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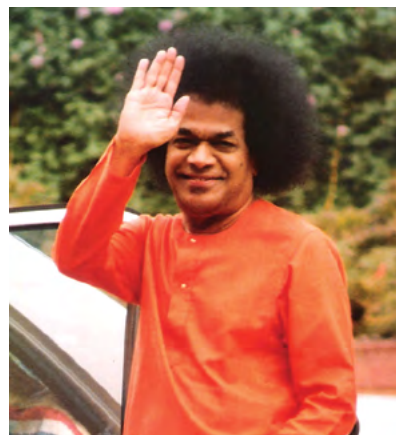
Editor **G.L. ANAND**
Assistant Editor **P. RAJESH**

E-mail: subscriptions@sssbpt.org
editor@sssbpt.org
For Audio Visual /
Book Orders: orders@sssbpt.org
ISD Code : 0091
STD Code : 08555
Telephone : 287375
Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust Telefax : 287390
Sri Sathya Sai University -
Administrative Office : 287191 / 287239
Sri Sathya Sai Higher
Secondary School : 289289
Sri Sathya Sai
Primary School : 287237
SSSIHMS, Prasanthigram,
Puttaparthi : 287388
SSSIHMS, Whitefield,
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“Rajas (passion) aggravates Tamas (sloth). One is filled with pride when one's wish is fulfilled, but gets dejected and blames God when it is not fulfilled. Tamas and Rajas are siblings of the same mother. Who is this mother? Ajnana (ignorance) is the mother. The moment Sujnana (spiritual knowledge) is born, Ajnana dies.”



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*“Sanathana Sarathi” wishes
devotees a holy and prosperous New Year*

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AVATAR VANI

GOD'S HEAD OFFICE IS MAN'S HEART

BLISS CAN BE FOUND ONLY IN THE ATMA



ONE WHO INDULGES IN FINDING faults of others will not know about himself. Man today is searching and investigating everything including God. He wants to know where He is; how He looks. This search is going on generation after generation. The human being uses his body and mind in this search. Mariwala (the earlier speaker) also said, "Body is most essential". Human body has five Koshas (sheaths). One can understand the nature of the body, when one understands the nature of five sheaths.

Know the Truth by Exploring the Atma

The Self is encased in five concentric Koshas or sheaths. The outermost and the grossest sheath is Annamaya Kosha (food sheath). The next is Pranamaya Kosha (life sheath). The third is Manomaya Kosha (mental sheath). The fourth is Vijnanamaya Kosha (wisdom sheath). The Upanishads say *Mano Moolam Idam Jagat* (mind is the basis of the entire world). Subtler than Manomaya Kosha is Vijnanamaya Kosha, which is beyond the mind. And the fifth is Anandamaya Kosha (bliss sheath). The first three

sheaths relate to the physical world which is temporary, while Vijnanamaya Kosha has special significance, as it is closer to the Self or Atma which is eternal. Each sheath is subtler than its outer sheath.

Modern people call science as Vijnana. The scientific research is being regarded as Vijnana by the scientific community. This modern science is based on external search, and is confined to the material world only. It is not the science of bliss and truth. The science of Atma pertains to the knowledge of truth. Bliss can be found only in the Atma, one's own innermost core. Atma and Jnana are synonyms only. The individual Self is termed as Atma, while the all-pervading Self is called Brahman.

Where can this Atma be found? As the diamond lies buried in earth, Chinmaya (supreme consciousness) is encased in Mrinmaya (inert matter), the physical body. But Chinmaya is beyond body. Many people search for Chinmaya in the external world. It is mere foolishness. However, this body should not be neglected, because it contains the most valuable Chinmaya, the Atma. Man is born in dust, lives in dust and merges in dust. The Nirakara (formless) principle of God cannot be understood by external vision or knowledge. It can be realised only upon exploration within one's own body. The scientific search on external materials can only be termed worldly knowledge. It is like a half circle. The spiritual science is like a full circle. It propounds, *Poornamada Poornamidam* (That is full, this is full) which means that the imperceptible Divinity is wholesome or totally integrated. This perceptible world is also a part and parcel of that integrated principle of Divinity.

Our great Rishis (saints) performed intense penance and spent their lives in search of God. Finally, they said, Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam Adityavarnam Tamasa Parastat (I have visualised the Supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond Tamas – the darkness of ignorance). You can also see God. God is not residing somewhere in Kailasha or Vaikuntha; these places are like branch offices of God. His head office is situated in your heart only.

Attain God through Love

You do not need a lantern to see the moon. The moon can be seen by its own light. God's form is love, and He can be known and attained only by means of love. Without knowing the principle of Divinity, people claim that they are in search of God. Jnana (knowledge) reveals itself only when ignorance is destroyed. What is Samsara? It is not merely husband, wife and children. It is the feeling of mine and thine. Man has emanated from the Supreme Divine principle. But he is born in this Samsara (worldly life) again and again due to ignorance and desires. Anger is the result of desires.

Human body is like an iron safe of little value. But it contains the most precious jewel of Divinity. What is the use of clinging to the physical frame, forgetting God within? The iron safe has to be opened using the key of discrimination. The safe opens when the key is turned to the right, and is locked when it is turned to the left. Turning of the

key towards right implies attachment with Divinity and detachment from the mundane world. How can man attain God when he has body attachment?

Here is a small story. The husband and wife were sleeping in their room at night. Six thieves entered the house. The wife was awake, while the husband was in slumber. The wife cautioned the husband that thieves had entered the house, but the husband, who was in a slothful state, said, "Yes, I know". "The thieves have opened the iron safe," she said again. The lazy husband turned from one side to the other and said again, "I know". The wife said, "Look, they are running away with the iron safe with valuables". The husband said confidently, "Don't worry, the key of the safe is with me"! The wife could only lament at the foolishness of the husband. In this story, the husband stands for Jiva (individual soul), wife for awareness, house for body and thieves for six inner enemies of man – desire, anger, greed, passion, arrogance and jealousy. After having realised that the most precious Divinity is there within you, why don't you endeavour to experience it?

Use Gross Body to Realise Divinity

Our great Rishis (saints) performed intense penance and spent their lives in search of God. Finally, they said, *Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam Adityavarnam Tamasa Parastat* (I have visualised the Supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond Tamas – the darkness of ignorance). You can also see God. God is not residing somewhere in Kailasha or Vaikuntha; these places are like branch offices of God. His head office is situated in your heart only. Purity and piousness are naturally present in you. God is behind the

curtain of Tamas. This curtain of Tamas has to be removed. Tamas makes good appear as bad and bad as good. It shows sacred things as unholy and unsacred. Rajas (passion) aggravates Tamas (sloth). One is filled with pride when one's wish is fulfilled, but gets dejected and blames God when it is not fulfilled. Tamas and Rajas are siblings of the same mother. Who is this mother? Ajnana (ignorance) is the mother. The moment Sujnana (spiritual knowledge) is born, Ajnana dies. On the one hand, it is the time for birth related rituals or celebrations; and on the other, obsequies related to death. Human body is a combination of loathsome blood, bones and flesh. But it houses pious and pure Atma. Therefore, this body has to be protected, and should not be neglected. In order to achieve the supreme goal of life, the mundane body has to be nurtured carefully, in a balanced manner. Our body's normal temperature is 98.4°F. Its higher or lower temperature spells danger. When blood pressure goes up or down the optimum level, it is an indication of disease. Same is the case with eyesight. All such parameters can be maintained well when you observe limits with regard to food and other habits. Spiritual pursuits progress only in a healthy body. The subtle Divinity can be realised with the help of this gross body.

So many of you are sitting in this room at Kodaikanal. You are directly seeing the shape of this gathering. When you go back to Delhi or the place you reside, this gathering is no more before your eyes. But when you recollect, its picture will come before your mind. The experience at Kodaikanal pertains to Sakara (form); and its recollection pertains to Nirakara (formless) state. So, the Sakara helps you in grasping the principle of the Nirakara. It



is an empty claim when somebody says that he is meditating on the Nirakara principle. One can easily grasp Divinity by developing love towards a particular form (Sakara).

Are we bothered about all that we see in the world? No. But we are worried about people or things we consider as related to us. Before your marriage, you did not know anything about your wife or her problems.



It is necessary to know the nature of the body. By restricting its negative aspects and promoting positive aspects, one can easily progress on the path of spirituality. In fact, there is nothing more simple than spirituality.

Many people go to places of pilgrimage with much pomp, wearing costly ornaments and fine clothes. Naturally, thieves abound these places. Once a rich man set out on a pilgrimage. A thief saw this rich man carrying a bag of money. Wishing to steal

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But a few moments after the marriage, you get worried when she gets a headache. You will even apply leave for her sake. It is because you developed attachment towards her. Life is a play of the mind along with its attachments and detachments. You have suffering due to attachment. When you are able to give up attachment, all your problems will vanish.

the bag by con, the thief approached him, pretending to be a good guide. All through the day, they travelled together, and at night they halted in a hotel. They were sleeping in side by side beds. In the middle of the night, the thief saw the businessman going to the toilet. He thought it was the right time to steal the bag of money. The thief searched for the bag all over the room. He was disappointed



because he could not find it. The reason was that the businessman had kept his bag right under the pillow of the thief. The thief went on searching without knowing that it was under his own pillow. The businessman could save his money by his intelligence. One should have intelligence, but misuse of intelligence can result in sorrow as in the case of this thief. The thieves of desire, anger, greed, etc., are present within us. The ignorant one is not aware of it. People are interested in searching faults of others, while ignoring their own grave mistakes and shortcomings. To search others faults is a vicious trait. To search one's own faults is a sacred trait. Valuables are within us not outside. Search truth within you.

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

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

(Telugu Poem)

Experience Bliss and Share it with others

Dear Students!

Remember that your body is God's gift; and it belongs to God. You should try to understand the nature of the body and learn to follow the commands of God. Who is responsible for your body? It is your parents. A pot is made by the potter. The potter is the maker of the pot. Your blood, food, head and money have all come from your parents. Some students tend to ignore their parents when they grow up and attain some high position. You must have gratitude and respect for them, considering them at par with God. *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava* (revere your mother and father as God).

Even as a young man, Chaitanya was always immersed in Krishna consciousness. One day, his mother Sachi Devi told him, "Dear Chaitanya! Your devotion to God is laudable indeed. But you should not ignore your mother's desire, as your blood came from me. I wish that you get married". Respecting his mother's desire, Chaitanya got married. Chaitanya went all over Bengal, singing Krishna's name in ecstatic joy along the streets, using cymbals and a drum as accompanying instruments. God wanted to test him. Some of the people were averse to his singing. One day, someone snatched cymbals from his hands. Chaitanya said to himself that it was an act of Krishna, meant for his own good. He continued with his singing, using drum. The next day, his drum was also snatched. Chaitanya reasoned that Krishna did not like the use of external instruments and that He liked the inner feelings as cymbals and the inner voice as drum. Nothing could disrupt his intense devotion for Krishna.

Likewise, Radha also felt in her ecstasy of devotion that Krishna came to her house and knocked at the door. The next moment she laughed and told herself that the entire universe was His house. Where was the question of knocking at the door?

*The whole universe is the Lord's abode,
Where then is the front door for that mansion?*

*Play on the life strings of your body,
Offer yourself at His feet and shed tears of joy,*

*See heaven in that experience, oh Jiva!
That is the main entrance to the Lord's abode.*

(Telugu Song)

continued on page 15...



TAKE FORWARD THE MISSION OF BHAGAVAN BABA

Venkaiah Naidu

Vice President of India

I AM EXTREMELY FORTUNATE TO be with all of you on the eve of the 92nd Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the occasion of launching of Sri Sathya Sai Archives today. People who have seen Bhagavan Baba in their lifetime, they can cherish their memories. But life is long, it flows on, it goes on. For those who were not fortunate to have His personal Darshan, this archives will be really very useful. In fact, this archives will be useful for hundreds and thousands of years for the devotees, for the people across the globe, to have reminiscences of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. That is why I feel it is a pious responsibility taken up by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust ably guided by Prof. Venkataraman and Prof. Sudhir Bhaskar and other technicians who have volunteered their wisdom and knowledge to take up this project. History is written undoubtedly but Sathya Sai has created history, that has to be written by somebody.

Bhagavan Baba's Mission of Love and Service

Information in this modern age where we are all moving with the information technology (IT) has become the new beauty. So, it has become part of our duty to make the country and mankind mighty by using it properly. This archives is information with confirmation because I always believe information with confirmation is more powerful than ammunition. To give Jnana, remove Ajnana and to pass on the



Sri Venkaiah Naidu lighting the lamp to inaugurate Sri Sathya Sai Archives.

information to future generations is really a great initiative which has been taken up by the Trustees. I would like to really compliment the scientists, technicians and the Trustees for getting this noble work done, that too in a beautiful place. I was filled with joy when I came here amidst chanting of Vedas, and also to be amidst devotees who have come from different parts of the globe. I had the fortune of meeting some of them and getting introduced to them. They are all people from various parts of the globe, who are all devotees of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and also intelligentsia from our country including Justice Venkatachaliah. All these great people have made it to this occasion. Tomorrow is the Birthday of Bhagavan



Baba, but I am deprived of attending the celebration here because I have already committed myself to a convocation at some other place. When Sri Rathnakar informed me, I felt really sorry that I am deprived of an opportunity of being present on the historic occasion. Later, I myself informed them if they could accommodate me, I would come one day before and be present here, function or no function is no problem, having the glimpse of devotees is having the Darshan of Sri Sathya Sai.

I recollect the first time I came here along with Sri Lal Krishna Advani and then met Swami for the first time in my life. Swami was moving around. When He came to Sri Advani, he introduced me to Swami. Swami said, "No, I know Venkaiah Naidu". Then He asked me, "How is your health"? I was really surprised because I had some health problems but how Swami came to know of it since I never came to see Him. Then He said, "Do not have tension, move on, things will be easy. God bless you". This is the advice He has given. I have the emotional feeling to any cause which is dear to my heart. I always used to be on the move. Of course, I have a different responsibility now. Some of my friends are very happy that I have become Vice President. When I asked them why, they said, "At least now you will take some rest, and your health will be taken care of". I said, "I have given GPA of my health to the Lord. Whatever He decides, it will go accordingly". I have the habit of meeting people, greeting people, talking with people, working with people. That gives me immense pleasure because our Puranas, our Itihasas, our Gurus always say, "Manava Seva is Madhava Seva". The essence of Sathya Sai Baba's teachings is simple – love, affection. You meet Him, half

of your problems are solved without hearing anything from Him. Hear Him, then the other problems are also solved. So, the love and affection He has given to society and the message He has given is, we are all one and we must involve ourselves in the service of mankind. Love, affection, service bring about peace. Peacefully living together, that is the life and message of Sri Sathya Sai, and we are really blessed to have it.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba is a loving God to His devotees, a universal teacher and humanitarian to others. He has inspired millions of people across the globe to actively participate in service of humanity. We don't have any example in the recent past in the history of a person influencing this many number of people in so many countries. And even now, though Swami has reached His abode, still His teachings are practised in 135 countries and people are involving in service. Even today, service goes on with the blessings of Swami. Why we celebrate all this is to give inspiration to others and also to motivate them. He was a great transformational leader, transforming the lives of people, transforming the minds of people. That is the need of the hour, particularly in the present situation of the world, transformation of the people to the original values, to the great traditions.

India is the Land of Spirituality

Friends, I always feel proud that I am born in this great country, a country which has got thousands of years of civilisation. Taking inspiration from our forefathers, from our culture, we must move on. We have seen history, we have read history. Many countries came and occupied other countries, including our country. They looted us some time, they cheated us also; they took



to India, India's GDP was 27% of the world. Now we are struggling hard to reach 7% and 8%. But the inspiration that India gives to the people across the globe is invaluable. People feel India is the spiritual headquarter of the world, and here is a spiritual leader who has given us the quintessence of spirituality. He also transformed the physical landscape of Puttaparthi. We saw how Puttaparthi was earlier and how it has now become a prominent place in the world map. Thanks to Baba's blessings, this small village has become a global, vibrant, spiritual retreat. I have no hesitation in saying this. He transformed the villagers' lives through the provision of drinking water. He demonstrated how values can be inculcated through education, and how healthcare can be delivered to the poor. Healthcare, education, water, these are the basic requirements for any civilisation to flourish. And Swami with His foresight, with His vision has focused on this and motivated people across the country and the globe to serve their fellowmen. He has, in fact, done such a commendable job which even governments could not do. I am particularly impressed by the service given to the poor. And secondly drinking water is the major source. Life without water is not possible.

More than anything else, I can tell you very frankly, before coming to Puttaparthi earlier, I was not a devotee. After coming here, I saw the transformation that Swami has brought about in students, particularly their discipline, their hard work and their orientation in Bharatiya Parampara (Indian traditions) and values which He has inculcated in thousands and lakhs of students. That is a very great service Baba has done to the cause of education. His teachings emphasise truth, love, peace.

right conduct and non-violence. That is the message of His life. There can be no progress without peace. If there is tension, there can be no attention, individually and as a country also. The service activities of Sathya Sai Baba's organisation that has worked in the national spirit are truly commendable. It is heartening to note that the clarion call of Sri Sathya Sai Baba has motivated people across the world to form service organisations in about 125 to 130 countries to serve the underprivileged and the needy. Our Sastras, our Puranas always tell this. We all feel proud of our culture and heritage.

I can tell you, the Indian culture is so great among all the cultures. That is why this civilisation has been able to survive. We have heard about Babylonian, Greek, Egyptian and Roman civilisations. But what happened to those civilisations? Indian civilisation was able to survive because it believes in universal brotherhood. This country has no history of attacking any other country. We believe in "Sarve Jana Sukhino Bhavantu" (all people should be happy). We talk about secularism. Our Constitution also did not have secularism initially, but it is strong in India because it is in the DNA of all Indians, irrespective of sex, caste, creed, religion and region. We feel proud of our culture, our heritage. This is the central point of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings and His life. He established super speciality hospitals, general hospitals, mobile hospitals, the four campuses of deemed to be university described by the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) as the crest jewel of the Indian university education system.

Service Activities of the Central Trust

Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust under the divine guidance of Bhagavan Baba has



provided clean drinking water to millions of people in 700 villages in Anantapur district. Besides, many projects were undertaken in Medak and Mahbubnagar districts of Telangana, a project to modernise the Kandaleru reservoir near my native place, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, and a canal from Kandaleru to Poondi reservoir in Tamil Nadu, the Telugu Ganga drinking water project to the city of Chennai. These are all some of the small examples; there are many more. The service activities in the field of education, healthcare, providing safe drinking water, and all other free services taken up by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust under the guidance of Sri Sathya Sai Baba are having a great impact on society in India and humanity worldwide.

Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust has been carrying on the service activities started by Sri Sathya Sai Baba in the same spirit they were created. What is the respect we can show to Baba? Praying here? Coming and offering garlands? Or erecting a statue? Or having the photo in our house? The real tribute to Baba is: follow His teachings and preachings. Serve the people. The greatest salutation is to carry forward the service activities to people. I am happy that the Trust and Trustees are wedded to the cause and are doing it in a very ideal and exemplary manner, with the same spirit with which He has given to them. He is the embodiment of selfless love and His life is a saga of selfless love for humanity. Baba served all humanity irrespective of caste, creed, religion and region. He practised the unity of all faiths which is summarised in the statement:

There is only one religion, the religion of love

There is only one language, the language of the heart

There is only one caste, the caste of humanity

There is only one God and He is omnipresent.

This is what Baba said. He always exhorted people to do selfless service. He said: *Hands that help are holier than lips that pray*. It is such a powerful, meaningful and thoughtful statement. Our people also in their conversations say, don't pay lip service. It means we have to do service by hands. In fact, it is the grand Indian tradition of serving everyone as divine and therefore serving human being is considered serving God.

If you eat your roti, it is natural; it is Prakriti (nature). If you snatch away the bread of other fellow and eat it, that is Vikriti (distortion). If you give some of your bread to helpless people, that is called Samskriti (culture). This is the essence of Indian culture.

Friends, I need not explain or elaborate further. I am delighted that the Trust has completed the project to supply drinking water to another 118 villages in Anantapur district. It is also constructing houses, getting involved in disaster relief operations, like during Hudhud in Visakhapatnam and cyclone in Chennai. Around 100 Sathya Sai Schools set up by devotees all over India are being provided financial assistance. The Divine Inspiration provided by Sri Sathya Sai Baba continues to drive the Trust to undertake new initiatives.

Sri Sathya Sai Archives

I would like to call upon all the devotees to take the message of Baba forward, take advantage of His teachings and preachings and pass them on to others. I was extremely happy to inaugurate Sri Sathya Sai Archives today. In His lifetime, Sri Sathya Sai Baba



had written several books, addressed devotees thousands of times in thousands of forums all over India, written letters personally and given messages to people of all walks of life. Many of these teachings are available in different formats, both audio and visual. Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust has collected these and preserved them for posterity, so that they will be available to the seekers of knowledge in the years to come. There is a veritable treasure house of 7,000 manuscripts, 9,000 audio cassettes, 5,50,000 films, 5,000 CDs and DVDs, 10,000 video tapes of about 1,800 hours and 1,50,000 photos. It is amazing that all these were collected with the blessings of Baba. These can be used by researchers and those who want to study the message of Baba. A state-of-the-art archives centre has been established as per the international standards in Prasanthi Nilayam for this purpose.

This archives centre, one of its kind in the country, is built on multiple levels with custom designed special vaults. The building has inner and outer shelves with sterile corridors, high level of dust control and robust security system. I am told the system can ensure the preservation of archived material for hundreds of years. When I saw this, I was enquiring from Prof. Venkataraman, what about India's original constitution, whether he can give helping hand to preserve it in its original form, because constitution is like Veda to us. These items have been digitised and kept in archives building. This should facilitate preservation of content in electronic form and help propagate the message of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Baba was a great spiritual leader who distilled the essence of the Indian philosophical heritage and conveyed it in a

very simple but effective way to the masses. As the great sage Narada describes a divine person, he not only navigates the ocean of life, but also helps others to cross it. That is life. He used to address the devotees as Paramatma Swarupulara. This very word fills you with joy, that you are also an incarnation of God. He used to very affectionately write letters to devotees saying, Nayana (my dear)! That is our culture. He said, if you lift your hand to serve, to help, to console and to encourage another man, you are lifting it for God because in every man, there is God. He also said, service is worship and each act of service is like a flower placed at the feet of God. For Him, selfless service to humanity is the essence of devotion. This echoes the concept of devotion that Narada gave us in his Bhakti Sutras. This unconditional sublime love can transform human beings into devotional souls, serving God through service to humanity.

This is the grand ideal set by Baba before us, and He demonstrated it throughout by His speeches, actions and life. It is the same spirit and the eternal flame He has kindled in us making our lives more meaningful. I invoke Baba's gracious blessings on the Trust and all of us around the world so that we can lead fulfilled lives. May we follow the path of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema that He has shown us! May we commit ourselves to work as Sri Sathya Sai guides us for the progress of humanity with love, compassion, right conduct and trustworthiness! Namaskar. Jai Hind.

– **From the Inaugural Address of Sri Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India on the occasion of the inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Archives at Prasanthi Nilayam on 22nd November 2017.**



From our Archives

FILL YOUR HEART WITH PURE LOVE

TAKE REFUGE IN GOD

STUDENTS! YOU MUST UNDERSTAND that the Sankranti festival has come to remind you of your latent potentialities.

People look forward to many worldly benefits also from this sacred festival. It is also celebrated as a day, when a sacred bull is taken from house to house, while the owner recites the Ramayana story. The festival is also a joyous occasion for the young folk. The Sankranti festival is more important than any other festival because it is the day when the newly married son-in-law visits the home of his bride and is entertained lavishly.

From ancient times, such festivals have been a source of joy to the people of Bharat. Alas! Such festivals have gone and the people have taken to purely worldly pleasures. Of what avail are these pleasures? They are artificial. People have forgotten the heart and lost their peace in the bargain.

Fill your hearts with love. That love should be pure and genuine. Today mutual courtesies have become artificial and insincere. Students should cultivate selfless love as one of the basic human values. Position, wealth and strength may come and go. Only divine love is permanent. Love is God. God is Love. That is the truth irrespective of nationality, race or religion.



Develop Forgiveness, Forbearance and Detachment

Develop the quality of Kshama (forgiveness) and refrain from harshness in speech. Sai is the example for you in this regard. All sorts of people indulge in calumny and criticism. Swami remains totally unaffected. Why should I follow their example? I must follow My own way. If I follow another, I am a slave. Therefore, I never follow another's ways. I adhere firmly to what I deem as good.

It is an auspicious coincidence that today you have both the prize distribution function and holy festival of Sankranti. On this doubly blessed day, you have to enjoy the sweetness of this combination, like the mixture of sugar and milk, and pledge yourselves to lead a dedicated life. The Upanishads have described the Lord as verily sweetness itself – *Raso Vai Sah*. You have Karunarasa (the sweet essence of kindness) in you. You are also filled with compassion and peace. Luckily you are free from Shokarasa (grief). You are free from bad qualities. Do not let them in. Foster the spirit of kindness. Treat life as a great game and be victorious in it by leading an ideal life.

This is what you have to achieve. Therein lies your true human worth. Human life does

not consist of getting married, bringing forth children and being caught up in that endless round. They are the routine of worldly existence. There is nothing wrong in it, but it should not be your ideal. Whatever you may do in your ordinary life, base it on ideals.

In the army, people are assigned different duties. But two things are common to everyone: parade (drill) and use of the gun. Likewise, two things are essential for students: Prema (love) and Thyaga (sacrifice). Adhere to these two ideals. Love all. Be prepared for any kind of sacrifice. Without the spirit of sacrifice, life has no meaning. For the sake of helping others or for promoting the welfare of society, you must be ready even to give up your lives. To realise God, continually yearn for Him. You must constantly pray for the opportunity to experience God. Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to feel sad if he did not have the vision of the Mother on any day. Pine for God at all times. When you get God's grace, all the planets will be in your favour. You must ceaselessly try to win God's grace. Never give up the search. Do your duty and God's grace will follow. Pray from the depth of your heart for the well-being of all people.

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

...continued from page 8

She regarded her veins as strings of music; and she considered herself present in Vaikuntha with ecstatic tears trickling down her cheeks. Who is Radha? This Dhara (Nature) itself took birth as Radha. Dhara Aradhana (continuous worship) is the Adhar (basis) for Radha. She was in constant contemplation of Krishna. She

had no attachment to her body. She had attachment to Krishna alone.

This kind of ideal has to be emulated by our students. Always keep the heart pure. Experience bliss and share it with others. That is real life.

– **Bhagavan's Discourse at Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 21st April 1992.**



Christmas Celebrations

THE TRUE SPIRIT OF Christmas was witnessed when devotees from overseas countries presented a number of music and cultural programmes at Prasanthi Nilayam. The theme of this year's Christmas celebrations was "God is Love, God is Light, Live in Love and Light". This theme was given prominence in all the Christmas programmes held for three days, from 24th to 26th December 2017. The entire township of Prasanthi Nilayam wore a festive look on this occasion with traditional Christmas decorations which included Christmas trees, stars and banners. Rows of glittering lights on Sai Kulwant Hall, Yajur Mandir and other buildings presented an enchanting spectacle at night.



International Christmas Choir.

December 2017. The choir composed of 82 men from 26 countries and 240 women from 35 countries suffused the entire milieu with sacredness of Christmas with soulful Christmas carols which included "So this is Christmas", "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen", "Mary Did you Know?", "Love Never Fails", "Adagio", "Love Embraces all" and "Hevenu Shalom Aleichem" (May Peace be upon you!).

The first programme of the celebrations was Christmas carols presented by the International Christmas Choir on 24th

The first programme on the Christmas morning, 25th December 2017, was the rendition of Christmas carols by overseas



devotees from 6.30 a.m. to 7.00 a.m. led by the Australian devotees. This most elevating presentation of Christmas carols on the Christmas morning surcharged the entire milieu with spiritual vibrations.

The next programme began at 8.20 a.m. with violin orchestra by the Primary School



Violin orchestra by Primary School students.

students who rendered a couple of Christmas carols. This was followed by an excellent



Band music display by Institute students.

display of band music by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. What followed next was a delightful mix of illuminating dialogues and uplifting songs by the students. The Christmas carols presented by them included "We Wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year", "We Welcome you Today", "We Pray we Pray", "Let's Pray to God of Love". As the Bhajans started after this, Christmas cakes were offered at the Samadhi of Bhagavan by devotees and students. The morning

programme came to a close with Arati at 10.00 a.m.

The evening programme started at 5.00 p.m. with Children's Nativity Procession coming to Sai Kulwant Hall from Yajur Mandir, the abode of Bhagavan Baba. The



Nativity procession of children in Sai Kulwant Hall.

children dressed in costumes from the time of Jesus depicted the birth of Jesus and moved slowly to the front of the hall to offer their salutations at Bhagavan's Samadhi.

Sri John Behner, a member of Christmas Committee, then introduced the guest speaker, Prof. Leonardo Carvajal, a senior diplomat of Colombia serving in their Embassy of Thailand. The eminent speaker narrated his experiences of Bhagavan's Divinity and stated how Bhagavan as a universal teacher and reformer had transformed people all over the world and helped man to attain the goal of human life.

The next programme of the evening was the International Children's Choir presented by about 50 boys and girls from 12 countries. Beginning with a prayer song in Sanskrit, the children sang in all 14 songs in Sanskrit, English, Latin, Yiddish and African languages which transported the listener to a higher plane. Some of the songs they rendered were: "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen", "Little Boy", "This Little





Christmas carols by International Children's Choir.

Light of Mine", "I will Follow Him", "African Noel", "All you Need is Love".

The last item of the programme was the screening of Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, in which Bhagavan related the story of child Jesus who went to a temple to listen to the talk of the priests while his parents searched him outside in the fair in Jerusalem. Man, Bhagavan added, should look within and realise his real nature. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, "Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam". Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

The programme on 26th December 2017 began with a brief talk of Sri Tom Lahey, Chairman of the International Christmas Committee who narrated how Bhagavan saved him twice when he met with accidents. Offering gratitude to Bhagavan for the opportunity to celebrate Christmas at Prasanthi Nilayam, the distinguished speaker thanked the Central Trust and groups of devotees from various countries who organised various events

of the celebrations. After this, Ms. Asya Sorshneva, a classical violinist from Russia, gave a brief talk describing how she longed to play for Swami since her childhood and so this opportunity to play at Prasanthi Nilayam was a dream come true. She then presented an enrapturing violin concert.

The grand finale of the Christmas celebrations was provided by the drama "The Ultimate Gift of God's Love" which was



A scene from the drama "The Ultimate Gift of God's Love".

performed by the students of Sathya Sai Education Programmes across Australia. More than 100 students came together to perform this drama which highlighted the importance of love and compassion in man's life and unity of all creation as taught by Jesus and Bhagavan Baba. Noble theme, good direction, meaningful dialogues and excellent multimedia support brought forth the real meaning of celebrating Christmas and made the drama an excellent presentation. With this, Christmas celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion.

The celebration of Christmas should not conclude with some carols, tableaux and made-up trees and Santa Claus. It must be soaked in the resolution to practise at least a few of the lessons Jesus taught us. The very first need is faith in God and in our own Divine Nature.

– Baba

VEDAS ARE THE ROOT OF DHARMA

E.S.L. Narasimhan

Governor, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana



OM SRI SAI RAM. DO WE understand the meaning of this salutation? To me it simply means, Bhagavan dwells in every one of us and every one of us resides in Bhagavan. So, once we have said Om Sri Sai Ram, I don't

the root of Dharma. If the roots are damaged, the tree will be harmed. Therefore, it is our responsibility to keep these roots alive. In this context, this conference on Vedas and multi-faith unity is singularly important for us.



Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan releasing the book "Sri Sathya Sai Vedamrutham".

think we need to address anyone in any other way in this gathering, however big or small he is because we have addressed the Ultimate. That is why I chose the salutation Om Sri Sai Ram.

Understand the Glory of the Vedas

As I stand before this great gathering, I am reminded of Purusha Suktam which says, *Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam...* (I have visualised the Supreme Being...). That Veda Purusha is our Bhagavan Himself. *Vedokhilo Dharma Moolam* (the Veda is verily the basis of Dharma). The Vedas are

After all, what did Swami tell us about the Vedas? Decades ago, Swami said *Veda Ghoshanam* (recitation of Vedas) will once again emerge in this land and today we see it happening. This was Swami's vision. Bhagavan once said, Veda is like *Kalpa Vriksha*, a tree which gives whatever we desire. However, in order to protect it, we have to constantly recite Vedas. That is the water which helps the tree to grow. Your Sadhana is the fertilizer for the tree. It is only with Adhyayana (study) and Sadhana that Vedas will bear the fruits of Dharma. *Veda Samrakshana, Vidwat Poshana* and *Dharma Sthapana* are essential today. And that is what Prasanthi Nilayam is organising today. In today's programme, I see Bhagavan's vision becoming a reality. He once said, "My task is to open your eyes to the glory of the Vedas. Vedic injunctions when put into practice will yield promised results".

What is Veda? Veda is that which enlightens and expounds a subject. In fact, when we talk of Bhagavan's teachings, it is like the Vedas. Why do I say that? It is basically, *Asatoma Sadgamaya, Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya, Mrityorma Amritamgamaya* (lead me from ignorance to knowledge, from

darkness to light, from death to immortality). That is what Swami's teachings are all about. And that is Veda for me. In fact, Swami's teachings are fifth Veda. This is what I would say today. It is basically opening our eyes to the reality. Vedas are for the entire humanity. Vedas make no distinction. Imagine how nice it would be to live in a world where there is no distinction of religion, caste, creed, etc.

Share the Knowledge of Vedas with others

The Vedas are *Apourusheya* (not authored by any person); they were communicated by the word of mouth from generation to generation. That is India's greatness. Human memory as compared to the artificial intelligence that we are talking about today, is far superior. In fact, recently when I was talking about artificial intelligence in one forum, I said, artificial intelligence as an add-on facility, as a facilitator, is good. But if it is to substitute human brain, we will be producing a generation of brain dead youngsters. It can be used only as a facilitator and not as a substitute. Vedas today are alive because from generation to generation they have come by the word of mouth. They were not written. They have come from memory. This is the greatness of Indian mind.

Today, unfortunately, a stage has come where we have to look outside the country for somebody to tell us about our own greatness. This is what I feel very sad about. If somebody tells us yoga is good for us, we start practising yoga. If someone tells Pranayama is good, we go and pay 15,000 rupees to learn Pranayama. Why should we wait for someone to come and tell us about the greatness of Indian heritage? There is nothing that is not available in Vedas.

from astronomy, astrology, medicine to technology... you name it, it is there in the Vedas. It is out of our ignorance that we think what we do not know does not exist. Ignorance of knowledge is taken as non-existence of knowledge. That is our biggest problem today. Knowledge comes to be only when it is known. Knowledge gets to live when it is shared. This is Swami's teaching. Share everything. Share happiness, share joy, share sorrow. Unless you share, it will remain where it is. Only when it is shared, it expands.

For example, thousands have gathered for today's conference. If you people go back and share with others what happened here, your joy and your knowledge will get multiplied. If you don't share, you don't get anything. What is the greatness of such a gathering today? Individual recitation of Vedas is different from collective chanting; it has a different vibration. There is relationship between the vibrations the Vedas produce and the effect on our human system. You spend half an hour today listening to the chanting and you find yourself a changed person, at least for that time. That is the power of *Veda Ghoshana*.

Bharat is considered to be Veda Bhumi (land of Vedas), as it is the birthplace of the Vedas. We have a tradition when Bharatiyas held Vedic scholars in high esteem. Today we need to learn to respect the men of learning and men of eminence. It is these men who are keeping the country and humanity together today. *Paropakarah Punyaya Papaya Parapeedanam* (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). Bhagavan said, Help Ever, Hurt Never. He gave very simple teachings so that masses can easily understand. His teachings are essentially meant for simple



masses. These are not intended for people who may think they know everything. He taught that humanity is one family and hence there should be love for each other. *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the whole world is one single family). Swami is the spiritual master who inspired humanity to lead a life of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa (truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence). Do you require anything more than this? Your knowledge may be very good. You may be able to reach the moon or the Mars. But basically as a human being what you require is only these five qualities. With these qualities, you get peace of mind. When you have peace of mind, the world will not go into pieces.

The Vedas Propound the Unity of Mankind

By following the teachings of the Vedas, we can promote unity in diversity. We must realise that we are today not in Kurukshetra (battlefield) but in Karmakshetra (field of action). Krishna taught *Karmanyevadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana* (you have right only on action, not on its fruit). Action is thy duty and fruit is not thy right. Swami also said, do your duty sincerely and fruit will automatically come to you. Swami started His mission and served mankind without any expectation.

The top of the mountain or the peak is only one. But you may have several paths. There are several paths that take you to the peak of Mount Everest. This is what we have to understand. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanthi* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). God is one, you may call Him by different names. Ultimately, the essence of all religions is to attain liberation. Swami said, "Let the different faiths exist, let

them flourish, let the glory of God be sung in all the languages, in a variety of tunes. That should be the ideal. Respect the differences between the faiths and recognise them as valid as far as they do not extinguish the flame of unity".

The underlying principle is faith. Purna Viswasam. That is enough...faith in humanity, faith in brotherhood, that we are all one. Having been born, all of us have to leave this earth one day. But before that if we can bring about peace and unity, that is what is required. Bhagavan said, "Each should practise his own religion sincerely. A Christian should be a good Christian, a Hindu should be a good Hindu, a Muslim should be a good Muslim. Let each one be a true practitioner of his religion".

Ultimately, you have to be a good human being. Upanishad says, *Isavasyam Idam Sarvam* (the entire universe is permeated by God). By sacrifice, you experience happiness. Look upon others as your own self. Renounce wars. Forsake competition. Give up aggression. Practise restraint. Share your wealth with others. Be kind to others.

This is what Bhagavan taught us in simple language. Unless you are going to share, you cannot have happiness. Harmony amongst the mankind, harmony between the teacher and the taught, harmony in the family, harmony in the world is what Bhagavan taught.

Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu (May all the worlds be happy!).

– **From the Inaugural Address of Sri E.S.L. Narasimhan, Governor of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana at the First Sri Sathya Sai International Veda Conference on 20th November 2017.**



Effulgence of Divine Glory

THE SOURCE OF INEXHAUSTIBLE BLISS

MY FIRST CONTACT WITH SRI Sathya Sai Baba was on 2nd December 1982, but it was only during my second trip to His Ashram a year later that I became convinced of His Divinity. At first, I regarded Him as a prophet and not as God incarnate.

For many years, I was a server during Mass in the Catholic Church and hoped to become a Reverend Teacher one day. My favourite prayer has always been Psalm 20 in the Holy Bible and I am convinced that this prayer, in addition to my past Karma, has contributed greatly to the Lord calling me to His Lotus Feet.

I left Africa for Hong Kong to study Acupuncture, Chinese Medicine and Alternative Therapies and to do medical research into chronic diseases such as epilepsy, diabetes and asthma. These diseases continue to cause problems to both doctors and sufferers. I wished to find a solution to these diseases and I prayed to God for guidance and success. I planned a stopover in India on my return journey. Little did I know then that this was an invitation from God.

In Africa, many people regard India as a mysterious country, full of black magic and occultism. This misconception is being fostered by some Indians who publish articles in African journals and newspapers, claiming to cure chronic illnesses and promising refunds if the disease is not completely eradicated within a short time.

Also, there are Indian films which portray magic and supernatural events. Publicity of this nature has made people suspicious of anyone who visits India.

India Beckons

I wished to go to India to find the truth for myself. Well, fellow Africans and those from other parts of the globe who have the same misconceptions about India, I ask that you reverse your judgement and proceed to the Lotus Feet of our Lord Sai Baba. He is the Creator who has come into the world for our sake. So, let us make use of this rare opportunity.

“I have come to help all men to acquire Sattwic nature. You might have heard people talk about the miracles of My ‘making’ this and ‘giving’ that, of My fulfilling all your wants, of My curing illness. But they are not so important as the Sattwa Guna (serenity and goodness) I appreciate, promote and instil. Of course, I confer on you these boons of health and prosperity, so that you might, with greater enthusiasm and with less interruption, proceed with spiritual practice and exercises.” – Baba

I started making preparation for the journey but unfortunately things did not happen as planned. I had to leave Nigeria for Cameroon to attend my grandmother's funeral and the money proposed for my trip to Hong Kong and India was spent away. However, when the Lord calls, amazing developments take place. Six years ago,

a fortune-teller had told me that I would receive a large sum of money and that when this happened I should give some to her. It came to pass and I found myself with twice the amount I had before leaving Nigeria.

As soon as I arrived in India, I started my research. Before leaving Africa, I had obtained the addresses of various Indian doctors. I visited these doctors to investigate their methods of treatment and to ascertain whether their claims to successful cure were true. I noted that there were not many patients attending their clinics. When I questioned the doctors, all gave the same reply about their methods of treatment. They said, they had been practised by their ancestors from time immemorial. The truth became apparent to me very soon. Most of the advertisements for miracle cures that I had seen in Africa were from money-making, unscrupulous people who misrepresented their country's image for the sake of their selfish interests.

Introduction to Baba

One evening, while in Baroda (now Vadodara) as I was out walking, I suddenly felt something within pulling me towards a clinic. A doctor named S. Dave Janakbala was attending to her patients. As I introduced myself, my eyes fell on a photograph of Baba on the wall. "Who is this man?", I enquired. "He is one of the Indian saints," she replied. My mother's warning about black magic came to my mind. I became uninterested and afraid of involving myself. Dr. Janakbala said that she did not have much faith in many Indian saints, but Sai Baba was exceptional. She told me the story of how she first experienced Baba. While she was walking in the village she fell into a pit and fractured her leg. At the hospital she was told that her leg would have to be

amputated and that she should return in a few days for the operation. Meanwhile, her friend gave her one of Sai Baba's books to read and advised her to pray to Sathya Sai Baba for help.

The day of the operation arrived and Dr. Janakbala was taken straight to the operating theatre where everything was ready. The final preparations were suddenly halted as the theatre was needed for an emergency. There had been a fatal accident. Dr. Janakbala was sent home and told to report again in three days' time. Day and night she continued her prayers to Sai Baba asking Him to help her. When she returned to the hospital three days later, the hospital doctor was astonished to find that the broken bone had set in its normal position. He could not understand how this had happened. That was it. Baba chooses His own time to call, but once He calls nothing can prevent that meeting.

Darshan at Brindavan

The epochal morning arrived. We sat down for Sai Baba's Darshan in the grounds of Brindavan – men on one side and women on the other. At about 9.30 a.m., Baba came out and moved slowly but majestically towards the crowd. He came straight to me and the vibrations nearly knocked me over. Luckily I was seated. He took my letter and materialised some Vibhuti. "Come tomorrow morning for interview," He said.

The next morning, I was in the interview room with three ladies from Nigeria. Baba materialised medallions for the ladies and a silver ring with His picture on it for me. This was followed by a private interview for the ladies and then it was my turn. It was like the father welcoming the prodigal son. Swami was for a long time patting me on the back and repeating "My good boy, My good

boy". My joy knew no bounds. I really felt His grace flowing into me. It was one of the happiest moments of my life.

During the second interview, Baba said that we should worship pictures of God not as pictures but as God. He emphasised that God is in everything – in chairs, articles of clothing, stones, etc. Baba seemed to have read my mind for I found it difficult to worship pictures and statues. I asked Swami what were the necessary steps to prevent rebirth and He replied, "Do away with desires and egoism. See God in all and love all. If you do this, one day you will become one with Me".

At every Darshan, Swami graced my heart with a smile or spoke to me and this continued throughout my first visit. I had planned to spend Christmas 1982 with a friend in Vellore but I returned to Puttaparthi two days before Christmas in time to hear that I had been selected as a representative of the continent of Africa to garland Baba on Christmas Day. After this occasion, Baba stopped people from presenting garlands because too much money was being spent which could be used for other purposes.

What actually convinced me of Sai Baba's divinity was His teachings and His method of imparting those teachings to His devotees.

On one occasion, whilst in Madras (now Chennai), I was supposed to send some money to London for a course on radionic computers. My admission form had arrived late and the closing date was near. Furthermore, all my travellers' cheques were with my friend in Vadodara for security purposes and it would take a number of days to arrange for them to be transferred to Chennai. What was I to do?

During my stay in Puttaparthi, a friend had advised me that Baba's ring would act

as a direct link with Him. Whenever I was in difficulty, I should pray to Him with the aid of the ring. I did just that. Later in the evening when I opened my box to pay for my supper, I found that my dollars had increased! I could post the money for the course. I was left with sufficient money to spend one more month in Chennai. This was my first experience of Sai Baba's power and omnipresence.

The night before my second journey to China and India, my friends were giving me a farewell dinner in a hotel when armed robbers raided the place. They seized money, watches, rings and chains from the hotel guests but we were not touched. My friends were very surprised but I knew it was the grace of Sai Baba that had protected me.

The Transformation

During my second visit to Sai Baba's Ashram, I lost a lot of weight because of the change to vegetarian diet. One evening, I felt a sinking sensation and I thought I was going to faint. I looked around for some vitamins but none of them were found. The next day, Baba called me for an interview. Swami, the doctor of doctors, told me that I had vitamin B complex deficiency. He waved His hand in the air and produced from nowhere a small bottle filled with yellow tablets. Of course, there was no manufacturer's name and address on the bottle. He handed them to me with directions to take a tablet after lunch and one after supper. Within a few days, I was strong enough to continue my Sadhana as usual. Swami had given me the tablets because He knew that I wanted them but inwardly I knew I was receiving cosmic energy directly from Him.

In the West today and particularly in Africa, there is a common belief that man

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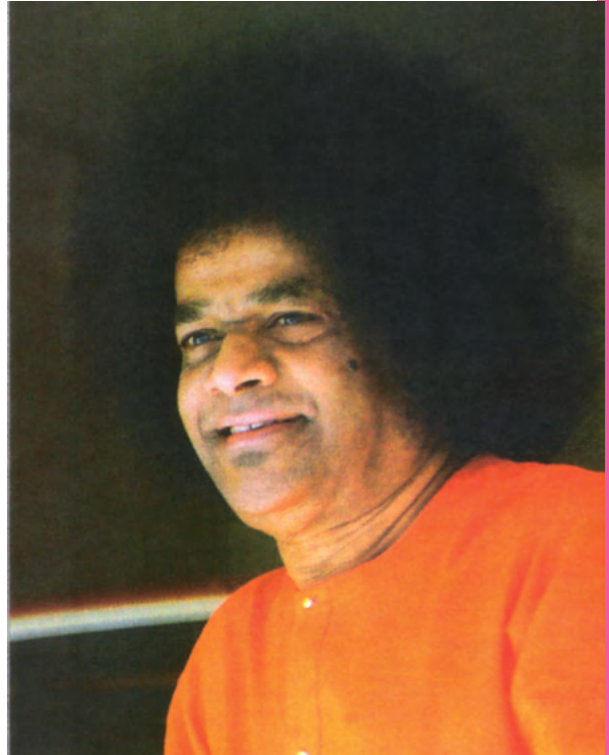
EKAM SATH VIPRAH BAHUDHA VADANTI

G.S.R.C.V. Prasada Rao

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA IS THE Supreme Divine principle of universal energy which walked on earth from 1926 to 2011 in human form. The universal energy (called Bhagavan by Bharatiyas), which has no form and no name, took a form and a name. Sri Sathya Sai Baba's life and works are recorded in various forms like printed books, audio tapes, videos, digital internet material, etc., by very many people and organisations and it is by now quite voluminous. No attempt will be complete to pen down Bhagavan Sri Sathya Baba's Avataric period. The Divine phenomenon can only be experienced by the heart, but the language of the heart has no script, and the mind which can learn many languages and scripts cannot fully understand and comprehend God. Many people describe this greatest phenomenon in many ways in an attempt to fully describe *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names).

This write-up is an attempt to highlight certain aspects of Bhagavan's life and His Avataric period. On almost every aspect that is penned down here, there is a lot of literature available which may be read to know more details of every aspect.

Venkavadhuta's prophecy to Sri Kondama Raju, grandfather of Bhagavan Baba, came true and God chose that family. He incarnated in Puttaparthi as the son of Sri Pedda Venkama Raju and Srimati Easwaramma on 23rd November 1926



and was named Sathyam. Venkavadhuta in his final phase of life was moving around Madakasira, Penukonda areas of Anantapur district. His Samadhi is in Hussainpuram in Pavagada Taluk of Karnataka State (bordering Anantapur district).

Leelas, Mahimas and Upadesh

Right from His childhood (up to 14 years), Sathyam showed signs of spiritual leadership (forming and leading – Pandhari Bhajan group) and Divine Leelas (divine play) with children of His age-group in the village, in schools where He was enrolled and with groups of people who gathered around Him.

Similarly, He showed the example of Seva (service) by participating as a scouts group boy in the village fair at Pushpagiri temple near Kamalapuram, a village in Cuddapah (now Kadapa) district of Andhra Pradesh where He lived with His elder brother Seshama Raju during His school days. Pushpagiri is now a noted religious and tourist centre with memories of Swami's stay. Nearby are Chennakesava temple on a hillock and river Pinakini joined by four minor rivers, namely, Kumudvathi, Bahuda, Mandakini and Papaghni, making Panchaveni Sangam (confluence of five rivers).

He declared at the age of 14 years that He is Shirdi Sai Baba reborn to continue His task of people's welfare and uplift. First 16 years of His life were a phase of Leelas. Next 16 years of His human body sojourn were Mahimas (miracles) phase. When more and more news spread, mostly through word of mouth by people who saw and met Him accidentally or incidentally, the flocking of people around Him started at Puttaparthi from places like Bengaluru and Chennai. Most people came to Him for worldly desires like curing an illness, seeking solutions to their family problems, blessings for good education, lucrative jobs, successful business, professional progress, etc.

In the next stage after 32 years, He adopted Upadesh (teaching and preaching) as His main task while His Leelas and Mahimas also continued. His teachings were down to earth, practical instructions on day-to-day life for all – students, employees, householders, responsible citizens, businessmen, etc. The preaching was on the purpose of human life, spiritual Sadhana, implementation of the maxims, "Love All, Serve All" and "Help Ever, Hurt

Never", conducting Himself in such a way that His life was His message and silently reforming people so that they conduct their life in such a way that their life becomes His message.

The Divine Mission of Service to Mankind

As visitors and devotees swelled in number, gifts and donations, though unsolicited, also started pouring in, for which Swami allowed a juridical body which would receive and hold the wealth and properties for public welfare. Swami never wanted anything for Himself, and throughout His Avataric period, He never had any bank account or property in His name. He declared in His Discourses and writings that He has no legal heirs either from the family where He was born or from the devotees. All donations in kind, cash belong to Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust (a public charitable trust) founded by Him in the year 1972.

Around the same period, Swami advised innumerable enthusiastic devotees, who took to service to society as part of their life activity, to form Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of India to channelise and systematise their Seva work. Today, it is one of the biggest voluntary organisations spread throughout the length and breadth of the country in all the States, all districts, almost all tehsils and so on. Worldwide, in more than 125 countries, there are Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations under the banner of Prasanthi Council.

Mother Easwaramma in her compassion observed and expressed before Swami that people of Puttaparthi were compelled to go to other big villages or towns like Bukkapatnam and Penukonda for schooling and medical aid, and also to fetch drinking water from deep wells with scanty water.



Hence, Swami blessed the people with schools and university, general hospitals and super speciality hospitals as well as drinking water projects. Kindly refer to the abundant literature available on these mega projects of Swami which are all totally free without any bill to the government or people. His benevolence extended beyond the major projects on education, health and drinking water supply to the construction of houses for cyclone victims (Odisha State), relief work relating to earthquakes (Gujarat), Tsunamis (Tamil Nadu), construction of buildings of schools, marriage halls, etc.

He decided to close His Avataric period on earth during His 86th year of worldly sojourn, about a decade earlier than the largely expected age of 96 years. It was a great shock to millions of His devotees the world over and a big jolt to the beneficiaries of His benevolence. However, His Avataric

influence continues as He still inspires and guides people to do Sadhana and Seva, spiritual Sadhana for their Self-realisation and selfless service for public welfare and their own elevation.

The relationship of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba with His devotees is “Heart to Heart” and unique to each individual. So, there cannot be any communicator, mediator or representative of Swami to the devotee. Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust looks after the worldly assets left by Swami and takes proper care to run the institutions like university, super speciality hospitals, Mandir, etc. It tries to provide to spiritual seekers the best exposure to Swami and Swami’s Prasanthi Nilayam for their Sadhana and Self-actualisation.

– The author is a Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam.

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has only one life – that he came from dust and he will return to dust. The tragedy is that people are completely ignorant of the great truths. They do not realise their own divinity nor do they understand the law of Karma (cause and effect). How can we realise the truth about God when everyday we condemn ourselves as sinners. The great spiritual masters understand and use the cosmic laws of nature. These masters have no need of any money we may offer. They can create whatever they need at will. Their only concern is our salvation.

The human body has within itself a most efficient pharmacy capable of healing any disease but we have to learn how to regulate our mental and emotional reactions in order to make the maximum use of this free gift of Nature. Illnesses are caused

more by malnutrition of the mind than the body. “Doctors speak of vitamin deficiency. I will call it vitamin ‘G’ (God) deficiency. The treatment I value most is the repetition of the name of God whilst contemplating His glory and grace. That is the medicine mankind needs,” says Baba.

Today, 23rd November 1985, is the sixtieth birthday of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and a new chapter has begun in His life, millions of people have come from all parts of the world to pay their respect at His Lotus Feet and to receive His blessings. Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the Creator, the Saviour in whom true devotees take rest in everlasting bliss.

– Excerpted from the article of Dr. Nguhi Etienne in the book “Sathya Sai Baba God Incarnate” by Victor Kanu.



Trust in God and Self-confidence Lead to Success

Chinna Katha

DURING THE SECOND WORLD War, Japan bombarded a steamer in which some Indian soldiers were on board. As a result of this bombardment, the steamer sank and many soldiers lost their life. But five of them tried to reach the shore with the help of a lifebuoy.

One of them was beset with great anxiety, disappointment and worry. He said to others, "My death is certain. Some sea monster will swallow me. I will surely die". Saying this, he breathed his last. Another soldier was

Putting the entire burden of their life on God, the remaining two soldiers thought that human effort was also necessary. So, they continued their effort to survive with self-



Two soldiers put their trust in God, did not lose self-confidence and were saved.



Some soldiers lost their life because of their worry and anxiety as well as their lack of self-confidence and faith in God.

also lost in great worry and met his death, saying, "Who will look after my family when I die? Alas! I could not fulfil their needs". The third soldier said, "The insurance papers are with me. It would have been good if I had left them in my house. Now, how will they claim insurance"? Worrying about it in this way, he met his death.

confidence. Meanwhile, seeing a helicopter coming near them, they waved at it for help. The helicopter lifted them up and took them safely to the nearest harbour. The captain of the steamer had conveyed the information of the sinking of the steamer to the officers in the harbour but the helicopter took some time to reach the site of the sinking steamer. There was only a few minutes time between the life and death of the five soldiers. But three of them lost their life because of their lack of trust in God and self-confidence. The remaining two soldiers put their trust in God, maintained their self-confidence, received the needed help at the right time and reached the harbour safely.

The first step of success in any venture is self-confidence.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

TRAINING PROGRAMME IN HUMAN VALUES

MORE THAN 400 TEACHERS came from the State of Kerala to participate in a three-day training programme in Human Values organised by the Institute of Human Values at Prasanthi Nilayam from 1st to 3rd December 2017.

Besides the proceedings of the training programme conducted in Poornachandra Auditorium, two eminent speakers addressed the teachers in Sai Kulwant Hall. The first speaker was Prof. Gopa Kumar, Vice Chancellor, Central University, Kasaragod, Kerala. Speaking on the topic "Higher Education in 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities" on 1st December 2017, the erudite speaker emphasised that higher education should be quality and character-oriented rather than profit-oriented. Training of teachers in human values, he said, was the urgent need of the hour since qualified and trained teachers were the greatest assets for higher education. The second speaker was Sri Jaya Kumar who spoke on the topic "Teacher as Guru, Guru as Teacher" on 2nd December 2017. Elaborating on the difference between a teacher and a Guru, the distinguished speaker observed that transformation, guidance, empowerment of the students and heart-to-heart communication were the hallmarks of a Guru which distinguished him from an ordinary teacher. He exhorted all teachers

to find the innate Guru within to bring about transformation in students.

PILGRIMAGE OF TELANGANA DEVOTEES

More than 1,000 devotees came on a pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam from Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts of Telangana from 9th to 10th December 2017 and presented music and cultural programmes on both the days.

They presented a very elevating programme of devotional songs "Sangeeta Vibhavari" on 9th December 2017, the melody and music of which transported the audience to a higher plane. The songs rendered by them included "Sai Mahadeva Mammu Kapadaga Rava" (Oh Lord Sai! Come to protect us), "Govinda Gopala", "Namo Sathya Sai Baba Namo Sathya Sai", "Narayana Mantram Sriman Narayana Mantram", (the Name of Lord Narayana is the potent Mantra).

On 10th December 2017, Bal Vikas children of these two districts presented




A dance number from the dance presentation "Bangaru Bathukamma".

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NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

U. S. A.

 SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL Medical Conference on Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare and Sathya Sai Global Health Mission was held in Southern



Sathya Sai International Medical Conference, Southern California, U.S.A.

California, U.S.A. on 2nd-3rd September 2017, wherein 400 delegates from 22 countries, including 150 young healthcare professionals, came to participate.

In his inaugural address on 2nd September 2017, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman, Prasanthi Council, pointed out that while most conferences focused on cutting-edge medical technology, medical economics and practice management, this conference was dedicated to understanding the fundamental principles of Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare, which are comprehensive, free, universal, compassionate and preventive healthcare. He elaborated on the life, message and legacy of Bhagavan Baba, the founder of SSIO and several world-class educational and healthcare institutions. This was followed by a short video presentation on the Sathya Sai Global Health Mission, serving the world.

A galaxy of eminent doctors then gave illuminating talks on various aspects of healthcare. They included Dr. Christina Puchalski, Professor of Medicine and Health Sciences, George Washington University School of Medicine, Dr. V. Mohan, a leading diabetic specialist and Member, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Dr. Jyosthna Bhat, a clinical psychologist, Dr. William Martin, Dean of College of Public Health, Ohio State University, Dr. Neelam Desai, Chief of Cardio Thoracic Vascular Surgery (CTVS), Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences and Dr. Soumya Panchanathan, Associate Programme Director, Phoenix Children's Hospital Paediatrics Residency Programme, Arizona.

On the evening of Saturday, 2nd September, nearly 500 guests attended an award ceremony at the Hilton Hotel in Anaheim, wherein awards were conferred upon 14 healthcare professionals and two volunteers by Dr. Narendranath Reddy for their outstanding contributions and long-term dedication to Sathya Sai Global Health Mission and the practice of Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare.

The awardees were: Dr. V. Mohan, Dr. Geetha Kamath, Dr. Chandra Varadachari, Dr. Kathir Nadanachandran, Dr. Neelam Desai, Dr. Rangasami Varadachari, Dr. Hector Castaneda, Dr. Joseph Phaneuf, Dr. Hari Conjeevaram, Dr. Surendra Upadhyay, Dr. Ganesh Yadlapalli, Dr. Venkatraman Sadanand, Dr. Bangaruraju Kolanuvada, Ms. Urvi Widhani, Dr. Yatish Merchant and Sri Pravin Wagh. The lively and highly enjoyable evening concluded with a soul-stirring music programme presented by talented Sathya Sai Young Adults.



The second day of the Sathya Sai International Medical Conference began on 3rd September 2017 with a beautiful interfaith music offering by Sathya Sai Young Adults. In the morning session, a distinguished line-up of speakers addressed the delegates.

The conference concluded with a panel discussion, followed by concluding remarks by Dr. Narendranath Reddy, and a beautiful musical presentation by Young Adults. The delegates left the conference charged with new vigour and enthusiasm to continue the noble work in the healthcare arena, first started by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, six decades ago.

CANADA

Record winter snowfall in 2017 and subsequent heavy rains and flash flooding forced a state of emergency in the city of Montreal. On 5th August 2017, young adults of the Sathya Sai Centre of St. Hubert began providing humanitarian relief at the City of Vaudreuil, which was among the hardest hit areas. The youth spent nine hours filling sandbags at stations set up by the city. Volunteers worked in teams filling the bags of sand and stacking them for home owners who needed them. They also helped build walls to contain and divert rising waters. The experience was emotionally and physically challenging for the volunteers, who also comforted families who lost their homes.

BRAZIL

The Sathya Sai School of Ribeirão Preto, in the State of São Paulo, Brazil, was founded on 31st March 2002, Easter Day, with the blessing of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Classes began in April that year, and the school has blossomed over the past 15 years, providing education in human values to hundreds of students.

The school has received national attention from the educational authorities, due to the exemplary character and conduct of its students and graduates. In June 2017, the Sathya Sai School received a congratulatory message for its 15th year of service from the President of the local government, who cited the human values in the school syllabus as a tool to build the character of students. This formal recognition heralded a new chapter for the school, which seeks to instil human values in the entire local community.

–Sathya Sai International Organisation

BHARAT

Haryana and Chandigarh: A grand function was held on 5th November 2017 to inaugurate the newly-constructed Sri Sathya Sai Seva Kendra at Kurukshetra (Haryana).

The magnificent building of the Seva Kendra contains the main hall, a dispensary, a library and a vocational training centre to



Front view of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Kendra.

conduct Seva activities. A Sarva Dharma Stupa also adorns the premises. While Sri Nimish Pandya inaugurated the main building, Sri Chakravarthi and Sri Rathnakar inaugurated the main hall and Sarva Dharma Stupa. Justice Rajiv Bhalla, Justice Nawab Singh and Sri Ashok Yadav performed the inaugural ceremony of the dispensary, library and vocational centre, respectively.

After this, Bal Vikas children of Kurukshetra district gave a beautiful

performance on the Gitopadesha of Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the Mahabharata war fought on the sacred land of Kurukshetra.

Three speakers addressed the gathering after the welcome address of the State President of Haryana, Sri Subhash Dheer. The first speaker was Sri R.J. Rathnakar who commended the Sai Organisation of Haryana for constructing this beautiful Seva Kendra. Sri K. Chakravarthi also appreciated the Seva activities being conducted by the Sai Organisation of the State. Sri Nimish Pandya appealed to all the devotees to take part in Seva activities more enthusiastically.

In the end, a sumptuous feast was served to all the participants. As part of Narayana Seva, food was served to about 700 Sadhus (mendicants) and blankets were presented to them.

Odisha: A two-day Sadhana Camp was held on 9th and 10th December 2017 at Paradeep, Odisha in which State Presidents, State

Vice Presidents and National Coordinators of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation took part. The theme of the Sadhana Camp was Nine Point Code of Conduct which Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba issued for the entire mankind, and in particular the devotees and members of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. The nine points were explained with PowerPoint Presentations and talks by All India President, Sri Nimish Pandya, National Vice President, Sri N. Ramani and State Presidents of the Sai Organisation. This was followed by talks of a galaxy of speakers which included Sri N. Ramani, Smt. Kamala Pandya and State Presidents of the Sai Organisation.

In conclusion, Sri Nimish Pandya summed up the proceedings and requested the State Presidents, Trust Conveners, State Vice Presidents and National Coordinators to take these Sadhana proceedings to Samithi and Bhajan Mandali level and to all the State and District office bearers.

...continued from page 29

a dance programme entitled “Bangaru Bathukamma” in worship of goddess Bathukamma. Beginning their programme with a dance in praise of Lord Ganesh at 5.00 p.m. the Bal Vikas children, both boys and girls, presented an array of scintillating, colourful and vibrant dances for nearly 40 minutes which enraptured one and all. Bhajans followed next and came to a close with Arati at 6.00 p.m.

PILGRIMAGE OF SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT DEVOTEES

More than 1,800 devotees came from Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh on a two-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam and presented an inspiring dance drama on 17th December 2017. Performed by



A dance number by the Bal Vikas children of Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

the Bal Vikas children and youth of this district, the drama highlighted the glory of Indian Culture and Spirituality as also the lofty spirit of patriotism of its people. Noble theme, excellent direction and scintillating dances of children made the drama an impressive presentation.





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Bachelor of Performing Arts (Music)

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Prospectus and Application forms: Prospectus and Application forms can be obtained from 1st January 2018 onwards till 31st January 2018 either from the office of “Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi” by paying cash ₹100/- (Timing: 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. / 2.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m. on all days except Sundays and holidays) (or) can be downloaded from our website: www.ssshss.edu.in The downloaded filled in application should be sent along with a Demand Draft drawn in favour of “Principal Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School” on State Bank of India, Puttaparthi Branch (Code no: 02786) for the value of ₹100/- with self-addressed stamped ₹ 10/- cover (size: 15 cm x 24 cm). The last date for submission of filled in application form will be 15-02-2018.

– *Principal*

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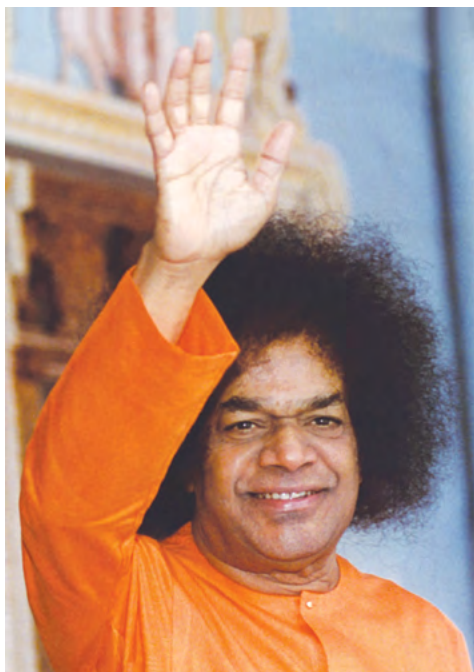
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The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

- 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 Bhagawan Baba's monthly spiritual journal - Sanathana Sarathi - in English and Telugu languages. Since 2011, e-version of the magazine is also released simultaneously and is available in the popular Interactive PDF format on www.sanathanasarathi.org.
- 3) Maintaining a reporting channel www.theprasanthireporter.org, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
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Christmas programme by Institute students.



Programme of devotional songs "Sangeeta Vibhavari" by Telangana devotees.

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Turn the mind towards the objective world, you are bound; turn it towards God, you are on the road to liberation.

The mind refuses to be calm even for a fraction of a second. When a continuous shower of stones is falling on the waters of a lake, how can the surface be calm and unruffled? So, too, man is throwing stone after stone of desires on the Manasa Sarovar, the calm lake of the Manas or mind.

— *Baba*

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