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"God will test His devotees in several ways. All these tests are the steps which lead him to a higher level. A true devotee leads a sacred life, demonstrating the sanctity of his conduct and depth of his faith. He will march ahead unmindful of all the troubles, difficulties and problems, and achieve the objective of his life."

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AVATAR VANI

EARN GOD'S GRACE THROUGH PRAYER

What can the evil effects of Kali Age do to a man whose heart is full of compassion, whose speech is suffused with truth and whose body is dedicated to the service of others?

(Sanskrit Verse)

OBSERVE EQUANIMITY IN PLEASURE AND PAIN

Embodiments of Love!

HOWEVER MUCH YOU MAY grind sandalwood, it will give only fragrance, nothing else.

Similarly, you may crush sugarcane as hard as you can, it will give only sweet juice. When the gold is put on fire, it shines with added brilliance.

Similarly, a true devotee may face all problems, difficulties, blames and troubles, yet

he will never leave God. He will follow God with total surrender. God will test His devotees in several ways. All these tests are the steps which lead him to a higher level. A true devotee leads a sacred life, demonstrating the sanctity of his conduct and depth of



his faith. He will march ahead unmindful of all the troubles, difficulties and problems, and achieve the objective of his life.

Spark of Divinity is Present in all Beings

The body has been gifted to man to sanctify time. Time is the very form of God. In the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna says, *Ahameva Akshayah Kalaha* (I am that infinite time). Time is infinite. Time has no measure. Man experiences this limitless time in his life by dividing it into hours, days, months and years. He

carries out his daily activities in the world because of this division of time and derives happiness in a limited way. But God is the master of time. He manifests in man as a spark of Divinity. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavadgita: *Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). Man has to perform Sadhana to experience this divinity within him. Even if a mirror is clean, it will not show your reflection if its back does not have the mercury coating. Similarly, your heart will not show the reflection of God in it if it does not have the coating of love on it.

There are infinite waves in the fathomless ocean. No two waves look alike in shape and form. But there is no difference in the water of the waves; it is the same water which is uniformly present in all of them. Similarly, there are infinite number of beings, with different names and forms in the world. But the spark of Divinity present in the form of Satchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute) in all of them is the same. Thus, every being is the embodiment of Satchidananda. When we treasure such sacred feelings within us, low and petty thoughts will not enter our mind.

Materialisation, Vibration and Radiation

God manifests in man in three forms: Bhur, Bhuvaha, Suvaha. Bhur means Padartha (material world) or human body. Bhuvaha refers to Prana Shakti (vibrating power) or life principle. Suvaha means Prajna Shakti (power of radiation) or divine principle. It is only this radiation which makes this material body move and work through vibration. God manifests in

There is water in the tumbler before Me. Without the tumbler, water cannot be kept. The tumbler is the basis for the water which is needed to quench the thirst. So also the body is the vessel which contains the water of divinity. Sadhana (spiritual practice) is required to drink this water. Thus, the thirst for realising Divinity can be quenched through Sadhana.

every being as radiation, vibration and materialisation.

The body is composed of matter. It is a combination of water, lime, iron, lead, phosphorus, etc. The body is inert. It functions through vibration of Prana Shakti. But it is the Prajna Shakti that causes vibration. The leaves of a tree do not move by themselves. They are moved by the pressure of the wind. Similarly, it is the power of radiation of Prajna Shakti which vibrates the life force in the body. This Prajna Shakti is conscience which occupies a special place in the body. God in the form of conscience activates the body. When man understands this truth of spirituality, he will never indulge in bad deeds.

The nature of the mind is very peculiar. It has no qualities of its own. Here is a newspaper. The newspaper has no special qualities. It has no smell of its own. When you wrap jasmine flowers in it, it will get the fragrance of jasmine flowers. The newspaper, which is without any smell before, will acquire the smell of Pakodas (a fried snack), if you wrap

Pakodas in it. Similarly, if you pack dry fish in it, the paper will also have the smell of dry fish. The paper has no separate smell of its own; it will acquire the smell of the item associated with it. Likewise, human mind, which is pure and sacred by nature, becomes impure and unsacred due to body consciousness and material attachments. When you think of a material object, it will assume the form of that object. If you turn the mind towards the world, it binds you to the world. But if you turn the mind towards the life principle (vibration), it will make your life sacred. When the same mind is diverted towards Prajna (radiation), which is Brahman, you become Brahman. It is the mind of man which is responsible for his bondage as well as liberation.

For everything, body is the basis. The body is the basis for the three Gunas (qualities) – Sattwa, Rajas, Tamas. The body is the basis for all the three worlds. In other words, all the three worlds, Bhur, Bhuvaha, Suvaha are present in the body. The Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara is present in the body. Everything being within man, he searches for God outside. This is ignorance. He himself is God; God is not separate from him. When he makes his nature pure and unsullied, then only will his divinity become manifest.

Realise Divinity through Sadhana

Embodiment of Love!

When you enquire deeply, you will understand that the entire universe is pervaded by God. *Viswam Vishnu Swarupam* (the entire universe is the embodiment of Lord Vishnu). The human body is limited. It is bound by time and space. Man is bound by action. Everyone has the responsibility to perform his duty.

Therefore, man should put the body to proper use and perform righteous actions. But man indulges in mundane pleasures and wastes his life. Instead, he should realise the effulgent Divinity that is within him. This world is bound to decay; it is temporary and untrue. Therefore, man should develop devotion to God who is eternal and true. This only can lead him to the path of Self-realisation.

The first requisite for Self-realisation is self-confidence. For all the troubles of man in this world, the main reason is the absence of self-confidence. So, man should have self-confidence first. Self-confidence confers self-satisfaction, and self-satisfaction leads to self-sacrifice. It is only through self-sacrifice that man attains Self-realisation. For this mansion of life, self-confidence is the foundation and self-satisfaction are the walls. On the walls only can we lay the roof of self-sacrifice. When there is roof on the walls, we can live inside happily. That is Self-realisation. These are steps to liberation: self-confidence, self-satisfaction, self-sacrifice and Self-realisation.

Everything is based on the Atma and everybody is Atma Swarupa (embodiment of the Self). The body is not the Self. The Self is beyond the body. Selfless self is the real Self. So, we should get rid of body identification. The body is just an instrument. There is water in the tumbler before Me. Without the tumbler, water cannot be kept. The tumbler is the basis for the water which is needed to quench the thirst. So also the body is the vessel which contains the water of divinity. Sadhana (spiritual practice) is required to drink this water. Thus, the thirst for realising Divinity can be quenched through Sadhana.



Earn God's Grace to Attain Eternal Bliss

There are nine paths of devotion to God: *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender).

Listening to the glories of God purifies the heart. So, the first step to devotion is listening. But it is not enough if you listen; you should sing what you listen. Even singing is not enough; you should think of it in the heart. Mere thinking is also not sufficient; you have to serve with both the hands. Therefore, have good words, thoughts and actions. That is Trikarana Shuddhi (unity of thoughts, words and deeds). There should be harmony between the feelings in the heart, which are expressed in words, and the words which are put into practice by the hand. Human life is sanctified by the harmony of thoughts, words and deeds. This harmony also sanctifies time.

We call this day as New Year Day. In fact, there is nothing new in this day. It is as old as any other day. There have been many many years like this before. But we consider it a New Year every time when one year ends. However, some follow solar system, others follow lunar system based on the movements of the sun and the moon respectively. But in both of them, time is one. Today we are bidding farewell to the year by name Angirasa, and welcoming a new year named Srimukha. Sri is very sacred. In all the eight forms of Aishwaryas (wealth) of God, Sri is most important. Sri is the symbol of all

auspiciousness, everything that is good. Not only that, it signifies immortality. It is customary to prefix 'Sri' to the names of males and 'Srimati' to the names of females to denote that the Atma in them is immortal though their body is mortal. Even when God comes down on earth in the form of an Avatar, Sri is added to His name, such as Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, etc., to signify that they are immortal even though they assume the mortal human form.

This body is a den of dirt, and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara (worldliness). It is nothing but a structure of bones. Oh mind! Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet. (Telugu Poem)

Never consider the body as permanent. Surrender to the feet of the Lord. The body of all beings is temporary. God's body is also temporary. So, Sri is added to names of God when He assumes mortal human body. But Iswara does not have any form. He is the master of all forms of wealth. As He has got all forms of Aishwarya (wealth), He is called Iswara. He has no body. So, no one says, Sri Iswara. They only call, Iswara.

The name of this New Year is Srimukha. This name implies that it gives brilliance of bliss to all faces. But it may not be full of happiness as its name indicates. It will have a few problems. Pleasure and pain follow each other. Troubles do come in life. You never get pleasure out of pleasure. Out of pain only comes the pleasure. When you suffer now, it means you are going to be happy next. Pleasure and pain are like



light and shadow. For the shadow to exist, light should be there. Without light, there cannot be shadow. In shadow also there is light. So, we should observe equanimity in both pleasure and pain.

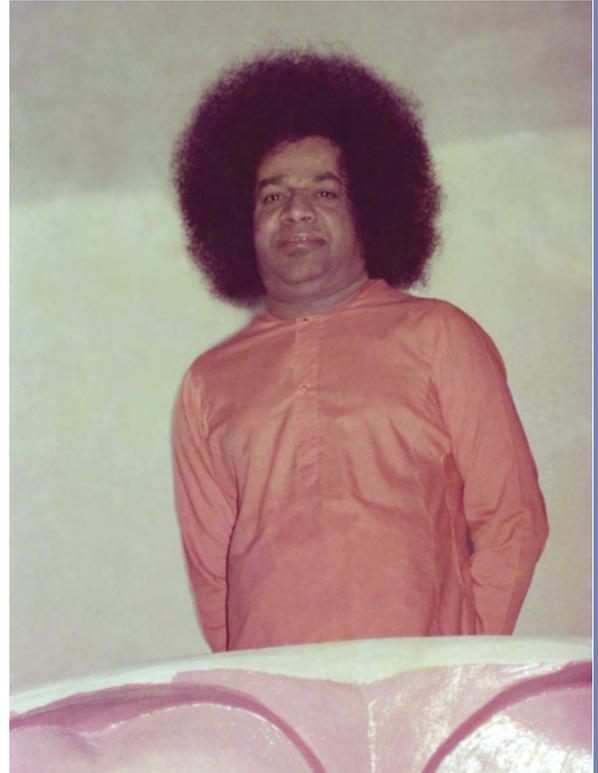
One who earns God's grace will be happy in all circumstances. But man today struggles for worldly happiness, worldly comforts and worldly possessions. He works continuously, makes all kinds of efforts to possess all that he does not

ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe).

Why should you search for God? If He is present only at one place, you need to search. But He has His feet all over, He has got ears everywhere, He installs Himself everywhere. Why should you search? It is mere ignorance to search for God.

The first requisite for Self-realisation is self-confidence. For all the troubles of man in this world, the main reason is the absence of self-confidence. So, man should have self-confidence first. Self-confidence confers self-satisfaction, and self-satisfaction leads to self-sacrifice. It is only through self-sacrifice that man attains Self-realisation.

deserve. But when he cannot fulfil all his desires, he gets disillusioned and disappointed. In this ocean of life, God is the only lighthouse of hope for man. This lighthouse is eternal and will never fail. It will always be there with great brilliance to illumine your path. So, you should engage yourself in godly activities. God is omnipresent. Therefore, you need not search for God. *Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Srutimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and



Real Bliss Lies in Sanctifying the Senses

All forms of God are in you. Bhur (materialisation - body), Bhuvaha, (vibration, Prana - life principle), Suvah, (Prajnanam, radiation - Atma) are in you. If you have such a feeling, you shall certainly attain divinity. Let us not wait for the New Year to realise this. We need not wait for new life, new education, new culture or new religion. We need men and women of



virtues who have pure and sacred hearts. It is possible to have a sacred heart only by chanting Lord's Name. Give no room to unsacred feelings in your heart. Lead pure and sacred life. Do not hurt anybody in any way. Sage Vyasa has written eighteen Puranas (mythological texts). You cannot go through all of them. He gave the essence of these eighteen texts only in two sentences: *Help Ever, Hurt Never*. Make your life sacred by putting this golden rule into practice.

Make proper use of the tongue. Speak only good words; never use harsh words. Talk sweetly and softly. This is the main quality of man. Jayadeva said:

Oh tongue, the knower of taste! You are very sacred. Speak the truth in the most pleasing manner. Chant the Divine Names of Govinda, Madhava and Damodara incessantly. This is your foremost duty. (Sanskrit Verse)

You have two eyes to see different things and two ears to hear, two hands to perform actions. But you have only one tongue to speak only the truth. You can manifest your divinity by speaking the truth. Truth is one, not two. Speak only truth, give no scope to untruth. If you utter falsehood, it means you have two tongues, not one. It is only a poisonous snake that has two tongues. You are not a snake. You are the embodiment of divinity. Speak truth and make your heart sacred and happy.

You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. The real beauty and bliss lies in sanctifying the senses. The ornament for the hand is charity. Truth is the real jewel for the neck. Listening to the glories of God is the real ornament for the ears. Never listen to unrighteous

words. You need not have a necklace for the neck. Speak truth; that is the real ornament. The jewels for the hand are not bangles; charity is the real jewel. Do not misuse your ears to hear worldly gossip. It is not the earrings which are real jewels for the ears, listening to good words is the real decoration. What other ornaments you need than these? That is the real jewellery. That is the only beauty. When you have that real beauty, you can attain bliss. Beauty and bliss are not separate. *Andame Anandamu* (beauty is bliss). Bliss is the life's nectar. Understand and experience the sweetness of bliss.

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

The New Year has commenced. From today onwards, listen only to good things, speak only good words and do only good actions. Through these things, we should have purity of heart. Make your life sacred by always thinking of God. If people adopt this sacred path, there will be peace and prosperity in the world. Swami blesses the entire gathering and concludes His Discourse. In the coming year, let all be happy, prosperous and peaceful. Pray to God with your sacred heart. Then only can you overcome all difficulties. No government, no army, no weapons can protect you from troubles and difficulties. There is only one protector. That is God. In order to seek protection from God, devotees should offer prayer. Through prayer only can you earn God's grace. So, pray wholeheartedly: *Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the beings of all the worlds be happy!).

– **Bhagavan's Discourse at Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 14th April 1993.**



From our Archives

PROMOTE LOVE IN YOUR HEART

PRACTICE IS THE TOUCHSTONE OF DEVOTION

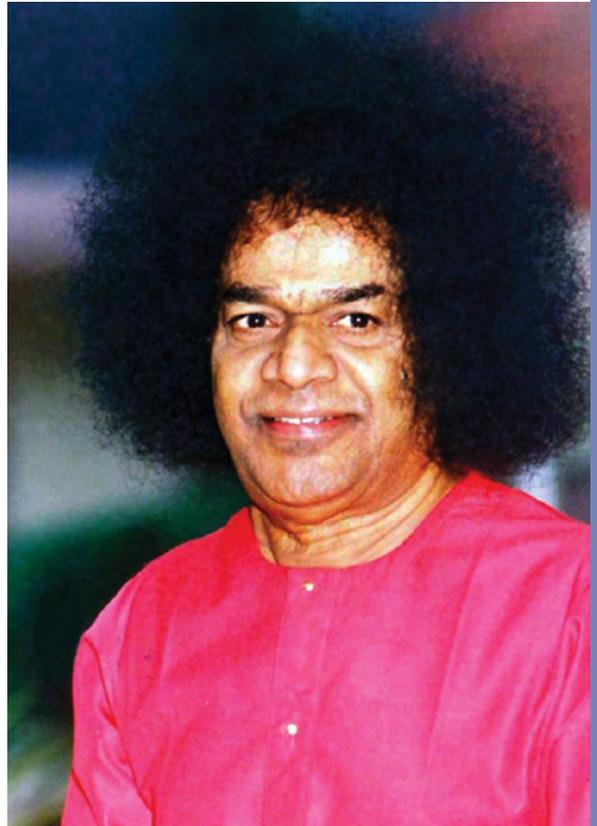
RAMA IS THE EMBODIMENT OF the three aspects of Time. He is the Lord of the three worlds and is the embodiment of the three Gunas. Hence, Rama is the indwelling spirit in every human being. To realise this truth, it is not necessary to be a great scholar or scientist. However great a scholar may be, if he has no eyes, he cannot see the world. However great a scientist may be, when he is fast asleep, he cannot see anything. But a man with open eyes even if he is no scholar or scientist can see the world when he is awake. The power of sight is not derived from scholarship or science but is a gift of the Divine. Moreover, scholarship does not enable a Pundit to understand his own true nature, though he can teach others. True scholarship consists in cultivating a pure heart.

Every person who has a purified heart experiences the Divine some time or the other. We have any number of examples of such realised souls. Valmiki was originally a highway robber. By the grace of sages, he became the author of the Ramayana. Nandanar experienced the Divine though he was an outcaste. Kuchela, steeped in poverty, secured the grace of the Lord. Gajendra, the Lord of the elephants, and Dhruva, a mere stripling, could get the grace of the Lord by their devotion. Sabari, an illiterate denizen of the forest, became a great devotee by the constant remembrance of Rama's name. Through her devotion, she could get the blissful experience of

welcoming Rama, Lakshmana and Sita in the forest.

Appeal of the Ramayana is Inexhaustible

There are in the world many such devotees who have achieved God-realisation without profound scholarship or



elaborate austerities. Hence, the Divine Rama Principle is not something to be remembered once a year but every moment of our life. Rama Navami falls in a period of the year when Nature puts on her new



vesture after shedding the old. Rama thus represents all that is beautiful in Nature.

The great devotees of Rama revelled in singing His glories. Such a moving and inspiring story as the epic of Rama cannot be found in any other country or language. Even after thousands of years, the story of Rama continues to be related in innumerable villages and cities.

Experience Rama in your Heart

In Bharat today there is no place where Rama's name is not chanted or Dana (charity) is not practised. Even in a tiny hamlet, there will be a small Rama temple. But these temples are not so very important. The temple in which Rama should be worshipped is your heart. God is Hridayavasi (dweller of the heart). You need not seek Rama anywhere else. Without going out anywhere, without incurring any expense, you can experience Rama in your heart and achieve liberation.

Today, on Sri Rama Navami Day, in spite of the good fortune of being born in the Rama Janmabhumi (sacred birth place of Rama) you are not recognising the Rama Principle. There is nothing great about celebrating the birthdays of great personages. You must put into practice the teachings of those great figures. What is the use of celebrating birthdays and ignoring the teachings? Practice is the touchstone of devotion.

Knowing the ephemeral nature of the body, people should follow the conscience and lead a godly life. That is true devotion to Rama. You should dedicate your body, mind and everything to God. God is the embodiment of love. You should promote love in your hearts. Turn your mind to God

before the end comes. It may come at any time.

Outgrow Body Consciousness

Valmiki prostrated before Rama and confessed, "I have done no penance or spiritual practices of any kind. By the constant chanting of Your name I have been blessed with this beautiful experience. In my youth, I had committed many atrocities and incurred many sins out of selfish motives. But, ultimately, chanting Your name, I forgot my body altogether. An anthill grew over me. But the name Rama came out of it".

That is what everyone should aim at. Outgrow body consciousness and merge in the Rama Principle. You must eschew all worldly attachments and fix your mind on God.

Make good use of the Sai who has come to you. Adore the feet of this Lord at Parthi.

Offer your devotion and achieve liberation. Do not go after all and sundry. Awake! Abandon your delusion.

(Telugu Poem)

Develop such divine feelings. Do not go after power and pelf. The people of Ayodhya concentrated on their duties. They considered duty as worship. When Rama was leaving for the forest, the people of Ayodhya were in deep distress. They did not want to stay in Ayodhya without Rama there. Every man, woman and child was in agony at that time. That was the intensity of their devotion to Rama. The same devotion should fill your hearts today.

Develop faith in Rama and cultivate love for Rama. Love and faith are most important.

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Sri Rama Navami Discourses.





SACHIN TENDULKAR AND HIS DIVINE MASTER

IT WAS 24TH APRIL 2011. AN IPL T-20 cricket match was scheduled on this day between Mumbai Indians and Deccan Chargers in the Rajiv Gandhi Cricket Stadium, Hyderabad. The stadium was packed to its capacity as it awaited the start of a clash between the home team, Deccan Chargers and a charismatic team which boasted of having the legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar as its captain. Adding to the excitement and anticipation of the crowd was the fact that it was also Sachin's birthday! A grand celebration, irrespective of the result of the match, was in order and a magnificent cake had been ordered to celebrate his birthday. Everyone was in a festive mood – everyone except Sachin himself.

When the Eternal Dissolved into Eternity

Sachin Tendulkar sat alone in his room with a 'Do Not Disturb' sign on the door. He did not care the least for his birthday. Actually, when it came to cricket, Sachin never gave anything else greater importance – least of all to his birthday. However, today seemed to be a day when his thoughts were on something that was bigger than cricket in his life! The master of cricket sat in contemplation of his Divine Master, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. News had just spread that Baba no longer occupied the physical frame which had been adored by millions across the globe. The eternal had dissolved into eternity and Sachin had no idea how to react to it. He had been simply devastated and he knew



that in future he would never have the slightest predisposition towards celebrating his birthday. How could he when his Beloved Lord had chosen to exit the world on that very same day?

Finally, it was time for the toss and Sachin did indeed walk out onto the cricket pitch. A huge roar of applause rent the air as the nearly 40,000-strong audience sighted their hero on his birthday. However, everyone could sense that he was not the same. He did play the match but politely declined any cake-cutting or birthday celebrations that day. Though he seemed to do everything in his routinely passionate manner, he was visibly poignant. Everyone knew that Sachin, for once, was unable to allow even cricket to take him over! As desired by him, the organisers of the match decided to switch off the music systems and also disband the girls' cheer squads from the venue as a mark of respect for Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It was also decided to observe a two-minute silence at 3.57 p.m. across the stadium.

This was all part of the efforts by the cricketers fraternity to empathise with him because of the great loss Sachin had suffered since Bhagavan Baba decided to end His sojourn on earth! As soon as the match was completed, Sachin and his wife Anjali were on their way to Bhagavan's abode in Puttaparthi.

What happened the next day was splashed across all the newspapers in India – a visibly shaken Sachin wept like a child at the physical loss of his Beloved Master. He did not speak even a word with anyone as he sat in silent communion with his Lord. Everyone wondered about this hitherto unknown part of the little master as he broke down, shedding profuse tears. It

would definitely require a book to write about everything between Sachin and Swami, but here we recapitulate a few moments which give a glimpse of that relationship.

The Beginnings of a Magical Connection

It was wayback in 1997 that the connection between Sachin and Bhagavan Baba was forged. The magical meeting and connection happened towards the end of 1997 when two ardent devotees of Bhagavan, Sunil Gavaskar and Alvin Kallicharan, requested Him to host an international cricket match in Puttaparthi. Swami granted their request and graciously chose the game of cricket to spread the message of Unity and Oneness. What seemed as a nearly impossible proposition indeed, happened on 30th December 1997 when the Indian XI led by Sachin Tendulkar took on the World XI led by Arjuna Ranatunga in Sri Sathya Sai Unity Cup Match. In the organising committee were E.A.S. Prasanna, Sunil Gavaskar, Alvin Kallicharan, Clive Lloyd and Zaheer Abbas while a galaxy of international stars participated.

It is said that God chooses the perfect time and perfect situation to enter a devotee's heart. On the day before the match, Sachin strode the Sai Kulwant Hall in a white T-shirt and blue jeans. He watched Swami, who wanted to ensure that the players were happy with the pitch. Sachin then rode next to the driver in Swami's car with Ranatunga, Swami and Gavaskar seated in the back. Sachin's heart became the home for Swami on that blessed day.

The match was organised in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium. Bhagavan came to the stadium led by students carrying flags of 86 countries. Sri I.K. Gujral, the then Prime Minister of India, hoisted Sri Sathya Sai



Unity Flag and Swami lit the Unity Torch. Among the guests of honour were Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Sri N. Chandrababu Naidu, Karnataka Chief Minister, Sri J.H. Patel and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Sri Lakshman Kadirgamar, with Bhagavan seated in the middle, watching the match throughout. During lunch break, a cultural programme was presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School. Sachin was the proud recipient of the Unity Cup after batting brilliantly and leading India XI to victory over the International XI by a big margin. It was a great moment for Sachin Tendulkar to receive the Unity Cup from Bhagavan's hands.

Shower of Divine Grace on Sachin

The greatest moment of Sachin's life came at the end of the match. As the function ended, Swami gently walked towards Sachin, put His hand on Sachin's shoulder



and took him for a stroll on the ground. Bhagavan was seen saying something to Sachin though no one could guess what the Divine Message was. The hand that soothed the shoulder of one of the greatest wielders of the willow and the words that

inspired him to rise to the pinnacle of glory were perhaps not for Sachin Tendulkar only. They were for India and the rising younger generation. What followed is now history inscribed in letters of gold. Bhagavan chose and blessed Sachin Tendulkar to spread joy and peace in the world through his genius.

Life is a Game, Play it!

When the Lord enters one's life, one attains both spiritual and worldly success in ample measure. And that is what happened in Sachin's career. The year 1998 proved to be the most successful year in Sachin's entire ODI career spanning nearly 24 years. That year alone he made 1894 runs with the help of 9 centuries, a world record to date. He also made it a point to visit Swami and have His Darshan whenever an opportunity presented itself. It was during one such visit to Swami's Ashram in Whitefield, Bengaluru, that he was blessed with an interview. After the interview, he spent a few minutes in the office of the then Warden of the Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. What he revealed there, during a short chat was simply amazing. He said, "Swami knows a lot about cricket. He told me something that will remain etched in my mind".

Naturally, the Warden's curiosity was aroused. Sachin revealed that Swami had told him that he was getting out unnecessarily because of his anger which led him to 'go after' a particular bowler. Swami advised him not to concentrate on the bowler but concentrate instead on the ball alone. That seemed like a whiff of fresh and fragrant air for Sachin and the world knows how meticulously he went about demolishing and demoralising opposition

teams around the world with much greater consistency and perseverance after that.

It seems Sachin learned more about the game of cricket and the game of life every time he visited Swami's Ashram. And he visited Him in times of plenty and times of need alike. When he was unable to visit Him, he carried Him in his heart and his cricket kit. As another Indian cricketing great, V.V.S. Laxman revealed "Sachin always carries a picture of Swami in his kit for each and every match. He also at times makes an altar and lights an oil lamp for Swami. At times, myself, Rahul (Dravid) and Sachin talk and discuss about Swami. Many youngsters too listen in awe and respect at such times. In fact, some of them also get a desire to have Swami's Darshan".

One such occasion when the desire of the entire team got fulfilled was on 23rd



November 2005, during the 80th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Baba. The entire Indian national cricket squad made a "surprise" visit to Puttaparthi and wished Swami on His Birthday. This was a moment when Sachin joyously held the mike and

spoke a few words of love, reverence and prayer to Swami. The 2,00,000-strong audience in the stadium was thrilled. The whole team sat on the floor of the stage throughout the morning session which concluded with Bhagavan's memorable Discourse in which He emphasised on the divinity immanent in every being. One must always help others and saturate oneself with love towards everything and everyone, He said.

A Constant Visitor

Sachin has a very special place in his heart for Swami. That is what made Him visit Swami amidst his frenetic schedule too. But Sachin did not have the slightest idea about such visits coming to an end so soon. And that was the reason for his unabashed outburst on 24th April 2011 – because like millions others, he felt that he had suffered the greatest loss of his life. It was not long before he realised the truth – again like millions others – that 24th April was actually a day of arrival of his Guru. It was a day when Swami had moved from the physical to the omnipresent; from the Yajur Mandir to the Hridaya Mandir (temple of the heart). And today, Swami visits Sachin regularly! As a teary Sachin told "The Times of India" on 13th May 2011: "Baba might not be present physically, but I still connect with Him in my dreams. That's where I draw strength from. He will always be with me".

There is no doubt that Swami is an integral part of Sachin's life. His absolutely clean and wonderful record on and off the field shows what a wonderful human being he is. It is no wonder that such a beautiful human being was blessed with this opportunity by Swami.

Source: aravindb1982.hubpages.com
Sanathana Sarathi

AN EXPERIENCE OF BHAGAVAN'S OMNISCIENCE

The author of this article, Smt. Ratan Lal, merged with Bhagavan on 12th March 2017. She served Bhagavan for nearly five decades in various ways and had the rare privilege of cooking for Him. Here we give one of the numerous experiences she had of Bhagavan's Divinity.

MUKUNDA WAS a devotee from Bangalore (Bengaluru). He had a business of Saris and Swami used to get Saris from him. Swami had told him that He would 'give' him a child. For twenty years, the couple was childless. In his desire for children, he had performed all spiritual ceremonies, kept vows and gone on pilgrimages, etc. But he remained disappointed and helpless.



Smt. Ratan Lal with Bhagavan.

Once He came to me and said, "I have given up hope. I don't think we will have children. Now there is no chance". I looked at him and said, "Mukunda, what is the matter? Did not Swami tell you, I will give you a child? Did He specify a time? Don't lose faith".

This conversation happened in Puttapparthi. They went back to Bengaluru and returned in about three weeks. During Darshan, Swami, while walking in front of Mukunda's wife, said, "Don't overdo. Take it easy". They did not understand the meaning of Swami's words. They both came to me after Darshan and asked, "Why did Swami say that"? I too was quiet, unable to fathom the meaning. On their

return to Bengaluru, they visited a doctor who discovered that Mukunda's wife was pregnant.

After about three months, in a conversation, Swami looked at me and said, "Aye, I will give him (Mukunda) two children together, a daughter and a son". I did not communicate this conversation to Mukunda.

Four more months elapsed. Swami asked me to go to Chikpet to bring Saris. This was not the usual practice. I used to telephone Mukunda to bring Saris to Brindavan for selection. I mildly objected to Swami's instruction, wanting to follow the usual method. I was worried about



preparing Swami's dinner. Swami was insistent, "You go to the city. His selections are not good. You go, see the lot and select. And don't worry about My dinner". I replied, "Swami, the dinner will be ready on time. I will come back from the city and prepare".

I went to Chikpet and finished the work. During the lull in conversation, a thought came to my mind. I was curious, inquisitive about Mukunda's wife. I hesitatingly asked him, "You must have got the ultrasound done. What have you discovered? Is she going to have one or two babies"?

He was taken aback and said, "Why are you saying this"? His face lost colour. He had hidden it from his family, mother-in-law and his brother. I asked him again, "Mukunda, tell me, one or two"? I wanted to glean the fact from him.

He did not answer. I then told him, "Mukunda, don't get worried. She is going to give birth to one boy and one girl. In her third month of pregnancy, Swami had told me that He was giving you two children, once for all". Mukunda's wife had a normal delivery and gave birth to two children.

– From "Sai Bhagavatham" by Sri Manoj Nakra.

If everything is dedicated to the Lord, there will be no room for worry or sorrow or even joy. If you rid yourself thus of attachment, Santhi can never be disturbed. I, my, mine, my own, your, yours... when these ideas take hold of the mind, Santhi suffers a setback. To get the attitude of sincerely offering all to Him, Prema is essential, Prema combined with faith in oneself. That is what is called Bhakti. Cultivate it steadily everyday and derive joy therefrom.

– Baba



OUR FAMILY DEITY

This is an article from one of the books of Sri B.V. Ramana Rao, Editor of Sanathana Sarathi (Telugu), who attained the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan on 14th March 2017. He served as All India Seva Dal Coordinator and State President of Andhra Pradesh and left a rich treasure of his unique experiences with Bhagavan in about 10 books in Telugu and English.

I HAVE RECENTLY COME to know that you have been neglecting your official duties and responsibilities and visiting Puttparthi quite often. While I am happy that at least now you have developed a spiritual bent of mind, I hasten to warn you against being misguided by the much publicised miracles of Sai Baba. You will be disillusioned and frustrated at a later date, should you continue to run after him.

“For the last several generations, Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati, after whom you are named, has been our family deity. He has been providing ample protection to us. There is no need or sense in bypassing him and blindly following these human demigods, abounding these days, allured by the so-called miracles about which there is enough controversy. I am seventy-seven years old and I expect you to give due credence to my advice.”

This is an excerpt from my father’s letter in June 1967, after he learned of my five visits to Puttparthi in less than a year. I reverentially appreciated his anxiety about my professional career but I was amused to note that he was more worried about my becoming a Sai devotee than my remaining an agnostic.

I had been a witness to a number of miracles during my subsequent visits to



Sri Ramana Rao with Bhagavan.

Puttparthi and stopped wondering at them, with a growing conviction that they are a manifestation of divine powers inherent in Baba.

I would like to give a brief sketch of my father. He was a simple, good natured and religious person hailing from a middle class family. After obtaining a degree of Bachelor of Engineering from Guindy, Madras he



joined government service in the erstwhile composite State of Madras. After thirty-seven years of service, he retired in 1952 and since then he was employed for thirty years in a private firm before opting for voluntary retirement when he was ninety. He passed away peacefully in 1984 at the ripe age of ninety-three. With fifteen children all hale and healthy and satisfactorily settled, he was a standing monument of mockery against family planning and a striking example of unshakeable faith in God's divine dispensation.

Among his fifteen children, I am the second staying at Hyderabad, employed in government service. In August 1967, when he came to Hyderabad on an official work, he happened to travel by train in the same compartment as Justice V Parthasarathi of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh. They had been good friends. My father was surprised to find some literature on Sathya Sai Baba with his companion. I gathered from my father that they had a long discussion on the subject of Sai Baba's miracles. The upshot was that the virulence of my father's anti-Baba viral fever had abated. After one more meeting with his friend, he had shown an inclination to visit Puttaparthi.

Without losing any more time, lest he should change his mind, I purchased tickets by train to Dharmavaram for three of us including my mother. My mother, at her advanced age, was suffering from a trouble due to disease of involuntary urination, with unsuccessful treatment at Madras, Vizag and Hyderabad, with the result she was reluctant to visit places of worship or auspicious functions to

avoid embarrassment. But I successfully persuaded her to go to Puttaparthi with us.

Baba was kind enough to grant an interview to us the very next day. The first thing Baba did was to create Vibhuti and give to my mother, saying, "Your ailment has gone. You can go wherever you wish and you will not be inconvenienced". My mother lived for thirteen more years without a trace of the dreadful disease from that very moment.

"I shall fulfil your long cherished desire" Baba told my father, materialising and giving him a small gold talisman, adding, "You were sad when you lost it. This is the same. I had traced it for you". None of us knew anything about the talisman, my father losing it and yearning for it. Later, my father told us that the sacred talisman was given to him by his father. My father had lost it in 1918, that is eight years before Baba was born.

The interview lasted for one hour and Baba answered so many of my father's questions pertaining to spiritual subjects. Finally, while we were taking leave of Him, with a smile filling up His radiant face, Baba said to my father, "Because of the very reason you are an ardent devotee of Tirupati Venkataramana you are drawn closer to Me since I respond to worship of any form". We all understood the implication of His remark. Until then my father visited Tirupati thirty-eight times. During the remaining sixteen years of his life, my father had not been to Tirupati even once, with the conviction that Baba was Venkataramana Himself. From that day on, Baba had been our family Deity.

– From "Love is My Form" by Sri B.V. Ramana Rao.



A RARE EXPERIENCE OF SWAMI'S DIVINITY

T.G. Krishnamurthy

"I opened my eyes and found Swami there. He asked me to sit up and I did so. He told me that I would be discharged tomorrow. He advised me to take rest for a couple of days and then resume my activities as Chairperson of the Andhra Mahila Sabha. I was thirsty and was looking around for some water. Swami noticed this and asked me to open my mouth. Swami placed the little finger of His right hand over my mouth. Lo and behold! I felt warm coffee flowing into my mouth. Swami then blessed me and went away."

SWAMI MADE ME THE DISTRICT President of Madras (Chennai) city on 14th April 1976. After that, it became customary for office bearers of Chennai including me to proceed to Brindavan every year to pray to Bhagavan to bless Chennai with His divine visit.

On many occasions, I was blessed with the privilege of driving the car in which Bhagavan travelled from Brindavan to Chennai. The convoy which accompanied Him would consist of students from Swami's college and some elderly devotees. I was also given the opportunity to drive the car which Swami used for his local visits within Chennai. We were also blessed with the opportunity to accompany Bhagavan and His entourage on their return journey back to Brindavan.

Bhagavan's Visit to a Nursing Home

During these visits, on each morning, the State President would meet Swami to seek guidance on His programme for the day. The programme in turn would be communicated

to me so that the exact location of the places of visit and most convenient route could be ascertained.

We would have two motorbike riders serving as pilots ahead of Swami's car. If the car were to take a right or left turn, I would use the indicator in the car to alert the pilots. It was the pillion riders responsibility to keep track of this signal and accordingly guide the person driving the motorbike.

One morning, I was informed by the State President that Swami had not given any indication on any proposed visits for the day. I was thus in a dilemma whether I should park the car in the shed or keep waiting till we received a clear instruction from Bhagavan. The State President told me to seek Swami's guidance on the same. When I sought Swami's guidance on this, He told me that I should keep the car ready for a visit He wanted to undertake. When I tried to know where He planned to go, He just said, "I will tell you". Since I could not push the matter further, I decided to wait near the car.



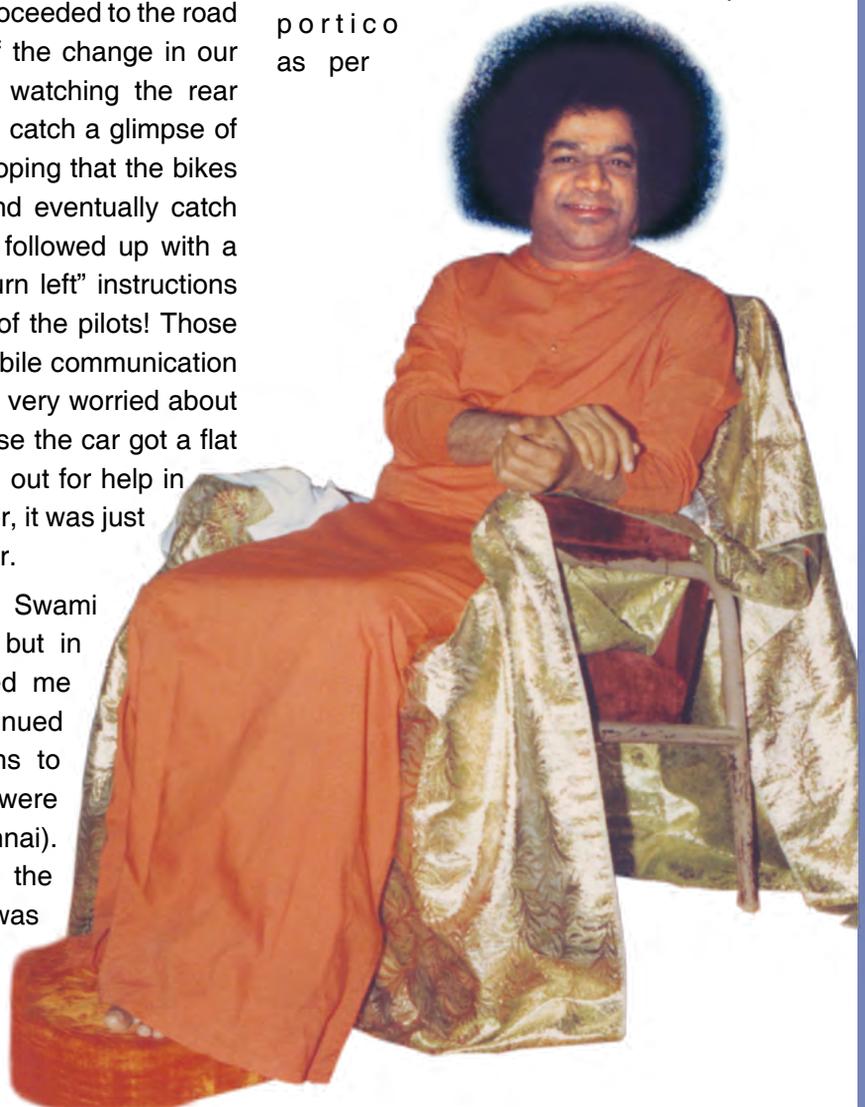
In a short while Swami arrived, sat in the car and said, "Let us go". It was just Swami and myself in the car. The two motorbike riders serving as pilots proceeded ahead of the car as usual. When the car approached the next intersection, I asked Swami whether we should turn right or left. Swami indicated that we should turn right. As per the standard procedure, I turned on the right indicator light to signal the pillion riders. But immediately after the motorbikes turned to the right, Swami revised His instruction and said, "No... let us go left"! Fortunately, the traffic on the left turn was not much and I turned the car towards the road on our left. By then the pilots had proceeded to the road on the right unaware of the change in our route. I was nervously watching the rear view mirror of the car to catch a glimpse of the motorbikes. I was hoping that the bikes would locate the car and eventually catch up with us. But Swami followed up with a series of "turn right", "turn left" instructions and soon we lost sight of the pilots! Those were the days when mobile communication was not available. I was very worried about what we would do in case the car got a flat tyre. How would I reach out for help in such a case? Remember, it was just Swami and me in the car.

I ventured to ask Swami where we were going but in response He just asked me to keep going. He continued giving me the directions to follow. Imagine, we were in Madras city (Chennai). I was supposed to be the local man. And here I was receiving directions on the route from Swami!

Soon we were in front of Lady Willingdon Nursing Home on Pycrofts Road. The time was around 11.10 a.m. I was familiar with the visiting hours of the hospital. I informed Swami that the hospital would be closed for visitors from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. In response, Swami just said, "I know... I know... just take the car near the portico of the hospital building".

Resurrection of Paravathamma

There would always be a security guard stationed at the hospital gate from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. But on that day, no guard was around and the gate was wide open. I parked the car near the hospital portico as per



Swami's instruction. Swami then got down from the car and proceeded to ascend the stairs leading to the first floor of the hospital building. I ventured to accompany Him but He stopped me by saying "No...no...you be here". I looked on worryingly as Swami walked up the stairs all alone. I was imagining all the criticism that I was bound to receive from the elders in the organisation for having let Swami go into the hospital all alone. Our State President in the Sai Organisation at that time was a retired army major and that made things even more risky for me!

To my relief, Swami returned after about ten minutes. He sat in the car and asked me to proceed back to Sundaram. After a while, I asked Swami why He had visited the hospital. Response to this question really amazed me. "Do you know Parvathamma?" He asked. I knew Parvathamma. She was the wife of Sri Hanumantha Rao, a former IAS officer. The couple were long-standing devotees of Swami. It would be interesting to note that Sri Hanumantha Rao had served as the Transport Secretary and had the privilege of issuing the driver's licence to Bhagavan! Swami used to drive a two-door Morris Minor car in those days.

Bhagavan then casually remarked, "Parvathamma passed away this morning. The hospital authorities had pronounced her dead. But she has a lot of work pending to be done as the Chairperson of Andhra Mahila Sabha (a socio-charitable organisation based at Chennai). I thus went and woke her up!"

I was astounded by what Swami said. He had just told me that He had resurrected a dead person. The amazing thing was that He was saying all this so casually. I kept staring at Swami through the car's mirror. Swami noticed this and said, "Aey...don't look at

Me. Focus on the road while you drive". We soon reached Sundaram. As expected, I received all the retribution from the elders in the organisation. I silently listened to them and did not tell them anything about why and where I had taken Swami.

I got into my own car and drove back to Lady Willingdon Nursing Home to meet Parvathamma. It was about 12.30 p.m. The hospital gates were closed and a guard was on duty. I informed the guard that I had come to the hospital at around 11.10 a.m. along with a guest to meet a patient. I further told him that the guest who came along with me had sent me again to convey a message to the patient. The guard just stared at me and said, "You appear to be an educated young man. You are still lying to me. I personally locked the hospital gate at 10.59 a.m. today. Here are the keys. I have been guarding the gate from the time I locked it till now. How dare you say that the gate was open at 11.10 a.m.?" I was utterly amazed! I was speaking the truth. But how was I to argue with the security guard? How was I to explain to him that the person with whom I came was the same Lord Krishna by whose Will Kamsa's prison gates opened on their own. Just as I was wondering how to go into the hospital, a doctor who was my friend, came to the hospital for his day's duty. The doctor consented to take me along. The security guard could not stop me now.

A Rare Blessing of Swami

I went to the first floor room allotted to Parvathamma. As I entered the room, I saw her seated on the chair. I made enquiries about her health and she said that she was feeling fine. When I asked her about Swami visiting her, she narrated the following: "I was lying down on my bed and heard Swami



calling out my name three times. I opened my eyes and found Swami there. He asked me to sit up and I did so. He told me that I would be discharged tomorrow. He advised me to take rest for a couple of days and then resume my activities as Chairperson of the Andhra Mahila Sabha. I was thirsty and was looking around for some water. Swami noticed this and asked me to open my mouth. Swami placed the little finger of His right hand over my mouth. Lo and behold! I felt warm coffee flowing into my mouth. Swami then blessed me and went away”.

I was wonderstruck by what I had just heard. I went back home and returned to Sundaram at about 3 p.m. The moment I reached, I found that there was a message waiting for me. Swami wanted to see me. I went up to Swami’s room at Sundaram. Once I was in Swami’s room, He looked at me with a stern expression on His face and asked, “Where did you go after you left Me at Sundaram?” “Swami, I went to the Nursing Home,” I replied. “Who asked you to go there?”, He asked. I just said, “Swami, I wanted to meet that fortunate devotee who received Your grace”. In response, Swami asked, “You already know Parvathamma and her husband very well. So, where was the need to meet her now?” I could not find a convincing answer to His question. I felt a sense of guilt and thus remained silent with my head bowed down. Swami then said, “Oh...so you wanted to test Me”? I submitted that my intention behind going there was not to test Him. I conveyed that I went there only out of concern for the devout lady and to get a first-hand account of her experience.

“Why do you want to know all these details?” He asked. I remained silent. “Don’t talk about this to anybody,” He commanded.

So powerful were the words of the Lord that the entire memory about the Parvathamma episode faded away from my mind.

All this happened in the year 1978. In the year 1995, I was made the State President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Tamil Nadu. In the year 1998, Swami visited Kodaikanal and I was near the gate of Sai Sruthi – Swami’s Mandir at Kodaikanal. I received the message that Bhagavan was calling me. I ran up the inclined path that led to Swami’s Mandir. By the time I reached Swami’s presence, I was gasping for breath. Bhagavan looked at me and said, “Santhi... Santhi... Santhihi!”. The compassionate Lord then asked me to open my mouth and poured water from His own glass for me to drink. He kept pouring for a while and I kept gulping the water down merrily! All this happened in the presence of the students and devotees gathered there.

Swami later asked me, “Do you know why I gave you water”? I just remained silent. And then He said, “Remember, I gave coffee to Parvathamma with My own hands. I gave you water the same way today”. In a flash, the entire story of Parvathamma came back to me.

This is just one of the infinite Leelas of the Lord. He alone knows as to how many devotees like Parvathamma have been rescued since the beginning of time. It is a futile exercise to try and understand Swami’s actions. All that we need to do is to surrender to His Will and be obedient instruments in His divine hand.

– The author, Sri T.G. Krishnamurthy, is a former President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Tamil Nadu.



A SCIENTIFIC CAREER ORCHESTRATED BY THE DIVINE MASTER

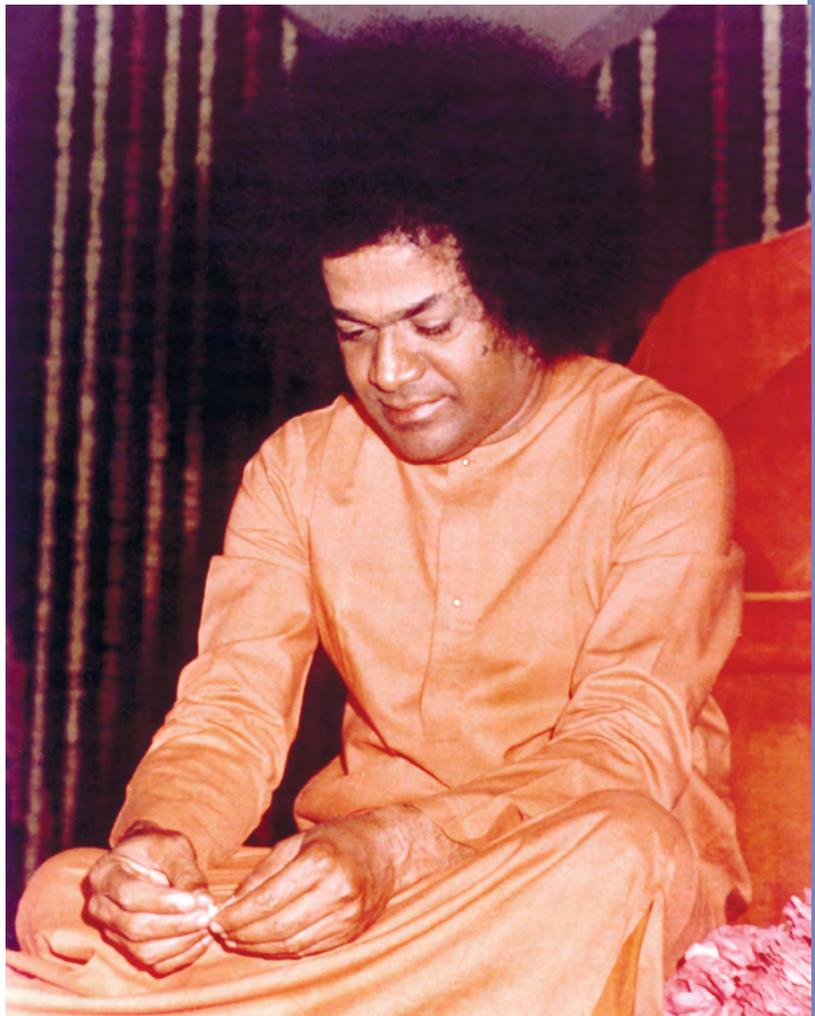
Prof. Sathya Gourisankar

Reflecting on a myriad number of unplanned career experiences and roles in the medical industry, I can say with certainty that there was only one central guiding force and lamp to light my way – Swami’s teachings coupled with Divine Grace, which could be described as my sole friend, philosopher and guide. I had no other source of backing or support to count on!

THIS NARRATION is a reflection of the profound impact Swami’s teachings have had on my scientific career in the areas of researching and developing life-saving, implantable medical devices.

Initiation with Three Sips of Water

As a preface, here is the backdrop on how Swami came into my life in a visible manner. It was October 1985; I was in the final stages of completing my doctoral degree in Chemical Engineering at the State University of New York at Buffalo, NY and hardly knew anything about Swami; I had not seen Him nor ever visited Prasanthi Nilayam. He appeared in my dream one night, sat cross-legged and simply offered three sips of water (from a copper vessel such as the ones used by



priests in India while doing their Pujas). He offered each sip slowly and measuredly. I accepted each of them and then prostrated

to Him full length. The dream ended with no words spoken.

The morning after the dream, a totally unexpected development occurred, which changed the course of my scientific and professional career. I received a letter via express mail, with an offer of a job as a scientist in a pioneering medical device company that was making implantable devices for cardiac surgery. Even though I had interviewed with this company a while back, they did not respond, leading me to conclude they were not interested in me. Also, in those days it was quite unusual for a Chemical Engineer to work on medical devices! I accepted the offer, joined two months later and now, after over three decades, I am being prompted to share the experiences I have had in learning and applying Swami's teachings to my scientific career in the medical industry.

Impact of Swami's Teachings on my Career in Medical Industry

In the first phase of my career in the medical industry, I was involved in scientific research. During this time, I also got introduced to Swami's teachings, primarily through reading His Discourses in "Sathya Sai Speaks" volumes, books of His devotees and the monthly "Sanathana Sarathi" journal from the Ashram. I began to relish reading all these and devoured the Sai literature with great zeal and new-found joy in life. It was as though I was hearing for the first time in life to an ancient, ethereal voice of wisdom that could explain all possible mysteries of life and be complete and whole in every respect. The earliest impactful teaching of Swami in my life that I can recall is: *Politics without principles, education without character, science without humanity, and commerce without morality are not only useless, but*

As I entered the leadership roles of Wall Street-driven corporations and started facing the pressures of "success at any cost philosophy", I started to realise I was a "misfit" in these environments and turned once again to Swami's teachings to find solutions to deal with the situations on a day-to-day basis.

I was often under tremendous pressure to comply with the edicts of management and business interests that conflicted with right action as well as my troubling conscience. Swami always helped me find the right path and led me through it, hand-holding me.

positively dangerous. This statement had a profound and life-changing impact on me as a youngster when I first read it. The part of it that inspired me most then was "science without humanity!" From then on, I began to view science and my career in science-based activities from a completely different perspective. I started to slowly understand that science was only a tool to help humanity and not an end in itself. I then started to look for every possible opportunity to relate scientific activities to human outcomes and realised how nicely Swami was giving me an opportunity by placing me in the medical device industries where we were working earnestly to develop products for saving the lives of people or improving their functionality.

At around this time in the early part of my career, I was also beset with my fair share of doubts on how the worlds of science and spirituality were related and if in fact they were even compatible. Here is when

I came across another of Swami's simple, yet profound statements that shattered my doubts and answered my queries on this topic. *Science is like the letter 'C' which is incomplete while spirituality is like the letter 'O' which is complete.* This statement conveyed a world of meaning to me, reassuring that science and spirituality were indeed compatible in all respects and complementary to one another. Armed with the above two statements of Swami, in the first phase of my career, I became a forceful advocate within my corporation for reducing the number of animals used for experimental surgery as well as reduction of high risk technologies being deployed for clinical studies on human subjects. I learned how to present my advocacy on these topics with an evidence-based approach in a professional, corporate setting where much emphasis was placed on business outcomes. Without ever mentioning of Swami or His teachings, I found great satisfaction as a young man in championing for "Dharmic" causes, winning some battles and overall gaining ground on balancing science-based pursuits with humane considerations and bringing Swami's teachings into my professional life.

Right Teaching at Right Time

Moving on to the second phase of my career, I began to be involved in translational and product-oriented research. This called for leading inter-disciplinary scientific teams to enable the transition from "Bench-To-Bedside" for the launch of medical devices for various surgical applications. The role demanded a huge balancing act between the domains of rigorous science, business interests, ethics, public safety and regulatory compliance. Various statements of Swami constantly came to my rescue as I traversed this phase. Recollecting them

at the right times and using them to gather strength and courage to deal with several difficult situations became my "Sadhana" on a day-to-day basis and helped me to grow spiritually as well as professionally. One of these that was particularly relevant for my role and the medical industry was: *The secret of happiness is not doing what one likes to do but in liking what one has to do.* This statement was immensely beneficial to me in sticking through tough job situations and gaining professional expertise and experience. Oftentimes, when the going got really tough and thoughts of quitting came to mind, this simple saying flashed across my mind and gave me the direction and strength to fight the battles rather than quit. I gained vastly from the experiences in this phase.

Duty without love is deplorable.

Duty with love is desirable.

Love without duty is Divine.

This statement became a signature work ethic message of Swami that has ruled my life throughout from the time I first heard it. I cannot express in words how much and how often I have relied upon it to get through the mundane, humdrum monotonies as well as potentially testing phases and situations of life. Surely, I could not have come out unscathed but for these impactful and powerful teachings of Swami, so simple, yet so potent!

Relevance of Swami's Teachings in Leadership Roles

Here is another teaching of Swami which had a lasting impact on my life:

Sometimes, it is natural for you to have adjustment and understanding. First you must understand each other. After that, adjustment will be easy. First understanding,



second adjustment. Ninety per cent of people try adjustment first. This is wrong way around. First understanding.

I stole the logic of the above statement of Swami that was mentioned by Him as the recipe for success in marriage to relate and help me out in my own several “professional marriages,” namely, with bosses, co-workers and other professional relationships. It came in handy for my career in a big way and helped immensely in managing people of vastly different backgrounds in the interdisciplinary teams I was leading for various corporations. As per Swami’s guideline, I started to do this in a two-step sequence, first, doing my homework on researching and understanding their backgrounds and then crafting a strategy to relate and interact with them. After I gained some mastery over this two-step procedure, my peers started to notice I was handling the “difficult personnel” very well in our group and started to consult me for advice. Without mentioning anything about Swami, I quietly passed on His “secret recipe” to them, became their informal counsellor and asked them to try it out for themselves. The results, needless to mention, were overwhelmingly positive and have given me many lasting friendships with colleagues of past years! Need I say how much I feel indebted to Swami’s teachings for enhancing my Man Management skills, based on just one simple statement and how rich were the dividends I could reap in my professional career over three decades!

As I moved into leadership roles, the next phase of my career began with new sets of challenges that called for application of other teachings of Swami. Matters of conscience, right action (Dharma), ethics and unselfish acts began to surface and confront me with their challenges in dealing with day-to-day functioning and carrying

out of my duties. By now, I had read a fair amount of Sai literature, covering the span from personal experiences of miracles to the values and life lessons-based teachings of Swami in volumes of “Sathya Sai Speaks” as well as some of the “Vahini” series books. Little did it dawn on me then that Swami was slowly, painstakingly preparing me and laying the foundation for facing the increasingly bigger challenges and hurdles of life. As I entered the leadership roles of Wall Street-driven corporations and started facing the pressures of “success at any cost philosophy”, I started to realise I was a “misfit” in these environments and turned once again to Swami’s teachings to find solutions to deal with the situations on a day-to-day basis. I was often under tremendous pressure to comply with the edicts of management and business interests that conflicted with right action as well as my troubling conscience. Swami always helped me find the right path and led me through it, hand-holding me.

Following are some highly relevant statements that became my life guides and companions during this phase: *A. Watch your Words, Actions, Thoughts, Character and Heart. B. Head in the forest; Hands in society. C. Life is a challenge, meet it! Life is a dream, realise it! Life is a game, play it! Life is Love, enjoy it! D. Patience is all the strength that man needs.*

Yes, I did pay the price in this phase for raising issues of concern and did get left out of the “cliques” and “mafias” that held power but I also gained much understanding on the need to stick to “Dharma” at all costs and scrupulously follow Swami’s teachings to the best of my ability. In spite of my productive performance, I faced the hardships of losing my job due to my values and championing of unpopular causes. Even though these



circumstances were trying and at times I would think in lighter vein on how Swami's values seemed to be so counter to the needs for success in today's times, I had the blessing and good fortune to never ever compromise on the core values of ethics, right conduct, transparency and truth in my career and did not yield to pressures from any quarter.

Swami's Teachings and Values for a Mentoring Role

By totally unexpected and chance circumstances (what Sai devotees would call "Sai-Incidences!"), after spending over thirty years in the medical industry, my life took a new turn in 2013 with the offer of a position in academia as Professor at Georgia Tech in their highly rated Biomedical Engineering Department. In this role, I am charged with mentoring and training students for careers in the medical device industries, much like the one I was blessed with for over 30 years. In this new role, I find myself constantly using all of Swami's statements, teachings of life, commands and directives to mentor young minds on various topics, spanning the breadth of both hard, technical skills as well as the "soft skills" so essential for life pursuits! In the soft skills and leadership training aspects, I freely adapt many of Swami's teachings. As an example, Swami's core human values of *Sathya Dharma, Santhi and Prema* are adapted to my programme as the 4T's for developing the future leaders of the medical industry through the values of: Truth, Transparency, Tranquillity and Tenacity.

Looking back at my scientific career starting from Swami's first dream initiating me into His fold with three sips of water over 30 years back, it only now dawns on me that Swami was working to a plan systematically, moulding my life through His values and

enabling me to be productive in a scientific career across various roles – starting as an individual contributor to science, later becoming involved in translational research and developing life-saving medical devices, then moving on to leadership roles in the industry and finally, moving into a mentor role to train the future leaders of the medical device industry. I have tried to earnestly recall and narrate retrospectively the experiences of a scientific career that seems to have been meticulously planned and orchestrated at every step by the Divine Master, although they seemed like a set of random and unplanned life events and circumstances in real time. Even though I was physically far away from Swami, visited Prasanthi Nilayam only on short trips to India, have had no interviews or encounters in person, Swami's Teachings through simple statements, casual sounding remarks and even apparently light-hearted anecdotal narrations have proved to be my life support, source of strength and guiding light of immense value to all aspects of my life.

My personal take-home message and conclusion from this reflection of career experiences is the following:

Pay full attention to anything said by Swami, however simple or casual it may sound. The simpler it is, the more powerful can be its value and impact!

On this note, I will conclude with the following statement of Swami which has become my current life guide-cum-companion and one which packs tremendous punch:

Be Simple and Sincere!

– The author is a Professor, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, U.S.A.



Effulgence of Divine Glory

SOME GLIMPSES OF SWAMI'S CHILDHOOD LEELAS

BABA STAYED AT PAMIDI FOR two days. Once He took us all to the river-bed where He created some idols for devotees. He was seen walking among the bushes avoiding the small cart track. Some people suggested that there were thorns and that He should walk along the cart track. He replied that the path along which He was walking will be the future road in the area and continued along the same path. Over the years, there has been considerable development in the area but it is not possible for us to verify the statement.

Swami was fond of a particular film song which I used to sing in those days for Bhajans. Sometimes, He would ask me to sing the same repeatedly and would not allow me to sing any other song. This was particularly so during this visit as I was the only singer other than Baba.

At the end of His visit to Pamidi, we returned along with Baba to Anantapur by the evening train from Kallur railway station. For the first time, He was fully relaxed as there were no crowds awaiting Him at our house. He sat on a lounge chair in the moonlight near the gate in the garden, relaxing. He instructed us to pick some flowers for Puja. Actually there were no flowers in the garden, so we informed Baba. He said, go and look again. My sister went and came back with a negative answer. Then Swami Himself went up to the tree and pulled out a few branches and asked us to see. Lo! The tree was full of



flowers and we could pick them to our heart's content. That night, we had a moonlight dinner on the terrace of our house. During the conversation that ensued, someone remarked that people of Pamidi were at last happy that Swami had finally graced them with His visit having ignored their prayer for a long time. My mother humorously remarked that Baba would not visit people without much waiting and causing anxiety. To this Swami remarked, "Is that so! Then I will definitely do the same to you". These words proved to be ominous, for, in the

continued on page 31...



God Protects His Devotees

IN THE TWELFTH YEAR OF THE exile of the Pandavas in the forest, they reached a part of the forest where there lived Roma Rishi. He was called Roma Rishi because his entire body was covered with Romas (soft hair). There was a tree in this forest, the fruit of which was such that if one ate it once, one would become free from hunger and thirst. The Rishi performed intense penance to grow this fruit. It was forbidden to pluck it or bring it down. Whenever it fell from the tree on its own, only then was it to be eaten.

Once when Draupadi and Yudhishtira were passing through this part of the forest, they came near this tree. On seeing this large fruit, Draupadi requested Yudhishtira, "Oh master! See how big and beautiful is this fruit! The entire forest is filled with its aroma. It can satiate the hunger of all six of us. Isn't it so?" Yudhishtira aimed an arrow at it and brought it down. He then tried to lift it up with one hand but could not even move it. Then he tried to lift it with both hands but he could not move it even a little. Thereafter, both Yudhishtira and Draupadi jointly tried but did not succeed. So, they went back to their hut where they found Arjuna. While they were telling Arjuna about the fruit, Nakula and Sahadeva also came there. They all came near the tree and tried together to lift the fruit, but all in vain. Soon, Bhima came searching for them. He told all of them to get aside; he would lift it alone. First he tried to lift it with left hand, then with right and in the end with both

hands. But the fruit did not move even a bit. Finally, all the five brothers together tried to lift it, but the fruit did not move from its place. Meanwhile, Roma Rishi became aware of this incident. The soft hair of Roma Rishi's body started moving, indicating to him what had happened. Having come to know that somebody had tried to remove the fruit, he proceeded towards the tree in great anger.

Realising the uniqueness of this fruit, the Pandavas got some indication of the impending danger. What should they do



When Draupadi prayed to Krishna, He came to the rescue of the Pandavas.

now, they thought? As Krishna always protected them, Draupadi prayed to Krishna. As Krishna came there, Draupadi told Him what had happened and prayed to Him, "There is none except You who can save us". Then Krishna said to her, "Do as I say without questioning Me. It is necessary for Me to enact a little drama now".

Krishna proceeded towards the Ashram of Roma Rishi. Seeing Krishna coming

to his Ashram, the Rishi came forward. Offering Sashtanga Pranam (full length prostration) to Him, the Rishi said, "Oh compassionate Lord! You have sanctified my Ashram today by Your Presence". Both of them started conversing with each other. Meanwhile, the Pandavas also came to the Rishi's Ashram as per the command of Krishna. Immediately, Krishna got up and offered Sashtanga Pranam to them. Since Krishna had already instructed them, they did not say anything. Thinking that they must be some great persons to whom Krishna offered salutations, Roma Rishi also offered his salutations to them by falling at their feet. Then Krishna, the director of the cosmic drama, said to Roma Rishi by way of their introduction, "They are the embodiments of Dharma and protectors



The Rishi himself offered the fruit to the Pandavas at the intervention of Krishna.

of Sathya". By now the anger of the Rishi had completely subsided. So, Krishna told him, "The fruit was plucked by them only". Thinking that the Pandavas would be happy to get the fruit, the Rishi went near the tree and himself handed over the fruit to them.

...continued from page 29

years to come, His visits were to become very few and far between. There is a moral in this: One must be very careful when dealing with Divinity; loose talk should be avoided even if it is only for fun. The next night, He left for Bengaluru accompanied by a devotee, Sri Thirumal Rao of Bengaluru.

Two of His hosts at Pamidi accompanied Baba to Anantapur, Sri Subba Rangaiah and Sri Rama Thulsi. They stayed with Baba in our house during His stay. Swami used to describe the various attributes of divinity during the bathing sessions and elsewhere in verse form composed by Him. Myself, a temporary school dropout, and the two of them alone used to be together with Bhagavan at those times. They would go into raptures shedding tears of joy praying

for a vision of the Lord, which was known to have been given by Him to several devotees by then. However, I doubt if they ever got one.

The two of them got a photograph taken with Baba at the footsteps of our house. This photo is with us sans their faces as a memento of His visit.

One day, we were all having lunch. My sister-in-law was pregnant. Swami said that a male child would be born and that he should be named Naga Raju. Thus, my nephew Naga Raju had his naming ceremony performed by Baba long before he was born.

– Excerpted from "Fifty Years at the Lotus Feet" by Dr. T. Viswanadha Rao.



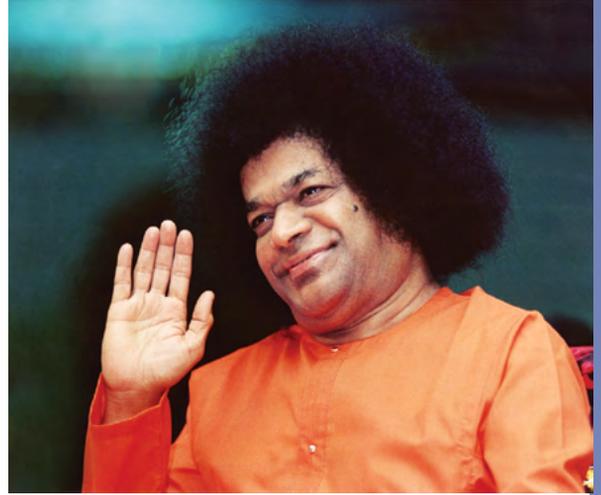
DIVINE BLESSINGS IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Kavya Budarayavalasa

SRI SATHYA SAI BAL VIKAS IS A movement launched by Bhagavan Baba to enable the blossoming of today's children into ideal citizens of tomorrow. It trains the children from the age of five to fifteen in good habit formation. It complements the school education emphasising on the importance of five cardinal human values, Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa (truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence). Thousands of children under the able guidance of teachers known as Bal Vikas Gurus have blossomed into men and women of strong character.

I joined Bal Vikas when I was five years old. I hardly knew the importance of these classes and it was a mere recreational activity for me. As time passed, I started learning and chanting small Slokas (verses). I developed interest in learning them and I also used to hear mythological stories of Rama, Krishna, etc. I started to participate in Bal Vikas programmes with full energy, enthusiasm and devotion.

When I was in the second year of my education, I suffered from a kidney disease and was hospitalised. When doctors told the severity of my illness, my parents and I were very much disturbed. I was on dialysis for about three-and-a-half years. It was a tough time for me and my parents. My mother and my Guru both encouraged me a lot and asked me to pray to Baba and not to lose hope. I started to sing Bhajans and chanted Slokas daily in the belief that one day Baba would listen to me.



As days passed by, my devotion to Baba increased. In 2013, my father's friend told us to register for a kidney transplant in Chennai which he did. And within a short time, I got my kidney transplanted. Here I want to share my mother's experience. We have a life-size photo of Baba in our house. Just one week before the operation, my mother had a dream in which she saw Vibhuti gushing out of the photo. After that dream, she was sure that something good was going to happen. But we never expected that I would have my kidney transplanted so soon. We were so happy and felt elated that Baba showered His blessings on us. It is with Baba's Divine grace that we came out of those trying times.

I thank Swami for making me a part of His wonderful education system and I dedicate all my achievements at His Lotus Feet.

– From "Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas: The Path Divine".



Valuable Maxims

Given below is an important maxim of Bhagavan. Contemplate on it and search the following words in the given word maze:

Thorn, hate, develop, desire, storm, whirlpool, attachment, avalanche, egoism, volcano, meditation, equanimity.

Have no thorn of hate in your mind; develop love towards all. Desire is a storm, greed is a whirlpool, pride is a precipice, attachment is an avalanche, egoism is a volcano. Keep these things away so that when you recite the Name of God or do meditation, they do not disturb the equanimity.

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

Swami's Tips to Students

The student today has to cultivate in this Kali Age nine gem-like qualities – spirit of sacrifice, humility, spirit of selfless service to society, friendliness, discipline, adherence to truth, non-violence, love and faith in God. The boys and girls who have these qualities alone will be the nation's treasure of virtue and ensure its future.

Dear students! Without these sacred qualities, all education is valueless. Does literacy or degree constitute education? Without wisdom and virtue can one be termed an educated person? True education is that which fosters the sense of oneness, draws out one's divine qualities and promotes the blossoming of human personality.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF BIHAR AND JHARKHAND DEVOTEES

A LARGE NUMBER OF devotees came from the States of Bihar and Jharkhand on a three-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from 10th to 12th March 2017 and basked in the sacred ambience of this abode of peace. As part of this pilgrimage, Bal Vikas children of these two States presented a very touching drama entitled “Niswartha Prem” (selfless love) on the sacred day of Holi, 12th March 2017. The theme of the drama was first illustrated through the stories of Prahlada and Abou Ben Adhem. What came next



The teacher was awe-struck by the spirit of sacrifice of his student.

the act of sacrifice of a Bal Vikas student for his friend who was engaged in the service of his ailing mother. The drama depicted how these students imbibe human values and develop the spirit of self-sacrifice to serve others selflessly even at the cost of their own difficulties and losses. Awe-struck at the highest spirit of sacrifice of his student, the teacher also decided to dedicate his life to the mission of Bhagavan Baba. An audio clipping of Swami’s Discourse added to the impact of the drama. Finally, a group song in adoration of



Bal Vikas children’s dance depicting Radha’s selfless love for Krishna.

was a beautiful dance sequence which showcased the selfless love of Radha for Krishna. But the climax of the drama was

Bhagavan Baba brought the curtain down on the evening’s colourful and impressive presentation.

Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital

Prasanthi Nilayam - 515134, Puttaparthi, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh
Email: hrmgh@sssihms.org.in, Phone: 08555-287256, 289409

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Post of Senior Consultant / Consultant

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Qualification: M.B.B.S. + MD / DNB / D.C.H.

- Anaesthesiologist: Senior Resident / Junior Consultant in the Department of Anaesthesiology

Qualification : M.B.B.S. + MD / DNB / D.O.A.

– *Medical Superintendent*

Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School

Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi - 515134, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh
(Affiliated to CBSE-New Delhi)
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Applications are invited for Post Graduate Teachers (PGT) (MALE) for the subjects “Mathematics” and “English” with relevant details and photograph

Minimum Qualification required:

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- 2) POST GRADUATE in English with minimum II class from a recognised university with B.Ed.

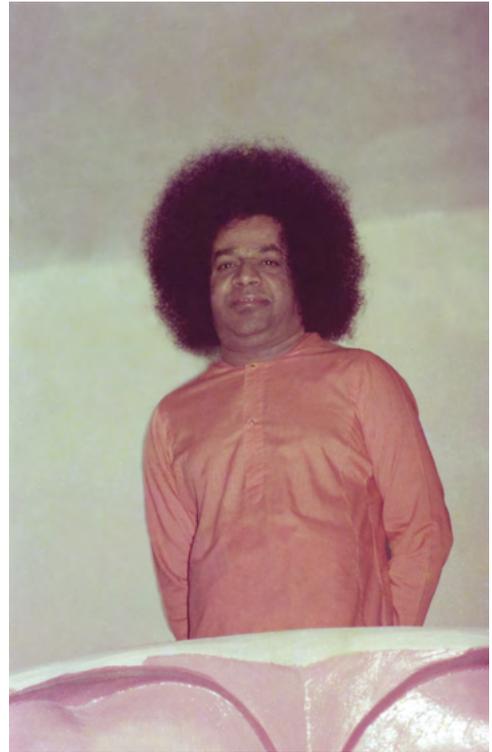
The selected candidate will be paid as per Andhra Pradesh State board recommendations.

The application should reach the school office on or before 15th April 2017 either by Post or E-mail with relevant details and photograph.

Superannuated persons of the age between 58 and 60 years can also apply.

– *Principal*

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

The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

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

A cleansed heart is the most appropriate altar. In that fragrant bower, the Lord will establish Himself. At that instant, another incident too will happen: the group of six vices that had infested the place would quit without so much as a farewell. When these vices quit, the wicked retinue of evil tendencies and vulgar attitudes which thrive on them will also break camp and disappear without even leaving their address!

– Baba



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