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*"Give due respect to your parents;
be grateful to them. But reserve
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Then she will surely understand
your mind and heart."*



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Forthcoming Festivals / Functions at Prasanthi Nilayam

6th AprilUgadi
14th AprilSri Rama Navami and Sita Rama Kalyanam
14th AprilTamil New Year Day
15th AprilVishu
24th AprilSri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsava

GIVE PLACE ONLY TO GOD IN YOUR HEART*

BE EVER GRATEFUL TO YOUR PARENTS

ONCE THERE WAS AN OLD scholar who was strict follower of ancient traditions. One evening, he was sitting in the verandah of his house. Nearby, his grandson was doing his homework. While doing homework, the boy was using a pen and an ink bottle to write in his notebook.

Understand the Meaning of Ancient Traditions

The sun was setting, and the old man started offering oblations, making use of water in a tumbler while uttering Om Pranaya Swaha, Om Apanaya Swaha,

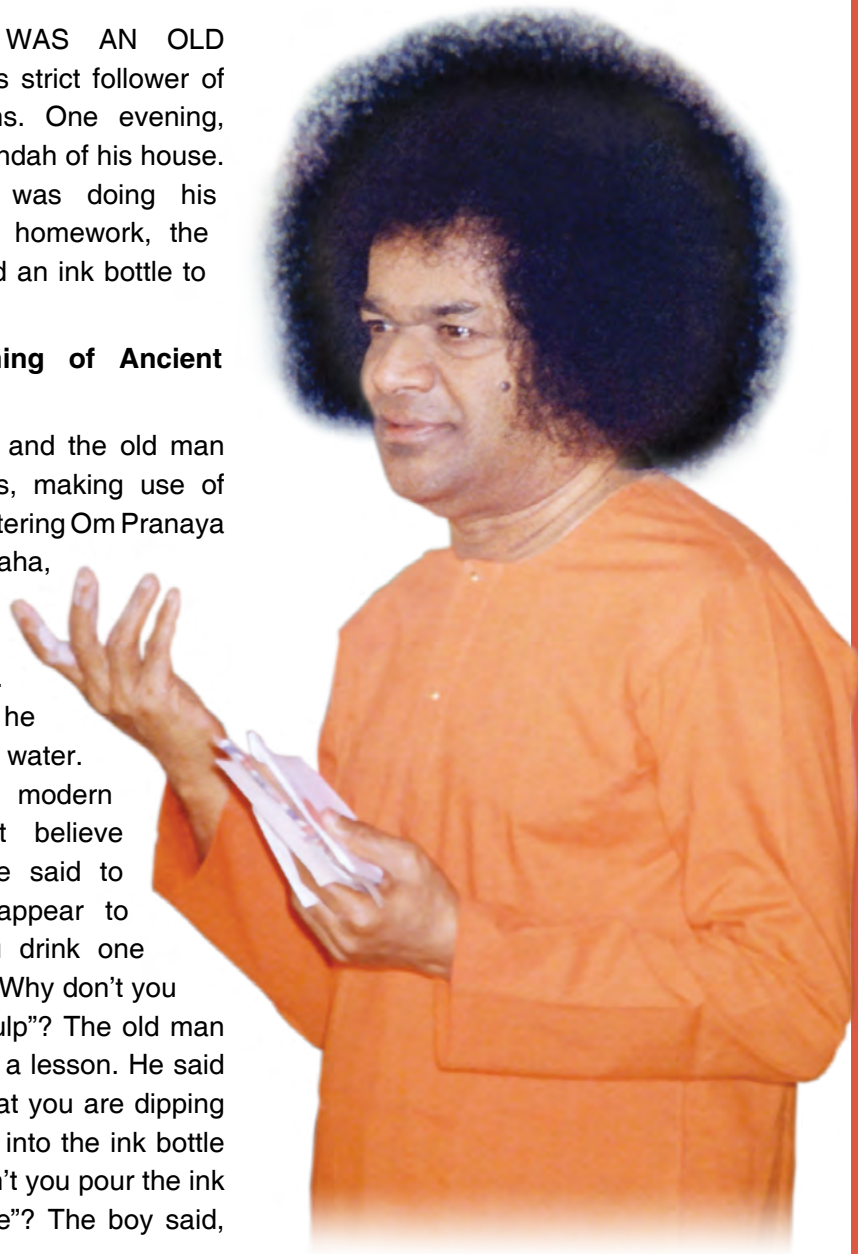
Om Vyanaya Swaha,

Om Udanaya Swaha,

Om Samanaya Swaha.

With each invocation, he was sipping a spoonful of water.

As the boy was getting modern education, he did not believe in ancient traditions. He said to his grandfather, "You appear to be thirsty. Why do you drink one spoonful after the other? Why don't you drink the water in one gulp"? The old man decided to teach the boy a lesson. He said smilingly, "Dear! I see that you are dipping the pen again and again into the ink bottle to write. Instead, why don't you pour the ink on the paper at one time"? The boy said,



“Grandfather! In that case, it will not form letters and words”. The grandfather replied, “In case I gulp water without invoking the name of the god I am offering to, it will not reach him”. A letter reaches the addressee only when the address is properly written. When the address is written wrongly, the letter will go to the dead letter office. Similarly, when you say Om Pranaya Swaha, it reaches the Prana Shakti, the life force. There are certain principles and procedures laid down in the scriptures which people should follow implicitly to attain what is prayed for. Many children question why they should offer respect and obeisance to their parents when they are grown up. You may have grown up and attained high position and education, but to your mother you will remain her child only; she will always be older to you, not younger to you. Isn't it so? Is it not your mother who has brought you up? Your blood, food, head and money are the gifts of your mother and father only. You should therefore offer due respect to them and be ever grateful to them. This is how you should give your love to them.

Always Pray to God for His Grace

Give due respect to your parents; be grateful to them. But reserve your heart only for God. All the worldly relations are transient like water bubbles. When you focus your mind on God, you should lovingly explain this to your mother. Then she will surely understand your mind and heart. The mother always wishes the welfare of her children. She always prays that her children should be good; they should attain higher positions in life and receive God's grace. When her child prostrates to her, she blesses saying, “Dear! Live for hundred years; may you live happily with good health, prosperity and reputation”!

***Human life is very valuable.
Man should use his human birth
to achieve higher goals in life.
Basically, it is not man's nature
to settle for petty things. He
always aspires for higher things.
Ultimately, he should strive to
reach the final goal, that is God
Himself. One who attains God,
attains everything.***

Even though the mother blesses, it is only God who grants her prayer saying, Tathastu (so be it). Without the grace of God, even the mother's prayers and blessings become futile. The current becomes useful only when positive and negative are united. The positive charge might be highly powerful, yet it will be useless sans association with negative charge. You may have good number of bulbs all around you, but they are useless in the absence of the current. And there is no use of the current when there are no bulbs. Similarly, both mother's blessings and God's grace are what you should attain. Always pray to God for His grace. In spite of all deficiencies and debilities, it is enough when God's grace is there. You can achieve everything by God's grace. Firm faith in God is essential for one and all. Remember that peace and happiness are available only with God. No one else can give peace and happiness other than God. Some people say that they don't have faith in God. Then do they have faith in devil? If you repose faith in the devil, you will have demonic qualities only.

Forgetting God, who is the abode of supreme peace and bliss, many people are always immersed in trivial worldly affairs.

How can such people attain peace and happiness? Only God can bestow peace. He is the embodiment of supreme peace and love. A mother may become angry at times. But God's love is immutable. However, you should have gratitude for your mother who has given you birth because of which you are able to know God. But there is nothing greater than God's Name.

Nothing is Greater than the Name of God

Once Anjana Devi, the mother of Hanuman, came to the residence of Kausalya. Even though Hanuman was a great devotee of Rama, Kausalya had never seen Anjana Devi before. While welcoming her endearingly, Kausalya asked Anjana Devi, "May I know who you are"? Anjana Devi prided herself as the mother of Hanuman. She replied, "Oh the revered one, how come you don't know my name. I am the mother of Hanuman who could cross over the mighty ocean in a leap". Kausalya said, "Dear! I am now realising that Hanuman is great indeed". As they were conversing thus, the mother of Sage Agastya came there. Kausalya asked her, "Oh revered one, may I know who you are"? In reply she said, "I am the mother of Agastya who swallowed the entire ocean in one gulp. I being the mother of such a great saint, how come you don't know me"? Then Kausalya told the mother of Hanuman and Agastya, "Dears! Your son Hanuman could cross over the mighty ocean and your son Agastya could gulp the entire ocean only because of my son Rama".

Rama entered just then. He at once understood the situation and wanted to curtail further argumentation among these mothers. He told Kausalya, "Mother! Both of them became great not because of Me. This body of Mine has been named as Rama. Only

by reciting the Name of Rama, Hanuman could cross the ocean, Agastya could gulp the ocean and I too became famous. All these achievements are due to the impact of Name". See the great power of Name of God. Even great mothers cannot help their children when God's grace is lacking. That is why the mothers keep on praying to God for the welfare of their children.

Divine Grace on Adi Sankara

Adi Sankara was born in Kaladi in the State of Kerala. He was only a six-year-old boy, when one day his mother said to him, "My dear! Your revered father has been steadfastly worshipping the Divine Mother. I wish that you follow in his footsteps! I have also no avocation other than reciting God's name. Having been born of my womb, you should earn a good name and become a man of high reputation". It is the ideal son who brings good name to his mother. Also, it is the mother who is the cause of her son's name and fame. For many years, Sankara's father had been engaged in the worship of the goddess Raja Rajeshwari. He worshipped the Divine Mother daily, offered Naivedyam to her and distributed Prasadam to his son, his wife and others.

One day, Sankara's father had to go to a neighbouring village. So, he said to Sankara, "Dear son! As I am required to go to a nearby village for one day, I cannot perform the rituals of worship to the goddess. As your mother cannot do it, I want you to do the rituals of worship to the goddess". Obeying the command of his father, Sankara placed a cup of milk before the idol of the goddess and prayed, "Mother! Please accept my offering". The goddess did not come to drink the milk even after a long wait. As the milk in the cup was not consumed, Sankara became sad and said to the Divine

Mother, "Did I commit any sin? You have been drinking milk when father was offering all these days. Why should you refuse to drink when I am offering"? He was filled with grief as he felt that he must have committed some sin. He thought that his life was useless if he could not fulfil his father's wish and brought dishonour to his parents. Intensely praying to the goddess to drink the milk offered by him, Sankara said, "Mother! If you do not drink this milk, I will end my life". Instantly, the goddess appeared before him and said, "Dear! Be happy. I am very much pleased with your devotion. Look, I am drinking the milk". She then drank all the milk; not a drop was left in the cup. Sankara pleaded, "Oh Mother! You have drunk the entire milk, leaving nothing as Prasadam. My mother may suspect me of drinking the whole milk. My parents should partake of the sacred Prasadam. My father used to bring home Prasadam everyday. So, please return some milk for me". The Divine Mother said, "How is it possible to get back the milk that I have drunk and digested? Can a river be separated when it has merged with the ocean"? Saying this, she disappeared.

Sankara started pleading with Raja Rajeshwari fervently, "Please give some milk otherwise I will get a bad name from my mother". Taking pity on the lad, the goddess drew milk out of her own bosom and gave it to him. By virtue of partaking this sacred milk, Sankara was able to master all the Vedas, Sastras and Upanishads without any effort. He attained such great spiritual heights that people started worshipping



The current becomes useful only when positive and negative are united. The positive charge might be highly powerful, yet it will be useless sans association with negative charge. You may have good number of bulbs all around you, but they are useless in the absence of the current. And there is no use of the current when there are no bulbs. Similarly, both mother's blessings and God's grace are what you should attain. Always pray to God for His grace.

him. Thus, man becomes Divine by the grace of God and the love of the mother. Therefore, revere your parents and pray to God. Install God in your heart. It is your duty is to bring good name to your parents. When you become good, your parents get name and fame. Sita attained great renown by the noble deeds of her sons, Lava and Kusa. When Lava and Kusa were engaged in battle with Rama, Lava aimed an arrow at Rama, thought of his mother Sita and wished that the arrow should make Rama unconscious. Accordingly, Rama became

continued on page 22...

DEVELOP FAITH IN THE DIVINITY WITHIN YOU

"The Atma is present in everyone. It knows no territorial barriers. It is omnipresent. To recognise the omnipresence of the Divine is the purpose of observing Sivarathri. This purpose is not served by fasting and keeping awake all the night. These are mere auxiliaries to what is considered the ultimate goal – God realisation," said Bhagavan in His Sivarathri Discourse on 19th February 1993.

SPIRITUALITY IS THE LIGHTHOUSE THAT SPREADS WISDOM

EVERY HUMAN BEING IS A fragment of the Divine. Only when a man discharges his duties will his life find fulfilment. Duty is man's primary obligation. If a man is endowed with wealth and possessions, he has a duty to enjoy them. But to covet or seize other people's wealth is a crime.

Dharma Implies Right Use of one's Resources

Wealth is not confined to money or gold or other possessions. All the knowledge and skills acquired by a person also constitute his wealth. Even health is wealth. The power to think is also wealth. Physical strength and mental abilities are also wealth. The time at one's command is also one's wealth. Hence, it is man's primary duty to utilise his time and every other form of wealth in the right manner. Unfortunately, today man wastes his time, wealth and talents. This is Adharma opposed to righteousness.

Oftentimes, I advise the students not to indulge in excessive talking for the reason that it is a gross abuse of the time available to them. Moreover, by excessive talk with



other person, they rob them of their time. This is also wrong. Dharma implies right use of one's time and resources. Adharma is the abuse of one's time and wealth and depriving others of their wealth.

Every person has a mind of his own in which thoughts arise based on his Ichchha

Shakti (will power). One person favours adoration of Rama. Another prefers Siva. A third one enjoys worshipping Krishna. A fourth is inspired by contemplation of Jesus. Another is musing over the thought of Allah. All these are based on individual preferences.

But, in the minds of all persons, in whatever country or region, whatever form one wishes to adore, whatever deity one wants to worship, whatever name one likes to chant, two things are essential. Viswasa (faith) and Sraddha (steadfast devotion). Without earnestness, even the most trivial act cannot be performed well. Without Sraddha nothing can be accomplished.

Sraddhavan Labhate Jnanam (one with earnestness attains wisdom), says the Gita. Only the earnest seeker can acquire knowledge of the Divine. However intelligent one may be, without earnestness he will achieve nothing. A man with earnestness can convert a small burning cinder into a huge bonfire.

Sraddha and Viswasa Represent Shakti and Siva

Sraddha is the means to the realisation of the Divine. What does Sraddha signify? It signifies Daiva Shakti (Divine power). Sraddha is called Bhavani. It refers to a goddess, to Shakti (Divine energy) or Prakriti (Nature).

Next comes Viswasa. What is faith? It symbolises Iswaratwam (Divine principle). Through Sraddha, Ichchha Shakti, Kriya Shakti and Jnana Shakti (will power, the power of action, and the power of wisdom) are manifested. The essence of these three potencies is Iswaratwa (Divinity). They constitute the power of Viswasa.

Thus, Sraddha and Viswasa represent Parvati and Parameswara. Humanness represents the combination of Shakti and Siva. These two are not disparate. Just as fire and the power to burn go together, these two go together. Sugar and sweetness are similarly interrelated. There is no sugar without sweetness. Where there is sweetness, there is sugar. Likewise, Sraddha and Viswasa are symbiotically related to each other. Hence, these should be regarded as present in man in the form of Siva and Shakti.

Difference Between Rathri and Sivarathri

Every night is marked by darkness. But tonight it is Sivarathri. What is the difference between Rathri (night) and Sivarathri? For the man who has recognised his divinity, every night is Sivarathri. For the man immersed in worldly concerns, all nights are the same. That night is marked by darkness. This night is marked by light. Spirituality is the lighthouse that spreads light for the man who is full of despair, immersed in insatiable desires. The name of God is the lighthouse. By chanting the name, the bearer of the name can be realised.

The Atma is present in everyone. It knows no territorial barriers. It is omnipresent. To recognise the omnipresence of the Divine is the purpose of observing Sivarathri. This purpose is not served by fasting and keeping awake all the night. These are mere auxiliaries to what is considered the ultimate goal – God realisation. But God realisation should not be put off to some distant future. It has to be taken up here and now. That is the purpose of Sivarathri.

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Sivarathri Discourse in Poornachandra Auditorium on 19th February 1993.

THE DEVOTION THAT LIBERATES

IN THIS WORLD, TWO significant questions arise in the human mind every now and then. The first question is 'who is God', and the second one is 'who is a devotee'. A noble person, in an effort to know the answer to the first question, made a thorough study of scriptures and the lives of Avatars. Ultimately, he went to Puttaparthi praying for an answer from Swami. Without even having to submit his question before Swami, he got the answer from Him during the first Darshan itself. Swami told him, "Your heart is My residence. From the physical point of view, I may appear to be residing in Puttaparthi, but in reality, you can find Me enshrined in your heart". Having succeeded in his endeavour, the noble person ecstatically told a fellow devotee, "My dear, I have realised that God is the one who dwells in the hearts of His devotees". What a profound statement! We are all aware of how this truth was amply demonstrated by the devotee par excellence, Hanuman, when he tore open his heart to reveal the presence of Sita and Rama in it. Then the answer to the second question, 'who is a devotee', is given, not once or twice, but umpteen times, in "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram". A devotee is the one who has enshrined God in his heart. That is why Swami repeatedly exhorted us, "Have faith in Me, I will carry all your burdens." He continues to uphold His Divine assurance even to this day. The blessed life of Smt. Rathnakaram Meenamma bears ample testimony to this.

A Saga of Unparalleled Devotion and Divine Benediction

The residents of the Ashram and the people of Puttaparthi were very well aware

that Smt. Meenamma used to come to Mandir everyday, both in the morning and in the evening, to have Swami's Darshan. She was an epitome of selfless, unsullied and matchless devotion. She silently served the Lord in her own way, without craving for recognition or publicity. Her life was a Nidarshanam (example) not Pradarshanam (exhibition) of Bhakti. Though her movements were restricted and she had to use a wheelchair for a number of years, never did she miss Swami's Darshan even for a day. Even on the last day of her earthly sojourn, that is, on 16th December 2018, she came to the Mandir and participated in the morning Bhajan. In the evening, she felt a bit uneasy and called her son Sri Rathnakar to take her to the hospital. Immediately, Sri Rathnakar wheeled her out to the car. But as he was helping her to get into the car, she breathed her last in his hands and merged in the Divine Lotus Feet. "Anayasa Maranam" (a painless and peaceful death) is the term we use for such a glorious end. Having been born in this world, everyone is bound to die one day or the other. But only one among millions is blessed to have a peaceful death like Smt. Meenamma.

As Adi Sankara said, there are three boons that everyone aspires for in life: Anayasena Maranam, Vina Dainyena Jivanam, Dehanthe Iswara Sayujyam... (a peaceful death, a life devoid of misery and ultimate merger in the Divine). Such rare blessings were bestowed upon her only due to the fact that she was a devotee par excellence, who enshrined the Lord in her heart. Smt. Meenamma, as we all know, was the wife of Sri Janaki Ramaiah, Bhagavan's younger brother. She had the great good fortune of having Swami's Darshan and serving Him everyday for almost six decades. She sanctified her life with one-pointed devotion and service to the Lord.



Smt. Meenamma with Bhagavan.

When Swami asked her, “Our Janaki Ramaiah has got only one lung, but it is My responsibility to protect him and keep him healthy throughout his life; will you marry him”?, she implicitly obeyed Him without a second thought. Then Swami blessed her, beaming an appreciative smile, “Good, I am there for both of you”. This was an assurance given by the Lord Himself. Can any power in this creation negate Swami’s word of assurance!

The marriage of Sri Janaki Ramaiah and Meenamma was performed in Prasanthi Nilayam Mandir itself in the year 1960. What a magnificent function it was, presided over by the Siva Shakti Swarupa Swami Himself. It was a sort of celestial wedding graced by all gods and goddesses in the form of devotees. It was here in the Mandir that Sri Janaki Ramaiah was bedecked in the ceremonial wedding attire. It was here that the noble mother Smt. Easwaramma looked at Swami in all joy as she bestowed her blessings on the newly-weds. It was here that Smt. Meenamma received Bhagavan’s bounteous grace and blessings for a long and happy married life. Sri Janaki Ramaiah and Smt. Meenamma were blessed with two daughters – Sailaja and Vanaja and a son – Sri Rathnakar.

Once when Bhagavan was in Brindavan (Whitefield), Smt. Meenamma fell critically ill. Doctors were very anxious and had almost given up hope. When Smt. Meenamma was taken to Swami, she prayed, “Swami, if something untoward happens to me, kindly look after my three children”. The all-merciful and all-knowing Lord smiled and said, “You have nothing to fear. Be assured that you will come to Me walking in one week after regaining your normal health”. This was an assurance from the Lord Himself.

Could anything happen contrary to it? Doctors who feared the worst were astonished to see Smt. Meenamma recover miraculously in one week’s time. They had no scientific explanation for this. As assured by Bhagavan, Smt. Meenamma regained her normal health, came walking and prostrated at Swami’s Lotus Feet, shedding tears of gratitude. What better proof do we require to understand God’s love for His devotee and devotee’s unwavering faith in the Lord!

For almost fifty years, half a century, in other words, Smt. Meenamma had the great good fortune of preparing food for Swami everyday. What a blessed privilege she enjoyed! Before partaking of food, Swami would invariably enquire, “Has Meenamma sent the carrier”? No doubt, it was Bhagavan’s way of acknowledging her sincerity and devotion.

People could easily approach her, pour out their woes and worries and find solace in her comforting words. Being kind by nature, she would listen to their problems with patience and concern. Then she would submit their prayers to Swami whenever she would get an opportunity, otherwise, she would silently pray for their well-being, invoking the grace of the indweller. Swami,

the Hridayavasi, would always answer her prayers in His own way. When self-aggrandisement and craving for publicity have become the order of the day, it is very rare to find such a simple and humble devotee like Smt. Meenamma. She endeared herself to the Lord by her simplicity and nobility.

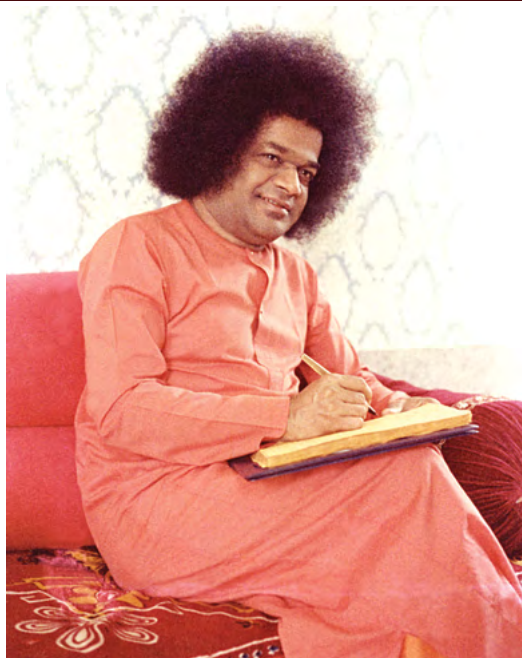
When Sri Rathnakar met with a serious road accident and was critically injured, Smt. Meenamma turned to Swami and not to doctors, for his safety and well-being. On one side, there was her young daughter-in-law, Smt. Himavahni with her two little children, on the other side, her son was lying on the hospital bed with grievous injuries. The situation was grim and frightening, to say the least. Even in the face of such extreme difficulty, her faith in Swami was undeterred. She prayed to Him with a total sense of surrender, to save her son from life-threatening injuries. Moved by her intense prayers, Swami used to personally visit Sri Rathnakar everyday, assuring and reassuring that all would be fine. Till such time he recovered completely, Swami continued to shower His love and grace on their family and helped them tide over the turbulent situation. He is the Leela Nataka Sutradhari (Divine Director of the Cosmic Play), who alone knows who is to be born to whom and for what purpose and also who is to face what situations in life to learn valuable lessons. When we go to the seashore, we see countless waves rising and falling but the core of the ocean is always still and serene. The heart of Smt. Meenamma was always like the core of the ocean, calm and composed. Even while facing 'relentless waves' of daily problems, she always kept the altar of her heart steady and pure with Swami enshrined in it. Swami declared, "My life is My Message" and being an ideal devotee, Smt. Meenamma moulded her life in accordance with Swami's message of love and service. In fact, her life was a shining example of

devotion for the Lord and unwavering faith in Him.

Beacon Lights in the Avataric Mission

There have been many beacon lights guiding and inspiring humanity in the Avataric Mission of Bhagavan. Innumerable are the blessed souls, who realised Swami's Divinity and served Him directly. There have also been many who served Him earnestly but chose to remain incognito. All of them played their role to perfection and served Him in their own humble manner. It is no exaggeration to say that they were all chosen by Swami Himself for the fulfilment of His Avataric Mission. Ever since Swami declared His Avatarhood and embarked on His Divine Mission, till the time He drew curtain on His earthly sojourn and even to this day, there have been many men and women of great merit, who dedicated their lives in the furtherance of His Divine Mission. Some of them decorate the Mandir premises with beautiful Rangolis everyday, some of them maintain cleanliness and hygiene in the Ashram surroundings, some of them are serving in various departments of the Ashram administration, providing food and accommodation to devotees, some of them come even from far off places, stay in the Ashram for a week or two and discharge their duties as Seva Dal and some of them run the educational and medical institutions of Bhagavan in accordance with His divine directives. Countless are such blessed souls, to whom we owe our deep gratitude and sense of veneration. Their lives continue to inspire and motivate us to rededicate ourselves to the Divine Mission. It is our foremost duty to emulate their ideal, cultivate the spirit of devotion and dedication as exemplified by them and follow the path of love and service laid out before us by Bhagavan for our own redemption.

– A renowned lyricist and script writer, Sri Bhuvanachandra is an ardent devotee of Bhagavan.



BHAGAVAN WRITES FOR SANATHANA SARATHI

WHEN BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA STARTED SANATHANA SARATHI in February 1958, He also began writing an article for it every month from its very first issue and continued writing without any break up to October 1984. All these articles were written in perfect sequence as these were meant to be compiled in the form of books which were called Vahini series. To acquaint our readers how these articles were written by Bhagavan, we reproduce Bhagavan's handwritten articles along with their translation that formed the 16th and final book of Vahini series named "Leela Kaivalya Vahini" (Stream of Cosmic Consciousness Divine).

The article given in this issue forms the second and final part of the article which was published in May 1984 issue of Sanathana Sarathi. The subsequent issues of Sanathana Sarathi will also carry further articles of "Leela Kaivalya Vahini" in question-answer form (except the one published in June 1984 issue of Sanathana Sarathi since we could not find this handwritten article). Since Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself is the Veda Purusha and the Vedas have emerged from Him, there can be no greater authority to propound the eternal values and invaluable teachings of the Vedas than Him. The seekers who want to grasp the authoritative and true import of the spiritual truths contained in these most ancient scriptures should read and reread these articles.

3. ఆంధ్ర ప్రదేశ్ లో 'మృత' వ్యక్తులను మరణం
పర్యవేక్షించే వ్యవస్థ ఏలా ఉంది?
 ఆంధ్ర ప్రదేశ్ లో 'మృత' వ్యక్తులను మరణం పర్యవేక్షించే వ్యవస్థ ఏలా ఉంది? ఆంధ్ర ప్రదేశ్ లో 'మృత' వ్యక్తులను మరణం పర్యవేక్షించే వ్యవస్థ ఏలా ఉంది?

సంగీతముగా. ఇది ప్రత్యేకంగా రాసినదిగా భావించవచ్చును.
పేరడంబరము.

పంక శత్రువుగా భేష్వానను వెలుగుల వేతబడి
ప్రభావాల ఆదేశములను.

అందు ఆశా కథనం అని విశ్వాసం వుంటుంది. అందుకు
నాకు అది ఆశా కథనం అని విశ్వాసం వుంటుంది. అందుకు
అందుకు అని విశ్వాసం వుంటుంది. అందుకు అని విశ్వాసం వుంటుంది.

॥१॥ शुभं भवतु

[illegible]

ಸಾ.ಶ. ಸಾಂಪ್ರದಾಯಿಕ ವಿಧಾನ:

[illegible]

లీలాకైవల్య వాహిని

(సాయి సాధకుల సంభాషణ)

‘అమ్నాయం’ అనగా ఇది ‘మ్నా’ అనే ధాతువునుండి వచ్చినది. ‘మ్నా’ అనగా అభ్యాసము అని అర్థము. ఎల్లప్పుడు అభ్యసించుచుండటచేతనే దీనికి ‘అమ్నాయం’ అని పేరు. ‘సమామ్నాయం’ అని కూడా అందురు.

“సామ” మనగా ఇది ప్రత్యేకించిన గానసారము. ఛందశ్శబ్దానికి వేదపరమైనది.

వంశపారంపర్యంగా అధ్యయనము చేయుటచేత దీనికి ‘స్వాధ్యాయము’ అని పేరు వచ్చినది.

‘ఆగమం’ అనగా భగవంతుని నిశ్వాసరూపంగా బయల్పడినది కనుక ఇది ఆగమమని, నిగమమని కూడా చెప్పబడినది. ఇవన్నియు మంత్ర స్వరూపాలు. ప్రతి పదమూ ఒక మంత్రమే. వేదములన్నియూ మంత్ర మయములు.

సాధకుడు : మంత్రమనగా ఏమి?

సాయి : విధింపబడిన అర్థాన్ని వివరించి చెప్పేది మంత్రము. మననము చేయడానికి హేతువయ్యేది మంత్రం అని కూడా అనవచ్చును. ‘మం’ మననము, ‘త్ర’ త్రాణ శక్తి. ఏతా వాతా - మనన త్రాణ సమ్మిళితము మంత్రము. యజ్ఞ యాగాది కర్మలు చేస్తూ వాటి స్వరూపాన్ని స్మరించటం. యాజ్ఞకులు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఉచ్చరించే శబ్దాలు మంత్రాలు. అయితే, ఈనాడు మంత్రాలను వల్లె వేస్తున్నారు, పారాయణం చేస్తున్నారు, అర్థాలు తెలియకుండా. అలా చేస్తే పారాయణముల ప్రయోజన ముండదు. అర్థజ్ఞానంతో పరించిన సంపూర్ణ ప్రయోజనం కలదు. ఒక్కొక్క వేదము అనేక శాఖలు కలిగియున్నది. ఆ శాఖల యొక్క పరిపూర్ణతను కూడా అనుభవించవలసి వచ్చును.

సాధకుడు : శాఖలనగా ఏమి?

సాయి : శాఖలనగా ఉపాంగాలు. చెట్లకు కొమ్మలుండినట్లు, కొమ్మలకు రెమ్మలుండినట్లు, ఈ కొమ్మ రెమ్మలతో కూడినదే వృక్షమైనట్లు, శాఖోపశాఖలతో కూడినది వేదము. ఇట్లు ఒక్కొక్క వేదమునకు అనేక శాఖోపశాఖలు ఉన్నవి. ఏవో కొన్నింటిని మాత్రమే కొందరు గుర్తించిరి. గుర్తించక, ఆచరించక వదలిన శాఖలు కొన్ని వేలు, లక్షలున్నవి. అసలు వాటి పేర్లు కూడా ఎవరికీ తెలియవు. కనుకనే, అనంతోవై వేదాః అన్నారు. ఒక్కొక్క మహనీయుడు ఒక్కొక్క వేదములో కొన్నికొన్ని శాఖలను మాత్రమే గుర్తించి వల్లె వేస్తూ వచ్చారు.

LEELA KAIVALYA VAHINI

Sai Speaks to Sadhaka

The word Amnaya is derived from the root “mna”, which means “learn.” Since the Vedas had to be learnt continuously and in a steadfast manner, they were collectively known as Amnaya and also as Namamnaya.

Chhandas means a poetic metre, which can be set to music, as in Sama Veda. So, the Vedas themselves were indicated by that name.

The name Swadhyaya was applied to the Vedas, since they were handed down from father to son and from generation to generation, by the process of teaching and learning (Swadhyaya).

Agama means “that, which has come, originated”. Nigamagama is an elaboration of the same word. The Vedas have originated from the Breath of God; each syllable is sacred. Each word is a Mantra. The Vedas are all Mantras.

Sadhaka: Mantra? What does Mantra mean?

Sai: Mantra is the exposition of the goal that is set. That is to say, it is that which prompts and promotes Manana or probing through the mind. “Man” syllable indicates the process of probing and the syllable “tra” means “the capacity to take across, to liberate, to save”. In short, Mantra is that which saves when the mind dwells upon it. While rites and ritual sacrifices are performed, the person has to remind himself constantly of their nature and significance. The formulae he has to repeat to achieve this end are Mantras. But today, those who perform these rites either recite them mechanically or allow them to roll on the tongue. They pay no attention to the meaning of the Mantra. When Mantras are uttered as rigmarole, they yield no fruit! The person can reap full reward only when he recites them with the knowledge of the meaning and significance. Each Veda has many “Shakhas” (limbs) and the total direction and purpose of each “Shakha” has also to be known by the Vedic scholar.

Sadhaka: What are Shakhas?

Sai: Shakha means limb, a text arising out of the main Veda. A tree has branches, each branch has twigs and bunches of leaves. When all these are conceived together, the tree emerges. Each Veda has a large number of main branches and subsidiary branches. Not all have come to light. Only a few have been identified and studied. The number of Shakhas lost from memory and practice will add up to thousands and even lakhs. Even their names have disappeared; no one can recall them. This is the reason why the scriptures declare, “the Vedas are endless” (*Ananto Vai Veda*). As a result, each of the great saints and sages took up for study and practice only a few Shakhas, from one Veda or the other.

OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE IN BHAGAVAN'S PRESENCE*

Kuppam Vijayamma

On one occasion, it so happened that all devotees gushed like a strong stream into the hall. We were trying hard to push them back. There was no other way. All our shouts were drowned in the milieu. An old woman happened to receive our butting. She became furious and landed a hard slap on my cheek, saying, "As I am a patient, how can you push me like this"? Just then a volunteer came and informed that Swami wanted to see me. I went to the upper room. My heart fluttered when Swami asked me lovingly, "Who was the person who slapped you"? I wondered how Swami came to know of it instantly; and the next moment I was ashamed of myself forgetting His omniscience.

ON 18TH OCTOBER 1955, DURING Dasara festival, there was a surge of devotees at Puttaparthi. Swami selected a large number of gents and ladies for the Seva duties. He addressed us all in the Mandir Hall:

Divine Directions to Seva Dal Volunteers

"Do not flock yourselves at a single place. Position yourselves at strategic places. Do not immerse in looking at Me while I walk along Darshan lines. You must take care that devotees do not rush towards Me in haste. First, you must understand that Seva is the best means to achieve Sameepya (nearness), Sarupya (oneness) and Sayujya (merger) with God. There is no guarantee that you will get another chance like this. In

these gatherings, you will come across all sorts of people – some are thieves who come to exploit people and some are noble. You may also come across adamant characters as also gentle people. You should be able to use all your skills such as Sama, Dama, Bheda and Danda (conciliation, pacification, division and discipline) as appropriate to situations. At times, you may find an adamant god (hard nut). You should deal with such people accordingly. But you should not use a hammer to bend a cork. There are soft-hearted and sensitive people

also. You should not be harsh towards them or cause pain to them. Do not ever blabber, saying, "I am the volunteer; you must obey my command".

"What is the purpose of your leaving home and coming here? It is not to bloat with ego or passion. It is to discard Mamakara (mineness), and to serve saying 'Na Mama' (not mine)! You should raise yourselves from the level of 'mine' to that of 'our'. What is your permanent abode? The temple of Sai's heart is your permanent abode". (Swami emphasised the last sentence amid claps of applause).

"Even after coming here, it is a shame if you cannot change your attitudes. Even while I am telling you so lovingly, if you do not change your attitudes and habits, of

**Continued from the previous issue*

what use is your coming to this place? I am receiving many complaints: Swami! We are coming all the way to Your abode bearing many hardships. But Your volunteers are treating us badly, they say. Is this the purpose for which the badge is given to you? They are not aware that I am advising you like this. Otherwise, they could jeer at you for being negligent about Swami's directions. I really feel ashamed if anyone of you behaves badly. It creates a bad image about all of us. For example, an old woman stood up in the Darshan line, and one of you rushed to command her to sit down, without having any patience to know the reason for her standing. When I went and sought to know the reason, she said, 'Swami! I got up because I was bitten by ants'. Had it been a scorpion, the situation could have been worse! Are you supposed to kill people? Can you suppress old people when they want to attend nature's call? I noticed some of you flocking and gossiping. Is this the way of rendering Seva?

"Devotees throng this place to witness Lingodbhavam (emergence of Linga) during the Sivarathri festival. They come with great fervour without caring about their own safety. If you are truly charged with love for selfless service, you would not be craving to see Abhishekam (ceremonial bathing) of the Linga or listening to speeches. I shall provide you tenfold of happiness in lieu (*loud applause*). In the near future, people are going to gather here in thousands. The whole world is going to stand as one at this place. In view of this, I am hereby announcing some important organisational arrangements. I am organising male volunteers into five wings – Health Wing, Prasanthi Administration Wing, Water Supply Wing, Hygiene Wing, Vigilance and Security Wing". Swami then announced the names of persons incharge for each Wing.



Swami continued with His speech, "You are free to inform Me about any important matter. Send a note through the person at My door". Our hearts melted when Swami was speaking those words, charged with Divine Love, enormous patience and deep concern for devotees. We truly felt that there was no use of being alive if we failed to work with all energy we had, when Swami was worried so much about the happiness of the devotees. Despite His tight schedule, Swami had spent one and half hour giving those directions to us. At the end, He presented badges to all of us along with Padanamaskar to each one of us. He then called me and Smt. Choudhry and said, "See that all these volunteers work properly".

The Way of Managing Huge Crowds

The number of devotees was increasing day by day. They were coming to Parthi in big groups. In view of this, an auditorium was built adjacent to the Mandir, which

could accommodate about 7,000 people. In those days, all festivals such as Sivarathri, Navaratri and Guru Purnima would invariably start by 7 a.m. Large groups of devotees would eagerly wait to enter, even before 4 a.m. They had to be admitted in proper order. There were neither sheds nor rooms to accommodate devotees, due to which all visiting families would use the open space around the auditorium for cooking and sleeping as well, along with their wherewithal. Srimati Choudhry, Malathi Lakshmi and I would reach the place early in the morning, do the cleaning, transfer all utensils of the devotees to a distant place, and return them to the respective families at the end of the programme. Again, the evening session would start at 4.00 p.m. All the speeches, dramas and Harikathas would come to an end only after 10 o'clock at night. Swami would sit all through these programmes, and He retired to His room only after blessing each devotee.

The auditorium would get filled up before the sun god appeared on the horizon, even when a function was scheduled to start at seven in the morning. Swami would enter the stage on dot, accompanied by a chosen group of devotees; and the entire auditorium would reverberate in joy. Looking at the Divine auspicious figure of Swami moving along and across the hall, we would find our hearts too small to contain and cherish the joyful scene. While Swami was moving from one end to the other end of the hall, the mass of people surrounding the hall would move to and fro like waves eager to have a glimpse of Him. All their attention would be on Swami, even without minding the safety of old people and children. On such occasions, it was the job of volunteers

to protect old people and children, and discipline the devotees.

The Omniscient Lord

The swell of crowds would reach maximum especially during the Sivarathri festival. Devotees would throng the auditorium to witness Lingodbhavam with great fervour. On the day of Sivarathri, most of the devotees strictly observed the vow of fasting from morning through the night. In the night, we used to prepare coffee on a large scale, and offer to all those present in the auditorium, along with some biscuits. On one occasion, it so happened that all devotees gushed like a strong stream into the hall. We were trying hard to push them back. There was no other way. All our shouts were drowned in the milieu. An old woman happened to receive our butting. She became furious and landed a hard slap on my cheek, saying, "As I am a patient, how can you push me like this"?

Just then a volunteer came and informed that Swami wanted to see me. I went to the upper room. My heart fluttered when Swami asked me lovingly, "Who was the person who slapped you"? I wondered how Swami came to know of it instantly; and the next moment I was ashamed of myself forgetting His omniscience. I said, "Swami, she is not at fault. I did indeed push her hard, due to jostling of devotees". Swami said, "Nonsense! The hit was hard. The cheek is swollen; poor girl!", and He gave me some Vibhuti. I fell at His Lotus Feet with tears trickling down my cheeks. He said, "I was there watching all this". True! Can there be any place where He is not present!

(To be continued in the next issue.)

– **Smt. Kuppam Vijayamma is the author of the famous book "Anyatha Saranam Nasti" and many other books on Bhagavan Baba.**

Effulgence of Divine Glory

VIBHUTI ABHISHEKAM AND LINGODDBHAVAM ON SIVARATHRI

Phyllis Krystal

IT IS ALSO ONE OF BABA'S customs to perform a ritual called Vibhuti Abhishekam on the morning of Sivarathri, to honour Shirdi Sai Baba, said by Baba to have been His previous incarnation. On that day, a silver statue of Shirdi Sai Baba was placed on the platform



for this ritual. First, Baba materialised precious stones and grains of rice and threw these into a sacred fire burning in a

container placed nearby for that purpose. Then, He was handed a vessel containing water which He first blessed and then used to wash the statue. Next, He took a large whisk, dipped it into the water and shook it out over the heads of the huge crowd sitting on the floor of the auditorium, sprinkling everyone with it. In order for each person to receive a few drops, He walked up and down the aisles, bestowing blessing on all those present.

An attendant then walked over to the image of Shirdi Sai Baba and held inverted over it an empty urn. Baba approached, rolled up the sleeve from His right arm and thrust it into the upturned urn. He then started to move it in a churning motion. Immediately, showers of Vibhuti began to pour out onto the figure in such quantities that it was soon almost completely covered, and the ash started to overflow on all sides. Suddenly, Baba withdrew His hand and the flow stopped as abruptly as it had started. Next, He proceeded to roll up the sleeve from His left arm and thrust that hand up into the urn and repeated the churning motion. The ash again began to flow, this time with such force that the urn vibrated violently and the man who was holding it aloft found it hard to keep steady. The flow continued until a huge pile of ash had collected all around and over the statue. As soon as Baba withdrew His hand again, the flow ceased and He

walked off the platform leaving the crowd spellbound by the spectacle they had just witnessed. I was delighted to have had the opportunity of witnessing this extraordinary pre-Sivarathri ritual.

During the rest of the day, there was a great deal of activity as more and more people arrived for the festival. By evening, they were milling around everywhere. The volunteers were trying to keep some semblance of order among them. Some people tried to push their way into the auditorium. They hoped to secure a place on the floor from which to observe Baba officiate at the remainder of the rites and, even more important, to hear His Discourse. He most considerately gave orders for the few Westerners who had travelled so far and at great expense to be allowed to sit in the first few rows. How very fortunate we felt, and so grateful to Baba for His thoughtfulness! We arrived early and sat quietly, my husband on the men's side as I took my place on the women's side of the great hall, waiting for Baba to appear. The usual audible hush settled over the packed auditorium as soon as He appeared from behind a screen at the back of the stage. He took His place in the big red velvet covered chair which He always used. A solemn ceremony was performed by several Vedic scholars and then it was time for Baba to speak. He delivered His Discourse in Telugu, pausing at intervals for Dr. Bhagavantam to translate it into English.

As soon as it ended, He broke into the opening line of a well-known Bhajan, leading the immense crowd. We all repeated it after Him in thunderous tones which reverberated all around the hall. The tremendous energy thus released could be felt by everyone and seemed to lift us all up to a level beyond our everyday consciousness.



When the sound had reached a peak, Baba started to cough, and reached for a handkerchief placed ready for His use on the arm of His chair. We were all shocked to see Him hold it up to His mouth and start to retch into it, His whole body contorted with the effort.

An electric current seemed to run like lightning around the huge hall as the silent question arose in everyone's mind simultaneously, "Was it possible that after a lapse of three years, He was again about to produce a Lingam in public for us all to see"?

As if following some silent cue, the tempo of the singing increased and everyone poured out in song their surprise and excitement at

the great good fortune of being present at such a significant event. Each one seemed to be trying to help as Baba strained to set free the sacred symbol which had been forming within Him. The tempo became faster and faster and a tremendous energy built up in the room.

As I watched Him intently, I found myself caught up in His effort to release the Lingam and for a split second I became almost identified with Him. I relived the birth of my two daughters, feeling again the tremendous pressure build up as I watched Him retch again and again in an effort to give birth to the God-symbol. Finally, He gave one last cough and quickly caught in the handkerchief a large shimmering opalesque egg-shaped Lingam. It appeared much too

large to have passed out through His throat. He immediately held it up between His thumb and forefinger for us all to see and then started to walk up and down the aisles to enable everyone to have the Darshan of this wondrous creation. As we were given a closer look at it, a light could be seen in its depths which seemed to move and change as He carried it around the packed hall. We were spellbound at having witnessed this extraordinary manifestation which produced a deep emotional impact on everyone present. After Baba had returned to the stage and disappeared through the curtains, everyone filed out of the hall, still in a daze, to prepare for the nightlong Bhajan singing.

– **Excerpted from “Sai Baba: The Ultimate Experience” by Phyllis Krystal.**

...continued from page 7

unconscious. See, when you contemplate on your mother with reverence and treasure God in your heart, the power of mother gets boosted. But in the present times, one can rarely find mothers who exhort their children to develop devotion to God. In the olden days, mothers were filled with happiness when their children took to Godward path. Parents of the contemporary generation should bless their children to emulate these ancient ideals. The children should learn to revere their parents. Parents are the cause of your physical body and God is the root cause of your existence. Make your lives meaningful by contemplating on the divinity of your mother and developing faith in God.

Human life is very valuable. Man should use his human birth to achieve higher goals in life. Basically, it is not man's nature to settle for petty things. He always aspires for higher things. Ultimately, he should strive to reach the final goal, that is God Himself.

One who attains God, attains everything. Sankara's mother Aryamba blessed her son, saying, “My dear! Become deserving of the grace of the Divine Mother! When you have divine grace, you will lack nothing and your name and fame will spread in the entire length and breadth of the country”. Sankara lived in peace and perpetual bliss. Even at a very young age, he could visit all pilgrim centres of the nation. The reason behind it all was Devi's grace. By divine grace, man can achieve everything. Hence, everyone should try to attain divine grace, develop faith in God and make his life worthwhile. With these blessings, I bring My Discourse to a close.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan “Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Ram...”)

– **Bhagavan's Divine Discourse on Easwaramma Day at Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 6th May 1997.**

CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF ANANTAPUR DISTRICT DEVOTEES

SRI SATHYA SAI SEVA Organisation of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana organised a two-day pilgrimage of Anantapur district devotees to Prasanthi Nilayam on 2nd and 3rd February 2019 and held a variety of music, cultural and social welfare programmes on both the days. More than 9,000 devotees came to participate in this holy pilgrimage from various parts of the district.

On 2nd February 2019, singers of this district offered a bouquet of devotional songs at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan with great devotion which suffused the entire milieu with devotional fervour. The songs melodiously rendered by the singers, both ladies and gents, included “Namo Sathya Sai Baba, Namo Sathya Sai” (salutations to Bhagavan Sai), “Sathya Sai Janani Prema Pradayini” (Mother Sai showers love), “Narayana Sathya Narayana”

“Brahmamokkate Para Brahmamokkate” (God is one).

On 3rd February 2019, the Sai Organisation of this district distributed sewing machines, wet grinders and other implements to beneficiaries to help them earn their livelihood. This programme was held in the morning. In the evening, Bal Vikas and



Distribution of useful implements to beneficiaries.

Deenajanoddharana Pathakam (orphanage project) children of this district presented a dance ballet entitled “Sai Bodhana – Nithya Sadhana” (day-to-day practice of Sai’s teachings) which comprised ten beautiful dances. Based on the episodes from the epics, the dances depicted the stories of Nachiketa, Ambarisha, Prahlada and others which showcased the pathways, dilemmas and obstacles in Sadhana. While the scenes from the stories were enacted on the stage, the children performed thrilling dances below the stage to the tune of thematic songs. The



Devotional music presentation by the devotees from Anantapur district.



A dance number from the dance ballet "Sai Bodhana – Nithya Sadhana" by the children from Anantapur district.

presentation of each dance by the children in colourful costumes was so enthralling that it was difficult to say which was better than the other.

EASWARAMMA PURASKAR SAMARAMBHA

A grand function was organised on 9th February 2019 by the Mahila Vibhag (Women's Wing) of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Karnataka State to present awards to three distinguished women who

The proceedings of the awards ceremony began with a grand palanquin procession of Bhagavan Baba which entered Sai Kulwant Hall at 4.50 p.m. This was followed by a welcome song by the ladies singers of Karnataka. A video presentation containing the summary of the awards during the earlier nine years from 2010 to 2018 followed this. Awards were then presented to three distinguished women who excelled in performing much-needed service to deprived and underprivileged sections of society. The recipients of the awards were: Smt. Tulsamma Kelur in the field of education for working for the visually challenged and running a school for the blind; Smt. Gayatri Narayan in the field of healthcare for running an eye donation centre and gifting eyes to the blind and Smt. Sitavva Dundappa Jodatti in field of social service for her work for the eradication of Devadasi system in society and empowerment of Devadasis afflicted by this evil system. The awards



Awards to three distinguished women for their service to society.

performed outstanding service to society in the fields of Education, Medicine and Social Welfare. The award entitled "Easwaramma Puraskar Samarambha" was started in honour of the Divine Mother Easwaramma in 2010 with the blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Earlier, these awards were presented in functions held at Brindavan, Whitefield, Bengaluru.

were given away by the Chief Guest of the ceremony, Justice (Smt.) B.V. Nagarathna of Karnataka High Court who felicitated the three awardees and urged those present, especially the youth, to engage themselves in acts of service in different areas to bring about societal betterment. After this, Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, addressed

the gathering. He referred to the role of women in promoting human values in the family and society and remarked that it was the women who were the source of strength for the Sai Organisation.

SAMOOHIKA UPANAYANAM MAHOTSAVA

More than 700 Vatus (young aspirants) were initiated into the chanting of the Gayatri Mantra when Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation organised Samoohika Upanayanam Mahotsava (mass sacred thread investiture festival) in Sai Kulwant Hall on 10th February 2019.

At the outset, Pradana Homa was conducted by the priests from 6.00 to 8.00 a.m. in Sai Kulwant Hall, in the centre of which a Yajna Kunda was set up for the performance of various types of Homas which included Ganapati Homa, Navagraha Homa, Sree Homa, Mrityunjaya Homa.

The Upanayanam ceremony started at 8.00 a.m. with the chanting of sacred Mantras by the chief priest which the Vatus and their parents repeated after him. Thereafter, the chief priest gave instructions for the performance of various rituals which were also demonstrated by a priest on the stage

and displayed on the giant LED screen for easy understanding by the Vatus and their parents. The sacred Mantras associated with various rituals were similarly spoken by the chief priest on the public address system and were repeated by the Vatus and their parents after him. Puja of the Yajnopaveeta (sacred thread) was performed with chanting of sacred Mantras, after which it was put on the right arm of the Vatus by their fathers.



The sacred ceremony of Brahmopadesha.

After the administration of the sacred thread to the Vatu, a Basinga (decorative head piece) was tied on his forehead. The important ceremony of Brahmopadesha and administration of Gayatri Mantra followed this, wherein the father of the Vatu whispered the sacred Mantra in the right ear of his son. As the Gayatri Upadesha was administered to all the Vatus, the sacred Gayatri Mantra reverberated in the entire hall when a video clip of chanting of the Mantra by Bhagavan with correct intonation was relayed on the giant LED screen which the Vatus, their parents and the entire congregation in the hall followed in chorus, spreading sacred vibrations on all sides. The ritual of the Upanayanam concluded with Bhiksha (offering of alms) to the Vatu by the mother. As the Vatu touched the feet of his mother and begged alms, the mother offered rice to him.



Young aspirants bestowed with sacred thread by their fathers.

Meanwhile, the performance of Homam concluded with the offer of Poornahuti in the Yajna Kunda. Thereafter, Bhagavan's Divine Discourse on the significance of Gayatri Mantra enlightened the entire congregation for the next 20 minutes. Gayatri Mantra, Bhagavan in His Discourse said, was the essence of the Vedas; it was universal in its scope and sanctified the life of all those who chanted it with earnestness. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati, bringing this sacred ritual to a happy end.

CHINESE NEW YEAR 2019

Devotees from Sathya Sai International Organisation (Zone 4B) comprising Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong and China came to Prasanthi Nilayam to celebrate Chinese New Year in its sacred precincts and presented music and cultural programmes on 11th and 12th February 2019. The theme of this year's Chinese New Year celebrations was "Parents – Our Treasures".

The programme on 11th February 2019 commenced at 5.00 p.m. with lighting of the sacred lamp which was followed by offerings of Flowers of Devotion on the Samadhi of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by women of Indonesia in the backdrop of serene chanting 'Om Sri Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaya Namaha'. Prayerful Buddhist Mantra chanting by devotees then reverberated in the hall, spreading holy vibrations.

In his welcome address, Sri Billy Fong from Malaysia referred to Bhagavan's message of respect and reverence for parents, 'God comes to you when you serve your parents' and called upon the devotees to meticulously follow His injunction in this regard. Sri Billy Fong urged the young adults

and devotees in general to eschew at least one bad quality and embrace one good quality to make their Prasanthi pilgrimage fulfilling.

Up next was a Harmonica presentation by a group of Malaysian devotees offering instrumental Sai Bhajans, played on mouth organ. A video clip of the deadly Palu earthquake which rocked Indonesia in September 2018 and the massive rehabilitation project by SSIO – Indonesia followed this, which showed how this tremendous work was accomplished in 57 days by Bhagavan's Divine grace. Sri Danesh Vatwani, Central Coordinator of Zone 4B then narrated his experiences of Bhagavan's Divine Presence and miraculous rescue of the victims of the earthquake which authenticated the message of Bhagavan: I am in you, with you, above you, below you and all around you. A Chinese Orchestra



Chinese orchestra performance.

offering followed, playing five solo Bhajans, all with special Chinese instruments. The concluding item of the programme was a medley of Chinese New Year songs. Bhajan followed next and concluded with Arati.

The programme on 12th February 2019 began at 5.00 p.m. with chanting of Buddhist Mantras by hundreds of devotees in unison with great devotion. A very inspiring talk "My Journey with Sai" by a young adult

from Indonesia Ms. Noviani Kesuma followed this. Narrating her experiences of Bhagavan's Divinity, the speaker said that her journey to Sai had been on for 22 years and she was still counting. She described how Swami took care of every aspect of her life and how as a tiny tot she walked hand-in-hand with Him, making Him her best friend, mother and father.

After this, there was a instrumental music presentation on Gu Zheng, a Chinese musical instrument, by Ms. Paramitha Putri Santosa who played the Bhajan "Yuga Yuga Ke Avatara" (You are the Avatar of all Yugas). A very elevating skit on respect and reverence to parents titled "The Divine Directives" was then presented by two young adults from Indonesia. Initiated as a dialogue between the two, the presentation delved into details of Bhagavan's teachings as to how to respect and revere one's parents, and thereby become deserving of His blessings, making one's life meaningful.

Symbolic of the transitory nature of life on earth, the item next was titled "Yoyo of Life", a Diabolo Performance, offered by a young adult Ong Hock Eng from Malaysia. The performance on the Diabolo, a juggling prop having an axle coupled with twin cups, was representative of human life with ups and downs, living the same out in absolute equanimity. It was an interesting session of juggling mastery by the young adult who enthralled the audience with his professional approach suffused with self-confidence.

The final offering was a drama titled "Parents – Our Treasures" by Sai Young Adults of Indonesia. The presentation with a father, a mother and son as cast sent out the powerful message of the need of the hour, parental reverence. Wayward and off the track, the protagonist, the son,



*A scene from the drama
"Parents – Our Treasures".*

understood his mistake in the end and made amends to respect and revere his parents, ahead of the Chinese New Year celebrations. Bhajans followed next and the session came to a close with Arati, marking the happy conclusion of the Chinese New Year celebrations.

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM THIRUVALLUR

More than 400 devotees including Bal Vikas children came to Prasanthi Nilayam from Thiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu on their pilgrimage "Darshanamritam" (nectar of the vision of the Lord) and basked in the Divine ambience of the abode of Bhagavan Baba. On 16th February 2019, they conducted Veda chanting and Bhajans both in the morning and evening in Sai Kulwant Hall. Besides, a child prodigy Master Aravind Balaji, a carnatic music vocalist presented an engrossing programme of devotional songs in the evening, enthraling the devotees for nearly one hour with his masterly rendition of devotional songs which included "Bhavayami Gopalabalam" "Pandhari Pandhari" and "Enna Punyam Seideno" (what merit have I done).

God Recognises Inner Feelings

Chinna Katha

IN A VILLAGE SITUATED NEAR the famous pilgrimage centre Srisailam, a nine-year-old boy Balaram, was studying in the elementary school of the village. One day, Balaram heard his friend talking to another friend cheerfully: "Tomorrow being Sivarathri festival, my elder sister and brother-in-law are coming to Srisailam, and they will stay in my house".

On reaching home, Balaram asked his mother, "Mother! I have never seen my elder sister and brother-in-law. They have never come to our house. When will they come? Sisters and brothers-in-law of my friends are going to visit their houses". Saying this, Balaram started weeping. Just to pacify him, his mother said, "You too have a sister and a brother-in-law. They are residing in the temple on top of the hill. Your sister's name is Bhramaramba, and Mallikarjuna Swami is your brother-in-law's name". Balaram said eagerly, "So then, tomorrow I will go and invite my sister and brother-in-law to come to our house". She became worried by her son's adamant resolve. Having come to know that her neighbour couple would be visiting the temple the next day, she requested them to take the boy along with them to the temple. Balaram insisted that he should give a gift to his sister. His mother replied, "It is not proper for young children to offer gifts to elders. On the other hand, they may give a gift to you". So saying, she gave

some money to him and sent him along with the neighbours to the temple.

Even while travelling, Balaram's mind was filled with thoughts of his sister and brother-in-law. Upon entering the temple, following his mother's request, the neighbour couple showed him the deities and said, "Balaram! This is your sister Bhramaramba, and that is your brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swami". Balaram ran at once towards the statues of the deities. He held Bhramaramba's hand and pleaded, "Sister! Mother asked me to invite you to our house. You must come home". And then he went to the statue of Mallikarjuna and pleaded, "Dear brother-in-law! Please pay a visit to our house



Balaram was taken to the temple of Srisailam by his neighbours.

forthwith". He started weeping when there was no reply from them. The priests of the temple thought that the boy was mad; so,

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NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

NEW ZEALAND

ON 1ST SEPTEMBER 2018, A multifaith group of young adults met with members from the Tamaki Estuary Protection Society to learn about the local area and understand the environmental impact of human actions over time. The beautiful sunny day brought the damage to the ecosystem into sharp contrast. The young adults saw first-hand



Environmental Awareness, New Zealand.

how the mangroves and shorelines were littered with countless plastic balls, bottle caps, and polystyrene pieces, and were driven to help clear rubbish along the Panmure Basin. The day was pervaded by a sense of comradeship and gave the young adults a chance to connect with the environment and others beyond the SSIO who share a similar appreciation of the link between nature, divinity and humanity.

ITALY

On 19th October 2018, a conference on the environmentally friendly use of plastics was organised in Rome by SSIO volunteers. Over 90 enthusiastic participants, including 70 members of the public, attended



Conference on plastics and environment, Italy.

the conference. Among Institute of Sai Spiritual Education (ISSE) delegates and distinguished speakers, the event featured students from two local high schools who presented their research on this topic. An ISSE delegate further spoke about life as a journey from 'I to We' and about the need for practising ceiling on desires as a means of environmental protection.

RUSSIA AND ADJOINING COUNTRIES

Over 25 years ago, on 15th October 1993, the Moscow Sathya Sai Centre, the first in Russia, opened its doors. To celebrate this joyous occasion, 45 SSIO members from



Silver jubilee of Moscow Sathya Sai Centre.

three cities gathered in Moscow. Volunteers decorated the venue with red heart-shaped balloons and covered Baba's chair with gold brocade. A brief film depicting the history of the Centre was shown, bringing back a nostalgic sentiment and resurrecting many happy memories. A senior SSIO leader then shared the history of the organisation, which was followed by a presentation of floral tributes to all senior SSIO members whose continued and tireless contributions were honoured. The festivities concluded with EHV students presenting a musical programme about the country followed by joyous devotional songs and a concert.

On a cold autumn day in mid-October 2018, over 300 volunteers from 59 cities across Zone 8 spread joy and cheer by serving over 1,300 needy people in Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan. In this semi-annual service, SSIO volunteers distributed warm food and clothes to the impoverished near temples, train stations, shelters, garages and markets. The volunteers prepared food while drawing inspiration from prayers and devotional singing. They served hot pilaf, buckwheat porridge with vegetables, hot cakes, buns, muffins, fruits, vegetables, cookies and sweets to the

hungry. In Ukraine, volunteers supplemented this service by also providing much-needed toiletries and lovingly conversed with the needy in their native language, creating an atmosphere of happiness and love. In the northwest region of Russia, SSIO volunteers further organised a concert in a night shelter, singing joyful songs. During another visit, this time to a care facility for veterans, the residents sang and danced enthusiastically with the volunteers. This international day of the service filled the participants with a spirit of enthusiasm, joy, reverence and gratitude.

COLOMBIA

On 28th November 2018, the Sathya Sai Human Values School in Funza, Colombia



Serving the needy in Kazakhstan.



Award to Sathya Sai Human Values School, Funza, Colombia.

was awarded the highly acclaimed “Country Builders in Educational Environments” prize by a major national newspaper: El Espectador in partnership with the Pontifical Xavierian University, the European Union, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The recognition highlights the efforts of educational institutions that contribute to creating an environment of peace in classrooms as well as social growth, and transformation among its pupils. Chosen from among 269 nominees from 26 departments and 106 municipalities across the country, the award is an endorsement of the School’s mission to engender to a novel vision for education and foster an inclusive, diverse and equitable nation.

AUSTRALIA

SSIO volunteers in Australia hosted a unique, multicultural Christmas celebration for 300 seniors. In spite of their diverse origins, ranging from Chinese, Serbian,



Christmas celebration for seniors, Australia.

Iranian, Spanish, Bhutanese, Turkish, Indian-Fijian and Caucasian ethnicities, the audience universally joined the joyous festivities. The event included a taste of the array of cultures as well as traditional songs

and dances. Special performances were also given by the Sydwest Organisation and Team Expansion which embodied the spirit of Christmas and gave joy to one and all. The event proved a spectacular success, and the SSIO of Australia was awarded a certificate of appreciation for their effort in bringing the day to fruition.

– Sathya Sai International Organisation

BHARAT

Gujarat: A two-day State Youth Festival on the theme “Youth for Nation Building” was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva



Youth Festival, Surat, Gujarat.

Organisation, Gujarat at Surat on 22nd and 23rd December 2018 with the objective of spreading Swami’s message to the new generation. Colleges across Gujarat were asked to send two youth representatives each who they thought could be social leaders in the long run. About 375 youth participated, wherein most of them were new and did not know about Sathya Sai Organisation or its activities.

This festival was more of activity and less of speeches and thus 10 different kinds of service activities were showcased, which are being carried out by our organisation regularly. The participants were distributed into 10 groups and four hours of hands-on service activities in the form of workshops

were conducted under the leadership of Sai Youth. The activities were Medical Camp, Blood Donation, Narayana Seva, SaiNet (medicated mosquito nets), Hospital Visit, Old Age Home Visit, SSSVIP Village, Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Jyothi Project, Veda and Bhajans and Sai Protein. The youth were taken to the concerned place by buses and the activity was done in the presence of real beneficiaries. Each youth was informed about the importance of the activity, how it was helpful to the beneficiary and how it helped us as a Seva Dal. Also, the method to provide this Seva was explained in detail and they were asked to carry out Seva themselves during the programme. It was for the first time for most of them to be exposed to such kind of activities. Dr. Shashank Shah was the keynote speaker and he delivered two motivating speeches during the event.

The Youth Festival was a great learning experience for youth in social service. State President Sri Hemant Patel, National Council Member Sri Manohar G. Trikanad, State Youth Co-ordinators, Sri Rajiv Gosai (men) and Dr. Shilpa Popat (women) actively participated in the festival.

Kerala: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Palakkad district organised the 26th Sri Sathya Sai Bhagavata Saptaha Yajna (an exposition of Lord's stories in seven days)

in December 2018. With 5,000 attendees listening to the divine stories for seven days, it was a novel programme for the residents of Chittilanchery, the local town which was the venue for this holy programme. The Yajna Acharya Sri N. Somashekharan could stir the devotion of the listeners through the sweet stories of our Lord. On the 6th day of the Saptaha, Sri Veda Narayanan from Puttaparthi gave a talk on the Vedas.

A newly-built Anganvadi, located in Chindakki region of Agali Panchayat in Attapadi, was presented to the people by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation on 30th December 2018. Constructed within a period of two months, it was inaugurated by the All India President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Sri Nimish Pandya. Many dignitaries and State office bearers of SSSSO were present. The tribal people welcomed them with their rituals. Not only the Anganvadi, but toys for children, required furniture and other basic necessities were provided by the Sai Organisation.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Kerala have jointly planned to construct 27 houses at Amayida Colony in Ambalappuzha Panchayat for flood-affected people. In the second and third phase another 37 houses will be built. On 31st December 2018, Bhumi Puja was



Anganvadi at Attapadi before and after the construction.



Bhumi Puja for construction of houses for flood-affected people.

conducted at the Amayida Colony and foundation stone was laid for four new houses by the All India President Sri Nimish Pandya on 31st December 2018.

Rajasthan: With the blessings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Rajasthan organised a State Youth Conference on 22nd and 23rd

September 2018 at Sai Horizon School, Sanjharia (near Jaipur), one of the Sai Schools in Rajasthan. The theme of the Conference was "Transforming Self to Transform the World". The conference was attended by about 300 youth from all over Rajasthan. Some of the topics of the talks were: Message of Baba for Youth, Service for Self-fulfilment, Youth and Leadership, Management of Thought, Breath and Time for Success, Joy of Namasmarana, Go to the Source with all your Force, Bend your Body, Mend your Senses, End your Mind. There was a separate session for value games. On both the days, youth were motivated to express their views and give their feedback on various illuminating talks. Many youth also shared their personal experiences of self-transformation. The conference concluded with a decision to actively involve youth in the activities of Rajasthan Sai Organisation.

...continued from page 28

they pushed him out. Balaram was filled with great anguish. He ran to the top of the hill and shouted, "Sister! Brother-in-law! I don't want to live any longer if you do not come to our house. I am ending my life by jumping from this cliff". There reverberated a voice, "Dear little brother! Balaram! Stop! Dear brother-in-law! Wait!"

Instantly, Bhramaramba and Mallikarjuna appeared before Balaram and held him in their hands. The boy insisted that they should visit his house. Acceding to his plea, the Divine Couple went to his house. The boy and the mother were merged in the Divine Couple.

The young boy Balaram could merge in God due to his pure heart and unshakeable

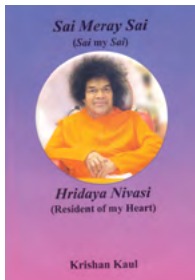


Strong faith in God earns Divine grace.

faith. Parents, elders and teachers should strive to inculcate in children sacred feelings and strong faith in God.

SAI MERAY SAI HRIDAYA NIVASI

(Sai, the Resident of my Heart)



SAI MERAY SAI
HRIDAYA NIVASI

Krishan Kaul

₹ 145.00 shipping charges extra,
Code No. 12430 pp. 345

T HIS BOOK, SAI MERAY SAI HRIDAYA Nivasi (Sai, the resident of my heart) contains a chronology of the author's precious and cherished experiences, as also of others which the readers will find resonance in their own experiences. The spectrum of subjects covered is vast, delineating from concept of Avatar through higher realms of spiritual concepts enshrined in sacred scriptures as also elucidated in simple terms by Bhagavan Baba. The book is structured into five parts, preceded by an insightful Foreword by Prof. Vishwanath Pandit, former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, and ending in Appendices comprising Bhagavan Baba's Mission of Love in action.

The author boldly and deftly deals with pertinent concepts, contradictions and hereditary perceptions in vogue, using cogent logic of ancient wisdom, in the background of his own experiential knowledge. As Convener of Service Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in the U.K., Sri Kaul had many interesting interactions and episodes connected with

Swami, which the reader no doubt will find very touching, challenging and enlightening.

Narrating one of his interviews with Baba, the author says, "What was singularly fortunate was to have been able to witness Time itself waiting upon (Swami) the Lord and Master of Time... An affirmation that my prayer had been heard and as a confirmation of the fact that not even a thought was alien to Him as He was privy to the language of the heart".

"Swami's eyes could not only see through but also had the power to burn the dross and evil tendencies in man," says the author. The way the author found himself behind Swami's Jhoola (at the Swing Ceremony) was an instance of alchemy of Swami's love and omniscience.

Discussing broadly Swami's cautionary exhortations about the mind and its machinations, the author remarks, "...Man is quick to assert the omnipresence of God, yet he is as quick to dismiss his own divinity as unscientific and irrational... The prospect of great discomfiture of the mind at committing certain acts, in full glare of conscience, persuades the mind into deluding itself to believe and pretend that conscience does not exist". The author quotes a student's words on Swami's impact, "All I need to do is to look at my own life and compare how my aimless and worthless lifestyle changed into a caring and purposeful life now".

"With palpable Divine Love in each utterance and action, the all merciful Lord had resolved persistent bickering, differences and divisions once for all by uniting mankind under one umbrella," says the author.

— P.P.S. Sarma

NOTICE

22nd February 2019

Exemption for donations, to Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust for the purposes of Medical Relief which gives 100% tax exemption u/s 80GGA (2) (bb) of the Income Tax Act 1961, will expire on 31st March, 2019. Donations for Medical Relief will be exempt u/s 80G (5) (vi) of the Income Tax Act 1961, subject to the applicable limits, w.e.f. 01st April, 2019.

However, 100% tax exemption will continue to be available for donations to Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning under Section 80G(2)(a)(iiif) of the Income Tax Act 1961.

**GSRCV Prasada Rao
Member Secretary
Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust**

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(Sd) **K.S. RAJAN**
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About Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust Publications Division (SSSSTPD)

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

The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

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

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Offering of Flowers of Devotion on Chinese New Year day.



A vibrant dance by Anantapur district children.



Devotional music concert by Master Aravind Balaji.

Date of Publication: 1st March 2019

Develop Firm Faith in God

If you have the strong desire to see God, contemplate on Him with unwavering faith. Then you can certainly see Him. Never doubt His existence. He exists for those who believe in His existence and does not exist for those who deny His existence. He acts according to your feelings. So, develop faith in Him.

– Baba

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