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for liberation has decreased. The reason
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educationists and the patrons of education,
all struggle to fulfil their worldly desires."



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Forthcoming Festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam



- 11th November 6 p.m.
to 12th November 6 p.m ... **Global Akhanda Bhajan**
18th November **Rathotsavam**
19th November **Ladies Day**
20th - 21st November **First International Veda Conference**
22nd November **36th Convocation of**
Sri Sathya Sai Institute
of Higher Learning
23rd November **92nd Birthday of**
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
25th December **Christmas**

AVATAR VANI

DEVELOP INTEGRATED AWARENESS

Man is born and brought up in Maya but he is so foolish that he does not understand what is Maya. Life is Maya, worldly attachments are Maya, family is Maya and even death is Maya. Knowing fully well that life is full of Maya, man still gets trapped in Maya. How strange it is!

(Telugu Poem)

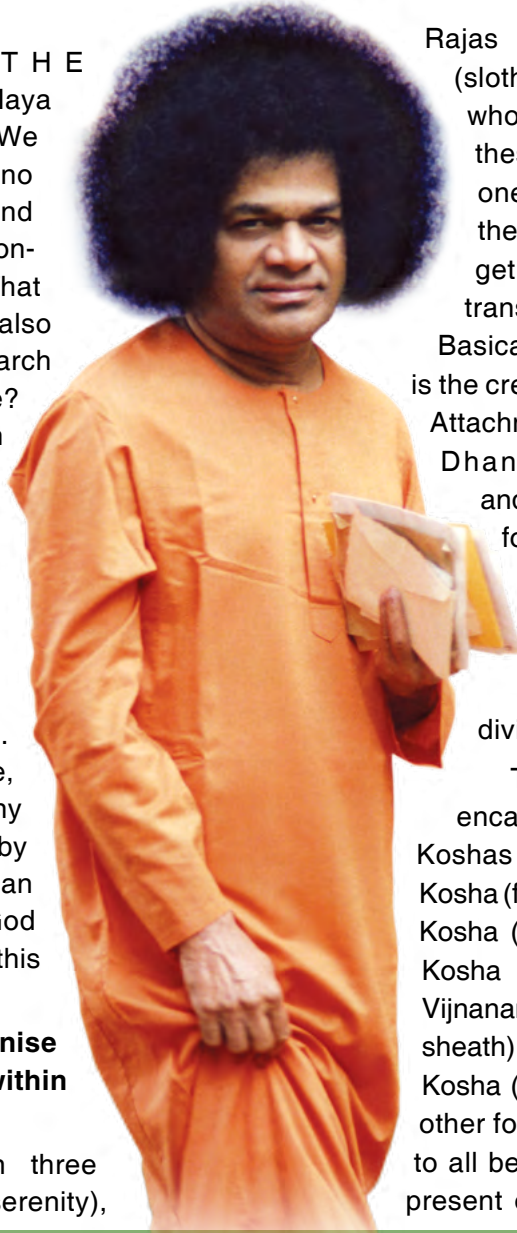
MAYA IS THE VESTURE OF GOD

Embodiments of Love!

WHAT IS THE form of Maya (illusion)? We talk about Maya, but no one knows its form and nature. That which is non-existent is Maya. That which is perceptible is also Maya. Why do you search for God here and there? Is He not present in your heart? God is within and without. *Ekoham Bahusyam* (the One willed to become many). The formless God assumes many forms. Maya is the vesture of God. Assuming this vesture, God manifests in many forms. Man is deluded by the Maya of God. He can have the vision of God when he overcomes this delusion.

Man should Recognise Tremendous Power within him

Maya manifests in three qualities – Sattwa (serenity),



Rajas (passion) and Tamas (sloth). All beings and the whole world is filled with these three qualities. No one is an exception to these qualities. Man can get rid of Maya when he transcends these qualities. Basically, Moha (attachment) is the creation of these qualities. Attachment has three forms: Dhaneshana, Dareshana and Putreshana (desire for money, wife and progeny). As much as man reduces his attachment, so much he increases his divinity.

The human body is encased in five concentric Koshas (sheaths): Annamaya Kosha (food sheath), Pranamaya Kosha (life sheath), Manomaya Kosha (mental sheath), Vijnanamaya Kosha (wisdom sheath) and Anandamaya Kosha (bliss sheath). While the other four sheaths are common to all beings, wisdom sheath is present only in a human being.

So, it is only man who can investigate and recognise the wisdom sheath and derive bliss. But, unfortunately, man is not utilising this special faculty properly, and is not able to discern Divinity from Maya. He experiences only three lower sheaths of food, life and mind, but does not reach the wisdom sheath which can lead him to the sheath of bliss. This wisdom is not worldly, physical or ephemeral. It should originate from the sacred heart of man. Then only can he experience real happiness. But man leads his life at the level of food, life and mind sheaths only, which engulf him in Maya. So, he cannot recognise the tremendous power that is within him.

Modern Education System Creates Unlimited Desires

There are two types of seekers, those who consider that God has a form and others who think He is formless. But God is one only. Along with rain, there can be hails too. Due to the effect of coolness, the rain water solidifies into hails; and due to the effect of heat, the hails melt into water. But the basic substance is water only. The hail is Maya and water is Divinity. Water can exist without hail, but hail cannot be formed without water. Can anyone travel without being followed by his shadow? Divinity and Maya are inseparable. They are like the object and its reflection, light and shadow. Man undertakes spiritual practices to differentiate Maya from Divinity. He follows the nine paths of devotion: Sravanam (listening), Kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), Vandanam (salutation), Archanam (worship), Dasyam (servitude), Sneham (friendship), Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). But who

Bodies are different. Names and forms are different. But the divine principle in all is one only. So long as we do not understand this truth, we remain in illusion. The world is illusion, all worldly relations are illusion, and family is illusion. Foolish people do not understand this illusion. They are born in illusion, grow in illusion and die in illusion without understanding the truth. When we experience oneness in all things, it means we have achieved Prajnanam or supreme consciousness.

listens, chants, worships, etc.? It is only man. But man is like an actor on the stage of the world. The world is a stage, all are actors, and God is the Director. Life has to be based on His direction. In earlier days, when the population of the world was only 100 crores, most people treaded the spiritual path. They undertook spiritual practices to attain Divinity and liberation. Considering human life as evanescent like a water bubble, they sought to know the eternal truth. Now the population has increased to 600 crores. The population has increased but desire for liberation has decreased. The reason is the modern system of education. This system of education creates unlimited desires in man. It does not inculcate the desire for liberation. The students, the educationists and the patrons of education, all struggle to fulfil their worldly desires. The first plan of a student is take up a course of study which would provide him wealth and high status. The only aim of education

is to earn a living. Is education meant merely to fill the belly? Only stomach is not important, head and heart are more important. What is the responsibility of the head? Its responsibility is not only to secure job and business for you. This leads to Pravritti (worldliness). The world is, in fact, an illusion. The path of Pravritti leads to illusion. The world is nothing but a dream.

All that is Subject to Change is Maya

During the dream, we consider the dream as real, forgetting the experiences of the waking state. But the dream is true till we wake up. Similarly, all experiences of waking state are true till we go to sleep. One is a day dream and the other, a night dream. Neither of these is real. Only you are real, who is a witness to both these states. You are omnipresent, you are truth, you are divine. The world is the creation of Maya. You call a house as yours. But when you sell it, only the money is yours; the house is no more yours. When you deposit the money in a bank, only the cheque book is yours. So, everything is subject to change like passing clouds. Everything that is temporary like passing clouds is Maya. A person, holding a 100-rupee note in his hand proudly smiles. The currency note laughs and says, "Oh foolish man, you are thinking that I belong to you. You know, before coming to your hand, I have seen umpteen number of people. How long will I remain with you? I never remain with any person for long. That is my nature". All that undergoes change is Maya. But man considers everything that is changing as true. This illusion is the sign of his ignorance.

The ocean is a stable body of water, but its surface keeps on shaking restlessly. It

is because of the wind. When there is no wind, there will be no waves. But waves are not different from water. The one and only Divinity takes various forms and appears as many entities. The head of a house is called father by his son, husband by his wife, son by his father and a grandfather by his grandson. Similarly, the same God is called Brahman by some and Atma by others. Some call Him Rama, Krishna, Jesus or Allah. Basing on their respective faiths and feelings, people give different names to God.

Religions are many but goal is one.

Clothes are many but yarn is one.

Jewels are many but gold is one.

Cows are many but milk is one.

Flowers are many but worship is one.

Beings are many but Atma is one.

(Telugu Poem)

There can be no differences such as jasmine worship or rose worship. Flowers are different but worship is the same. People worship God and recite His several names such as Narayana, Govinda, Madhava, etc. One God has thousands of names. When we recognise this truth, we become free from illusion. Sat (truth) and Chit (consciousness) are the basic reality of everything. When this is understood and experienced, there can be no question of worry or sorrow. Before the marriage, you did not know anything about your wife or her sufferings. But five minutes after the marriage, you are greatly concerned when she undergoes some kind of pain. You even forego food for her sake. How has this connection and concern cropped up? Before the marriage, you were never concerned about her nor was she about you. Pain and pleasure are caused by



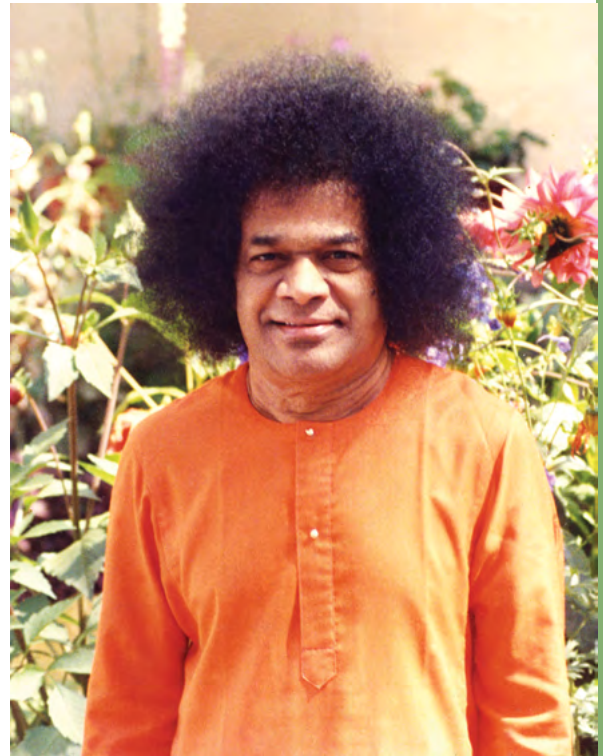
attachment. In the stream of time, beings come together and get separated. Human life is full of attachment and detachment. Both are nothing but Maya.

Destruction of Attachment Leads to Liberation

Here is a small example. This is a common experience of people all over the world. You go to see a movie. You do not pay any attention to the screen, which remains passive all through the show. You are concerned about the pictures which

and picture are inseparable. Without the screen, you cannot see the picture. Birth and death are also like these pictures. *Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam* (Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death time and again). Truth is like this screen and all pictures are illusion. The Upanishad says, *Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat* (Vishnu pervades the entire universe). Truth is constantly associated with Maya or illusion. Man must endeavour to transcend Maya to establish himself in

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are coming and going. You see various scenes on the screen. An actor appears and cries on the screen. When the actor cries, you also start crying. The actor cries in order to earn money, whereas you spend money, go to the cinema and get into the act of crying! Pictures come and go, but the screen is always there. The screen is the truth and pictures that come and go are illusion. But screen

Divinity. But man today is beset with all types of illusions. These illusions are due to Moha. Moksha or liberation is attained when all the attachments are conquered. *Moha Kshaya Eva Moksha* (destruction of attachment is Moksha). Moksha is not something that descends from heaven; it is not something which emerges from the earth. According to scriptures, removal



of the veil of ignorance is Moksha. Ignorance is the other name of Moha. It is based on three basic qualities known as Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. As long as one is entangled in any of these attributes, the principle of Divinity that is beyond all attributes cannot be realised. God is beyond all attributes; and hence called *Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam* (God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, wisdom absolute, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the Mahavakya Tattwamasi, one without a second, eternal, pure, unchanging, witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three attributes of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas).

Follow the Path of Spirituality

Suppose you enter a room of mirrors. You will find your images all around. As an intelligent being, you know that they are all your own reflections. But when a dog enters the room of mirrors, it regards those reflections as some alien dogs trying to attack it, and it starts fighting with those images. The mirrors get broken and each piece appears as a separate dog. He who regards the world as an integrated entity of God is God indeed. He recognises the unity in diversity of all objects in the world. One who considers the world as consisting of fragments of objects has an aberrated or perverse vision. He is no better than a dog. This kind of divisive outlook is due to illusion. Where is the question of fear for a person who considers all as one? Only a divisive mind will have fear. There

is no delusion when there is no fear. God is beyond attributes; and yet He is present in them. There is mud in a pot, but there is no pot in the mud. Pot got a name because of its form. Similarly, even though there are no attributes in Him, all attributes are contained in God. God is eternal, dispassionate, ever pure, having no specific name or form. Where there is a form, there is a name. Where there are forms, there is Nature. Names and forms relate to head, whereas qualities such as Sathya, Daya, Prema, Sahana, Samadrishti (truth, compassion, love, patience and equanimity) relate to the heart. They do not have any form or shape. They relate to Nivritti (spirituality). Man should endeavour to change his attitude of Pravritti (worldliness) into Nivritti. This is what is known as Sadhana.

It is the outwardly projected mind of man that prevents him to take to the path of Nivritti. The mind is like a dog which will not allow you to remain stable. The Upanishad says in this regard, *Mano Moolam Idam Jagat* (the mind is the basis of the entire world). In reality, he who has controlled the mind is man (Ma-ni-shi). He who has become a slave to the mind can be regarded in the reverse direction (Si-ni-ma) or cinema. It is said, *Manah Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandhamokshayo* (mind is the cause of bondage and liberation of man). Bodies are different. Names and forms are different. But the divine principle in all is one only. So long as we do not understand this truth, we remain in illusion. The world is illusion, all worldly relations are illusion,

continued on page 16...



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

ONAM FESTIVAL

THE TRUE SPIRIT OF ONAM WAS witnessed when Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Kerala organised three-day celebrations at the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam and presented an array of devotional music and cultural programmes from 2nd to 4th September 2017.

Day 1: 2nd September 2017

The first presentation of the celebrations was a devotional music concert performed by Mahalakshmi Sisters, Kumari Parvati Narayanan and Kumari Pooja Narayanan on the morning of 2nd September 2017. The talented duo suffused the entire milieu with deep devotion by their melodious rendition of a mix of devotional numbers which included “Kurai Ondrum Illai” (no regrets have I) in Tamil, “Thirinjonnu Nokkane Swami” (please look back and see me, Swami) in Malayalam, “Hey Shyama Sundara”, a Hindi Bhajan and a couple of classical compositions.

The first programme of the evening was an insightful talk by Dr. Latha, Vice Chancellor, Cochin University of Science and Technology, who narrated her experiences of Bhagavan’s Divinity and described how Bhagavan guided her at every step of life and practically taught her the real meaning of Advaita by eradicating her ego and creating self-confidence in her.

Her talks was followed by a report on Sri Sathya Sai Rehabilitation Programme

presented by Dr. Anand Mohan, State Co-ordinator of this programme, who explained how the Sai Organisation of Kerala was providing necessary help to cardiac operated patients of Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospitals at Prasanthigram and Whitefield (Bengaluru).

The last programme of the evening was a devotional music concert by a well-known singer Sri Pandalam Suresh. Beginning his concert with “Mahaganapatim”, he enthralled the devotees for nearly one hour with a variety of devotional numbers which included “Swagatam Krishna”, “Vande Keshavam Karunakaram” (I offer salutations to compassionate Lord Krishna) and evergreen Bhajans “Vanamali Radha Ramana Girdhari Govinda” and “Hum Sab Milkar Mangal Gayen Sai Bhagavan Sathya Sai Bhagavan”. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati bringing to conclusion the first day’s programme of Onam celebrations.

Day 2: 3rd September 2017

The programme on 3rd September morning comprised a beautiful dance



A scene from the drama “Draupadi – the Symbol of Motherhood”.

drama in Sai Kulwant Hall and Sai Gayatri Homam in Poornachandra Auditorium. The dance drama “Draupadi – the Symbol of Motherhood”, presented by the Bal Vikas children of Alleppey district of Kerala, depicted various episodes from the life of Draupadi through thrilling and lively dances which brought forth her rare qualities of kindness, righteousness and perseverance, and showcased her unmatched devotion and total surrender to Lord Krishna.

A large number of devotees took part in Sai Gayatri Homam which began at 10.30



The drama “Mother and Motherland” brought forth love and reverence for mother and motherland.

choreography and appropriate multimedia support made the drama an impressive presentation.

Day 3: 4th September 2017

On the Onam day, 4th September 2017, Sai Kulwant Hall was beautifully bedecked with flowers, flags, buntings, colourful parasols and Kerala type decorations. The morning programme began at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting by



Sai Gayatri Homam in Poornachandra Auditorium.

a.m. and concluded with Poornahuti (final oblations) at 12.15 p.m. in Poornachandra Auditorium.

An array of songs and dances by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Aluva surcharged the entire milieu with devotional and patriotic spirit when the students presented relevant episodes from the lives of Adi Sankara, Pundarika and Lord Rama to showcase their love and reverence for their mother and motherland in the dance drama “Mother and Motherland” performed by students on the afternoon of 3rd September 2017. Excellent acting of the cast, good



Auspicious notes of Panchavadyam on Onam day.

the Kerala Veda Group. Auspicious notes of Panchavadyam by Kerala musicians followed next.

A devotional music concert by a noted classical vocalist Sri Abhiram



Unni followed this. Beginning with a fine rendition of “Mahaganapatim”, the singer presented an array of devotional numbers which included “Shambo Shankar Daya Karo” (Oh Lord Siva, shower your grace), “Govinda Gopala Narayana Hari”, “Krishna Nee Begane Baro” (Oh Krishna, come soon), and concluded with evergreen Telugu song “Brahmamokkate Para Brahmamokkate” (God is one). A brief session of Bhajans followed this devotional concert and concluded with Arati.

On the auspicious day of Onam a sumptuous lunch was served to all the devotees in South Indian canteen by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Kerala.

The programme in the afternoon began with an erudite talk by Justice P.B. Suresh Kumar, who narrated his experiences with Bhagavan Baba and stated how Swami helped him in the performance of his professional duties as a judge and guided him to deal with some very difficult cases.

Devotees were then blessed with a Divine Discourse of Bhagavan which was aired on the public address system. In His Discourse, Bhagavan highlighted Mahabali's qualities of sacrifice and surrender and exhorted the devotees to imbibe good qualities and spread them in the world. Bhagavan called upon one and all to observe Daiva Preeti, Papa Bheeti and Sangha Neeti (love for God, fear of sin and morality in society), and shun the craze for money because it makes many wrongs. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan “Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram” which the devotees followed in chorus with deep devotion.

After the Discourse of Bhagavan, gold medals were presented to the winners

of Essay Writing Competition held this year, in which 40,000 students from 1,300 educational institutions of Kerala took part.

The final programme of the Onam celebrations was a fusion music concert “Bala Leela Spiritual Waves” by Sri Balabhaskar and party. Presenting a mix of classical compositions and popular devotional numbers, e.g., “Krishna Nee Begane Baro”, “Partheeswari Jagat Janani”, the musicians kept the audience spellbound with their fine blend of music and melody. This was followed by Bhajans which concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m., marking the happy conclusion of Onam celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam.

PILGRIMAGE OF MADHYA PRADESH AND CHHATTISGARH DEVOTEES

More than 2,500 devotees came on a two-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and presented beautiful dramas on both the days, 9th and 10th September 2017, as part of their pilgrimage.

On 9th September 2017, Bal Vikas children of these two States presented the drama “Chaitanya Mahaprabhu” on the illustrious life of this great devotee of Lord



Chaitanya Mahaprabhu immersed in the ecstasy of Nama Sankirtan.



Krishna, who propagated Nama Sankirtan (chanting of God's Name) as the most effective means of God-realisation in Kali Yuga. The drama which opened with a joyous dance of Bal Vikas children at the birth of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, depicted the main events of his life, which included his Leelas of childhood, his victory over a rival scholar, his initiation by his Guru Ishwar Puri, and his final merger with Lord Krishna at the temple of Lord Jagannath. Elevating theme, good acting of the children and excellent multimedia support made the drama an admirable presentation.

The second drama presented by the Bal Vikas children on 10th September 2017 portrayed the life story of Ahilyabai Holkar who ruled over the erstwhile Malwa region of India in 18th century. Depicting



A picturesque portrayal of the life story of Ahilyabai Holkar.

the main events of her life, the drama brought forth the important qualities of this able administrator and ideal woman ruler of yesteryears. Excellent script, superb direction, fine dialogue delivery and appropriate multimedia support in the backdrop made the drama historically realistic and picturesque. Thrilling dances of the children added to the beauty of the drama.

PILGRIMAGE OF TELANGANA DEVOTEES

More than 1,500 devotees came on a two-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from Mahabubnagar, Wanaparthy, Nagarkurnool and Gadwal districts of Telangana and presented music and cultural programmes on both days, on 16th and 17th September 2017.

On 16th September, the devotees presented an array of devotional songs which included "Manasa Bhajare Gopalam" (oh mind, chant the name of Gopala), "Narayana Sai Narayana", "Talli Tandri Neeve" (You are my mother and father), suffusing the entire milieu with devotional fervour by their soulful rendition.

Bal Vikas children of these districts presented a drama "The Divine Judgement" on 17th September, which showcased how deep faith and devotion of a Sai



A scene from the drama "The Divine Judgement".

devotee removed the doubts of sceptics and how Bhagavan granted His vision to him and others on the earnest prayer of His ardent devotee. Embellished with beautiful dances of the Bal Vikas children, the drama highlighted the values of faith and devotion.



From our Archives

INSTALL GOD IN THE ALTAR OF YOUR HEART

GET RID OF YOUR DEMONIC QUALITIES

THE MAIN PRINCIPLE OF THE culture of Bharat is to understand and experience unity in diversity. But today, man visualises diversity in unity. He has forgotten the principle of equality and has consequently, become restless. Unity in diversity is the fundamental truth that one



has to recognise. Since time immemorial, the Bharatiyas have been making concerted efforts to understand this truth and experience it.

Love Alone is Immortal

Once Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sought his mother's permission to go and pursue his studies. His mother said, "My dear one, there are various types of education in this world, but they are meant only for a living and not for life. Only the Adhyatmika Vidya (spiritual education) is true education. It is immortal

and has no limitations. It is changeless in all the three periods of time. Make efforts to acquire such education". From that day onwards, Chaitanya went about propagating the efficacy of chanting the divine name in each street and in every village. He chanted the name of Lord Krishna at all times and under all circumstances. His message to mankind was simple, yet profound.

Man should give up enmity and develop amiable relations with his fellow beings. This is the most essential education that he has to acquire. It is a sign of delusion and a demonic trait to develop hatred towards others and lead a life of selfishness. Why does Purusha Suktam declare *Sahasra Seersha Purusha*? It means that God is not a separate entity. He is Samashti Swarupa (the Cosmic Form). He is present in all beings. When God is so close to him, why does man suffer from delusion and face hardships in life? God is permanently installed in the altar of human heart. He is all-pervasive. Man can certainly see Him, touch Him, and also speak to Him. But he lacks such determination and yearning for God. Hence, he suffers.

Chaitanya prayed to Lord Narayana thus: "Oh Lord, You are all-pervasive. You are the master of all beings. You control the entire universe. You are the very life principle. I do not aspire to attain Vaikuntha or Kailasa or



Swarga (heaven) nor do I crave for liberation. Bless me with love so that I can love You”.

When Chaitanya prayed in this manner, an ethereal voice said, “Tathastu” (so be it). The worldly education one may be well-versed in and the immense power one may be endowed with are bound to disappear with the passage of time. Love alone is immortal. Hence, one should consider love as one’s very life. Chaitanya prayed to Krishna to bless him with such eternal love. Kailasa, Vaikuntha and Swarga are like branch offices of God. Chaitanya was not interested in attaining them. He recognised that Hridaya (heart) is the correct address of God. He prayed, “Oh Lord, I know that You are installed in the altar of my heart. Kindly, bless me with such experience”.

Give up Bad Company

Lord Krishna, accompanied by Sathyabhama, went to wage a battle with the demon Narakasura. A fierce battle ensued, and the demon died at the hands of Sathyabhama. Being the all-powerful one, Krishna could have killed Narakasura without Sathyabhama’s help. Then why did He take her help? Narakasura, being a wicked demon, did not deserve to even die at the hands of Krishna. Since he had subjected thousands of women to untold suffering, Krishna decided that he should be killed by a woman. Narakasura had imprisoned thousands of princesses who were great devotees of the Lord. They were the very embodiments of love and contemplated on Him incessantly. After slaying Narakasura, Krishna granted them freedom. It is in this context that Saint Thyagaraja extolled the Lord saying, “You have protected the sixteen thousand Gopikas”.

It is always dangerous to be in the company of the wicked. Hence, it is said:

*Tyaja Durjana Samsargam,
Bhaja Sadhu Samagamam,
Kuru Punyam Ahorathram,
Smara Nityamanityatam.*

(Sanskrit Sloka)

(Give up bad company, join good company, perform meritorious deeds day and night and remember what is transient and what is eternal).

One should resolve to follow such sacred path and propagate the principle of love to one and all.

What is the inner significance of the slaying of Narakasura? ‘Nara’ means the immortal Atmic principle. When the qualities of an Asura (demon) enter Nara (man), he becomes Narakasura. In such a person, you find only bad qualities and evil feelings. He does not join the company of the noble. He does not make efforts to reach God. He makes friendship with only wicked people. Such a mentality is the consequence of evil deeds over a number of births.

Today, man is under the delusion that he is highly educated. In fact, it is not Vidya (education), but only Avidya (ignorance) that he has acquired. How can one be called educated if one does not have a good conduct and does not join good company? Ravana had acquired all types of knowledge, like Rama. But unlike Rama, he joined bad company, entertained bad thoughts and indulged in wicked deeds. Hence, people revere Rama and censure Ravana.

One is revered or ridiculed on the basis of one’s conduct. One should not lead a self-centred life. Wherever a good activity is taking place, wherever a prayer meeting is held, take part in them. But there are some people who indulge in evil deeds and do not join good company. What is the use of such



a life? In this context, Saint Purandaradasa said,

Oh Lord! In spite of having eyes, people are verily blind as they do not yearn to see Your auspicious form. Though they are endowed with ears, they are deaf to Your teachings. Though God is immanent in them, they have drowned themselves in worldly life. How can one describe their misfortune?

(Telugu Poem)

Man should understand the truth that God is present in all beings and conduct himself accordingly. That is his primary duty. He should not only contemplate on divinity but also sing His glory. There was a grand celebration in the kingdom of Narakasura when he was slain. As long as he was alive, the hearts of people were engulfed in darkness. When he was ultimately killed, there was joyous celebration all around. With his death, the darkness of ignorance and hatred was dispelled. People symbolically celebrated the occasion by lighting lamps. Just as bats find their way into a house engulfed in darkness, likewise, wicked qualities enter the heart filled with darkness of ignorance. Only bats like to live in darkness, not human beings. You should not live like bats, in darkness of ignorance.

Some people appear to be of Sattwic (serene) nature externally, but they are full of wicked qualities. You should beware of them. You should not be in bad company even for a moment. In olden days, people distanced themselves from demons and demonic behaviour. Hiranyakasipu tried his best to stop his son Prahlada from chanting the divine name of Lord Narayana. But Prahlada was always immersed in the contemplation of the Lord. Prahlada was dear to Lord Narayana, whereas his father

Hiranyakasipu was dear to demons. He was an emperor. What sort of an emperor was he? He was an emperor of wicked qualities and evil deeds. Follow the ideal set by Prahlada and sanctify your time in the contemplation of the Lord.

Realisation of the Atmic Principle is True Devotion

In the present-day world, demonic activities are on the rise. One cannot stand such sights, nor can one bear to hear about them. Why should you give scope to such ghastly events? Install God in your heart. It is said, *Iswara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). Develop such firm faith. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as are the feelings, so is the result).

Dear Students!

Today is the day on which Narakasura, the demon, was killed. What does this event signify? It signifies killing the demon in man. 'Nara' means man and 'Asura' means demon. This demon is present in every human being. It is not necessary to acquire great Astras and Sastras (weapons) to kill this demon. Man is called 'Nara' because there is Atma in him. That Atma is the embodiment of love. It is possible to kill the demons only through love. Therefore, realise the Atma Tattwa (Atmic principle) and develop love. This is true Bhakti (devotion).

Fill your Heart with Love

What is the purpose of human life? To eat, drink and roam about? No, no. The birds, beasts and animals also do that. That is not what is expected of a human being. The human values inherent in us must be given expression to. They have to be propagated. They must become part and parcel of our



daily life and reflect in our behaviour. If they are merely propagated without being reflected in our behaviour, it becomes a futile exercise. Therefore, we must realise the inner meaning of the various festivals and act accordingly.

Embodiments of Love!

Your duty today is to destroy the demonic qualities in you. Evil thoughts and evil actions are rampant everywhere. You cannot remain a mere witness to these happenings. Placing your faith in God, you have to fight evil forces as a human being. You have to demonstrate your human estate. You have to earn a name as a good man. That alone counts. All other acquisitions are worthless. Only a good man endures. Every moment of one's life should be devoted to practising

Dharma (righteousness) and earning Kirti (good name). Fill every cell of your body with the spirit of Truth.

Naraka Chaturdasi is the day on which you resolve to get rid of your bad qualities and follow the path of righteousness. Deepavali is celebrated today as a festival of lights, with the firing of crackers and display of fireworks. In olden days, the ancients rejoiced over the destruction of the demon Narakasura and let off fireworks. The joy derived from the firing of crackers should really come from the elimination of bad qualities within one. For this, it is essential to meditate on God, listen to Divine Discourses and participate in Bhajans.

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

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and family is illusion. Foolish people do not understand this illusion. They are born in illusion, grow in illusion and die in illusion without understanding the truth. When we experience oneness in all things, it means we have achieved Prajnanam or supreme consciousness.

Man is born in society, grows up in society and dies in society. But he does not make efforts to know the nature of society. He who endeavours to know himself is a real human being. Can the snake be killed by just rubbing over the ant-hill? Man must delve deep within himself to understand his true nature. How can man call himself a human being without knowing himself? He may be a human being in form, but not in reality if he does not act according to his human nature.

Can all the birds of green colour talk like a parrot?

Can all the insects that crawl on the flowers become the bumble bees?

Can an oversized pig become an elephant?

Can one who does not know about himself acquire knowledge of the Self?

(Telugu Poem)

It is not the form that is important. Behaviour is important, habits are important, discipline is important. A real devotee is one who observes discipline. Good behaviour, good habits and strict discipline make one a real human being.

– **Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 23rd April 1993.**



NEED TO SPIRITUALISE MEDICAL PRACTICES

Ramesh Kumar

Emphasising the need to spiritualise medical practices, Sri Ramesh Kumar, Minister for Health, Government of Karnataka called upon the medical fraternity to adhere to the values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa in his Inaugural Address at Sri Sathya Sai All India Medical Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam on 19th August 2017. Here we give a brief version of his Address.

IT IS INDEED A GREAT BOON THAT I have been bestowed upon by Swami the opportunity to be here today to inaugurate Sri Sathya Sai All India Medical Conference at this holy place, Prasanthi Nilayam. I deem it as a great fortune to be amongst all of you, especially the doctor community who have assembled here today to be a part of this conference. The hallmark of a good doctor is sacrifice. Dr. Somaraju emphasised on this. Many doctors live under the hallucination that getting remunerated for the services they offer is sacrifice. It is only marketing the skills they have. I may sound rough but I speak truth. We are all aware that Swami is the Doctor of doctors and He has set the right model for medical service, be it the Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospital of Puttaparthi or the one in Bengaluru. Not limiting this 'Sat Sankalpa' (noble resolve), He went one step ahead by taking holistic healthcare at the doorstep of the villagers through Sri Sathya Sai Mobile Hospital services. Medical aid should be the right of every individual irrespective of caste, creed, colour, religion or nationality. The presence of the doctors here in Prasanthi Nilayam serving humanity across the States of India and the hospitals of the Sathya Sai Central Trust are a standing testimony of pure Love and Seva. That is why we are all here.

Swami's Hospitals are Models for the World

The world scenario is changing. Healthcare is becoming more and more expensive, unaffordable to poor people. Please underline this. It is not in our hands



Sri Ramesh Kumar addressing the gathering in Sai Kulwant Hall.

as to who should fall sick. And all those who fall sick are necessarily not in a position to afford the treatment. With all our hospitals, if the last man is sick and he cannot afford the treatment, what is the use or worthiness of the existence of all our hospitals? Swami has shown us the way as to how to make the life worthier, and we should emulate Him. He is a model to all of us. I still remember, when the hospitals at Prasanthigram and Whitefield were opened, many people commented and asked whether a free



model in healthcare could survive. People who have narrow considerations, people who are motivated by selfish gains will never be capable of thinking beyond themselves. Basically, a person who does not trust himself can never be able to trust others. It was a million dollar question whether this experiment of Swami will survive, how long can He do it, where will He get money? All kinds of things were said. Nobody wanted to appreciate that here was Swami who wanted to take up this burden upon Himself; He is not the Prime Minister or President of India or even the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh or Karnataka. And He wanted to make the whole thing free.

When the Bengaluru hospital was inaugurated, there were three Chief Ministers, to the right and left of Swami – Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Swami in His usual style looked at all the three Chief Ministers and asked, “Did you go around the hospital? There is one department that is missing. Did you notice”? All the three Chief Ministers were wonderstruck and they were looking at Swami, what He was asking about. Then Swami said, “The billing department is not there”! And as we all know, that is what scares the people today, much more than the ailment. We had the audacity to speak all that we wanted. The truth of the fact is, it has survived despite Swami’s physical form leaving us; we are still showing this to the whole world. This is the power of Swami; this is the strength of Swami. It is not what He gives to me materially. He has shown a way to all of us as to how we should live. You and me may belong to political parties which are diametrically opposite to each other, but I think one thing we should have in common; we should all adopt Swami in

our manifesto. He is an all India party leader, and a leader for the cause of human beings. I was touched and deeply moved when Dr. Somaraju was speaking. These words come from the mouth of a person who is heading a Super Speciality Hospital. We have seen the inhuman attitude of people in medical profession who have the audacity of refusing to release the dead bodies if their relatives are not in a position to make the payment. Swami, should we be the witnesses to all this? Please save us from this disgrace. Guide us to behave well.

Compassion and Sacrifice are the Hallmarks of a Doctor

It is a shock for people to realise, assume and digest that free medical services can be offered. Time has come now for all of us to think and realise that the act of healing should be restored to its pristine sanctity which can only be done when it is free from the stigma of commercialisation. Where is professionalism now? It does exist minus of professional ethics. If professional ethics vanish from any profession, then its commercialisation only remains with us, and not the profession. The need has come, wherein the human agents of healthcare delivery system, be it the administrators, doctors, technicians or nurses, should be human in thought, word and deed, demonstrating the five human values of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. This could happen if we spiritualise medicine. What I mean is the modern medicine should be restored to its inherent and intrinsic proximity to spirituality, which is to strengthen the spirit of man, the divine force in him that energises his physical, mental and psychological systems. Just imagine if every hospital or nursing home in India can make available one free bed



for treatment to organisations such as Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Imagine, my friends, my dear brothers and sisters, all the devotees, how much good can be done in society? It is said *Vaidyo Narayana Harihi* (doctor is verily God). Today we have more than a thousand gods sitting here right in front of the Supreme Lord. Today this place, by the Will of Swami, has turned into a Maha Maha Punyakshetra (very sacred place) because of such divine beings present here. I salute every doctor here for their love and commitment to holistic healthcare. In my opinion, medicine is meant to promote heart to heart and love to love relationship between a doctor and a patient. Don't you all feel the presence of the doctors here reverberates sacrifice, love and compassion which are the most needed tools for a doctor today?

The Uniqueness of Sri Sathya Sai Healthcare Mission

I honestly and earnestly salute every one of the doctors and paramedics that are here. This world is so tempting, luring. There are so many places of interest for you to go and spend two days. But you decided to come here ignoring all that. You are great, and in fact, that is Swami's greatness. We are now actually introducing a legislation to bring in this patients chapter. We are making it mandatory to avoid unwanted tests being carried on patients, truth being suppressed from being disposed to patients, making it obligatory on the part of doctors to be polite and modest to patients. A doctor cures half the ailment by His smiling face. But, unfortunately, many doctors now smile only looking at the purse, not at the face of the patient. What to do? I am happy that this conference is being held on the principles of Sri Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare, which is universal, free, loving, comprehensive

and preventive. The need has come for us to reach out to the poor and needy. The theme of the conference, that is reaching out holistic healthcare at the doorstep, is appropriate. I am happy that Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation is moving ahead in the direction which Baba has always shown us and expected us to behave this way. I felt so happy to learn that in the medical mission of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, India, about four thousand doctors and an equal number of paramedics and Seva Dals are rendering service to the underprivileged and needy in the areas of allopathy, Ayurveda, homeopathy and veterinary care.

Comprehensive care is what is needed with regular follow-up and this is what Sri Sathya Sai Medical Mission is all about. It is the right place to recognise the efforts of the participants who have been serving the country with a passion to spread love and good health. I understand that eminent doctors from the country who have contributed in a great manner to community medicine as a part of the responsibility towards nation building are here today to address the participants. I have seen the topics of the sessions which are very relevant for today's scenario. I am sure that the interactive sessions will definitely take Sri Sathya Sai Medical Mission to the next level in the coming years.

I don't know how I should express my grateful thanks to Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Immaterial of the fact whether I am a minister or not, they have always been extending the courtesy of inviting me to be here with them. I am so privileged, I am so honoured, I am so touched. It is our assurance to the Central Trust which is spearheading in the direction shown by Swami to fulfil His Mission that we are soldiers at their command.



THE FOLLOWING NARRATION IS an account of Swami's response to my father's devotion. In this episode, I had the good fortune to be both a first-hand eye witness as well as an instrument of Swami. I am narrating the incidents exactly as they occurred.

It was the summer of 1992. I was employed as a scientist in a medical device company in USA. Along with my siblings in US, I invited my parents to visit us all for a few months. After much persuasion, they arrived in New York on 21st May 1992. I had meticulously planned a holiday cum sight-seeing trip for them over the next few

Lord's help to deal with the crisis. We were too dazed and did not know how to go about dealing with this matter. One of our earliest reactions I can recollect is my mother writing a heartfelt letter addressed to Swami (dated around 4th June 1992) and mailing to my uncle (late Prof. A.N. Mohana Krishnan) who was then a faculty in Swami's Management College at Prasanthi Nilayam. She merely mentioned the diagnosis, our family's state of shock and asked if he could convey to Swami (if and when Swami might talk to him during Darshan) about our situation to seek His help. She felt that since he was a faculty in Swami's college and had the privilege of

Prof. Sathya Gourisankar

SWAMI – THE DIVINE PLANNER AND EVENT MANAGER

An Eye-witness Narration

months. Here is how my plan got revised by Swami's "Master Plan"!

Four days after his arrival, my father developed urinary bleeding. I rushed him to the emergency room where they gave antibiotics and suggested I follow up with a urologist. Two days later, I took him to a urologist who performed tests and gave us the shocking news that my father had extensive bladder cancer all over, which required a major surgery. His visitor's medical insurance could not cover it and it would be very expensive for us to pay out of pocket. After receiving the cancer diagnosis, my parents and I visited a nearby Krishna Temple, offered our prayers and sought the

the "Verandah Darshan," there was a chance he could somehow convey her prayers to Swami in person! Following the mailing of this letter, we started to witness Swami take charge and a divinely orchestrated drama unfold with a series of inexplicable events, listed below as a timeline summary.

Event 1: (4th June 1992)

By a "chance" encounter, we got connected near our place in New Jersey, USA with an old family friend from our home town in India (Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh) where my father was a practising lawyer. It turned out that our friend (with whom we had lost touch) had become a urologist and was practising near our place of residence.



As soon as I contacted and told him about my father, he was very kind and asked us to see him right away. Following his examination, he told us the following: Yes, the diagnosis is that your father has bladder cancer which is both extensive as well as appearing to be of the highest stage of malignancy, perhaps even inoperable. He then mentioned to us he had specialised in that very area within the field of urology, namely, adult oncology, and was one of only a few experts who was trained in those days to perform a complex surgery known as “Radical Cysto-Prostatectomy”. He also sat down with my father in his clinic and strongly persuaded him to undergo this surgery in US as it could not be done in India where my father wanted to go back for treatment. Based on his comments, my father agreed to undergo the surgery in US and the date was set at 17th June 1992, with a number of pre-surgical procedures such as biopsies, ultrasounds, etc., being scheduled over the next few days.

Since I was the principal instrument and “errand boy” of Swami in this episode, I was going through a hectic period trying to juggle between hospital visits, my job responsibilities and domestic situation. One of the first big issues for me to deal with was the huge medical expenses looming. I had just received confirmation in writing that medical insurance coverage was denied citing it as a pre-existing condition for a visitor’s policy. Due to this, I had lost all hopes of insurance coverage and was scrambling to gather finances for handling this large commitment. At this time, around 8th June 1992, just a few days prior to the surgery, Swami came in my dream in the early hours and said the following exact words in English and disappeared: *You proceed with the surgery; I will take care of*



the insurance. I woke up clearly recollecting every word in the dream. These dream words of Swami seemed too far-fetched and unreal then since insurance had already flatly denied coverage in writing to me. Therefore, I chose not to take the dream seriously and put it out of my mind.

Event 2: (16th June 1992)

On the day prior to surgery, i.e., 16th June 1992, I drove my father to the hospital for admission. After settling him in the room, I called home to receive the following surprise news from my wife. It seems, as I was driving to hospital, a gentleman by name, Mr. Mohammed, called from London and told my wife that the insurance company had decided to revise their original denial of coverage for my father’s surgery and now were going to cover the full expenses except for a small portion of the deductible costs as per the policy rules. When I heard this, my first reaction was she must have misheard or misunderstood because insurance industry would never of their own accord revise their denials which were made in writing and this must be a mistake which I should ignore. My wife then told me he also mentioned that he had sent a fax of this to the hospital and I could get it from the hospital records department. I now decided to check it out; so, I went to the records department of the



hospital to ask if they had received such a fax. Lo and behold, they gave me a print out of the fax with the exact words spoken over the telephone by Mr. Mohammed to my wife! Until then or thereafter, I could never find or speak to a “Mr. Mohammed” from that company, try as much as I could!

Event 3: (17th June 1992)

The day of surgery dawned, 17th June 1992. My father was wheeled in at 8.30 a.m. The doctor told us that it was going to be a long surgery since it required the removal of prostate and bladder and the creation of a new bladder from the small intestine. After ten hours of surgery, the doctor came out and told us that it went well and my father would be in ICU over the next few days. The first thing my father mentioned to us as soon as he gained consciousness was that he saw Swami standing around his bed, placing His hand on the surgical area and blessing him as he was coming out of anaesthesia! He then started to recover gradually and was in the hospital over the next two weeks, being attended upon by a multiple set of clinicians.

Within about a week following surgery, my mother received a response from my uncle in Prasanthi Nilayam to the letter she had written earlier about the surgery. It seems her letter to him got re-directed to Bengaluru where he was attending a Summer Course of Swami. On the day he received it, he took it for Darshan, was holding it in hand when Swami came straight to him and asked him to talk about the letter in detail and listened intently. It seems after my uncle explained the whole matter, Swami replied in acknowledgement that He knows it all, will take care and then He took the letter. It is remarkable that, on that very day and at the same time Swami talked to him, the surgery was happening in US without my uncle knowing about it!

Following the surgery, the biopsy samples which were sent to the laboratory came back with a stunningly surprising result for the medical community – the malignancy was nowhere near the advanced stage expected by the doctors; in fact, it was near benign! The surgeon was so startled at this result that he resent the pathology slides to another laboratory for confirmation and they also had the same conclusion. The surgical team then mentioned to us that this was the rarest case they had seen and were going to present and publish these results in a clinical meeting and journal!

Event 4: (July – 23rd November 1992)

In the next few months (July–September of 1992), we witnessed the recovery and improvement of my father’s health to a considerable extent and by early October of 1992, he was fit enough to travel across US and spend time with my siblings and relatives in other cities of USA. This was indeed a remarkable turnaround to witness over a four month period.

Immediately following this major surgery, as is the customary ritual in USA, the patients and their families started receiving bills and invoices for medical expenses from a multitude of attending clinicians, support staff, hospitals and testing laboratories. Although I gained immense relief and joy at my father’s surgery going smoothly and his excellent recovery, I had to now face the next set of challenges in having to deal with the mounting paperwork and deadlines of medical bills and payments. At this stage also, I was sceptical if Swami’s improbable sounding dream assurance on taking care of insurance was valid, whether the insurance company would really pay as promised, if “Mr. Mohammed’s fax” was genuine and so on! My doubts were based on the



experiences many have had in dealing with the health insurance industry. As a trial, I began to forward the first set of bills and to my surprise, they got paid promptly. By the end of October 1992, all the clinicians and support staff were paid and only the hospital stay costs were now remaining. The insurance company asked me to request the hospital to forward the patient file to them for paying the hospital costs. I was often asking the hospital to send it over so I could wrap up this saga. After nearly three months of procrastination, I was told by the hospital of the following: they could not trace the file of my father; therefore, they were totally waiving all his hospitalisation costs, and neither the insurance company nor I would be liable for any costs incurred. I was once again stunned at this turn of events; so, I requested them to send this information in writing. I received the following letter on Swami's 67th Birthday, dated 23rd November 1992, from the hospital: "Due to internal hospital problems, we are unable to submit insurance carrier prior documentation required by your father, to them paying his hospital bill. Because of this problem, we will not hold your father responsible for the balance of \$XXXX".

I could not believe my eyes or ears at this stage. Here is a modern-day hospital with state-of-the-art computers and documentation systems, my father undergoes a major surgery involving three top-notch surgeons (two urologists and one rectal surgeon), he is hospitalised post-surgery for about two weeks, undergoes a huge number of daily tests and procedures and his entire medical file is missing now! Only then on 23rd November 1992 did it strike me that about five months earlier, when the whole surgery drama started to

unfold, Swami had appeared in my dream and said in the clearest manner: "You proceed with the surgery, I will take care of the insurance". How those so improbable sounding words of Swami of June 1992 came to be so true on His Birthday on 23rd November 1992, all in less than six months of high intensity drama scripted across the fields of surgery, science, healing and even insurance!

My father returned to India in March 1993 following the surgery. He lived in perfectly good health for a period of 18 years thereafter and passed away in 2010. Swami's involvement in his end was also very evident – he passed away on 22nd November 2010, just a day prior to Swami's 85th Birthday, on the most auspicious Karthika Somavar (Monday), in total ease and with absolutely no suffering.

This incident had a huge impact on me as a youngster journeying through life with scientific training and not quite accustomed to easily accepting anything outside the domains of reason, logic, facts and data. It taught me in a powerful way that there was more to life than the mere external world based on sensory experiences and that there was an "unseen" hand of God which was all-important. Upon reflection after many years, I am left with a feeling of deep gratitude to Swami for taking care of our family in this episode and through many others with such indescribable love, affection and care! Through this incident, Swami revealed to us that He is the greatest "Event Manager" and when He takes charge, it is the "Complete Package", from beginning to end.

– A scientist by profession, the author is a Professor, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, U.S.A.



Effulgence of Divine Glory

SWAMI'S MEDICAL TREATMENT

THE HILL VIEW STADIUM WAS readied in the year 1976. Swami was organising Narayana Seva as a mega event during Dasara that year. Lines would be marked on the ground with white flour. Seva Dal would seat 100 beneficiaries in each line, keeping males and females in separate rows. Soon after they settled, sweet Pongal and Sambar - rice would be served. After this, clothes would be distributed – Dhotis for males and Saris for females. Swami Himself would initiate the Narayana Seva with His Divine hands. Thus, about ten thousand persons were served.

On that occasion, Sambar - rice fell short of the need. Sri Kutumba Rao was instructed to arrange rushing up additional quantity of Sambar - rice in a tractor. The supply was somewhat delayed. Then Swami instructed me to go and hasten up the process. When I reached the canteen, it was found that the huge aluminium vessel containing very hot Sambar slipped while being lifted on to the tractor – and one-fourth of the hot liquid spilled on Sri Kutumba Rao who was helping to lift the vessel. His skin, from the thighs up to the chest was badly singed and blistered. He was immediately sent to hospital; the remaining material in the vessel was sent to the Narayana Seva ground, without any further delay.

I called on Sri Kutumba Rao at his residence at 3 p.m. His wife requested me to convey to Swami, “Cream was applied on



the parts that were burnt and bandaged. He was given sleeping pills, but he is moaning with pain”. At that, I was only wondering that the question of informing Swami arose only if He was not aware of it, and also how to convey to Swami the news at that instant. Further, it appeared that those who were with the tractor already informed Swami and that Swami stayed there till the Sambar - rice mix was prepared, asked it to be served and then left the scene.

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Sathsang with People of God and Refuge in God

Jagat N. Prasad

I WAS BORN IN MUMBAI AND brought up in Hyderabad; I spent my academic years in Hyderabad, and it was in college that I picked up the vice of smoking cigarettes. I settled in Mumbai from 1996 onwards and started involving myself in the activities of the Sai Organisation since my extended family with whom I lived, was into it. I saw myself being dragged into it very deep at a fast pace. Having said this, I was still a smoker and had also picked up the liking for drinking alcohol. Even amidst organisational activities, I used to find a corner and have a quick smoke. We used to be a group of youngsters all well qualified, always moving around in the Samithi and the bigger organisation in whites.

My First Darshan of Swami

In July 1997, my entire group went to Puttaparthi for the First World Youth Conference. We reached a couple of days before the conference started. One day, my Sai brothers and I went to this “tea kottu” (tea shop under a thatched roof) opposite to Prasanthi Nilayam just before going for Darshan for a quick cup of tea and me additionally for a smoke. As I smoked, I could see that my Sai brothers were feeling embarrassed and perhaps even ashamed of having me with them. We were all dressed in pristine white as is required by the rules and were standing right opposite the Mandir. My Sai brothers did try to persuade me to quit smoking. I kept telling myself, ‘yes, yes, I will’



but did not have even a bit of determination to quit. That day, we got token no.1 for the Darshan line and sat in the first row in the Mandir. The excitement to see our God was mounting; the one whom we kept talking about everyday in Mumbai, whose name we kept using during our group work, whom we kept calling during our Bhajans and also whom we kept blaming for putting us through troubles!

After a long wait, the music started playing and the beautiful divine moment arrived when Swami started walking from His Poornachandra residence to Sai Kulwant Hall. After showing His beautiful form on the other side, He walked towards us and my heart started beating faster in anticipation of speaking to Him or that He might call us for

an interview. A few moments later, He came and stood right in front of me. I had my first and one of the best Padanamaskars, such soft feet just like rose petals. Swami stood there for about half a minute or more. I felt a silence within me. I loved those moments of looking at my dear Lord in the shining orange robe. It is after that first Darshan that I have never felt the urge to smoke again! Swami's love gave me the will power and I have never looked back.

Opportunity to Sing in Swami's Presence

In 1997, when I was one day practising Bhajans with my cousin, who is a Bal Vikas student and has had many opportunities to be in the physical presence of Baba, mentioned to me, "Jagat, you better stop singing since you are so flat with no Bhava (feeling)". It was not that she told this to an accomplished singer but to a novice. So, I decided from that day that I will stop singing as a lead singer. But I continued to put efforts to sing in chorus to please Swami who is Om Sri Sai Sulabha Prasannaya Namah (I offer salutations to Sai who is easily pleased).

A few months passed like this. Occasionally, I would get a chance to lead Bhajans in the Samithi. On Sivarathri that year, I had been to Dharmakshetra. While going, I had this clearly in my mind that I would sit behind. But having learnt Mridangam for 5 to 7 years in childhood I got a fancy of playing tambourine. It was midnight when my Bhajan Guru Suresh Mavinkurve uncle called me and asked, "Which Bhajan are you going to sing"? I smilingly said, "Uncle, I will only give chorus". Then he said, "Nothing doing, you are going to sing". Now I was both confused and thrilled. To sing in Mandir (Dharmakshetra)

was a great fortune coming my way. I did not know what to do, but said 'yes' to uncle. When my turn came, I sang one Bhajan with a lot of fear, praying to Swami all the time. After this, I said to myself with a sigh, "Now that I have crossed the bridge, let me go and sit behind and be at peace". The moment I started to get up, Suresh uncle said, "Arrey! where are you going? Sit here itself". After another half an hour, he asked me to sing one more Bhajan. I said to myself, what is happening! Is it raining Bhajans on me? So, I sang a second time. I thought it was pure luck. But it did not stop at that, I was given one more chance that night. It was amazing on one side, but confusing on the other.

Now, very little did I know about Swami's plan. But I started involving in regular practices and became an integral part of the Samithi Bhajans as a participant. Then in 1999, the biggest news of my life came that Swami was expected in Mumbai in the month of May and everyone in the city started preparing for His arrival. Now Narayan Swami uncle and Suresh uncle started calling people for Bhajan practice. I was also called and started attending Bhajans in different locations. It was an amazing experience even to be a part of this. I thought at least I will get a place in the chorus in the front, have Swami's Darshan and give a letter. Just before a day or two before Swami's arrival we were told where we had all to come, in terms of venues apart from Dharmakshetra. As the day came closer I started feeling anxious to see Swami. On the last practice day, it was decided that Shailesh Nayampally and I would be singing in lead during Darshan in Dharmakshetra and Goregaon. Now my happiness knew no bounds, but at the same time, pressure of performance was very



high. Finally, the blessed day came when in the morning Darshan, Swami came and I had a chance to sing Bhajan in His Divine Presence. The Bhajan was “Om Namah Sivaya Sivaya Namah Om”. A Sai brother from Chembur was on the harmonium. As soon as the ladies side finished, we heard the Sruthi and started. Unfortunately, I started on a higher note instead of black 2 and immediately I knew it was higher. I prayed to Swami that even if it was my last Bhajan of life and even if I lose my voice, I will sing with full capacity. Then what I saw was Swami came and stood right in front of me while the Bhajan kept going and people gave chorus. There was a lot of positivity because of the Divine Darshan and devotees were lost in the Bhajan, I could hear my Sai brother trying to catch up the Sruthi off and on with me, but I continued. Even after 80% of the Bhajan, I could see Swami standing right there in front of me and only at the end of it He moved from there. That’s how Swami gave Bhajan singing experience to me and He chose to give me many more chances in Mumbai and in Prasanthi Mandir ... I loved it, but it is like way Sachin says that every match is like a first match. For me, every time I sing a Bhajan is like that first experience involving a lot of preparation and

anxiety. However, Swami has continued to inspire me and has transformed my life from then till now in many ways.

Swami is my only Refuge

One more short encounter with God. One day in January 2014, when my company decided to shut show in India, I knew I was going to be jobless. But I told myself that I would focus on Sai Organisation activities completely, thanks to all my Sai brothers and sisters, especially Mohanraj and Srin. So, that Thursday after the Bhajan at Khatwari Darbar in Khar West, Mumbai, I came home happily feeling satisfied and fulfilled. After entering my house, I went into my room to quickly change as I was sweating because of participation in singing and playing tambourine. At that time, I started singing a cinema song. The song goes like this – “Jiska Koi Nahin Uska Toh Khuda Hai Yaro ...” (God is the refuge of one who has none else). As I sang “Jiska Koi Nahin Uska Toh”, a photo of Swami came rolling down from the shelf on my left side. Instantly, tears started rolling down my cheeks, with heart filled with assurance that He is with me during my tough times as always ...

– The author is an ardent devotee of Swami and a Bhajan singer from Mumbai.

...continued from page 24

Swami called for Sri Kutumba Rao at six in the evening. He went to Swami, unmindful of suffering with pain. Swami said, “Sohan Lal has arrived from Delhi along with six friends. You go to their rooms and deliver these guest badges”. Sri Kutumba Rao executed the orders of ‘Sai Rama’, in spite of all the pain he was undergoing. The doctor told in the night that the patient would be admitted in the hospital next morning and given the necessary treatment. It was learnt

that Sri Kutumba Rao was groaning with pain till midnight. Early next morning, his wife removed the bandages to facilitate his attending to the morning chores. But there was no sign of burning or blisters anywhere on his body! He took his bath and attended to his usual Puja schedule just as on every other day. That was the style of Swami’s medical treatment.

– From “Nectar of Love” by Sri B.V. Ramana Rao.



DR. T. JAGANNADHA PAWAN

GOD LISTENS

IT WAS THE ANNUAL CONVOCATION of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in the year 1997. I was a student of my first year undergraduate programme at Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami was presenting gold medals to students who topped in academics. I too longed for that golden opportunity of getting a prize from Swami and a photograph with Him. Years passed, time rolled by, and I felt that my desire of getting a prize from Swami would remain just that, a desire.

I had little sense of how Swami listens and fulfils the wishes of our hearts in His own unique way. In the final year of my studies, Prasanthi Nilayam was once again brimming with the excitement of sports activities when the Annual Sports and Cultural festivities began. Like every year, sports and games virtually turned Sri Sathya Sai Hostel and its sports facilities into a mini-Olympic stadium. While most students were involved in some event or the other, I was selected to be the vice-captain of one of the two postgraduate basketball teams. When the 'best of three' basketball match series started, I had to be the acting captain of my team as the captain of my team was injured during the trial sessions. We won the first match although the other team appeared much stronger. In the second match, luck seemed to favour the other team. They were leading by one point when the match was about to get over in thirty seconds. Almost miraculously, one of my team members made a basket at this

stage of the game giving two points to our team. We won this thrilling match as well as the series.

Prasanthi Nilayam witnessed an exuberant celebration of sports on the Annual Sports and Cultural Meet day of the Institute on 11th January that etched wonderful memories in our hearts. This festival of sports culminated with the prize distribution ceremony on 14th January. Like every student of the final year postgraduate class, I did not want to believe that this was going to be the last prize distribution ceremony that we would witness as students of the Institute. On the day before the prize distribution ceremony, there were some signs that, after a gap of almost three or four years, Swami might give shields to winning captains of team events this time. The long cherished desire of getting a prize from Swami once again flashed in my mind. Later that night, it was almost confirmed that Swami was going to give shields to winning captains of team events. The hostel bloomed with excitement.

The prize distribution ceremony began early morning in Sai Kulwant Hall. The winners were called onto the stage one after another to get their prizes from Bhagavan. As soon as I heard 'Postgraduate Basketball Winners' announced on the mike, I leapt from my place and went onto the stage. As I knelt next to Swami, He smiled and gave the shield. Cameras clicked photographs. My heart was flooded with joy and gratitude. I returned to my seat soaked in His love. I never imagined that I would get a shield from Bhagavan's hands as the winning captain of basketball! He did all this to fulfil that wish I had in my heart long back to get a prize from Him. Bhagavan indeed listens



to our hearts and most lovingly responds in His own unique divine manner.

Swami gave me several experiences of His omnipresence after completing my studies at Prasanthi Nilayam. Purely by His infinite grace and blessings, I went to Germany to pursue my doctoral studies. On one particular evening during the first week of my stay there, I was greatly missing the wonderful food of my mother. A shopkeeper whom I met that day for the first time insisted that I come to his house that same evening for an Indian dinner. I felt that this was Swami playing through one of His myriad forms, showing that He is with us every moment, caring, comforting and listening! On a different day, when I was thinking about Swami's assurance that He would always be with us, a former student who was my classmate at Prasanthi Nilayam called me up from America and told me that he could feel Swami's omnipresence and see Him define the course of his life. Swami's promise to be with us wherever we are and the experience of His unseen hand at work fills us with infinite hope, strength and courage. The subtlety and grandeur of these incidents that are not mere coincidences but Sai's reassurances are miracles that we experience in everyday life. They provide us immense succour to march on with faith that Swami is always with us.

Does God have time for me? I pondered over this question at the beginning of my studies at Prasanthi Nilayam. While I mistakenly opined then that He was too busy



for me, the incidents of my life reaffirmed to me that He is willing to give all His time for each one of us, that He listens and fulfils every small wish of our hearts in His own unique way. 'Do we have time to listen to Him and follow His teachings?' is probably a more pertinent question. I pray to our most Beloved Swami to bless us with immense faith in His love for us. I pray to Him to shape each of us into a Prasanthi Nilayam so that He resides in our hearts forever.

– The author joined Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning in 1997 and graduated with B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc. in 2002.

My glory is spread daily through those who call themselves My Bhaktas. Your virtue, your self-control, your detachment, your faith and your steadfastness are the signs by which people come to know My glory.

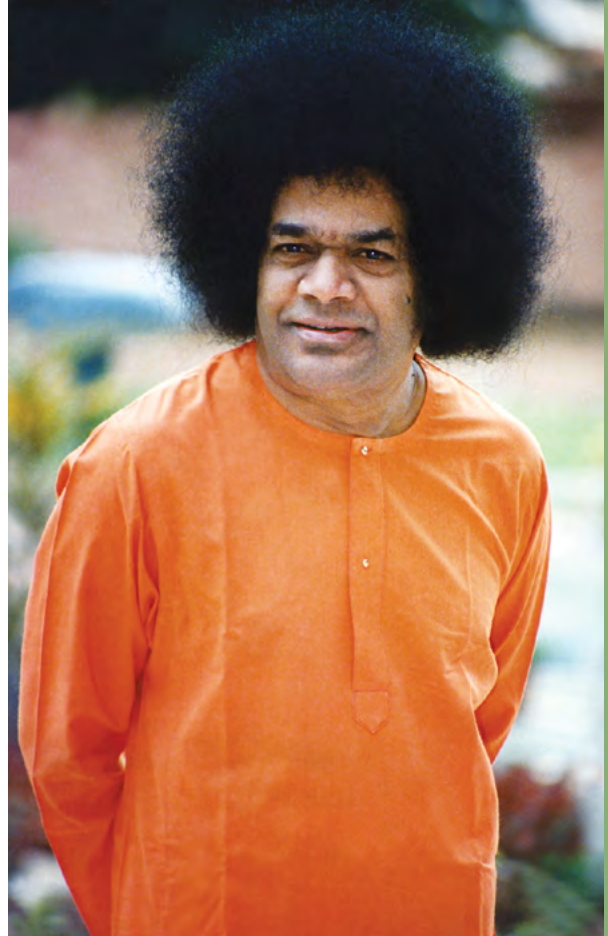
– Baba



The Shortest Path to God

A DEVOTEE, WHO WAS STAYING in America and came to India on vacation, thought of visiting great people and spend time in a sacred manner, instead of wasting in other avocations. He wanted to listen to preaching of wise men. Air ticket was not available, and so he travelled by train to Kasi (Benaras). One Sannyasin, whose face was bright with an aura of divinity, was sitting in front of him in the compartment. He felt strong urge to talk to him and so accosted him, "May I ask you a question, sir"? The Sannyasin consented. "Can you show me the shortest path to God"?

The Sannyasin replied, "Get down in the village called Ramapuram. Engage the auto rickshaw known as 'Faith'. Get down in the colony called 'Devotion'. You will come across a dead end known as 'Karma'. You will find red light known as 'Evil Deed'. Proceed when the green light of 'Good Deed' glows. Turn to right as you find a sign board of 'Bhajan Mandali'. There you will find four paths. You will come across 'Jealousy, Vengeance, Anger'. Leave aside and enter the fourth lane known as 'Satsang' (good company). Don't make the mistake of trespassing into the bylane called 'Rumours'. It is a one way lane. Walk a little further and you meet a junction. Left of it is the road known as 'Passion'. On the right is 'Detachment'. The traffic on the 'Passion' is heavy. Go on to the 'Detachment'. You will find ahead the circle of 'Kaivalyam'. Look for the signboard 'Heart of Compassion is



God's Temple'. Follow the direction; walk on the 'Path of Knowledge'. There you will find a white coloured hermitage known as 'Abode of Atma'. As you go near, the gate of 'Mutki' opens automatically. God whose name is Sai Natha will be waiting for your arrival in it. This is the only path I know of. I had the good fortune of reaching there, and hence I am suggesting this to you".

— **Source:** "Swami..." by **Gita Paramahansa.**



NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

BOTSWANA

THE SATHYA SAI CLINIC IN Botswana has served the community of Gaborone for 11 years. On 23rd April 2017, the clinic launched a public outreach programme. About 200 people, including government officials,



Minister of Tertiary Education and other dignitaries in Sathya Sai Clinic, Botswana.

dignitaries, doctors, pharmacists, opticians, patients of the clinic, and members of the SSIO participated in the event, made festive by colourful banners. The Minister of Tertiary Education was the keynote speaker and Sri Ramachandran Otthpath, CEO of Choppies Group, was the Chief Guest. The Sathya Sai Clinic also inaugurated a new laboratory, with the donation of a haematology machine by Sri Otthpath. Demonstrating the work of the clinic, 120 patients were then registered, their vital statistics recorded, and given services by five doctors, two pharmacists and two opticians. The Chief Guest, the Minister and other dignitaries toured the clinic and commended the Sathya Sai volunteers. The event received press coverage by Botswana Television, Radio Botswana, the *Botswana Daily News* and the *Botswana Guardian* news publications.

Botswana Television aired interviews with patients, who appreciated the services received at the clinic.

CANADA

Fifteen years ago, teachers, parents and students of the Sathya Sai School of Toronto organised the first Walk for Values in Canada. The participants pledged to practise a human value and walked through a low-income community to share Sathya Sai Baba's message of human values. This year,



Human Values Day, 24th April in Canada.

90 cities and municipalities across Canada and the provinces of Manitoba, Alberta and British Colombia have adopted Human Values Day to encourage the practice of human values, and the Walk for Values has expanded into a worldwide movement. On 24th April 2017, 95 members of the SSIO of Canada, along with members of the public and government officials, celebrated the global inauguration of 24th April as World Human Values Day, at the prestigious Parliament Hill in Canada's capital city,



Ottawa. The event kicked off with Sathya Sai students singing the bilingual Canadian National Anthem, followed by a rendering of the universal prayer of the Sathya Sai School. Several government officials and dignitaries spoke about the benefits of raising awareness of human values to resolve conflicts in society and to mitigate environmental crises around the world today. A letter from Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, was read aloud, and the Human Values Day Proclamation was presented to the SSIO of Canada by Jim Watson, Mayor of Ottawa. The SSIO donated 150 T-shirts to the Shepherds of Good Hope, the largest non-profit organisation serving and caring for the homeless in Ottawa, in honour of Canada's 150 years of confederation.

ECUADOR

The SSIO of Ecuador observed Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsava (offering of love to Sathya Sai) on 24th April 2017, with devotional and service activities in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Sathya Sai members rendered service at the López Bermejo children's shelter in Guayaquil, an institution dedicated to caring for needy family members of patients undergoing cancer treatment at a local hospital. Sathya Sai devotees served food and distributed personal hygiene items to the hungry and homeless visitors at the shelter. With the help of the facility staff, the volunteers organised several children's activities, such as painting, music, and devotional prayers. The SSIO resolved to continue this project to serve the shelter residents.

AUSTRALIA

On Earth Day, 22nd April 2017, young adults of the SSIO hosted a Nature Walk and outdoor session at Parramatta Lake, Sydney, focusing on the reduction of plastic



Young adults decorating their canvas bags on Earth Day in Australia.

waste and plastic use. They conducted a study circle on identifying plastic usage and practical methods to reduce or eliminate it. Participants pledged to use reusable items such as drink bottles and bags instead of disposable or single-use plastic goods. Each person received a canvas bag to decorate with a personal expression about the environment. Participants also walked around the lake to appreciate its natural beauty and reflect on Sathya Sai Baba's teachings on Nature.

SINGAPORE

Forty-five students from the Sathya Sai Kindergarten in Singapore, assisted by eight teachers and volunteers, served seniors at the Chinatown Senior Activity Centre on 24th



Service to senior citizens in Singapore.

April 2017. The elderly residents eagerly look forward to the children's entertaining visit each year. After a cultural performance, the children distributed lunch boxes with paper fans they had made, to each of the 70 senior citizens.

MALAYSIA

In April 2017, many of the 85 Sathya Sai Centres and Bhajan units in Malaysia served food to the needy, with each unit offering meals to 100-500 homeless



Providing food items to the needy in Malaysia.

individuals in their respective communities. About 500 volunteers joyfully served an estimated 5,000 people in this country-wide coordinated service project, in honour of Baba's memory. SSIO members also contemplated on Sri Sathya Sai Baba's messages, putting them into practice for 40 days, from 22nd March to 30th April 2017.

THE PHILIPPINES

In commemoration of Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsava, on 23rd April 2017, Sathya Sai volunteers served macaroni, bread, bananas and juice to 300 adults and children at the Casa del Niño Science High School, Pacita Complex, in San Pedro, Laguna. In addition, volunteers distributed



Distribution of food items to needy families in Philippines.

household groceries to 350 families and clothing to adults and children. On the same day, Sathya Sai young adults organised a programme for sharing their experiences on offering service. They discussed what motivated them to serve, how they placed a ceiling on desires, and what they had learnt from service activities. On 30th April, the young adults held a second event on the same topics.

THE NETHERLANDS

More than 40 Sathya Sai volunteers, organised in groups, rendered selfless



Sathya Sai volunteers serving the needy, the Netherlands.

service from 20th to 24th April 2017 in the Netherlands in honour of Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsava. One team helped elderly or disabled people with their gardening, embellishing 13 gardens with flowering plants. Another group of Sathya Sai members visited lonely and abandoned people to bring them love and cheer. Another volunteer team escorted 15 wheelchair-bound residents of a retirement home to a park for an outing. In another instance, SSIO members cooked dinner for the homeless at a shelter, while others engaged in a game of bingo, at the request of a group of elderly people living near their Sathya Sai Centre. Some volunteers took families with children, living in a homeless shelter, to a petting farm, to lift their spirits. In another community, children participated in arts and crafts activities, based on human values. Members of the Sathya Sai Centre of Rotterdam invited elderly guests to attend a Bhajan session and served them dinner.

SRI LANKA

During the last week of May 2017, Cyclone Mora swept over Sri Lanka, with heavy rainfall and high-speed winds, causing flooding and landslides, and resulting in 177 casualties and 112 missing persons. Residents of Colombo, Kalutara, Gampaha, Matara, Galle, Hambantota, Kegalle and Ratnapura districts were affected by the disaster. The SSIO of Sri Lanka immediately offered humanitarian relief and distributed 1,000 breakfast packets, 600 lunch packets, 5,000 litres of bottled water, and dry rations through the Sathya Sai Centre in Colombo. Disaster relief supplies were sent to Sri Lankan Air Force base in Ratmalana, to be airlifted and distributed, since the most

affected areas remained accessible only by air. In addition, members of the SSIO delivered dry ration packages and 90 cooked food parcels to 35 families affected by the floods in Gemunupura, a village adopted under Sri Sathya Sai Village Improvement Programme.

PARAGUAY

On 11th June 2017, SSIO members of Paraguay delivered warm clothing and footwear to more than 500 families from Villa Florida, who were severely affected by flooding of the Tebicuary River and in dire need of help. Clothing including coats and shoes were distributed to 300 people in the San Francisco neighbourhood, 250 people



Flood relief material to flood-affected people, Paraguay.

in the Rosa Mística neighbourhood, and 200 children living on the streets. The residents of a home received clothes, blankets and shoes. Members also distributed packets containing blankets, trousers and socks to 500 families, providing T-shirts and sports shoes to about 1,000 children from these families.

– **Sathya Sai International Organisation**



Vedas are Universal, Let Us Preserve, Propagate,
Proliferate to Protect the Planet

1ST INTERNATIONAL VEDA CONFERENCE

TO BE HELD AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM ON NOV. 20-21, 2017

*Chant Rudram and make your life bhadram (safe);
why, let it become a Bhadrachalam,
an unshakeable Mountain of Safety*
- BABA

On 20th November 2017 there will be mass recitation of Rudram and Mantra Pushpam by the chanters comprising Bal Vikas Children, Youth, Adults, Ladies from all around the world apart from India.

Visit our website www.ssssoindia.org for registration.
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in such a unique Mahayajna to foster Vedas...



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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 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 Bhagavan 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.
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Devotional music presentation by Sri Abhiram Unni.



Devotional music concert by Mahalakshmi sisters.



Devotional music presentation by Telangana devotees.

Date of Publication: 1st October 2017

Materialisation, Vibration, Radiation

The mind is a white paper on which is recorded the life-records of several births of ours. It is called the Chitta. He who is hidden in this and does the recording is called Chitrugupta – the hidden recorder. This power is also called the Prajna Shakti – the radiation. This radiation vibrates the life force (vibration) that helps this body (materialisation) to be alive and functioning.

– *Baba*

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