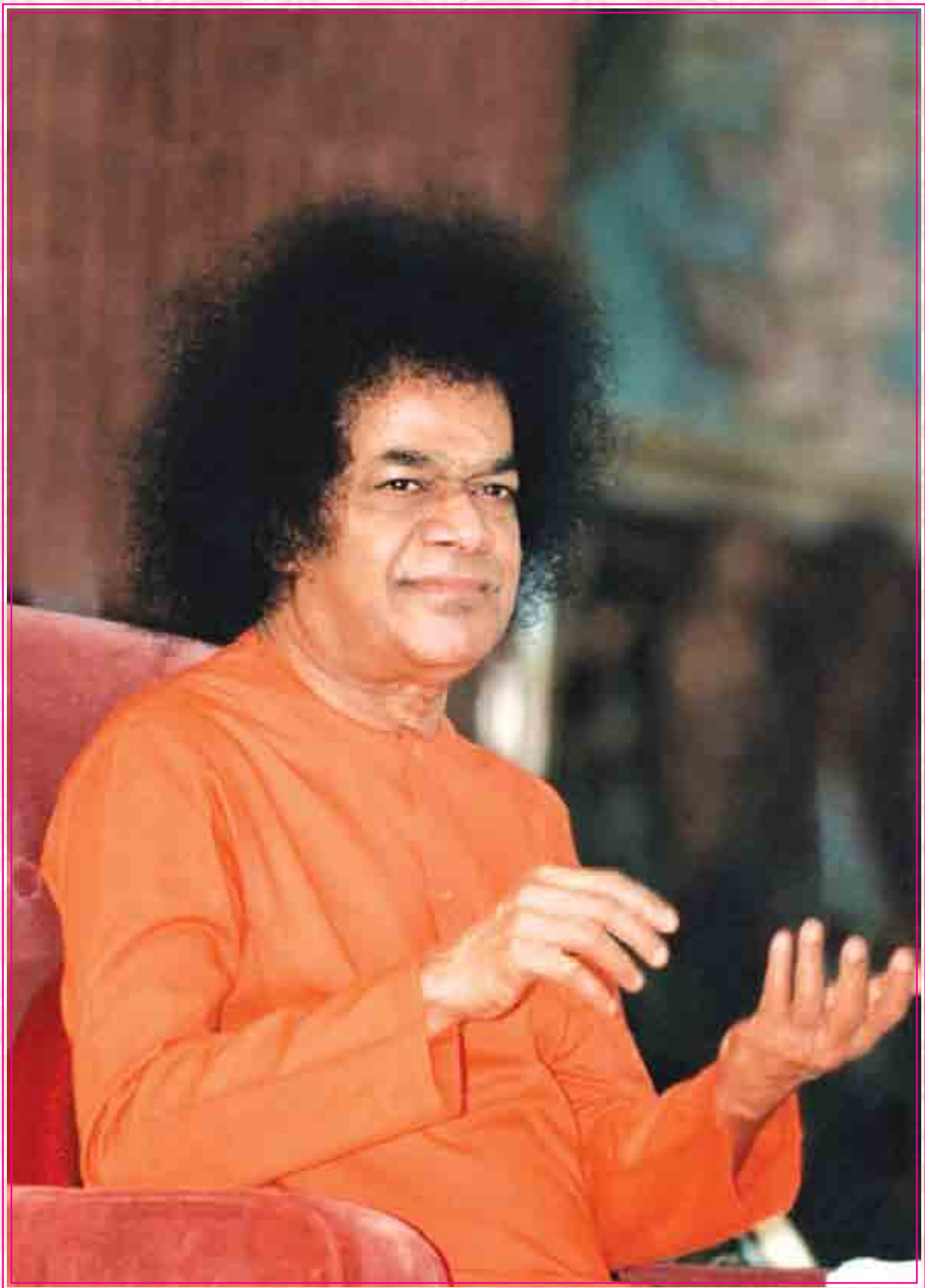


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"The word 'good' contains two
zeros. One zero stands for the
world. If you remove this one zero
(the world), there will remain only
'god'. So, see good, do good and be
good to merge with God. Direct all
your actions towards God."



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AVATAR VANI

DIVINE PROXIMITY IS THE SOURCE OF TRUE HAPPINESS

EXPERIENCE BLISS THROUGH THE ONENESS OF THE ATMA

ALL NAMES AND FORMS ARE OF THE Divine. Every person is the embodiment of the Divine. Human body has been gifted to man in order to know the Divine.

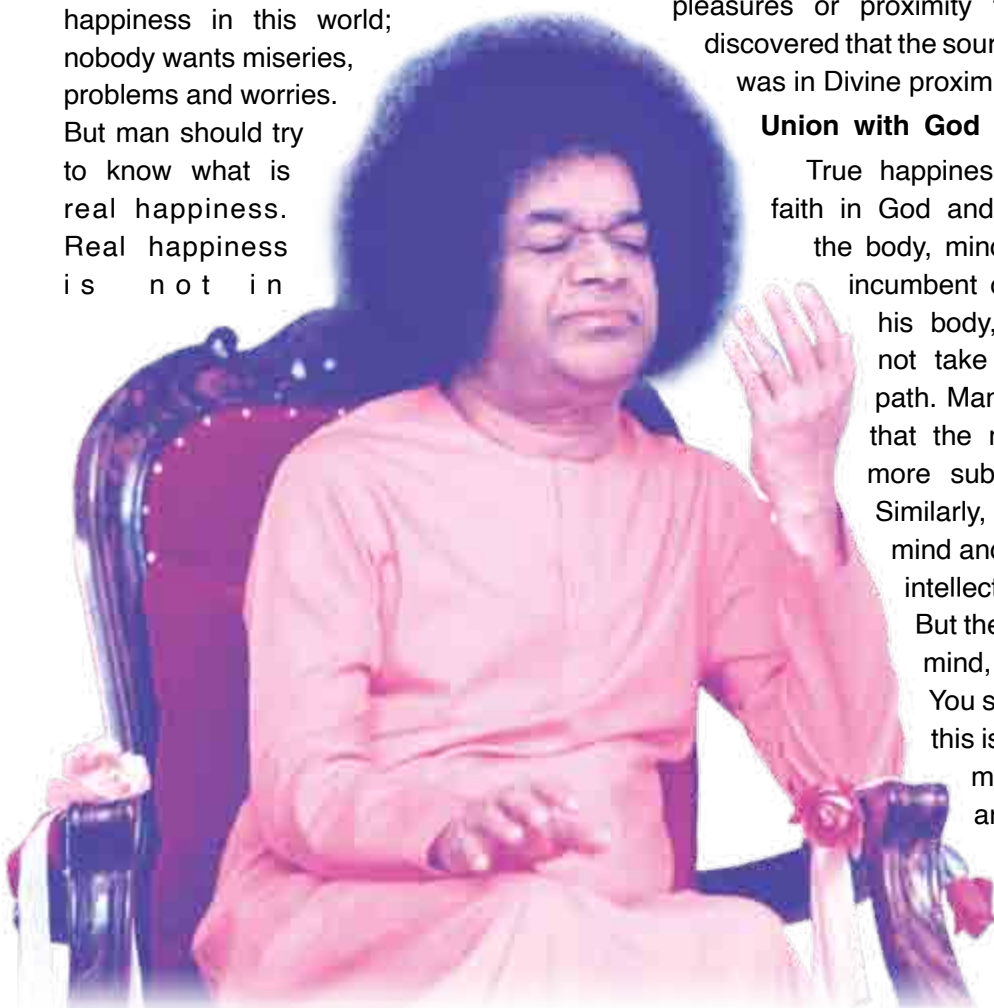
Embodiments of Love!

Everyone wants peace and happiness in this world; nobody wants miseries, problems and worries. But man should try to know what is real happiness. Real happiness is not in

sensual pleasures though many people think so. In fact, sensual pleasures make a man equal to a beast. Moreover, sensual pleasures give only momentary happiness. Ancient sages of India prayed to God to reveal whether there was happiness in worldly pleasures or proximity to the Lord. They discovered that the source of true happiness was in Divine proximity.

Union with God is True Happiness

True happiness comes from firm faith in God and full blossoming of the body, mind and intellect. It is incumbent on man to see that his body, mind, intellect do not take him to the wrong path. Man should understand that the mind is above and more subtle than the body. Similarly, intellect is above the mind and subtler than it. The intellect controls the mind. But the Master of the body, mind, intellect is the Atma. You say, "This is my body, this is my mind and this is my intellect". But who are you? You are the Atma. Man should realise this truth and see to it that



the body, mind and intellect are put to proper use, so that he can experience true happiness which is in union with God. Union with senses is the cause of man's misery.

Nature is the creation of God and God is the Creator. So, Nature is divine. It is the Will of God. Man should develop devotion to God so that the individual will is in harmony with the Divine Will. Sita is the daughter of the earth and represents divine qualities such as sacrifice, compassion, mercy and peace. Sita always willed to be with Rama. Her will was in harmony with the Will of Rama. Man will have peace when he lives in harmony with Nature. Peace is not outside; peace is within; outside there are only pieces.



Purified Intellect Shines in the Light of Atma

The mind is the master of the body, the intellect is the master of the mind and the Atma is the master of the intellect. So, the Master of life is the Atma. If one merges the intellect in God, all the senses will be subjugated. Mahatma Gandhi always prayed, "Sabko Sanmati Do Bhagavan" (Oh God! Give good intellect to all). A purified intellect reflects the light of the Atma. Man will have true wisdom

when he purifies his intellect. When man's intellect becomes divine, he will follow the correct path and experience peace and bliss. If his mind follows the senses, he will invite disaster.

*Follow the Master,
Face the Devil,
Fight to the End,
Finish the Game.*

Who is the Master? The conscience is the Master. So, follow the conscience. To face the devil means to avoid bad company, thoughts and actions. To fight to the end means to work to subdue the unruly senses. Say to the senses, "Don't go here and there; go only

True happiness comes from firm faith in God and full blossoming of the body, mind and intellect. It is incumbent on man to see that his body, mind, intellect do not take him to the wrong path. Man should understand that the mind is above and more subtle than the body. Similarly, intellect is above the mind and subtler than it. The intellect controls the mind. But the Master of the body, mind, intellect is the Atma.



towards God". The eyes should see only God, the ears should listen to the glories of God.

*See no evil, see what is good;
Hear no evil, hear what is good;
Talk no evil, talk what is good;
Think no evil, think what is good;
Do no evil, do what is good;
This is the way to God.*

The word 'good' contains two zeros. One zero stands for the world. If you remove this

one zero (the world), there will remain only 'god'. So, see good, do good and be good to merge with God. Direct all your actions towards God. Jesus said, "All are one, be alike to everyone".

The Same Atma Indwells all Bodies

Buddhi (intuitive intellect) has the power of discrimination. Discrimination is of two types – Individual Discrimination and Fundamental Discrimination. Fundamental Discrimination is of universal nature like the prayer *Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the worlds be happy!). Individual Discrimination relates only to the individual. It is limited, narrow and selfish. One thinks only of my body, my friend, my relative, etc. This represents untruth. The Fundamental Discrimination is based on Truth. Man should develop Fundamental Discrimination to have goodwill and good feelings towards all to experience oneness with God.

The Atma is the same in all. There are many tube lights in this room, but the current flowing through all of them is one. All the bodies can be compared to many tube lights. The capacities of the tube lights may be different,

but there is one current in all. Similarly, the same Atma indwells all the bodies, though they have different forms. *Ek Prabhu Ke Anek Naam* (one God has many names). There is only one Divinity that is present in all. When you experience unity, you will have bliss. The bliss that comes through the experience of the oneness of the Atma will redeem your life. So, spiritual aspirants should not move about here and there; they should meditate in solitude. Then only will they experience bliss. Here is a handkerchief. It has numerous threads. The unity of the woven threads provides strength to it. Similarly, unity of body, mind and intellect provides strength to the individual.

Man is the embodiment of Sat, Chit, Ananda (Being, Awareness, Bliss). When Sat and Chit combine, the result is Ananda (bliss). Sat is like sugar, Chit is like water which keeps moving or flowing. If you mix sugar and water, it becomes syrup which may be compared to Ananda (bliss). This bliss is not found in the material world. Material world can give only temporary happiness, not eternal bliss.

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

– **From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 5th April 1996.**

Some short-sighted critics declare that spiritual matters should not be communicated to children, for they are too young and inexperienced to benefit by the instruction. But, if a thing deserves to be done, the sooner we set about it the better. The slogan, "Start early, drive slowly, reach safely" applies not merely to journeys by road or rail; it applies also to the journey from untruth to truth, from darkness towards light and from death to immortality. The unrest, anxiety, fear and hatred that torment the world now are largely due to the neglect which kept off from the growing child the disciplines that can regulate the passions and emotions of man.

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Chapter 5

YAJNAS AND THE PENANCE OF ELDERS

DHARMARAJA ACCEPTED the advice of Vaasudeva as well as the benediction of Vyasa. He sent his brothers, with the army, to bring the gold that had been thrown aside by the Brahmins. They left after purifying themselves by partaking consecrated offerings. They discovered the quantities of gold that had been given as presents to the priests at the conclusion of the sacrifice by Emperor Maruth in the past. They had dropped the gold on the sides of the roads along which they returned home. The army collected these and conveyed them to the capital on camels, elephants, chariots and carts. It took them some days to reach Hastinapur with all that load. They unloaded the gold amidst the acclamations of the people.

The citizens were amazed at the success of the expedition. They extolled the good fortune of the Pandavas. They welcomed into the city the princes and the gold, dancing in joy and shouting “Jai, Jai” until their throats were hoarse. They pictured among themselves the grandeur and magnificence of the sacrifice, for which this gold was brought.

Preparations were started that very day for the construction of the ritual altar and the necessary adjuncts on the bank of the Ganga. The sacred area was many square miles in extent. The ground was levelled and cleaned. The dais was built; beautiful buildings arose on

the vast area. Porches and verandahs were added. Decorations like flags and festoons embellished the structures.

When the holy day neared, chieftains, Brahmins, scholars and sages moved from all directions towards the sacred place, hastening each other in their enthusiasm to reach early. They took residence in the quarters allotted to them, according to their status and needs. They spent the night counting minutes, in joyful expectation of the magnificent and efficacious Yajna that they could witness when the dawn brings in another day.

The morning came. The auspicious moment approached. The priests took up their positions and got ready to take the vows of initiation. They stood up facing Lord Krishna and the king and said, “Oh king, we understand that you have resolved to perform not one but three Aswamedhas. Is that correct? If so, do you desire us to perform them, one after the other? Or, shall we repeat every formula and rite thrice and have them all concurrently? If you make it known, we shall arrange the participants and performing priests accordingly”.

At this, Dharmaraja replied, “What can I say when you know best; I shall agree to whatever advice you offer. I seek only the consent of Vaasudeva for whatever course we adopt”, and he turned towards Krishna with pleading eyes. Krishna left the decision to the Brahmins. They discussed among themselves for a while

and announced at last that the effect of three Aswamedhas can be secured by repeating each Mantra thrice and presenting to the Brahmins presiding over the rituals thrice the usual fees. Vaasudeva indicated His approval of this suggestion, and taking his cue from this, Dharmaraja declared that he was agreeable. He desired that the Yajna might be inaugurated.

The recitation of the Mantras by the Brahmins shook both earth and sky. The preliminary rites were gone through and the sacrificial horses proceeded on their planned round. They were caparisoned in great style and they carried on their foreheads the Declaration challenging anyone to take them into custody if he dared. When He, who is the recipient of all Yajnas, (Yajna Swarupa) has taken the role of the presiding authority, no words can describe the fortune of the participants and the witnesses. It drew to a successful close with the Poornahuti (final oblations).

The experts in sacrificial Mantras, the sages and the Brahmins were loaded with presents and fees. Enormous numbers of cows, large areas of land and vast quantities of gold were gifted away by the king. The whole nation was filled with happiness. Everyone was praising the Yajna as indescribably superb. All who came were fed sumptuously at all hours. Sages and ascetics who saw all this lavishness extolled the Yajna of Dharmaraja as grander than even the Yajna performed by Emperor Maruth in the past! They were delighted they had the chance to partake in this Yajna. People once claimed that the Yajna of Maruth was presided over by Indra, the ruler of gods and they felt that it made it incomparably superior to any other sacrifice. But now, they congratulated Dharmaraja on securing the Yajna Swarupa (Vaasudeva) Himself to preside over the Yajna, a piece of

good fortune far superior to Maruth's and far more difficult to secure.

At the end of the Yajna, those who had come from far off places returned; others too turned home. The kings and chieftains took respectful leave of Dharmaraja and went back to their own principalities. The kinsmen of the king stayed for a few days more and left at their convenience to their places.

However, Krishna chose to spend some more time with the Pandavas; so, He stayed on in Hastinapur. The Pandavas were delighted at this signal act of grace. They made suitable arrangements for the residence of the Lord. They served Him everyday, filled their eyes with His beauty and filled their hearts with His gracious words of instruction. They spent the days in supreme joy. After some time spent thus in the Pandava capital, Krishna returned to Dwaraka, taking Arjuna with Him. The inhabitants of Dwaraka were overjoyed when their Lord returned to His capital. They welcomed Him in enthusiastic reverence. They feasted on the Darshan of the Lord and were immersed in Ananda (bliss).

Meanwhile, news came to Hastinapur that Vidura, Yudhisthira's uncle, was moving about on the environs of the city in the guise of a monk; it travelled from mouth to mouth and at last reached the ears of Dharmaraja, the king. The news was received with surprise and joy. He sent a few scouts to discover whether the news was authentic, and soon, they brought the welcome information that Vidura had actually come and was present. Dharmaraja could not contain himself with excitement.

"Ah! How happy you have made me!" he exclaimed. "This holy moment has made the dried trunk of the tree of hope put forth leaves again. Oh, I can now see and serve Vidura

who fostered us and guarded us and guided us, though I feared I might not get the chance at all.”

The heartening news was spread by courtiers among the queens and princesses and women of the royal household. Dharmaraja did not rest; he spoke about the great event to everyone around him. He sought out others to share with them the joy. He issued orders to the army that appropriate arrangements should be made to welcome into the capital the brother of his late father, Sage Vidura, foremost among the votaries of the Lord. The citizens too were alerted and asked to prepare a grand reception.

They decorated the streets and mansions on each side of them. They erected arches and hung festoons and hoisted flags. They allotted galleries and seats on every road for children, women, and the aged, so that they might have a fine and clear view of the procession and of the great sage. It was an inspiring sight to see many old men and women hobbling on with their sticks, eager to get a glimpse of Vidura, whom they extolled as the very embodiment of Dharma, as the very Godfather of the Pandavas. Some thought at first that the sighting of Vidura on the outskirts of the city must have been in someone's dream, and not in actual fact. They had lived long enough to swallow the rumour without personal verification. For, they never could believe that Vidura would ever come back to Hastinapur. They grouped themselves on vantage points and got ready for the great moment when they could rest their eyes on the saint. All along the route, every building was overflowing with humanity. The trees carried strings of adventurous youth, full of excitement and expectation, shouting in acclamation the impending arrival of Vidura.

The king decked in ceremonial robes ascended the royal chariot and started out of the palace with his brothers to bring home the famous votary of the Lord.

Vidura appeared before them walking barefoot, slow and dignified, with matted hair and wearing the robes of a monk. The king and his brothers stepped down from their vehicles, bowed reverentially to the feet of Vidura and walked behind him at a respectful distance. The citizens ran forward and fell at Vidura's feet, in spite of the earnest entreaties of the guards that they should desist. The Pandavas could not express welcome in words; their joy was immeasurable. So, their eyes spoke it, with tears of gratitude. They clasped Vidura in their arms and prayed to him that he should get into the chariot so that the thick ranks of onlookers on all the roads might get Darshan to their hearts' content. Vidura was persuaded to agree. Seated in the royal chariot of the king, Vidura gave Darshan to the people who had amassed en route. At last, the procession reached the palace. It was a sweet flood of song and joy that flowed along the roads of the city that day.

Some of the citizens were so overcome with joy that they were rooted to the spot. The arduous life of Tapas (austerities) that Vidura had undertaken had so transmuted his personality that he appeared a different person, a person glowing with divine aura, like Indra, the king of gods. The people were describing their exultation in their own words to one another. Many shed tears remembering the trials and tribulations which Vidura had undergone and the peace that he had acquired. The queens and princesses too had Darshan from inside the Purdah and they were supremely happy.



BRINDAVAN
WHITEFIELD
PHONE NO. 22

DATE: 21-4-74

My Dear! Accept my blessings and love
Religion is not a dogmatic faith, but the
necessary conduct implicit in the movement
towards perfection. Therefore, religions cannot
really contradict one another. All religions are
the different forms taken in practical life by
the one aspiration for perfection working through
different temperaments. In this sense, no true
freedom is possible without freedom in the light
of religion.

Religion is the attitude of reverence which
human beings have towards the Supreme Being,
based on the relationship that exists between
them and the Supreme Being. This reverence
may take different forms in different persons
because of the differences in the conceptions of
the relation that is between man and the
Supreme Being.

With Blessings
Sri Satya Sai Baba
Camp "Brindavan"
Pocangalore



BRINDAVAN
WHITEFIELD
PHONE NO. 33

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

DATE: 21-4-74

My Dear! Accept my Blessings and Love.

Religion is not a dogmatic faith, but the necessary conduct implicit in the movement towards perfection. Therefore, religions cannot really contradict one another. All religions are the different forms taken in practical life by the one aspiration for perfection working through different temperaments. In this sense, no true freedom is possible without freedom in the light of religion.

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With Blessings
Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Camp "Brindavan"
Bangalore

Mesmerising Moments with the Divine Master*

Rani Subramanian

I USED TO COME TO PUTTAPARTHI every six months, sometimes even three times a year. I have to tell you, in those days, Swami's aura was very powerful. He could really transform our whole thinking in a very short time! In the first visit itself, within a few days, I could accept anything. Normally, I would not have accepted rain coming in my own house; I would have reacted. But I did not react there. He gave us an experience of His Power.

Some people may not understand, but in my first visit itself, I could understand; we had Baba's blessing to understand that He had Infinite Power! How could we transcend? We thought that we would be disturbed, but we were not disturbed at all. We had to go to the hill for the call of nature, but it did not bother us: 'Oh! We have to walk' or 'Oh! We don't have a toilet'. We walked happily.

Experiencing the Infinite Power of Swami

We did not have tap water, we had to draw water from the well or walk all the way from the Patha Mandir to Chitravathi to wash so many clothes and take them back like a washerman. We were not used to all this. And yet, we used to cry on leaving Puttaparthi! Can you believe it? We did not want to go back home! What did He do? It was an overnight change. I consider ourselves very blessed.

I will not say I am that detached now; I may be more aware of conveniences now. But, in those days, He did something to just give us a taste; it was not a permanent acquisition, just as Sri Ramakrishna gave Swami Vivekananda



the experience of Nirvikalpa Samadhi for a short while and then took it back and kept the secret. Baba did the same thing; He gave us an experience of His Infinite Power and grace, that He can do anything, just like that. He does not need time. I don't have to do Sadhana for six years to get that; nothing! It was instant; but only a taste of it. With Sadhana alone, I can get permanent realisation of His Power.

Even now, we have to work with ourselves, because so many things are happening in our family; things that we don't approve of – like tragic incidents; so many things which upset

* Continued from May 2021 issue.

people. It may upset us for a little while; it does not upset us permanently, because we have the knowledge to get over that situation. Why does it not affect us always? We don't worry. At that moment, yes, we will be upset, because we are not yet stabilised in our Jnana (knowledge). Until that knowledge is stabilised, permanent acquisition of the equanimity of mind will not be available.

Swami is showing us that through our experiences. Something unpleasant may happen, and we may think 'why should this happen'? We think about it and give it too much thought – not that we worry, we pray to Swami. But if we give it a lot of time and a lot of thought; that is what should not be done. Instantaneous indifference to anything happening externally should be our acquisition, our achievement. That is the achievement Swami wants to give us, but we have to work with ourselves. And each one will perform according to his or her capacity. Capacity means Prarabhda Karma, tendencies and merits acquired from previous births. I may like to do like someone else, but I am not able to! Why? It is my Prarabhda Karma. Once we asked Swami, "Can Prarabhda Karma be wiped out"? He said: "Yes. You made your Prarabhda Karma; God has nothing to do with it. You have written your Karma, your destiny; you have to wipe it out. Like an examination paper, you have to answer your own examination paper. Can somebody else come and write it for you? No! Not even the teacher. It is a test which you have to face alone. You have written your destiny, you can wipe out your destiny".

How can you do it? He told me once in Whitefield about obedience to one's Guru. I will never forget this. There is nothing else you need to know. We now hear His Discourses about obedience to one's Guru. He is not talking about it individually; there are millions coming

now; can He talk to everyone individually? No! During those days, there were hardly 100 people! So, He could give a lot of time. Now, where is time for Swami? There are only 24 hours! Hours don't extend; for Him too it is still 24 hours! He has to fit in so many things; it is impossible for Him now to give interview to everybody or talk to everybody!

He had told us about that years ago: "You are very lucky. This chance you will not get again. Years later, you will not get this opportunity". Now, do I talk to Swami? No! We just see Swami and return. I cannot believe that at one point, we had so much joyous time with Him! Once He told me: "Old devotees must withdraw and go to the back; give place to the newcomers". That is the grace of old devotion.

What Should we Pray for?

Old devotees want to come and sit in the front line and want interviews. Then what have you imbibed? Nothing! He told me of an old devotee who was a friend of mine, who wanted an interview each time she came. She would come from Madras (Chennai) and stay here for one or two months, and each time, she would ask for an interview before she left. Swami would not let us; but she would insist. So, Swami would say: "Okay, go". He cannot say 'No' to old devotees – I tested Him!

We ask Him; but we are not supposed to ask! What is the use of coming for so many years? My coming here for 57 years is no qualification; let me tell you that! A person who has come for just 10 days can realise much more than I have done! Because they might be understanding; they might be ready; they might be mature! You must have spiritual maturity to understand Swami. And your life must be in tune with Swami's teaching – not tuned with what you want; then you can receive Sampurna Kripa (complete grace),

and your Prarabhda is wiped off. He does not want great performance; think of Him all the time – it is so easy; Namasmarana. Pray: “Swami, I surrender everything to You”! and be at peace. Years ago, a couple of years after I came, He told me once: “You don’t know how to pray, your prayer is all wrong. I will teach you how to pray”.

I did not know what was wrong with me, because He said: “You are asking for all sorts of things! ‘I want this... I want that... I want this done this way... etc’. You are always asking for something or the other. Don’t do that. If let us say you ask for a necklace or a bangle, or something material; it is a piece-meal prayer; make it a total prayer. And the total prayer is to ask for Santhi; Parama Santhi (Supreme Peace) that is undisturbed by anything external. That is what you should ask for and I will give it to you”.

And then He added: “You won’t know how I will give it to you! I know the way; it will reach you, you leave it to Me! Just say, ‘Swami, I want peace’. That is all you should ask as your prayer. Don’t say, that one is troubling me, or I want more money, I want a house. Don’t ask material things”.

The Wealth that only God can Give

Once He said: “Because you are devoted to Me, and you are doing prayers and Sadhana, I will grant you whatever you want in the world. But then, you can’t get Me! You will get everything in the world, but not God. God is Peace! He is Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love! I am Love, Peace and Compassion! These you will not get. But you will get everything else in the world – money, position and power too. I will give it because you want it! But with all that, you will become more peace-less! You will have more problems; so, don’t ask for all that! If you are a wise person, a good devotee, ask for ‘gold’! Peace is gold;

if you have that, you can get anything out of it. So, ask for gold – pure gold! This Peace is pure, solid gold! That is what I have come to give you all – Supreme Peace”!

Lord Krishna says the same thing in the Bhagavadgita when Arjuna asks Him the same question: “Swami, what will I get if I obey You”? He said: “Arjuna, I will give you Supreme Peace; undisturbed by anything external; gain or loss, praise or blame, victory or defeat; everything will be the same. All are pairs of opposites; you will transcend all of them”.

Also, we should not feel any problems with heat or cold – because when it is hot, if we keep saying, “Oh! It is so hot”!. That is a disqualification too! Or when it is cold, if we keep saying: “Oh! It is so cold! I wish it was warmer”! That means we are reacting to things. Small things should not matter. We should not even comment! What we say is true because that comment will affect our state of consciousness which can give us peace.

We devotees used to come from Patha Mandir (Old Mandir) to Prasanthi Nilayam everyday till the quarters were built (inside the Ashram) and we used to help with sweeping and everything. During the construction, Swami ‘needed’ help with planting trees and other matters, and we used to serve. He Himself would allot the duties: “you do this; you do that”...

One day, we were coming to Prasanthi Nilayam and the Prasanthi buildings were not ready yet. This incident happened before the building of the New Mandir. We just came to help with various things and we had to do Bhajans too everyday. So, we were always in and out of Prasanthi Nilayam. The foundation had been laid, and Swami was sitting on the sand – there were no chairs. And we three sisters came – my fourth sister was not there with us then; she came much later.

Bestower of Bhakti and Mukti

As we were coming along, He called us: “Come here”! and He made us sit there with Him on the sand. We sat down. Then He looked at my elder sister, Kamala Sarathi – she was so blessed by Swami – and asked her: “What do you want? I will give you whatever you want”! She looked at us; it was a sudden surprise! She said: “Swami, I want Bhakti, and Mukti (devotion and liberation)”. Then He looked at her and asked: “Are you sure you want that? It is difficult; do you want it? Bhakti and Mukti”? She said: “Yes”. He said: “Don’t say that because I am asking you! Be honest! Just because I have asked you, you don’t have to ask for Bhakti and Mukti. If you want something in the world, be honest and ask; I will give it to you”. Then she said: “No, Swami; I have everything; I don’t think I want anything; I want Bhakti and Mukti”. He said: “Given! I have given you”!

Then, He asked my other sister, “What do you want”? And she also said the same thing. And He told her too: “You think before you give Me an answer! Be honest”! And she too said: “Swami, I also want Bhakti and Mukti”. Then He asked me: “What do you want”? I said: “Swami, I also want the same thing”. Then, I don’t know, why He repeated in my case: “Rani Maa, it will be difficult! Are you sure you want it”? I said: “Yes, Swami, I want it”. He said: “Okay, I will give it to you”!

Then He spoke to us about spirituality. He always used to tell us something from the scriptures; either the Ramayana or the Bhagavata – something spiritual; He never talked much about family or any other thing. And after that, we went out.

Attainment Through Trials

After this incident, Swami came in my dream and said: “Rani Maa, do you know

what you are going to pass through? You have asked for Bhakti and Mukti! I am going to treat you like a wet towel! Just like one rinses the towel to take out the water, I will squeeze you out. Will you be able to take it”? I said: “Yes, Swami”! He said: “Okay, but you are in for great tests”!

You see, I felt He didn’t tell all that to them in a dream; so I was just thinking to myself: ‘Why did He tell me that’? Rightly or wrongly, I came to the conclusion that for some people, their Prarabhdha (accumulated merits) is favourable. With a few tests, they can probably attain it or maybe, when He says: “I will give it”, He may not mean this birth! He may give it in the next birth, because for Him, death and birth have no significance! Life is continuous; the same soul comes and goes.

We read in the Bhagavadgita too that death does not signify the end of a person; the journey continues after death too. So, with what reason He gave that to me, I don’t know yet! But in the dream, He did say: “Are you prepared? I will squeeze you like a wet towel! You can change your mind now too! You can say: ‘No, I am happy and comfortable in the world; I don’t think I want Mukti yet”.

More than Bhakti, Mukti is more difficult – complete freedom from the mind; it is like the role of a renunciant. I said: “No, Swami, I want both Bhakti and Mukti. You can squeeze me”! After that, I passed through a lot of tests and trials – all sorts of suffering. I guess, because I had asked for it, I had to be prepared for any tests! Though I do suffer during the tests – not that I am above it – but, something gives me the courage to face it! I don’t go down with it; I keep on chanting His Name, and praying more. Swami says that is the only way to keep up the equanimity of the mind – you pray all the time.

Swami says: "When a problem comes, don't think of the problem. Just think: 'All this is Anityam (temporary); I am going to transcend all this'. And keep on chanting My Name, and I will give you the strength to face it".

Do not Identify yourself with your Problems

Once He called me for an interview in Prasanthi Nilayam. He asked me: "Rani Maa, do you have domestic problems"? I said: "Yes, Swami". He asked: "Do you know how to transcend those problems"? I said: "No, Swami, I don't know; You will have to tell me". He asked me: "When you have a dream, when do you realise you are dreaming"? I said: "Swami, when I wake up, I realise that I was dreaming". He said: "Until you wake up, do you not identify with the dream as yourself"? I said: "Yes".

He said: "All these problems come under the realm of dream. Do you know what you must tell yourself? 'Swami, it is all a day dream'! If you say that, it will not touch you. But if you identify yourself with whatever is happening, you will suffer. So, you just have to play your role".

That is how He said we should detach ourselves. He said: "You see, you are all only playing a role! Role is like Jiva – the soul – 'I am so and so'! That is the ego – the false

identification. That is not the real you. You have to tell yourself: 'I am playing a role; but my real nature is Atma. I am above all this, Swami'. Constantly, you must meditate on that thought! Otherwise, you will go down with your problems; you will suffer; you will be anxious; you will be worried. But you have to help yourself – like an antidote – and keep saying: 'This is all a dream, Swami'! If in spite of saying that, you don't get that awareness, then ask Me: 'Swami, please give me that awareness'! I am always ready to give you whatever you ask! But you have to ask! I will not give it to you by Myself"!

He said: "If you ask for the right things, I will surely help you. If you ask for worldly things, I will give it to you too; but again, you will be caught up in Maya, delusion. But if you ask, I will give you the experience that it is all a dream, and it will not touch you".

So, right from the beginning, Swami has been giving us spiritual instructions.

(To be continued ...)

Courtesy: Sri Sathya Sai Media Centre

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

Iswara or God though not perceptible to the senses, ordinarily, becomes so perceptible to the devotee who has such deep attachment to Him that he yearns to merge in Him. Why? Such devotees perceive God as clearly as they perceive external objects. God or Iswara is said to be formless; that is to say, He can assume or adopt any form. He has endless forms. Then, in what form does He grant the clear vision to the devotee? He manifests Himself in the form that the devotee yearns for, the form which will grant him the highest satisfaction. These forms are His Avatars. Iswara does not limit Himself when He thus manifests; He is fully present in every such Avatar; He manifests Himself with His full glory in every Avatar.

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Baba – Love Incarnate

Justice P.N. Bhagwati

WRITING ABOUT BHAGAVAN SRI Sathya Sai Baba is like trying to enclose the universe in a small space or to measure the circumference of the earth with a foot-rule. How can the finite and the limited measure the infinite and the limitless!



It has been said in the Gita that whenever there is decline of Dharma and the rise of Adharma, the Lord descends upon the earth in order to revive and resuscitate Dharma. Throughout the centuries, there have been Avatars of the Lord, and through some divine dispensation and will, Bharat has been the chosen land for these manifestations of the Lord. Bhagavan Baba is acclaimed the Avatar of the age, who has descended in human form to lead mankind along the path of love and devotion. There is something about Baba which is so profound and deep, so vast and limitless, so infinite and universal that it is not possible to describe it in words. One has only to experience it by being in his Divine presence. And even then, one cannot comprehend Baba fully but have only a glimpse

of the great Divinity that is within Him. What Nehru once said of the Mahatma applies aptly to Baba – "Where he walks is hallowed ground, and where he sits is shrine". Therefore, as a humble seeker after truth, I shall try to present here two or three aspects of Baba's Divine personality for the contemplation of all of us.

Sankaracharya says in his Vivekachudamani: *There are three things in life which are difficult to obtain and they can be obtained only through the grace of God – one is human birth, the second is desire for liberation and the third is contact with Mahapurushas, that is, great beings.*

Desire for liberation is indeed one of the four preparatory conditions which are essential for God-realisation; the others being discrimination, renunciation and forbearance. But all these four preparatory conditions are difficult to attain without Divine grace. Tapasya or personal effort is certainly necessary but without Divine grace nothing can be achieved. In the 'Udyogaparva' of Mahabharata, Krishna speaks of the human will and Divine ordaining. He compares the former to furrowing of the field and the latter to the rains from above. Tapasya can be likened to the sowing of the field with the seeds of one's aspiration, and Divine grace to showers from God. Baba has been very kind to shower His Divine grace on all but it is up to each one of us to sow the field of our heart with the seeds of aspiration for the Divine so that the seed may flower into a burning desire for liberation and we may realise the identity of the self with the Divine.

The path which Baba has shown is the path of Prema (love) and Bhakti (devotion). He has always preached the gospel of pure and

undemanding love. We find in Baba an ocean of love and compassion, Prema and Karuna. Whenever we meet Baba or we see Baba moving about amongst the crowds of people who have gathered to have Darshan of His Lotus Feet, we observe love and compassion pouring out of Him and overwhelming everyone around Him. He is the very embodiment of love and he has shown in His life how love can be all-embracing and universal. I have seen for myself His infinite love and compassion for the entire humanity. Some years ago when He came to Ahmedabad and stayed with me, there were large crowds of people coming to have His Darshan right from the morning until late in the night, and every time, He would go out, walk amongst the people, meet them and comfort them and radiate His message of love to them through the very presence of His personality. No Avatar has done like this before – going among the masses, counselling them, guiding them, consoling them, uplifting them and directing them along the path of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. So great is the love and compassion of Baba for mankind that He does not care for His own comfort or convenience and whenever at any important function there is occasion to distribute food or clothing, He Himself personally goes around and gives it lovingly to the poor.

There are numerous instances when, out of love and compassion for the suffering humanity, He took over the disease of others. One of the most memorable instances is the one which took place on 28th June 1963 when Baba took over the disease which one helpless devotee of His was otherwise to get. Baba took over his illness and allowed Himself to suffer a severe paralytic stroke and heart attack with all its terrifying consequential effects. He experienced paralysis of the left side, heart seizure and partial loss of eyesight and went through four severe heart attacks in the course of eight days. The eighth day ended on 6th July 1963

which was a Guru Purnima day and on that day Baba, practically carried by several disciples, went to the crowded prayer hall and there in the presence of His devotees, He sprinkled water on His paralysed left hand and leg and to their great delight and joy became completely normal. So much is the love and devotion evoked by Baba from the people that when Baba restored himself to normal health, the devotees who had gathered there “jumped about in joy. They danced, they shouted, they wept. Some were so overcome with ecstatic gratitude that they laughed hysterically and ran wild among the crowd which came rushing in from outside”. Baba then gave a Discourse to the devotees who had gathered in the prayer hall and pointed out to them that this was not His illness but it was an illness which He had taken on in order to save a Bhakta who could not have survived the illness. Baba said, “So according to my Dharma of saving devotees from harm, I had to rescue him”.

Such instances are many where Baba took over the illnesses of His devotees in order to protect them. So deep and profound is His love and compassion! And, this love and compassion He showers not only on those who are His devotees but on the entire humanity. And this is what He wants all of us to do if we want to realise the indwelling Divinity in us. Baba says, “Start the day with love, fill the day with love, end the day with love; that is the way to God”. He points out that most routes to God like Japa, meditation and Bhajans are circuitous, but the direct path is love. Baba has, time and again, emphasised the importance of love in the path of spiritual realisation. In one of His Discourses He said:

“It is enough if love is cultivated – the love that knows no distinction between oneself and another – because all are but the limbs of the one corpus of God Almighty. Through love alone can the embodiment of love be gained. Here no scholarship is needed; in fact, scholarship will

be an impediment for it caters to egotism and it breeds doubts and the desire for disputation and the laurel of victory over others preening themselves as learned.”

How simple, direct and yet eloquent are these words of wisdom and how true!

The Upanishads tell us that Brahman or Pure Consciousness is the cause and substance of the entire universe. It is the impulse of this Pure Consciousness which has resulted in the creation of the plurality of the world of experience. But in this birth of the plurality from the supreme, no division or change has taken place in the infinite. The plural world which is finite and changing is only a superimposition on the Pure Consciousness or Brahman and it is only the knowledge of the Supreme Reality that can remove this delusion of superimposition and enable one to see that it is only the Brahman which is the reality and not this world of experience in plurality. The superimposition is the process of a delusory vision which veils the real nature of the substratum and gives us an experienceable perception of something different from the reality. This superimposition has been created on the Supreme Self or Brahman Itself by Itself. The Supreme Self or Pure Consciousness itself has become the entire world of perception, manifest and unmanifest, with form and formless; all knowledge and ignorance, truth and falsehood; in short, every object of experience has come from that one substratum, the Brahman. Whatever be the size, shape, design, colour or price, all clay pots have arisen from one mud alone. The sense-bound mind is unable to perceive the reality behind the pluralistic world and it is indeed difficult to conceive how pure, non-dual consciousness can account for the solids, liquids and gases and other entities and events of the physical world. But it should not be so incomprehensible, if only we realise that the intangible solar energy becomes tangible food and coal and oil on the one side and the body

and its metabolism and the mind of man on the other; or a microcosmic unit of genetic matter becomes the highly differentiated but integrated organs and organ processes which constitute man. Brahman or Pure Consciousness is the substance and origin of the universal existence, and the Individual Self is also likewise one and indivisible with Brahman or the Supreme Reality.

Now if Brahman or Pure Consciousness permeates every human being and if the mind-body-intelligence complex is nothing but an instrument through which the Supreme Reality functions in this world of Maya, then why should any artificial barrier stand between man and man? Why must our hearts not go out to all living creatures? Why should, asks Baba, our love not encompass every human being? Baba has, therefore, always exhorted us to rise above our little ego and express our true Self, the Self that realises its oneness with all and gives itself away to all in love and service. The twin ideals of Thyaga (renunciation) and Seva (service) have been placed before us by Baba. But when Baba speaks of Thyaga, He does not mean renunciation of work, but renunciation of attachment to the fruits of work. The Thyaga which He wants us to achieve is Thyaga or renunciation of self-interest or selfishness and not of activity. What He wants us to realise is self-renunciation and not world-renunciation. What is necessary is Thyaga or renunciation of ego and manifestation of the higher Self in us and the positive expression of this Thyaga is Seva or service. Baba has always emphasised that service to man is service to God. Our hearts must be filled with the sense of selfless service to suffering fellow creatures in the spirit of worship of the One beyond everyone, yet present everywhere. Baba has put this thought before us succinctly and beautifully:

“Man has to worship God in the form of man. God appears before him as a blind beggar, an idiot, a leper, a child, a decrepit old man,

a criminal or a mad man. You must see even behind these veils, the Divine Embodiment of Love, Power and Wisdom, the Sai and worship Him through Seva or service”.

Baba has also expressed the same idea in different words: “God is not in need of your service; what He needs is service of man in whom He resides”.

The greatest and the most convincing characteristic of an Avatar is its capacity to transform human beings. Baba has this capacity in a supreme and unprecedented measure. Everyone who has the good fortune to be in His Divine Presence experiences the deep and profound impact of His personality. One is enveloped in such a highly charged aura of love in His presence, such a profoundly spiritual and holy atmosphere that many are transformed on the spot. And almost everyone coming into His presence can feel this deeply moving climate. He radiates peace and in His presence, all agitations of the mind cease, all anxieties vanish and one is submerged in an ocean of bliss.

There are a few people in the country and abroad who are unduly critical of Baba. I do not doubt their sincerity and bonafides, but though they profess to possess a scientific temper, their criticism betrays lack of it. They presume to sit in judgment over men of God without bothering to know whether they are competent to judge them in their limited sphere of thought and activity. Experience pours in on an individual from various levels – sensuous, emotional, mental, spiritual and so on. Unless we are familiar with the level from which experience emanates and with its quality and character, it will be presumptuous on our part to attempt to judge that experience. The so-called rationalists assume that the noblest faculty that man has is reason and that every experience can be evaluated and judged with the faculty of reason. But they forget that the faculty of reason cannot be an adequate instrument for judging experience at all levels.

There are other faculties available for judging experience at the spiritual level and these faculties have been fashioned and perfected by our sages and seers. It is most unscientific to ignore the existence of these faculties and to conclude that spiritual experience is not real but is only a delusion because it cannot be judged by the faculty of reason. It is indeed a negation of scientific temper and it would be no exaggeration to say that it is a superstition of rationalism. The so-called rationalists forget that there are higher laws of nature revealed only by the science of consciousness and they do not become unreal or non-existent because the faculty of reason cannot reach them. Moreover, these critics do not even care to make an attempt to comprehend Baba and criticise Him without adopting an objective and dispassionate approach. I would like to know how many of these critics have approached Baba, discussed any philosophical or metaphysical problems with Him and spent some time with Him in a spirit of humility and understanding. Baba Himself has said, “You must dive deep into the sea to get the pearls. What good is it to dabble among the waves near the shore and swear that the sea has no pearls in it and that all tales about them are false? So also if you must realise the full fruit of this Avatar, dive deep and get immersed in Sai Baba”.

Then again at another place, Baba has said: “Everyone has to be asked to approach Me and experience Me in order to get an idea of what I am. It is not enough if you see a stone and say, ‘the mountain is a million times the size of this’. You will have to see the actual mountain at least from a distance”.

It is indeed most irrational and unscientific to criticise Baba without experiencing Him. But even to these critics Baba has nothing but love to offer. He says, speaking about them:

“The people too have to be pitied, rather than condemned. They do not know. They have no patience to judge aright. They are too full of

lust, anger and conceit to see clearly and know fully. So, they write all manner of things. If they only knew, they would not talk or write like that. We, too, should not attach any value to such comments and take them to heart, as you seem to do. Truth will certainly triumph some day; untruth can never win. Untruth might appear to overpower truth, but its victory will fade away and truth will establish itself.

"This means that I will never give up those who attach themselves to Me. When I am thus engaged in My beneficial task, how can My Name ever be tarnished, as you apprehend? I would advise you not to heed to such absurd talk. Mahatmas (great souls) do not acquire greatness through someone calling them so; they do not become small when someone calls them small. Only those low ones who revel in opium and ganja but claim to be unexcelled yogis, only those who quote scriptural texts to justify their gourmandry and pride, only those who are dry-as-dust scholars exulting in their casuistry and argumentative skills, will be moved by praise or blame.

You must have read life stories of saints and divine personages; in those books you must have read of even worse falsehoods and more heinous imputations cast against them. This is the lot of Mahatmas everywhere, at all times. Why then do you take these things so much to heart?"

Baba has come with a mission and that mission is to lead mankind to Ananda or bliss through the path of Prema or love. Baba is constantly engaged in this task and He is performing it in a thousand ways. He is running educational institutions with a view to moulding the character of our young boys and girls so that they may realise the greatness of Indian culture and become the true inheritors of our spiritual heritage. He is running summer classes which are a spiritual supplement to the curricular material that is being given to the students

in colleges and universities. He is instructing and educating people in the path of spirituality through His wonderful Discourses and above all He is transforming the lives of countless men and women by His Divine Presence and personality. He is an Avatar who is conscious of His Divinity and lives constantly in a state of identification with Pure Consciousness. He can create anything at will and many are the miracles performed by Him to which not only common men and women but also intellectuals and scientists are witnesses. But Baba Himself has said that miracles have no significance at all in the mission He has come here to fulfil. It is His message which is all important and that message is to realise the divinity that is in every one of us through the path of love and devotion. I cannot do better than quote the words of Baba Himself when He says:

"You may have heard people talk about the miracles of my taking this and giving that, of my fulfilling all your wants, etc., of my curing your illness. But they are not as important as the Sattwa Guna (spiritual quality of steadiness, purity and unselfishness) I promote and appreciate and instil. Of course, I confer on you these boons of health and prosperity so that you might, with greater enthusiasm and with less interruption, proceed with the spiritual Sadhana (spiritual work)."

Let us all proceed along this path of spiritual Sadhana which has been pointed out to us by Baba and I have no doubt that with His Divine grace, we shall reach the end of the journey and realise the ultimate goal which is Brahman or Pure Consciousness.

Source: Golden Age 1979.

– **The author was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. He served in the Divine Mission of Bhagavan Baba as a Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and as Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.**

MY EXPERIENCES WITH BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA*

Dr. Goteti Saraswati

SWAMI CAME TO RAJAHMUNDRI (Rajamahendravaram) in 1963 staying at Sri Ramarao's house. My younger brother had just come after passing MBBS from Calcutta (Kolkata). He and I, along with another girl, took a hotel room and stayed there for five days. My brother had a friend named Ajit Mukherjee at Kolkata. My brother's name is Lingamurthy. Swami called my brother and said to him, "See Lingamurthy! Send a telegram to Ajit, asking him to come". Ajit was in Kolkata. He had never seen Swami. Why was Swami calling him? Excitedly, he told me, "Sister, Swami has asked Ajit to come". He sent a telegram. That very night, Ajit got into the mail train and arrived the next morning. He was taken to Ramarao's house. Swami spoke to him, and gave him a big locket with Maha Vishnu, Shirdi Sai and Sathya Sai. He told him, "Always keep this locket in your purse. Don't take it out. This is very important for you". And He sent Ajit back. As soon as he reached Kolkata, appointment order was ready for him to join army. Swami had given him protection.

We cannot limit Swami. He is God who sees all, speaks to all. This happened in 1963. If we wanted a glass of drinking water, the people near Godavari would charge a quarter anna. I don't know how many paise that would be nowadays. We had to buy and drink water. That is to say, there were so many people. On the third day, they fixed Swami's meeting in the stadium there. There was a railway crossing on the way. The police gave up. "Swami, we are

unable to control the crowd. It would lead to a stampede." Swami said, "You don't need to do anything. I will do". There was a large ground behind Ramarao's house. Swami climbed up near Ramarao's house, and the meeting was held in that ground. The police also sat there happily, listening to Him. Nothing happened despite so many people.

Swami's Visit to Amalapuram

In 1964, Swami went to Bhadrachalam. I did not go since I was unwell. In 1965, He visited us at Amalapuram, about which I should tell you. We kept calling Swami, "Please come, please come". And He would keep saying "I will come, I will come". Finally, in 1965, He said He would come. He said, "I will stay for one or two days". I sent one group of devotees from here.



* Continued from May 2021 issue.

Some persons teased me. "Whom did you send? One has a fancy store? Another has a sweet shop. And another one has another shop. And you, madam doctor, have sent all these people to call Swami? Are you of that stature to call Swami"? I sent a letter, inviting Swami. And Swami told that very group that He would come! Seetharamiah said, "What is this? You have sent such people"! I replied, "Who else is there for me to send? They would keep coming". Swami had gone for three days to Vizag.

My younger brother had come. He had not yet begun his practice and was working at another hospital. I asked him to bring Swami in his car. They would allow cars over the Dowleswaram anicut. At that time, the bridge on Godavari had not been built. After 6 p.m., they would not allow; only one way traffic. He took the car to the other side at Dowleswaram and was waiting for Swami. Swami came at night, 10.30 or 11.00 p.m., arriving directly from the border town near Vizag. The poor fellow was sitting in the car, he dozed off to sleep. "Lingamurthy, get up!" Swami woke him up, got into the car and arrived here. He reached our home at 1 o'clock at night. As soon as He came, Swami asked me, "What is there to eat? All these people have come. What is available to eat"? "What would be there, Swami? Meals can be made ready". "It is 1 o'clock at night. No, not meals. Get some Uppindi made for everyone". They call Upma as Uppindi in that region. That was done, along with coffee and so on. Everyone ate nicely. How they slept? Raja Reddy slept in the corridor, from the steps to my room. My room was given to Swami. Early in the morning, I found them sleeping. When they were with Swami, there were Discourses throughout the day, and travelling throughout the night. Swami had said, "I am coming to Amalapuram. All of Konaseema is filled with

that doctor's disciples, clients. Everyone will come to see Me there. That would be difficult for her and Me. I am coming there for rest and peace. Tell them". As soon as they arrived, they conveyed this message to me. Definitely, we would do it that way. I called a meeting of all the devotees. I would call them 'boys'. All were younger to me. A meeting was arranged in the High School ground. Girl guides and boy scouts were trained to make all the arrangements when Swami arrived in the large ground. I met the Headmaster. Before this, a stampede had occurred at Rajamahendravaram on the 2nd day. On the 3rd day, Swami controlled them. We had to ensure that such stampedes did not occur. We had to conduct everything so that Swami would be pleased. We kept preparing that ground, a few days earlier. We did not employ even a single coolie. Just a few young people did the work. In that way, the ground was prepared.

At that time, there were not many Samithis; Ambajipet, Annavaram and us. We would do service there till 11 p.m. We built up barricades. Everything was done nicely. Finally, Swami arrived at around 1 o'clock at night. There used to be empty space in the front. Refreshing juice stations were set up in front of each house. They served everyone refreshing drinks like sugarcane juice for those three days. Nobody had to drink plain water. That ground was set up like that. Anyway the meeting was to be held, right? Swami said, "I will not allow My people to come in here. You too, don't bring your people here". So, nobody was being permitted into our house. Only Swami and those who had come with Him were there. My aunt came to the gate. She was calling me from there. "Saraswati, open the gate, they are not allowing me in!" If she sees me, she might call me, so I went inside. Nobody was allowed in, none of my blood relatives, close relatives. Only Swami's devotees.

There were barricades so that Swami could walk along the middle and give Darshan to everyone. Taking all the silk Saris from home, we spread them nicely there, from the road at the back, all the way up to the High School. A few hundred silk Saris. After Swami went there, in a quarter of an hour or so, metres and metres of silk Saris came to me. There was no place for us to go. Swami saw it and said, "Are you crazy? Have you left even a single Sari for yourself to wear? You have spread all these Saris here! As soon as I pass by, remove all of them!"

Gogineni Venkateswara Rao, a big mica mines business magnate, had also come. Swami was in his car. He drove it, and brought Swami. Swami asked me to make separate arrangements for him and I did. By the time I woke up and came down, he was climbing the wall with a ladder. I asked him, "Hey brother, what are you doing up there"? He said, "How would you take Swami to the High School? I am searching for a hidden road by which we can go without crowds", he replied. I said, "No need for you to search, please come down, I will tell you". In that way, we arranged this way to go, and that way to return, so that the crowds would not block the path. In that way, we made good arrangements.

On the third day, while Swami was having food, people filled this road. They stood there and shouted, "Govinda, Govinda"! for Him to give Darshan. He got up. I asked, "Why are You getting up Swami without having food..."? "See, they are shouting Govinda, Govinda there and have lost their voice. Should I not give them My Darshan?" Washing His hands, He went to the balcony to give Darshan. He gave Darshan from there like that. On the third day, He climbed to the top. At that time, there were no Shamiana awnings in this village. This were quite primitive. Some buntings were made with white cloth. There was nothing

along the balcony. Swami climbed up there in the sun and started addressing the gathering. My elder son and others took four coconut leaves and held them over Swami as He was speaking. They stood up by His side, putting up shade for Him with coconut leaves! Swami asked me, "Did you notice? I spoke five times at your place. At all other places, I spoke only two times". "Very happy, Swami," I said in gratitude.

Shower of Divine Love on Humble Devotees

Swami was here for three days and on the fourth day, the onward journey. Swami said, "Let's go"! My brother drove. I sat next to him. Swami was in the back seat. As we were to leave, I said, "Swami, the boys (volunteers) have worked very hard. Please give Namaskar or Prasadam for them". "You have kept this also for the last minute? See, there is no time." It was 9 p.m. or so. He took out Vibhuti packets and said, "Distribute this to everyone". I had not eaten for three days. We did not have meals, no sleep either. Food was not necessary. When we are with Swami, why have food? So, I got into the car. Swami said, "Just as you would have come, go to that junction. From that junction, you should take a left turn. That way, you reach the main road, then Ambajipet and so on". Once we reached there, Swami said, "Lingamurthy! Turn right, not left". "Where to, Swami in turning right?" I asked Swami. "Just sit," said Swami. I sat quietly. Swami kept giving directions and my brother kept driving. "We will go to the Pandit's house," He said. Whose house did He mean? There was a press there. Appanna Sastri was a member of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha. After going to his house, Swami went to see the press. When did they call Him? When did they get everything ready? I did not know all this. I did not know where that house was either. Appanna Sastri was a great scholar. They had

a press. I did not know the way. "I will tell you. Keep going." He said. "Turn this way that way", He said and finally the car stopped. Asking us to wait there – my brother and I – Swami hurried in, gave them Namaskar, blessed the press and when He returned, the elder daughter-in-law kept two bananas in Swami's hands. He came out with those two bananas in His hands. As He got into the car, He said to my brother, "Lingam, are you hungry?" "Yes, Swami." "Eat these two bananas." We had no time to eat at home. Now He made him eat those two bananas. We were to come back and then go to Ambajipet and so on. "Without touching Ambajipet, can you get Me to the main road, Rajahmahendravaram road?" He asked me. "Yes, Swami, I will take You," I said. We went through many unpaved roads and reached the main road. "Abba! When did you see all these back roads? Have you gone around all these?" He asked. "Yes, Swami, I have gone all these around for patients." We went along like this for four furlongs. In the village there, an elder had built a small Agraharam for Vedic scholars. You may know Seetharamapuram Agraharam. Swami had already sent His cars and others to Rajahmahendravaram. Ours was just a small Standard 10 car. All

this journey was in that car. As we passed by Seetharamapuram Agraharam, He asked for the car to be stopped. Swami had a large torchlight with five cells. He took that light and came down that embankment. I kept watching Him. Where was He going? Stepping down that embankment, Swami paused at the last house in that row. Swami was downstairs. A lady from upstairs hurried up and gave Arati to Swami. Kolluri Somasekhara Sastri was also a member of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha. His wife was lame. Poor thing! She used to come to Puttaparthi and stay there for ten days. She used to move closely with me and treated me like her daughter. When did Swami tell her? When did He give her the date? As soon as Swami went there, she gave Arati! Swami gave her Namaskar and got back into the car. Later, she said, Swami told me, "Don't struggle to come to Puttaparthi. Wait at your home like Sabari. I Myself will come and give you Darshan". That is what Swami had told her. So, she stopped going to Puttaparthi. And Swami went to her! She was waiting for Him like Sabari.

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

With the advance in technological civilisation on the earth, various deadly, dangerous and mysterious diseases have appeared all over the world. Healthy habits like bathing, keeping the teeth clean, etc., are being considered outmoded and uncivilised by youth. In the name of fashion, many insanitary and morbid practices are adopted. Smoking, drinking, sitting long hours in the midst of packed crowds in cinema theatres and subjecting oneself to all kinds of shocks and tensions – all lead to chronic damage both to body and mind. Cancer, eosinophilia, tuberculosis, and heart diseases – all these have increased as a result of such deleterious habits. Man has to be vigilant about his habits, his desires, his emotions, the impressions he gathers through his eyes and ears, the books he reads, the films he sees, etc.

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

AVATAR VANI

KNOW THE KNOWER

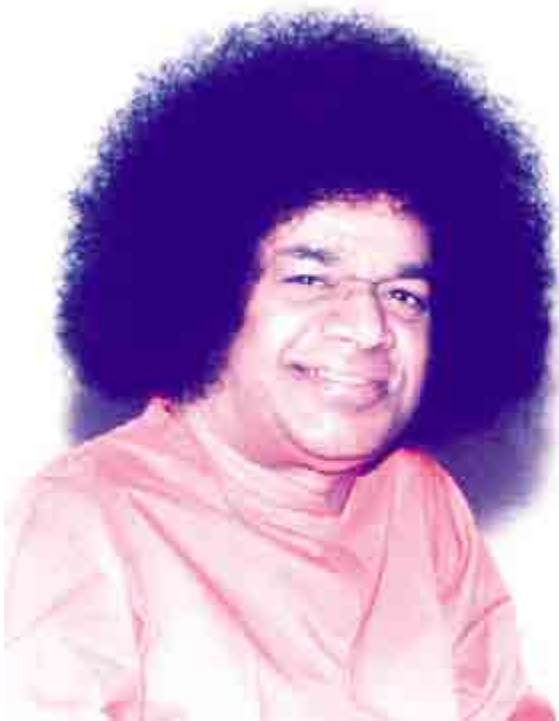
"By means of prayer you can win the grace of God; prayer saves you from slavery to the senses; when you extol God and feel that you are activated by His Will, you will become free from anger, anxiety, prejudice and envy; these passions ruin physical and mental health. Whenever you feel greed or resentment, try to control the emotion. Treat it as you would treat an illness; find the cure and master it," said Bhagavan in His Discourse in April 1973 in Hyderabad.

THE HAVEN OF PEACE IS WITHIN YOU

MEN EVERYWHERE ARE frittering away the precious years allotted to them on earth, in vain pursuits: praising oneself, thrusting one's interests forward, aggrandisement at

all costs; defaming others, blackening the reputations of others, scandalising the good and fawning upon the bad; talking frivolously or irresponsibly, stoking the fires of hatred or slinging mud, helter skelter, with no care for the injury done.

Men try to know everything about everybody else; but, they do not try to know about themselves! The attempt to know about the Knower is called Sadhana; knowledge about the Knower is Atma Vidya. It is only through that knowledge that man can live in peace anywhere. For, when you know that you are but a spark of the Divine and that all else are the same Divine sparks, you look upon all with reverence and true love; your heart is filled with supreme joy; and the assertions of the ego are rendered ineffective. Man seeks joy in far places and peace in quiet spots; but, the spring of joy is in his heart, the haven of peace is in himself. Even when he walks on the moon, man has to take with him, his fears, his anxieties, his prejudices and his pet aversions. Have faith in God, and in the correctness of moral living. Then, you can have peace and joy, whatever may be the fare that fortune offers you.



Love alone Confers Lasting Happiness and Peace

Goodness, compassion, tolerance – through these three paths, one can see the Divinity in oneself and others. Softness of heart is condemned by people today as weakness, cowardice and want of intelligence. The heart has to be hardened, they say, against pity and charity. But, that way lies war, destruction, downfall. Love alone confers lasting happiness and peace. Sharing alone can reduce grief and multiply joy. Man is born to share, to serve, to give and not to grab. When you install faith in God as a precious truth in the altar of your heart, you will welcome with equal alacrity the blows and blossoms of fortune.

Man can have the highest joy and can share that joy with others; but he is now having only grief and sharing that grief with others. A king once granted a woodcutter in the forest an extensive sandalwood plantation as Inaam (reward), in return for an act of hospitality that he had the chance to offer him. The fellow did not realise the value of the wood nor did he investigate the meaning and mode of the fragrance that emanated from the wood; he cut all the trees in a short time and burnt them for selling as charcoal. Most men waste their lives; they make charcoal out of sandalwood and are happy at the few chips, they get in exchange!

By means of prayer you can win the grace of God; prayer saves you from slavery to the senses; when you extol God and feel that you are activated by His Will, you will become free from anger, anxiety, prejudice and envy; these passions ruin physical and mental health. Whenever you feel greed or resentment, try to control the emotion. Treat it as you would treat an illness; find the cure and master it. A monk was going along a jungle track when he was followed by a gang

of rowdies who showered abuse on him. He sat down on a rock before the edge of the forest was reached; and encouraged them to do their worst for, he said, there he would be met by a group of his devotees who might beat them off enraged at their behaviour.

Discipline is the Mark of Intelligent Living

Man is basically love, peace, joy and truth. He is the embodiment of all these, that is to say, of Divinity. He ought to behave only in accordance with his basic traits; but he overlays upon them the false traits of I and mine, and tarnishes his own personality. How to get rid of this tarnish is the problem of religion, everywhere. Bhajan (group singing of devotional songs) and Namasmarana (chanting of Divine Name) are fine cleansing processes. Only, the mind must dwell on the sweetness of each name, and become sweet as a consequence. These practices must be done as a regular discipline, with the awareness that they will yield good results. They should not degenerate into mere mechanical routine items of a crowded schedule.

Discipline is the mark of intelligent living. Parents should not allow children to fall away from their control, and wander about without compass or anchor. Many parents feed and fondle their children, and then, in the name of freedom, leave them to find their own friends and pleasures. They take them to films regardless of the impression they create on their tender minds. They entertain the friends of their children, but, do not enquire their antecedents or habits. They even encourage their children to smoke and drink, not knowing they will one day have to rue their action. They thus declare by their actions that they are the enemies of their own progeny!

The Golden Rule of Life

I like children; I take great care of them; I pay them great attention. I give, and advise

parents to give them, proper advice at the proper time. I insist on discipline, on reverent obedience to parents, on regulated food and play, on rigorous allocation of time for study, Bhajan, meditation, etc. I also recommend some items of service, like nursing the sick. I condemn frivolous talk, luxurious living, deleterious habits, addiction to films, horror-comics, pen-friends, exotic dress, outlandish coiffures designed to draw attention to oneself, etc. By these means, boys and girls are slowly drawn into unrighteous and immoral ways.

Discipline trains you to put up with disappointments; you will know that the path of life has both ups and downs, that every rose has its thorn. Now, people want roses without thorns. They consider life as a saga of sensual pleasure, a picnic all the time. When this does not happen, you turn wild and start blaming others. If each one cares for his own pleasures, how can society progress? How can the weak survive? Mine, not thine, this sense of greed

is the root of all evil. This distinction is applied even to God – my God, not yours! Your God, not mine!

You must examine every act to find out whether it will cause pain to others; if it does, withdraw from it. Don't do to others what you would not like to be done unto you. This is called the Golden Rule. Yes, it is the best test for distinguishing right from wrong. If another person has with him what you like to have, do not make him miserable by snatching it from him. Would you like something you like to be snatched away from you by another?

Learn to serve people to the extent of your capacity. Learn to revere your parents, teachers and elders; they have your progress always in view. When you go back to your villages, join the Seva Samithis there and engage yourselves in Bhajan, service programmes and study with the members there.

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Discourse in Hyderabad in April 1973.

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– Director

THE STORY OF SRI SATHYA SAI HILL VIEW STADIUM

Bishu Prusty

IF THE 50TH BIRTHDAY OF BHAGAVAN, in November 1975, witnessed never-before-seen Divine aerial Darshan as He showered rose petals of grace from the helicopter, the 60th Birthday raised the four hundred thousand hearts gathered to never-before-experienced heights of Divine camaraderie and joy as He inaugurated the sprawling Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium for His devotees.

Later, on His 65th Birthday, Bhagavan erected there the 65-foot Hanuman statue which indeed was a grand finale to the making of the Stadium.

Sprawling Stadium for Grand Functions

Not many know that the Hill View Stadium came up in less than six months. Until the summer of 1985, no one had any clue of the sweeping transformation that the simple playground of the students was to undergo.



The sprawling Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium before and after its construction with galleries.

In fact, the theme of the World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in November 1985 was 'Integration of the World Community'. Perhaps there could have been no better venue to deliberate on this theme than the 3,82,000 square feet wide expanse of the Hill View Stadium that holds the towering statues of the Avatars and Prophets of all religions.

Indeed before 1980, this vast expanse of land between the main road of Puttaparthi and the long chain of hills on its west, was a wasteland. It was covered with bushes, thorns and stones. However, a small portion of this land would be cleared once a year to serve as the venue for large scale Narayana Seva during Dasara celebrations, wherein food and clothes would be distributed to the

underprivileged. But between 1980 and 1982, a virtual wall came up on its eastern side with the construction of a string of buildings: Hostel for Senior students (1980), Primary School (1981), and Higher Secondary School (1982). Earlier, the only structure in this line was the Easwaramma High School (1972).

Now this big ground became a secluded space with the natural wall of the hill on one side and the concrete wall of the educational institutions on the other. Given its flat domain, it became a natural playground for the students. In 1983, Bhagavan made it even more tempting for the boys to play here by levelling a part of the land that was adjacent to the hill. This flat surface was now more inviting than ever for the students to play games like football, hockey, cricket and so on.

Thrilled with this awesome facility, the students decided to do something special to offer their gratitude to Bhagavan. So, in the summer of 1983 when Bhagavan was away in Brindavan, a few climbed up to the western hill and on this rocky surface, in big, bold letters

first ever International Bal Vikas Rally but also when the Central Trust elders asked Him to name this stadium, He instantly said, "My boys have already named it 'Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium'. Let it continue"! Truly, God never has any choice. His choice is what emerges from the pure hearts of His devotees.

After the grand and colourful rally of 7,000 children from 20 countries in December 1983, Bhagavan further developed this ground by dividing the whole area into two distinct parts in 1984. Along with the Upper Ground which was close to the hill, now there was a Lower Ground too. This was smaller and three feet below the Upper Ground, and good for sports like volleyball, basketball, shuttle badminton and the like.

Bhagavan also built audience galleries on its western side. When someone suggested making the stadium even bigger by blasting the hill, Swami dismissed the idea. Today, we know, at least to some extent, why Bhagavan wanted that hill. It is truly this hill that was to be the basis for the transformation of this entire space.

The next year brought in sweeping changes to this huge playground. One morning, in May 1985, Bhagavan asked a few Ashram officials and the sculptor Sri Shilpi Subramanyam, who were seated in the Darshan lines, to assemble in the ground. Bhagavan Himself arrived there at around 10 a.m. and looking at the vast land, He revealed, "From now on, all the functions will take place here". He then looked at the engineers and pointing to a specific area, He instructed, "Build a big Mandapam (rostrum) here". The sculptor immediately asked Bhagavan for the size of this platform. Pat came His direction: "Have it 90 feet by 60 feet".



Students painted the name of the stadium on the face of the western hill.

they painted: "SRI SATHYA SAI HILL VIEW STADIUM". On a navy blue background, these letters in white stood out gloriously.

It did move the Lord. A few months later, Bhagavan not only selected this venue for the

to be continued in the next issue...

CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

SRI RAMA NAVAMI

SEEP DEVOTIONAL FERVOUR marked the celebration of the sacred festival of Sri Rama Navami at Prasanthi Nilayam. There were programmes of spiritual significance both in the morning and the evening on Sri Rama Navami day, on 21st April 2021.

The programme in the morning began at 8 o' clock with regular Veda chanting by Prasanthi Mandir Veda Group. This was followed by Sita Rama Kalyanam, the celestial marriage of Lord Rama and Sita. The idols of Sita, Rama, Lakshmana and Hanuman were brought to Sai Kulwant Hall from Bhajan Mandir in a grand procession led by Nadaswaram musicians followed by priests and devotees and were set up on a decorated platform for the divine wedding. The priests then started the rituals of the divine marriage beginning



Sita Rama Kalyanam in Sai Kulwant Hall.

with various types of Puja. All the wedding rituals were then performed which included exchange of garlands, giving away of the bride and tying of the auspicious Mangal Sutra around the neck of the bride. At the conclusion of the wedding, offerings were made to the divine couple and Arati was offered. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati.

The evening programme began with Veda chanting at 5 p.m. Bhagavan's Divine Discourse followed next in which He explained the inner meaning of the story of the Ramayana and stated this sacred epic was full of sweetness and nectar and was inexhaustible mine of spiritual gems.

A very captivating musical offering was thereafter made by the Prasanthi Mandir Bhajan Group showcasing the divine glory of Lord Rama. Some of the compositions melodiously rendered by the singers were: "Sri Ramachandra Kripalu Bhaja Mana" (chant the Name of the compassionate Lord Rama), "Jaise Suraj Ki Garmise Jalte Huye Tan Ko Mil Jaye Taruvar Ki Chhaya" (divine refuge is like the shade of a tree in scorching heat) and Sri Hanuman Chalisa. The programme ended with the Bhajan "Rama Kodanda Rama" in the golden voice of Bhagavan.

SRI SATHYA SAI ARADHANA MAHOTSAVA

Devotion and piety marked the organisation of Sri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsava held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 24th April 2021. The programme was conducted in Sai Kulwant Hall which was aesthetically decorated for this important event.

The highlight of the morning programme was the rendition of Sai Pancharatna Kritis, a compilation of five musical gems to offer musical tribute to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Renowned carnatic classical singers rendered these compositions with deep



Rendition of Sai Pancharatna Kritis by carnatic classical singers.

devotion and reverence which suffused the entire milieu with divine vibrations.

Bhagavan's Divine Discourse followed next, in which He exhorted the devotees to recognise the truth that Divinity pervades the entire universe. This was why the Bharatiya culture envisaged the worship of all elements, Bhagavan added. He brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram". An Audio CD "Bhakti to Bliss", a compilation of Bhajans sung by singers from different parts of the world was released by the Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust and the Puttaparthi MLA Sri D Sreedhar Reddy on this occasion. Bhajans continued after the Discourse of Bhagavan and the morning programme concluded with Arati at 10.00 a.m.

A special musical presentation was made in the evening by Prasanthi Mandir Bhajan Group. Some of the numbers rendered by the singers were: "Tumhi Ho Mata Pita Tumhi Ho" (You are our mother and father), "Jab Koi Baat Bigad Jaaye" (Sai is the refuge in difficult times), "Sai Ram Sumiran Jo Bhi Kare" (whoever recites the Name of Sai). This soul-stirring music programme was followed by Bhajans which concluded with Arati at 6.45 p.m.

EASWARAMMA DAY

Reverential homage was paid to Mother Easwaramma on Easwaramma Day which was observed at Prasanthi Nilayam on 6th May 2021.

The morning programme held at the Samadhi of the Divine Parents at Samadhi Road began with Bhajans. While the Bhajans continued, offerings were



Offerings made at the Samadhi of the Divine Parents.

made at the Samadhi of the Divine Parents, Sri Pedda Venkama Raju and Smt. Easwaramma by the family members and devotees. The Bhajan session concluded with Arati.



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30 JUNE 2021

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About Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust Publications Division

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 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 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 www.theprasanthireporter.org, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers'- for free distribution.
- 4) Providing library and Reading room for visiting devotees, with a very large collection of books written by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and books on Bhagawan besides various spiritual and religious books.

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Other Books By Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division (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!
10. Life Is A Dream, Realize It!
11. Bhagawan And Bhakta
12. Body And Mind
13. My Dear Ones
14. Sevadal
15. Silence
16. Suffering
17. Surrender
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19. Do You Know
20. Gopikas Of Brindavan
21. Gratitude
22. My Beloved Ones
23. Only Love
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25. Memoirs Of A Sai Student
26. A Journey To Self-Peace
27. Dharma
28. Guru
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30. Life
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38. Truth, Auspiciousness, Beauty
39. Sai Baba's Mahavakya On Leadership
40. Path To Peace - Prayers for Daily Life
41. Sathya Sai Speaks Vol-1
42. Summer Showers In Brindavan, 1973
43. Summer Showers In Brindavan, 1974
44. Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Vol – 1
45. Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Vol – 2
46. Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Vol – 3
47. Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Vol – 4
48. Life is a Game, Play it
49. Divine Inspirations Vol-1
50. Divine Inspirations Vol-2
51. Divine Inspirations Vol-3
52. Divine Inspirations Vol-4
53. Divine Inspirations Vol-5
54. The Light of Love
55. Bhagavatha Vahini
56. Dharma Vahini
57. Dhyana Vahini
58. Gnyana Vahini
59. Geetha Vahini
60. Prema Vahini
61. Prashnottara Vahini
62. Leela Kaivalya Vahini
63. Vidya Vahini
64. Prasanthi Vahini
65. Sathya Sai Vahini
66. Eashwaramma: The Chosen Mother
67. Loving God
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Recognise God in All

See God in everyone you meet; see God in everything you handle. His mystery is immanent in all that is material and non-material; as a matter of fact, it has been discovered that there is no matter or material. It is all God, an expression of His mystery! Derive joy from the springs of joy within you and without you; advance, do not stand still or recede. Every minute must mark a forward step. Rejoice that it is given to you to recognise God in all, and welcome all chances to sing His glory, to hear His chronicle, to share His presence with others.

– Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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