of Sai Baba once again started to become bigger and fiery and became far more scary and powerful than those of a Royal Bengal tiger that I had once encountered in the headlight of my jeep in the forest of Jaldapara Game Sanctuary. As the powerful dazzling gaze of Baba enlarged in intensity, the beam of torchlight went dimmer and dimmer to the point that it was

***The impact of the knowledge that God actually lived on earth immediately reflected on my life. From that very day, I gave up drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and eating meat. It was a huge step forward towards spirituality that gradually reflected on my family members as well. After a few years, my whole family became vegetarian. My grandchildren are born vegetarians. It was a positive step towards spiritual progress.***

automatically shut. I was completely off balance, totally scared and my whole body shook like a leaf in a gale.

The torch fell from my hand. I turned around in the bed and covered myself with the quilt. The rapid loud heartbeat was like hammer blows in my ears, and I was trembling with fear. Automatically, I was chanting "Sai Ram! Sai Ram!". I do not know how long I chanted before I fell asleep.

### **Miraculous Cure of Cancer**

When I woke up, my room was already filled with the bright morning sunlight. I ruminated over the incident of the night but could not make head or tail of it. It was mind-boggling and I feared that, if I related the incident, others might not believe me. Hence, I refrained from telling the incident even to my wife for a long time.





After a few days, I was in a hospital in Kolkata for treatment. Elaborate pathological tests were carried out and my ailment was diagnosed as cancer at an advanced stage. Doctors advised my wife to take me back home as it was too late for any medical treatment. At her tearful request, the doctors put me on chemo and radiotherapy only for her mental satisfaction. After a short course of treatment, to the utter surprise of the doctors, my body started responding positively to the medicines. Thereafter, I was advised to go immediately to Tata Memorial Hospital, a specialist cancer treatment and research centre in Mumbai.

In Darjeeling, I had undertaken a vow to visit Prasanthi Nilayam on Sai Baba's Birthday and I insisted on going there on the way to Mumbai. Adamant as I was, my

family members yielded to my demand. Due to paucity of time, I was flown to Bengaluru on 23rd November 1993, but the flight was delayed due to adverse weather in Kolkata, and we reached Prasanthi Nilayam only in the evening. However, by Providence we had a good seat from where we had Baba's Darshan from a close quarter. I felt completely uplifted and exhilarated by the Darshan. My wife was in the ladies section, and because of the huge crowd, we met her after the Darshan with some difficulty. On meeting her, the first sentence I uttered was, "Don't worry, I am cured". A big smile on the face of my wife was the happy resound. After that, my treatment continued both at Mumbai and Kolkata, and there was steady progress in my health and I was fully cured of cancer.

*...continued from page 10*

who have such spirit of sacrifice can really be called truly fortunate. So long as you remain distant from God, you will not be able to understand the principle of Divinity. As you go closer to God, all the mysteries of life will be revealed to you. Not only that, you will develop a sense of detachment without any effort. Your heart will be filled with divine feelings and your life will be sanctified. As the saying goes, *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati* (the knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman), you become one with God. Therefore, develop good qualities and the spirit of sacrifice. Sage

Vyasa has given the essence of eighteen Puranas in two sentences, *Paropakara Punyaya, Papaya Parapeedanam* (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). *Help Ever, Hurt Never*. If you put this dictum into practice, you would have followed the teachings of Vedanta in the real sense.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...*")

– From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall on 7th September 1996.



## Effulgence of Divine Glory

# THE FIRST CHURCH ST. FRANCIS REBUILT

**B**Y APRIL THE TRAVEL FOR MY research was finished and I flew to Rome where Italian devotees met me at the airport. We drove out of the city along a lovely highway in the Umbrian countryside for about two hours until we reached the small, two-storey hotel with a centre courtyard, in the middle of fields and farms, where the conference was being held. The hotel was apparently not in the city of Assisi, still some miles away. There were about five hundred participants from Europe and a few Americans.

I arrived on a Thursday night. The following morning, I arrived late for breakfast. Most people had already gone to the auditorium to get good seats as the conference would be starting in about twenty minutes. I had just enough time to eat something and sat down at the only table where a few people were lingering. A gentleman from Germany introduced himself. We had a brief conversation and I excused myself to take my place on the stage. Dr. Art Ong Jumsai, Sri Indulal Shah, Phyllis Krystal and a few others, including Marianne Meyer, Thorbjørn's wife, who was also playing a key role in SSEHV in Europe, were there to present as well. Saturday continued with general speakers in the morning and in the afternoon I met with teachers who were attempting to

*I knew then that they were bringing me – that Sai Baba was bringing me – to the church He had taken me to in my dream sixteen years ago. I told my companions about my dream and what I knew to be happening. Just as I finished my story, we approached the old walled city of Assisi and drove through the cobblestone streets that Francis had roamed. We stopped at the bottom of a hill on the outskirts of the city and got out of the car to walk up the hill to San Damiano. There, at the top, was the church – exactly the same to the finest details as I had experienced it in the dream.*

implement SSEHV in their classrooms or schools in Europe.

As the weekend progressed, I began to wonder if I would get to see the city of Assisi. Prior to coming I had been too busy to take the time to learn anything about what remained of this medieval city (this being prior to the phenomenon of an internet search). I had by now read the

book “The Little Flowers of St. Francis”, and knew that St. Francis had lived there sometime in the mid-twelfth century. When Francis was a young man, he had joined the crusades and went off as a soldier for king, God and country. The ravages of war were more than his tender heart could bear. When he returned home, he went through an intense period of healing and transformation, finding solace in the beauty of Nature and in the company of birds. One day he wandered into an abandoned church and heard the voice of God telling him to ‘rebuild My church’. He left home, accompanied by a few friends (‘brothers’), to live his life, as he believed Christ wanted him to, in simplicity and poverty, dependent only upon the bounty of His Lord and dedicated to the service of others. Amongst the first tasks they took up was to rebuild that church – the church Sathya Sai Baba had taken me to in my dream.

On Sunday afternoon, the German gentleman who had introduced himself to me at breakfast Friday morning approached and explained that he and a few others would be driving into Assisi at the end of the conference later that day. Would I like to join them? Once again, I was amazed at the unfolding of events. Sitting in the front seat of the car as we continued to drive down the same country road that had taken me to the hotel two days earlier, I listened as my hosts chatted away in Italian, understanding not a word. Suddenly, they broke into English and someone in the rear said, “Where should we take Ronne?” “Why don’t we take her to

see San Damiano?” the driver suggested. “What is San Damiano?” I asked. Somewhat surprised by the question, he responded, “It’s the first church St. Francis rebuilt”.

I knew then that they were bringing me – that Sai Baba was bringing me – to the church He had taken me to in my dream sixteen years ago. I told my companions about my dream and what I knew to be happening. Just as I finished my story, we approached the old walled city of Assisi and drove through the cobblestone streets that Francis had roamed. We stopped at the bottom of a hill on the outskirts of the city and got out of the car to walk up the hill to San Damiano. There, at the top, was the church – exactly the same to the finest details as I had experienced it in the dream. It was so beautiful to me, I couldn’t tell if the dream was real, or this day was real.

Entering the church, we took seats on the wooden benches that have now been set up for mass. A stone floor has been added and a small sacristy behind which is the same wooden door through which Sai Baba had taken me after revealing that I had been one of those abandoned children. Otherwise, nothing had changed; nothing was different. The size and scale of the building, the windowless walls, the rough-hewn stones – especially those stones which had been lovingly and tenderly placed one by one by the hands of Francis and the others appeared exactly the same.

– Excerpted from “The Power of Love” by Dr. Ronne Marantz.



## Cover Story



ONE OF THE IMPORTANT landmarks of Prasanthi Nilayam is the Vata Vriksha (banyan tree) planted by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for the benefit of spiritual seekers who want to practise Dhyana (meditation) for their spiritual advancement. That is why it is also called Meditation Tree. It is because of this act of Divine grace of Bhagavan on spiritual aspirants that one of His Names in Sri Sathya Sai Ashtottara Namavali is: *Om Sri Sai Sadhakanugraha Vata Vriksha Pratishthapakaya Namah* (salutations to Sri Sai who planted the banyan tree for spiritual aspirants). Bhagavan ceremonially planted this Vata Vriksha with His Divine Hands at 9 o' clock in the morning on 29th June 1959. It is located adjacent to the Administrative building of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on a small hillock which overlooks the Prasanthi Mandir on its north, Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital on the east and a sprawling forest on the south.

While planting this sapling of Vata Vriksha, Bhagavan placed underneath it a Yantra (mystic diagram), thick copper plate

of 15" x 10" size containing mystic markings and designs. This Yantra was materialised by Bhagavan from the sands of Chitravathi river on Vaisakha Purnima Day of 1959 when a devotee in the congregation asked Him about the tree in Bodh Gaya under which Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. Bhagavan said that a similar Yantra was placed under the Bodhi tree also. A Yantra, according to scriptures, has great mystic power to help concentration and promote spiritual advancement. One can imagine the spiritual potency of this Yantra which the Avatar Himself materialised and placed underneath this sapling of Vata Vriksha with His Divine Hands.

There is a very relevant and significant saying of Bhagavan which has been inscribed on a plaque set up in front of this Vata Vriksha. This saying of Bhagavan is: "It is only in the depth of silence that the voice of God can be heard". Explaining the objective of Dhyana (meditation), Bhagavan says, "By Dhyana you have to achieve the sense of oneness with the Divine. The very first requisite for the practice of Dhyana is to control the vagaries of the mind".

Human mind by its very nature is fickle and restless. It is always in a state of flux. Thought waves keep on arising in the lake of the mind continuously, thereby keeping it in a state of agitation and disquiet. One cannot hear the voice of God when one's mind keeps on making a noise all the time. This internal noise of the mind has to be stilled and the mind has to be calmed if one wants to hear the voice of God from



within. There are two important requisites for that. At one end, the mind is connected with the physical body and at the other, it is connected with breath. The first step therefore is to make the body steady by sitting in a steady posture like Padmasana, Siddhasana or Sukhasana. Bhagavan says, "The body is like a vessel and the mind is like water. If the body moves, the mind will also be agitated".

At the same time, the breath has to be regulated. Slow, deep, long breaths lead to the stillness of the mind. Short, shallow, fast breaths produce the opposite effect. A significant maxim in this regard is: Chale Vate Chalam Chittam, Nishchale Nishchalam Bhavet (unsteady breath makes the mind unsteady while steady regulated breath makes it steady). Bhagavan's instructions in this regard are: "The mind may be restrained from restlessness by making it concentrate on the breathing process, and relating inhalation and exhalation to the repetition of the Mantra, Soham (That I am)". This Mantra keeps us reminding all the 24 hours of the day that our real nature is divine. Bhagavan says, *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati* (the knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman). If man keeps on reminding himself constantly that he is divine, the Divine he will become.

But this is easily said than done. It is impossible to focus the mind on breathing, Soham principle or any other Name and Form of God unless it is pure, free from desires and endowed with virtues. The mansion of Dhyana can be built only on

the firm foundation of virtues like truth, righteousness, love, compassion and self-sacrifice. In fact, no spiritual advancement is possible without ethical perfection. Where there is Kama (desires), there cannot be Rama (God). It is the desires which make the mind unsteady, restless and impure, and also disconnect it from the source of peace and bliss within. Dhyana endeavours to re-establish this connection by internalising the mind and focusing it on God. Man can open the lock of his heart with the key of the mind to enter the realm of peace, bliss, knowledge and freedom. But, unfortunately, man turns the key in the opposite direction and plunges himself in the abyss of ignorance, restlessness and bondage and becomes a victim of many maladies. Bhagavan describes this unfortunate scenario when He says: "The world is a huge hospital and humanity is bedridden. Some are writhing in pain of envy, some are bloated with pride, some are losing sleep through hate, some have become blind through miserliness, some are struck down with selfishness; everyone has some illness or the other". This is truly the miserable state of man today.

Bhagavan therefore exhorts us to master the mind and be a mastermind. Success in Dhyana is possible only when man masters his mind. In conclusion, it is most appropriate to quote this exhortation of Bhagavan from Dhyana Vahini: "Everyone has the right to achieve this high degree of success. I do not say this in just a quiet tone. I declare this loud enough for all quarters to hear. Knowing this, meditate and advance. Do Dhyana and progress. Realise the Atma".



## ALUMNI FORUM

B.S. RAVI TEJA

# THE LOVE OF MY LIFE

IT WAS A BRIGHT SUNNY morning in Brindavan. Swami was standing on the pathway, in front of the Trayee Mandir, behind the lines of the students seated there, facing the deer park. He was talking to some of the senior devotees who were also standing close to the deer park grill. In those days, there were a lot of trees there, in a row. As Swami stood there talking, a small leaf from one of the trees slowly glided down through the wafting breeze and landed on Swami's hair softly. Bhagavan did not seem to "notice" it and continued conversing with the senior devotees. But some of us sitting close to where Swami stood saw this and quietly nodded to each other with a smile. I, for one, thought in my mind how lucky the leaf was. This thought was but a blip in my mind and almost immediately, as if He heard me "say" it, Swami turned back, took a few steps towards me, picked the leaf from His hair and said, "It is not the leaf, you are fortunate"! Saying so, He gently dropped it on my lap. I was expecting a leaf to fall, but instead, a small fruit resembling a guava fell on my lap. As I sat with my mouth open in utter awe, Swami gave me a mesmerising smile and moved on.

It took some time for me to touch down to reality.

### We are all Very Fortunate

We all are extremely fortunate to be so close to Him while the Lord has taken Avatar. We are blessed to be able to speak to Him, touch Him, laugh with Him and be part of His fun and sport. Sitting close to Him, we can only marvel with utter adoration as He lays bare the greatest secrets of His own creation in so nonchalant a manner. But the greatest of our boons is to receive His wonderful love and grace in various forms. One lifetime just does not suffice for any of us to appreciate and bask in this breathtaking flow of grace of the Lord. Indeed it is the greatest privilege conferred on each one of us. While we try our best to understand and realise the deep significance of such a wonderful blessing, it is but natural to revel in His Leelas (divine sports) and Mahimas (miracles), announcing at least infinitesimally, His love for us. Here are some of the marvellous experiences I have been blessed with.

### He is the Caretaker

I always wondered how Swami took care of people across the world and





marvelled at His myriad miraculous ways of pleasing His children all the time. After we had completed MBA, some of us stayed back in Puttaparthi praying to Swami to give us a chance to live at His Lotus Feet and serve Him. Swami too responded favourably to our prayers and gave me and a couple of other students an opportunity to serve, albeit temporarily, in Sri Sathya Sai Gokulam (a cowshed housing about 200 cows at that time). We were very happy to be associated with the “divine” cows at the abode of Sai Gopala. In fact, Swami used to address us as ‘cow boys’ too.

One day, my elder brother landed in Puttaparthi for Swami’s Darshan. During a conversation, he casually offered me money for my expenses. I felt a bit offended as the norm in our family was not to depend monetarily on anyone in the family after completing our studies. So, I vehemently refused the offer from my brother and said, “Swami is there to take care of me in every way”. This happened after morning Bhajans at around 11 a.m. We used to stay in the old hostel in those days (now used for Brindavan boys as hostel when they come to Puttaparthi). Even as I uttered these words, someone came rushing and said to me, “Swami is calling you”! I was totally astounded because Swami had already retired for the session in the morning. In those days, Swami used to stay in the Prasanthi Mandir itself. I could not really believe this but rushed to the interview room rather confused wondering what could be the matter. I walked straight into the interview



room upon instructions and Swami seemed to be waiting for me there. As soon as I walked in and presented myself at His Lotus Feet, puffing and panting, Swami gave me a few hundred rupee notes, saying, “Keep this for your expenses”. My heart missed a beat and tears rolled down my cheeks spontaneously. I fell at His feet with my heart full of gratitude. Swami listens to what we say, no matter where we are. When we have trust in Him, He takes care of us always.

### ‘Picture’sque Sai

Once when my brother had come from abroad for a visit to our home town, it so happened that all our family members were present in my home except me. I was studying in Puttaparthi at that point of time. My mother felt sad for my absence and went

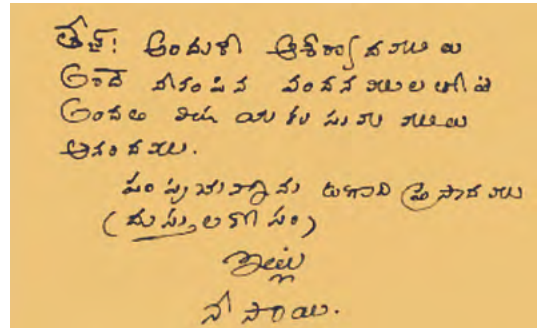


and sat in front of Swami's picture in our home and cried out, "Swami, all are here. Alas, only my youngest son is missing". I must add – I was totally unaware of all of these behind-the-scene developments. That very afternoon, in the Mandir, Swami walked up to me and said "Your mother is crying for you. Go to your home town. Stay for a couple of days and return". Saying so, Swami gave me Prasadam and asked me to leave that very evening. Obviously, everyone in my family was surprised to find me home the very next day. Every picture of Swami represents Swami Himself and is not merely a picture.

### Beyond Time and Space

Swami is no doubt beyond time and space and He has demonstrated this many times to many people – appearing at the same time in different places and doing the impossible. Once in Brindavan, I offered a letter to Swami and He gladly accepted it with a mischievous glee in His eyes. I did not understand the humour and wondered if there was something wrong with my face! But Swami moved on without a comment and walked out of Trayee Brindavan and beyond its compound walls to grant Darshan to the hundreds of devotees sitting in the Sai Ram Shed, while we all waited for His return. After sometime, Swami slowly walked back. This time though, He had a big bunch of letters in His hand that He had collected from the numerous devotees. He moved gracefully, straight towards me and with a stare, pulled out exactly my letter from

the middle of the big bunch and tossed it back at me and glided on without uttering a single word. I was rather stunned with this move and felt remorseful as I felt He had not accepted my letter. Later, I went back to my room and opened my letter to check if I had written something wrong that had displeased Swami. But amazingly, I did not find the original contents of my letter. Instead, I found five hundred rupee notes



and a small piece of paper on which was written in Telugu "I am happy with your offering. Accept this blessing of mine. Stitch clothes for Ugadi festival" in Swami's own hand! When did He open my letter and read it? When did He write this note? When did He place the money in it? He is indeed Kalateeta!

I always wonder – will I ever be able to repay Him for all the love that He has bestowed on me? Or is it too arrogant on my part to even think that I could repay Him? Can I ever even match His expectations in terms of leading a life that He wants me to? One thing I can say – He has shown me that He has indeed created us and that He is the ultimate goal that we all have to reach.



## Students Corner

# MY JOURNEY THROUGH BAL VIKAS

**M**Y JOURNEY THROUGH BAL Vikas started when I was only four years old. Bal Vikas has given me so much that it cannot even be expressed. I have learnt deep life lessons through easy Slokas (verses) which have helped me to cope up with my daily life challenges. Moreover, Bal Vikas has made me realise my real happiness, happiness of giving. Bal Vikas is that driving force which has made me realise that God and I are one. It has helped me to nurture my soul and grow gracefully. People waste their entire life chasing their desires and it is only due to beautiful verses of Bhaja Govindam that I have learnt to control them. The Bhagavadgita Slokas have made me aware of my real enemies Kama, Krodha, Lobha and Moha (desire, anger, greed and delusion). Bal Vikas has moulded me and shaped me with qualities like Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. It is only because of Bal Vikas that I know my aim of life, and this makes me completely different from others.

My Guru asked me to do surrender prayer daily by surrendering my thoughts, actions, the words that I say to Swami. I realised the importance of surrender to God when I delivered my first speech on Easwaramma Day. It cannot be expressed in words but that was the first time in my



life I experienced Swami standing next to me. The energy and the vibrations almost brought tears to my eyes overwhelming me. The fragrance of Vibhuti had transmitted me to an entirely different place. That day I let go of all my fears and I was ready to trust Swami; I was ready to swim across the ocean of love with Him.

Now as I complete my 3rd Group, I would like to express my gratitude to Swami. Swami please bless all of us so that we can give Your love and Your Divine Message to every heart. Help us, Swami, so that we, Your Bal Vikas students, may light the darkest regions and transform this world through love and love only.

– Yashaswani Prakash





## Swami's Tips to Students

What we need today is not bookish knowledge, though we require it to a certain extent to cope up with life in this world. But what is essential to us is knowledge of the Atma. Spiritual education is the highest education, says the Bhagavadgita. It starts with discrimination knowledge, which is like a perennial river. In the perennial rivers, the quantity of water may vary but not the quality. Therefore, students should understand that quality of education is more important than its quantity. Degrees are not important, but the knowledge accomplished out of education is important. What is the meaning of education? It is not just accumulation of knowledge. Education is not mere knowledge, it also includes action. Education, which originates from within, has a sound basis and is permanent. It is referred to as Sathyam (truth).

### Valuable Maxims

Here are three valuable maxims given by Bhagavan. Practise these and search the following words in the given word maze:

*Bear, give, serve, nothing, eyes, faults, discover, educare, manifest, latent.*

1. Bear all and do nothing,  
Hear all and say nothing,  
Give all and take nothing,  
Serve all and be nothing.
2. Close your eyes to the faults of others,  
but keep them open to discover your own.
3. Educare is meant to manifest the latent divinity of man.

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

# NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

**F**O COMMEMORATE THE 90TH Birthday of Bhagavan, the SSIO is organising the Tenth World Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam in November 2015, with the theme: *Love is the Source; Love is the Path; Love is the Goal*. In preparation, Pre-World Conferences are being held on the topics of love and selfless service, all over the world.

The first Pre-world Conference was held in Singapore from 16th to 18th



*A section of audience in Pre-World Conference in Singapore.*

January 2015, the second conference was organised in Hong Kong from 23rd to 25th January 2015 and the third one in Brazil from 6th to 8th March 2015. More such Pre-world Conferences are being held in other countries to spread awareness about the teachings and mission of Bhagavan.

## ARGENTINA

The Sathya Sai Group of Punilla City in Argentina was started in April 2014. It

serves devotees living in remote locations who cannot travel to Sathya Sai centres or attend meetings. This Group of 5 to 10 Sathya Sai volunteers has travelled to La Falda, Huerta Grande, Villa Giardino, Carlos Paz, Tanti, Falda del Carmen and Alta Gracia, to sing devotional songs and share the Divine Message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, along with related videos. The Sathya Sai Group of Punilla City meets every month to practise musical presentations and finalise their future plans to serve devotees in remote areas. The SSIO of Argentina supports this Group's activities to share Bhagavan's love with the underprivileged.

## GHANA

The Nsawam Orthopaedic Training Centre (NOTC) is a Catholic institution in Ghana. It helps disabled children who have lost one or both limbs due to accidents or birth defects. Twenty-one Sathya Sai volunteers in Ghana visited the NOTC on 26th December 2014 to offer encouragement and loving advice to the children. The volunteers served food to 50 children and 10 adults. Sister Magdalene, the head of the NOTC, expressed her gratitude for the loving services.

## U. K.

On 20th December 2014, about 20 Sathya Sai youth in London helped pack and distribute 133 hampers containing





*Christmas party for the homeless in Leicester.*

scarves, gloves, hats, sleeping bags, raincoats and socks to the homeless. In addition, 90 toys were donated to Children's Hospital at Royal Marsden and Great Ormond Street. On 20th December, Sathya Sai youth in Leicester hosted a Christmas party for residents of the Dawn Centre, a temporary shelter for the homeless. The establishment provides advice and assistance on health, housing, life skills and education, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, class or religion. The shelter residents were touched by the caring and loving service rendered by Sathya Sai volunteers.

## ARGENTINA

For several years, the Sathya Sai Centre of Rosario has served the destitute living on the streets. Services are rendered annually in honour of Christmas Day, 25th December, and the Day of the Three Wise Men, 6th January. On 21st December 2014, Sathya Sai volunteers, dressed as Santa Claus and his helpers, distributed 200 gifts to children and adults living on the streets. On 4th January 2015, about



*Gifts for destitute children.*

30 volunteers from the Rosario Sathya Sai Centre, dressed in Santa costumes, distributed 300 gifts on the streets and in the parks of Rosario. Many children were happy to receive candy, toys and other gifts.

## PUERTO RICO

The Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) programme is spreading Bhagavan's message in many countries. On 21st December 2014, a book titled *Brotos del Corazón: Cuentos de Valores Humanos* (Buds of the Heart: Stories of



*Meeting on SSEHV in Puerto Rico.*



Human Values) was published in Puerto Rico, containing 36 prize-winning essays on human values, submitted in contests over the past two years. The book was released in a ceremony attended by 98 people, including members of the Ministry of Education, parents, and the winning students from 28 schools. Professor Raul Rodriguez, President of the Sathya Sai Institute of Human Values, gave an inspiring talk on how the practice of human values was changing the life of young people. A violinist entertained the audience with four beautiful musical renditions.

## SOUTH AFRICA

The SSIO of South Africa conducted an innovative service project from November 2014 to January 2015, delivering school shoes to needy children. SSIO members donated 14,000 pairs of shoes for this



*Distribution of school shoes to needy children.*

project. Sathya Sai Centres in various regions of South Africa compiled a list of destitute children in need of shoes, along with their shoe sizes and other relevant information. Sathya Sai volunteers then

sorted, packed and shipped the shoes to all provinces in South Africa, distributing them in cities as well as villages, to children's homes, orphanages and schools. A total of 87 schools were covered, including three Sathya Sai Schools in South Africa. The smiles on the faces of children receiving their new shoes was a sight of pure joy and love.

## KAZAKHSTAN

On Christmas Day 2014, 22 members of the Sathya Sai Centres of Prema and Santhi, in Astana, presented a new version of the musical show, "The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids", to an audience of 100 at a boarding school for children with disabilities. The children joyfully recognised the familiar characters in the



*Serving food to children with disabilities.*

play. In conclusion, the actors and audience danced together around the Christmas tree. Sweets and gifts were distributed to the children and food was served to them.

## NEPAL

The devastating earthquake that struck Nepal on 25th April 2015 caused enormous



loss of lives and properties. To offer help in this grave calamity, Sathya Sai International Organisation of Nepal has started offering food, water, clothes, shelter and medical care to the victims of the disaster. They are also organising blood donations and



*Helping the victims of earthquake in Nepal.*

helping at local hospitals. Furthermore, the SSIO is working to arrange shipments of much-needed medical supplies to Nepal, which is critical for medical care. After an initial period of stabilisation, medical camps, meal services, rehabilitation, educational activities and other services will be offered by the SSIO Disaster Relief Committee on a sustainable and long-term basis. The SSIO has transferred funds immediately to Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Nepal to sustain the noble work of Sathya Sai volunteers

## BHARAT

**Gujarat:** On 25th January 2015, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Valsad was felicitated by Hazrat Balapir Dargah Committee of village Saron, Valsad district for its extraordinary



*Valsad Samithi felicitated by Dargah Committee.*

service activities. This committee is a well-known Muslim organisation in Valsad region. About 2,500 Muslim brothers were present in that function, wherein Sai Samithi was presented a memento and a shawl. This news was printed in various Gujarati newspapers also.

Jain Social Group, Bharuch felicitated Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Bharuch with 'The Champion of Social Work' award on 22nd March 2015 in a ceremony held in Atulanandhi Auditorium, J.P. Arts and



*Jain Social Group honours Bharuch Samithi.*

Science College, Bharuch. This was a special function to celebrate Jain Social Group's three decades in the city of Bharuch. The Bharuch Samithi established in 1968 has done commendable work in the field of medicare and education for poor sections of society.



**Himachal Pradesh:** It was on 15th April 2010 that Swami inaugurated “Anand Vilas” in Shimla. A grand function was held from 13th April to 15th April 2010 to celebrate its 5th anniversary. About 700 devotees from different parts of Himachal Pradesh came to participate in this important event. Different topics pertaining to spiritual principles of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation as laid down by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba were elaborated upon by the speakers, who exhorted one and all to practise them in their daily lives so as to set an example before society. Topics like “Seva and its Integration with the Self”, “Inner Significance of Village Adoption”, “Value-based Life and Relevance of our Relationship with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba” were thoroughly discussed and all were exhorted to truly imbibe and practise these values. Bhajan training programme was organised by Sri Raviraj Nasery which thrilled all the devotees.

**Sikkim:** A Sports and Cultural Meet of Bal Vikas students and students from Sri Sathya Sai Schools in Sikkim was held on 12th April 2015 at Paljor Stadium under the auspices of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Sikkim. Besides a huge gathering of devotees, the function was attended by many dignitaries, which included Sri R.B. Subba, Minister for Human Resource Development and Sri Arjun K. Ghatani, Minister for Health and Family Welfare and Information and Public Relations. Sri Pawan Kumar Chamling,

Chief Minister of Sikkim, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

After the Chief Guest hoisted the Bal Vikas Flag and lit the sacred lamp to inaugurate the function, arrays of Bal Vikas students from all the four districts of Sikkim as well as from Sri Sathya Sai Prashanti Vidya Mandir, Gangtok, Sri Sathya Sai Gurukul Academy, Tadong and the Sai Gurukul Academy of Pakyong displayed a brilliant parade. The students then enthralled the audience with a series of cultural items.

The Chief Minister in his benedictory address said that there were great teachers today but good teachers were



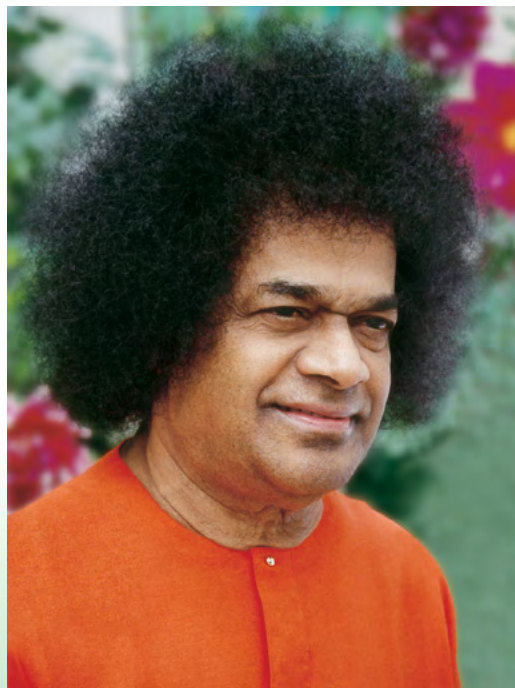
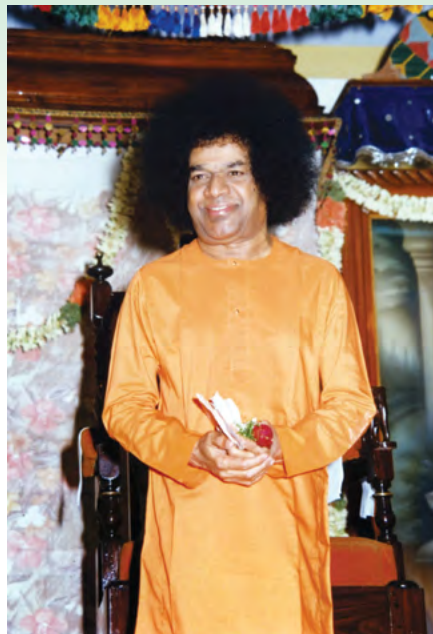
*The Chief Minister of Sikkim, Sri Pawan Kumar Chamling, presided at the function as Chief Guest.*

so rare to find. This was a reiteration of Bhagavan's exhortation to mankind to strive for goodness and not greatness. He expressed his happiness that Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation was reviving the Gurukul system of learning.





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## About SSSSTPD

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-versions of the magazine are also released simultaneously and are available in PDF and EPUB formats on [www.sanathanasarathi.org](http://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.

## Other Books By SSSSTPD (In English)

1. Sai Sathya Sakha
2. Summer Showers In Brindavan, 1972
3. Satyopanisad I
4. Satyopanisad II
5. Gurudev
6. Namasmarana
7. Bhakthi And Health
8. Life Is Love, Enjoy It!
9. Life Is A Challenge, Meet It!
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19. Do You Know
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REGD. WITH REGISTRAR OF NEWSPAPERS R.NO.10774/1958 REGN.NO. HDP/002/2015-2017

LICENCED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT No.PMGK/RNP/DLGS/Sanathana Sarathi

Date of Publication: 1st June 2015



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Printed by K.S. RAJAN Published by K.S. RAJAN On behalf of the owner Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur District (A.P.) And Printed at M/s Rajhans Enterprises, 136, 4th Main Road, Industrial Town, Rajaji Nagar, Bengaluru - 560044, Karnataka And published at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

Editor: G.L. ANAND

## *Be Always Aware of My Presence*

Be always and everywhere conscious of My Presence. Be vigilant, even while engaged in little tasks. Maintain silence, in the recesses of the heart, as well as outside. The Gita says, God's hands and feet are everywhere. You can hear His footfall only when no other sound hinders. Develop the awareness of God, see Him and serve Him in every living being.

*– Baba*



Publications Division