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SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

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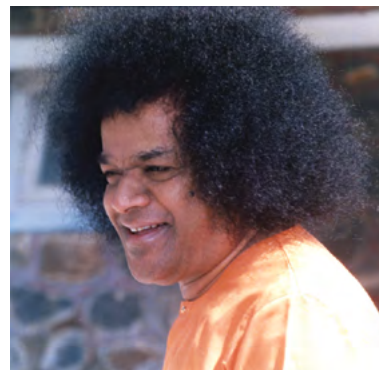
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*"To dispel darkness, we need light. You
don't need to worry as to how long it will
take you to remove this darkness that has
been with you for many lives. A building
may be closed for ten years. There may
be pitch darkness day and night in that
building for ten years. But it does not
take much time to dispel that darkness.
As soon as you light a lamp, the entire
darkness would go in a moment.."*



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Forthcoming Festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam



12th November 6 p.m.
to 13th November 6 p.m.Global Akhanda Bhajan
18th NovemberRathotsavam
19th NovemberLadies Day
22nd November35th Convocation of
Sri Sathya Sai Institute
of Higher Learning
23rd November91st Birthday of
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
25th DecemberChristmas

AVATAR VANI

KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON GOD CONSTANTLY

All names and forms are the manifestations of the Supreme Being who is the embodiment of peace and auspiciousness. He is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute and non-dual. He is Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Goodness, Beauty).

(Sanskrit Verse)

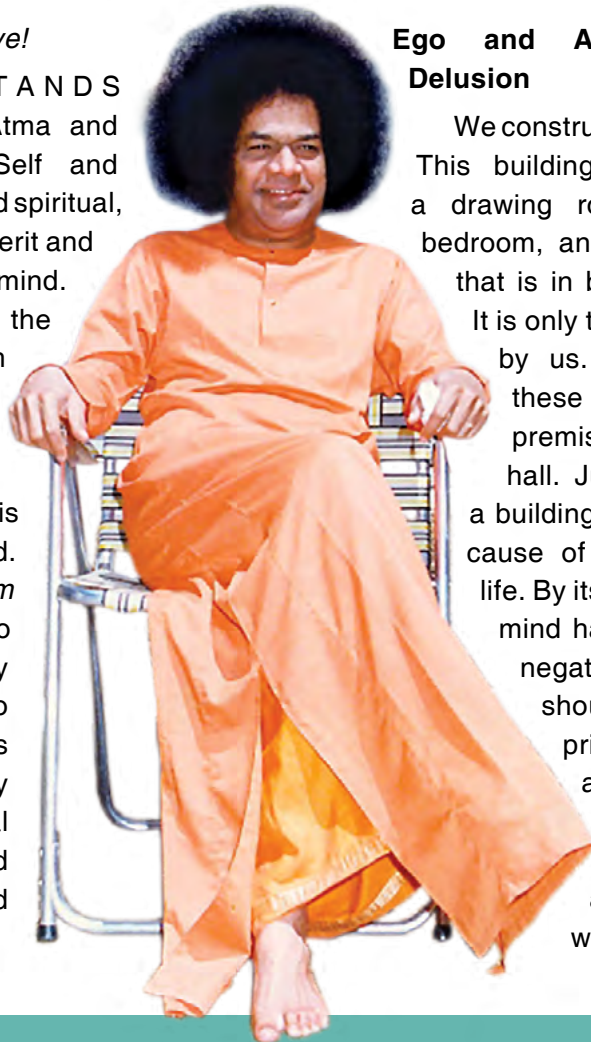
The mind is responsible for everything. Merely going to forest is no guarantee for you to attain liberation. If you transcend the mind, then the result is the same whether you are at home, in a forest or in a temple.

(Telugu Poem)

START CHANTING THE DIVINE NAME RIGHT NOW

Embodiments of Love!

WHAT STANDS between Atma and Anatma (Self and non-self), worldly and spiritual, good and bad and merit and sin is the human mind. It is like a wall in the mansion of life which causes division in unity. Man can experience unity when he removes this obstacle of the mind. *Ekoham Bahusyam* (the One willed to become many). Only one manifested into many. Man sees diversity in unity due to the mental delusion caused by his ego and attachment.



Ego and Attachment Cause Delusion

We construct a very big building. This building has a bathroom, a drawing room, a kitchen, a bedroom, and so on. What is it that is in between the rooms?

It is only the walls constructed by us. When we remove these walls, the entire premises becomes a big hall. Just like the walls in a building, human mind is the cause of diversity in human life. By its very nature, human mind has both positive and negative thoughts. Man should understand this principle of the mind and conduct himself with discrimination. Negative thoughts arise in the mind when it associates

with all that is worldly. Involvement of the mind in worldly scenario increases mental agitation and anxiety. Negative thoughts develop more and more because of mental anxiety. Positive and negative thoughts are just like the warp and woof of cloth. If you remove the threads, you can do away with cloth. When there are no thoughts, there is no mind. It is the negative thoughts which harm man. These can be controlled only by constant practice.

Once Arjuna asked Krishna, “Swami, the mind is very fickle. It is also very powerful. It is not that easy to control the mind”. He prayed to the Lord to teach him the way to control the mind. Then Krishna said, “Oh madcap! In this world, there is nothing easier than controlling the mind. Wherefrom does the mind originate? It originates out of thoughts. If you make your thoughts proper and good, you will never have any problem with the mind. What is the practice that you should do? Only one practice. Have full faith that the entire universe is the very form of God. You should recognise that there is one divine principle in the entire diversity of many names and forms in this world.

Jewels are many but gold is one.

Cows are many but milk is one.

Beings are many but breath is one.

Flowers are many but worship is one.

Religions are many but goal is one.

Beings are many but Atma is one.

(Telugu Poem)

Bulbs may be of different wattages and different colours, such as red, black, blue but the electric current in all of them is one. Likewise, beings have different names and forms but divinity in all of them is one and the same. Just as there is one current

***You may be a householder;
you may be a student or a
businessman. Whatever task you
may be engaged in, keep your
focus on your aim of knowing
the Atma. That is spirituality.
Spirituality is not merely limited
to spiritual practices. Keeping the
mind focused constantly on the
Atma and experiencing bliss in
the heart is true spirituality. Then
whatever you do, it will become
sacred and worthwhile.***

in all the bulbs, there is the same Atma in all beings. We have to practise this and recognise, “I am the Self, I am the Atma”. “I am the Atma” is also a thought. Even that thought should not be there because it means I and Atma are two entities. It is duality. Where there is duality, there is ignorance. *A man with a dual mind is half blind.* Today we are not totally blind. We don’t have clear vision. We are just half blind.

To get away from this half blindness, we should get away from this dual feeling of I and Self. We should say, “I am I”. We should enter the path of oneness. Arjuna also followed this path. God is like the current. You cannot see the current separately. It has no form. When the current enters the bulb, it gives you light. In fan, it gives you cool breeze. In stove, it helps you to cook. In a machine, it makes it work. You can make use of the current in an instrument. Without the instrument, it is not possible to make use of the current. The body, the mind, the intellect, the ego, the senses are merely instruments. The Atmic principle in them is like the current

which makes them function. They cannot function without the divine principle.

Recognise the Value of Human Life

Man should try to know the divine principle which makes all the organs to function. For this, form of the Divine is most essential. Some say that God has no form. The one who feels so is ignorant, without any knowledge. Form is most essential. You want liberation. You want bliss. You want peace. You want to experience divinity. How do you experience? You want to drink milk, water or Payasam (sweet pudding). For this, you need a tumbler or a vessel. Without container, you cannot take the material. So, you need a container for everything you partake of. When the container of the body receives bliss, you can experience it. Divinity is also like a liquid, to experience which you need the container of your body. You cannot make use of this liquid otherwise. If you have no container as such, at least you should join both palms and make a container.

Hence, container is most essential. That is the body. In the temple of the body, the Self is the eternal indweller. *Deho Devalaya Proktho Jivo Deva Sanathana* (the body is a temple and the indweller is God). It is not enough if you merely think of God. You have to make appropriate effort.

Will the darkness in the world be dispelled by the message of light?

Can the disease be cured by merely listening to the efficacy of the medicine?

Can the poor get rid of poverty by listening to the principles of economics?

Can hunger be satiated by mere repetition of the names of various delicious dishes?

No. You can attain bliss only when you put your knowledge into practice.

(Telugu Poem)

You have to acquire, experience and catch hold of what you aspire for. To dispel darkness, you need light. You don't need to worry as to how long it will take you to remove this darkness that has been with you for many lives. A building may be closed for ten years. There may be pitch darkness day and night in that building for ten years. But it does not take much time to dispel that darkness. As soon as you light a lamp, the entire darkness would go in a moment. It is enough if you know this truth once. You don't need long time for this. Man does not recognise how sacred, valuable and noble human life is. To make efforts to know the value of one's own Self is true spiritual practice. Diamond does not know its value. The one who owns the diamond and the one who has discrimination really knows its value. How is it that man does not know his value? The reason is his ego. It is because of his ego that he has forgotten his true nature. He has forgotten his own truth because of his identification with this ephemeral, transient, physical world. This is the cause of all his troubles. We see with our eyes, we listen with our ears, we experience with our mind, and consider this world to be true. How long does it last?

Turn your Mind Godward

Today you are all listening to Swami's Discourse; you see Swami and experience the bliss. How long does this truth last? It lasts up to the time you return home at night, take your food and go to bed. After you go to sleep, you have many dreams. In the dream, this waking state is not



there. Believing all that happens in the dream, you experience pleasure and pain. But how long does the dream last? It lasts until you wake up. In waking state, there is no dream. In dream, there is no waking state. But you are there both in the waking state and in the dream state. You are omnipresent. What is that omnipresence? That is divinity. You are the very form of divinity. When you understand these simple things, you will recognise even profound truths. But man today worries about the past. There is no use of worrying about the past. The path that you have already travelled, why do you look back at that? Past is past, forget the past.

Thinking of future, you build castles in the air. But future is not sure. Who has got full faith that he will see tomorrow? So, there is no use of thinking about tomorrow. Past is past. Future is not sure. Do not brood over future. Live in present. This is not ordinary present. This is omnipresent. Past results are in the present. Future results are also in the present. The seed sown earlier is a plant today. Had you not sown the seed last year, you would not have had the tree today. The seed of the future is also present in the present tree. Present tree is, therefore, omnipresent tree with past and future seeds. Similarly, present time is omnipresent. Therefore, be happy in the omnipresent. Why is man grief-stricken today? He is grief-stricken because he forgets the present and worries about the past and future. The reason for both is his mind.

Manah Eva Manushyanam Karanam Bandhamokshayo (mind is the cause of bondage and liberation of man). Swami said this many times. You put a lock on the door. To open the lock, you insert the

Man does not recognise how sacred, valuable and noble human life is. To make efforts to know the value of one's own Self is true spiritual practice. Diamond does not know its value. The one who owns the diamond and the one who has discrimination really knows its value. How is it that man does not know his value? The reason is his ego. It is because of his ego that he has forgotten his true nature.

key and turn it towards the right side. Then the lock opens. To lock it, you turn the key towards the left side. The same lock, the same key. There is difference only in turning right or left. In the same way, heart is the lock, mind is the key. Turn God-side, you get detachment, turn world-side, you get attachment. Turning the mind towards God, you get liberation. Turning the mind towards the world, you get bondage. So, mind is responsible both for liberation and bondage.

Swami said the other day, individual practice, family practice and community practice. The world will progress through these three practices. What do you mean by individual practice? It is the spiritual practice done by the individual himself. What is the practice? Is it Japa, Dhyana or Yoga (chanting, meditation or spirituality)? No! None of these. It is the full blossoming of the individuality of a person. Without blossoming of one's own individuality, all practices are useless. Individuality is needed. How do you develop that? You should never take to narrow path. Then only will you have the full development



of your personality. What do you mean by personality in the first instance? Personality signifies manifestation of latent divinity of the individual. The body of a person does not mean his personality. Who is truly a person? One who manifests his latent bliss is a person in the true sense of the term.

Manifest your Latent Divinity

How has this word 'person' been derived? It is a derivative of the Roman word, persona. First of all, we have to know what is meant by persona. Jesus who descended from divinity is called persona. So, persona means divinity. This means that divinity is present in every person. That divinity is omnipresent. Let us think of another simple subject.



You say, this is my body, this is my mind, this is my hand, this is my nose, these are my eyes, etc. Everything is mine, mine, mine. Then who am I? Put the question. Here also lies the personality. Here also lies omnipresence. You say, my eye. In this word eye also there is I. You say, my hand, my body, my stomach, my mind. I is there in all of them. So, I is everywhere.

That I denotes your true personality. You say, "I have come". Who is the one that has come? The one that has come is the body. When you say, "I came yesterday", you mean the body. So, that I identifies with the body. But the divine I is beyond name and form. Though it shines in different ways, it remains one. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). It is only one, not two. That is your true Self. In English alphabet, you must have seen the letter I. In numbers also, one is written as 1. So, 1 and I are similar.

However, if you add up I plus I, I plus I a million times, its total will be I only. But

You put a lock on the door. To open the lock, you insert the key and turn it towards the right side. Then the lock opens. To lock it, you turn the key towards the left side. The same lock, the same key. There is difference only in turning right or left. In the same way, heart is the lock, mind is the key. Turn God-side, you get detachment, turn world-side, you get attachment. Turning the mind towards God, you get liberation. Turning the mind towards the world, you get bondage.

when you add up 1 plus 1 plus 1, you get millions. So, I will remain one only. That is the Atma. But when you write it as number 1, it becomes millions. There is unity in diversity. When you consider the body as



I, you get multiplicity. When you realise Atma as I, you get unity.

The Upanishads teach you to understand unity in diversity. Beings are many, breath is one. Nations are many, earth is one. You should never say, "I am an American, I am an Australian, I am a Britisher, I am an Indian". Not like that. No! All belong to the same earth. Divinity in all of you is the same. What is this earth? In Sanskrit, we call it Bhumi. But in spiritual sense it is called Bhuma which means unlimited Brahman. The earth is not permanent, but Bhuma is permanent. Understanding this truth connotes true spirituality. However, do not consider the world as an obstacle in the path of spirituality. Living in the world, do your duty, discharge your responsibility, but keep the focus on the goal; never forget it.

Here is a small example. A housewife goes to the river. She cleans the vessel, fills it with water, keeps it on her head and walks back her way while conversing with other women. She may even quarrel with them but she will never forget the container, which she has kept on her head. There is another example. A dancer performs a dance. She moves her hands, turns her eyes this way and that way while following the rhythm and observing the tune. But in spite of all this, she performs the dance correctly. She has focus on her dance. No distraction can make her forget her dance. This should be our true aim in life.

Always Remember that you are the Atma

You may be a householder; you may be a student or a businessman. Whatever task you may be engaged in, keep your focus on your aim of knowing the Atma.

That is spirituality. Spirituality is not merely limited to spiritual practices. Keeping the mind focused constantly on the Atma and experiencing bliss in the heart is true spirituality. Then whatever you do, it will become sacred and worthwhile. But you have to keep a watch on the mind because it is the mind which stands as an obstacle in everything. Keep the mind aside. Tell the mind, "Don't stand in between God and me. You relate to the world. My relationship with God is sacred and spiritual". Pacify the mind in this way and keep it cool.

There is a very good ideal in the Ramayana. While walking in the forest, Sita followed Rama and Lakshmana followed Sita to protect her. It was not a royal road; they just walked one behind the other on a narrow path. At one time, Lakshmana desired to see Rama. But in between was Sita. He could not dare to overtake Sita or show anger towards her lest it should displease Rama because she is the very property of Rama. So, if he prays to mother Sita, "Mother, please give me the way, so that I can see Rama", she will certainly oblige. Then Rama will be happy, Sita will be happy and Lakshmana will also be happy. This denotes a profound truth. Lakshmana is the Jivatma (individual Self), Sita is Maya (illusion) and Rama is Atma. All the three are one behind the other. When the Jivatma wants to see God, Maya comes in between as obstacle. You should not have hatred for Maya, because Maya is the vesture of God. Instead pray wholeheartedly. Then there will be no Maya and you will see God. You can never overcome Maya through hatred. You have to make friendship with Maya. With good words, it will give you the way, and you can see the Lord.



Maya is, in fact, our own delusion. Otherwise, it has no existence. It is our imagination. That imagination should go. Here is a small example. There is a rope. But in the darkness you are afraid, mistaking it as a snake. No snake has come; it is only your illusion. Switch on a torch and see. The rope remains as it is, there is no snake. The snake has not gone, the rope has not come. First, the rope had not gone and the snake had not come. It is not that the snake ran away as you switched on the torch. Then and now it was and is the same rope. That which came and disappeared was illusion. Maya has no separate form as such. It is only thoughts that constitute it. Fill your thoughts with love and proceed on the path of sacrifice. Then you will never be affected by Maya. But you struggle for your selfish interests. You are afraid what others would think, what others would say. Why should you have fears like this? If you do not chant the Name of the Lord now because of such baseless fears, then who will come to your rescue when the messengers of death take hold of you?

At the time when the messengers of Yama (god of death) put the noose

around your neck and start dragging you away, saying, come, let us go.

At the time when your relations tell your family members to take you out of the house, saying your end has approached.

And at the time when your wife and children start weeping and wailing,

How can you chant the Name of Hari?
(Telugu Poem)

Start early, drive slowly, reach safely. Don't delay and waste time. Start now. Experience the bliss of chanting the Divine Name now. Later is later. Next is next. Do not waste time at all. Engage your mind in the practice of sacrifice. Take to the path of renunciation with due practice. This is the right attitude of the mind. In the midst of all kinds of thoughts and activities, you should always remember that you are the Atma and nothing but the Atma. Never forget these divine feelings. Have the feelings at all times, at all places, everywhere that you are divine. There is no other spiritual practice greater than this. There is nothing more that is necessary. You don't need to leave your duty and responsibility. Discharge your duties with divine feelings. Then only will you attain lasting peace.

– Bhagavan's Divine Discourse at Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 18th April 1993.

Divine Love does not expect anything in return. In order to cultivate such Divine Love, man should have the faith that he is the spark of the Divine and he should understand that the same God is present in all. Once he understands and develops faith in this truth, he can love everybody. Today one does not find such love. It only means that man has no faith in the statement of God that "all are sparks of the Divine".

– Baba

SRI SATHYA SAI GHAT AT RISHIKESH

A

THREE-DAY PROGRAMME WAS held from 9th to 11th September 2016 to celebrate the inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Ghat on the river Ganga at Rishikesh.

The programme on 9th September 2016 began with Ganesh Homam performed with offering of oblations to Lord Ganesh amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras. This was followed by musical presentations by Bal Vikas Alumni from Haryana-Chandigarh, adding further to the spiritually charged ambience of the Sri Sathya Sai Ghat with the holy Ganga flowing in the background. In the evening, a play on Mother Ganga was presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Rishikesh. This was followed by Bhajans by the Prasanthi Mandir Bhajan Group who concluded their session with a special medley of Bhajans based on the Ganga theme. The students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Rishikesh then performed the synchronised Ganga Arati with lamps reflecting on the waves of the river. The programme on 9th September concluded with Arati to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Earlier in the day, the spacious Sai Annapoorna Dining Hall (60 feet by 30 feet) was inaugurated by Sri S.S. Naganand, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

The programme on 10th September began with the early morning Nagar Sankirtan across Laxman Jhoola which surcharged the entire milieu with sacred vibrations. Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation then inaugurated the spacious Sri Sathya



Ganesh Homam at Sri Sathya Sai Ghat, Rishikesh.

Sai Ghat, which comprises a flight of steps leading to the river bank and lies right below the vast estate that houses Sri Sathya Sai Mandir, North Prashanti and Bhagavan Baba's residence where He stayed in 1982. The programme earlier started with performance of Ekadasa Rudra Abhishekam conducted by Sri K.R. Vedanarayanan. Everyone present got the opportunity to perform Abhishekam with holy Ganga water. This was followed by Bhajans by the Prasanthi Mandir Bhajan Group.

Another important event of the day was the installation of Padukas of Bhagavan



Nagar Sankirtan at Laxman Jhoola.



Swami's Padukas at Sri Sathya Sai Ghat.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the Ghat. The installation ceremony was performed by Sri R.J. Rathnakar, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. The Padukas were installed in a specially set up Mandir on the Ghat. These Padukas were brought from Prasanthi Nilayam Mandir where they had been sanctified by the power of the continuous prayers held in the prayer hall for the past 40 years.

A devotional music concert by Bhagavan's students from Prasanthi

Nilayam on the evening of 10th September 2016 enraptured one and all. Renowned Bhajan singer, Sri Anup Jalota presented a melodious concert on the night of 10th September 2016 which surcharged the entire milieu with devotional fervour.

A number of sculptures along the Sri Sathya Sai Ghat capture the glory and the story of river Ganga. The 18 feet tall statue of Mother Ganga sits on the main Ghat, besides a statue of Lord Siva and King Bhagirath. Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman, Prasanthi Council, inaugurated the 23 feet tall Siva statue located outside Sri Sathya Sai Mandir. The image of Lakshmi Narayan on the Ghat was unveiled by Justice A.P. Mishra, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

On 11th September 2016, Sri Sathya Sai Vedic Learning Centre and Library was inaugurated by Dr. B.G. Pitre, Director, Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Mumbai. The learning centre will be open to all for Vedic learning. The centre is supported by a well-equipped library with Vedic literature which was inaugurated by Smt. Nimmi Kanwar, National Coordinator, Bal Vikas programme.

Happiness lies in union with God. God is the embodiment of bliss, which is eternal, unsullied, pure and non-dual. It is most unfortunate if you forget God. Never give up Sai and make the best use of the chance given. Once you lose the opportunity to serve the Lotus Feet of Partheesa, you will not get it back. Sai grants you devotion, strength and liberation. Do not ruin yourself by listening to others. Do not believe anybody, believe your conscience and follow it.

– Baba

From our Archives

ATMA IS THE ETERNAL WITNESS

Truth is the mother, wisdom is the father, righteousness is the brother, compassion is the friend, peace is the wife, forgiveness is the son. These six virtues are the real relations of man.

(Sanskrit Verse)

ENGAGE YOURSELF IN THE QUEST OF ATMIC BLISS

IN THIS WORLD, EVERY INDIVIDUAL has a mother. But truth is the mother of the entire humanity. Those who follow this mother will never face any difficulties in life. The worldly mothers are bound by space and time and will have to leave their bodies at one point of time, but truth is not limited by space and time and remains the same in all the three periods of time. It is the master of all the three worlds. So, everyone must necessarily follow such a noble mother (truth).

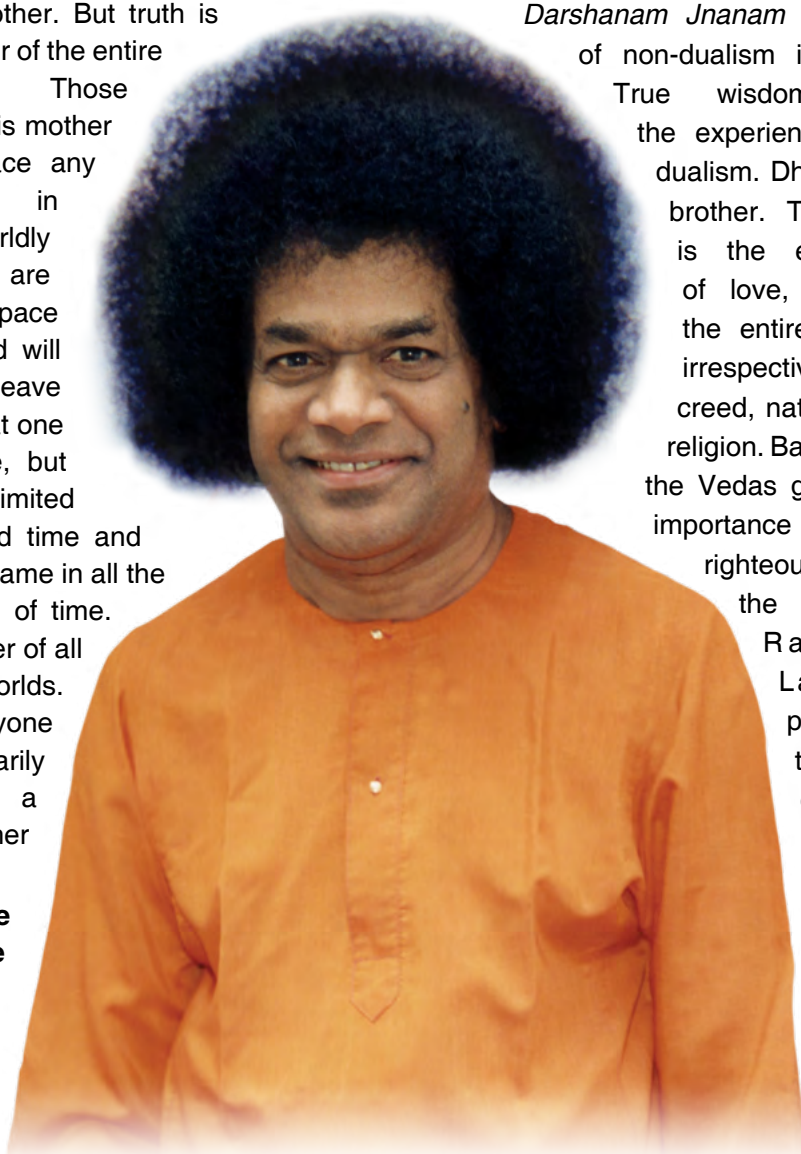
**Recognise
your True
Relations**

Wisdom
is the father.
W i s d o m

does not mean worldly knowledge. *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* (experience of non-dualism is wisdom).

True wisdom confers the experience of non-dualism. Dharma is the brother. This brother is the embodiment of love, and loves the entire humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality and religion. Basing on this, the Vedas gave utmost importance to truth and righteousness. In

the great epic Ramayana, Lakshmana personified this principle of Dharma. When he fainted in the battlefield, Rama lamented, saying that He



could get a consort like Sita, a mother like Kausalya, but not a brother like Lakshmana. Rama said, His Divinity blossomed because He had a brother like Lakshmana. Compassion is the true friend. In this world a friend today may become an enemy tomorrow. But, there is no greater friend than compassion. Peace is the wife. This is the precious jewel of saints, and is the royal path in the spiritual field. Forgiveness is the son. There is no greater quality than forgiveness. It encompasses all the good qualities like truth, righteousness, non-violence and it is the essence of all Vedas.

Therefore, for every individual, the true relations are truth, wisdom, righteousness, compassion, peace and forgiveness. The whole world is full of agitation and disturbance because of lack of these sacred qualities.

Embodiments of Love!

You should always remember your true mother and father. You cannot exist without them. The whole creation has emerged from truth and merges back into it. There is no place where truth does not exist. It is the good fortune of human beings to have this eternal truth as their mother. But, today humanity does not follow such a sacred mother. You worship Devi in these nine days of Devi Navaratri. You consider Devi as your Divine Mother. This Devi is called Sathya Swarupini, which means she is the embodiment of truth. So, worshipping truth amounts to worshipping Devi.

Control Ego and Attachment

If you understand and follow this truth, you will be successful in every field. The Vedas also proclaim this truth. There are many in this world who have gone through the Vedas and sacred texts, but their views

seem to be distorted and perverted. Since ancient times, sages and saints of India undertook many spiritual practices in quest of truth. They determined not to give up till they had the vision of truth. Ultimately they declared to the world that they had seen God, who is all brilliance, full of effulgence and is beyond the darkness of ignorance. They also declared that God is not far off in a distant land, but is present in the human body. The saints had the vision of God, who is Chinmaya (effulgent) in the body, which is Mrinmaya (earthly). So, we should not underestimate the human body and use it for mean and worldly pleasures. Body is the temple of God. The body may be compared to an iron chest. Just as the precious jewels are kept in the iron chest, so also God is present in the human body. Therefore, the body has to be maintained and made proper use of for the sake of the precious jewel, Atma. You get jewels only from earth. Similarly, you have to search for the jewel of Atma only in the body.

Let us investigate what comes in the way of experiencing the Atmic principle. Ego and attachment stand as obstacles in your path. Only when you give up ego and attachment will you have purity of heart, which in turn will lead to the experience of supreme wisdom. The more you develop attachment, the more restless you become. Ego is much more dangerous. It has become an incurable disease in human beings. So, you have to keep ego and attachment under control and engage yourself in the quest of Atmic bliss.

During these sacred nine days (Navaratri), people go through the sacred texts such as Devi Bhagavata, Ramayana and Mahabharata. People also worship the deities Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. This Trinity is present in the principle of Truth.



Goddess Gayatri has three heads. They are: Gayatri, Savitri and Saraswati. Gayatri is the presiding deity of your senses. Savitri is the presiding deity of life principle. Saraswati is the presiding deity of speech. All these three are within the same principle of Truth. Gayatri Mantra begins with *Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah*. Bhu means materialisation (body); Bhuvah means vibration (life principle); Suvah means radiation (Atma).

During these nine days goddess Shakti (energy divine principle) is worshipped. Truth, righteousness, peace, forgiveness are all the expressions of the principle of Shakti. Truth is the primal cause. There is nothing other than this. All faculties of energy are present in truth. So, consider truth as your mother and follow it. The Vedas proclaim, *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara*, which means speak truth and follow righteousness. Unfortunately, today people do not follow this. This is the cause of all suffering. Ancients gave utmost priority to truth and righteousness. They followed the dictates of their conscience. But today such an attitude is lacking.

Practise Truth and Righteousness

Many people say they are in search of Divinity. Once you follow the path of truth, you will find Divinity everywhere. A small example: The same eyes see the mother, daughter, wife and sister. Here you need to enquire as to what kind of feeling you should have towards each. This is the quest for truth. Mother should be viewed with reverence and respect, daughter should be considered as a part of your own being. In this way, you should enquire and understand the truth.

If you just go by the direct evidence of what you see, you will never know the truth. All that you see is bound to perish. There

Let us investigate what comes in the way of experiencing the Atmic principle. Ego and attachment stand as obstacles in your path. Only when you give up ego and attachment will you have purity of heart, which in turn will lead to the experience of supreme wisdom. The more you develop attachment, the more restless you become. Ego is much more dangerous. It has become an incurable disease in human beings.

are many things, which cannot be perceived by the naked eye. In spiritual path, everyone wants *Pratyaksha Pramanam* (direct evidence). But direct evidence cannot constitute the entire truth. For example: You see a person who is four feet five inches tall, weighing forty-five kilograms and fair complexioned. All these can be seen by the naked eye. But you cannot go merely by these physical qualities. You should also take into consideration the unseen qualities in him such as love, compassion, anger, etc. It is utter foolishness if you go by the physical form, which is direct evidence. It is not possible to see the direct manifestation of God. God, who is the embodiment of truth and righteousness, is everywhere. So, you practise truth and righteousness and enjoy the bliss.

Turn your Vision Inward and See the Atma

For everything, conscience is the witness. If you do not follow the conscience, everything becomes unsacred. Atma is the eternal witness and that is conscience. Atma is everywhere. It is in every individual and every creature. It has no form. It is



attributeless, eternal, ancient, unsullied, immortal. Who can understand such an Atmic principle? You speak of truth and consider whatever you see and hear as truth, but all this is limited to senses. Atma is beyond the senses. Then how to know this Atmic principle? You do not need to search for this elsewhere. Turn your vision inward. The Vedas said: *Pashyannapicha Na Pashyati Moodho* (he is a fool who sees, yet does not recognise the reality). All that you see is Divine, but you mistake it for Nature. The one with Atmic vision will see the entire Nature as Divine. But if you have the worldly view, you can only see the world. *Viswam Vishnumayam* (Lord Vishnu pervades the entire universe).

Names and forms may vary, but Atma is uniform in all. To understand this unity, you have to turn your vision inward. There is no separate path to know God other than knowing one's own Self.

The entire universe is within you. The mountains may appear smooth from a distance, but once you go near, you will know the truth. It is the distance that lends enchantment. As long as you think that Kailasa, Vaikuntha and Swarga are at a distant place, you will go mad thinking of them. But actually all of them are in your Hridaya. Your happiness is heaven and your misery is hell. The concept of hell and heaven is introduced in order to see that you do only good. Heaven and hell are not separate; they are in your mind. What is the cause of misery? Your own actions. Buddha did penance for six long years. One day he opened his eyes and said, he had caught hold of the thief. Who is the thief? It is the mind. He realised that the mind was the root

cause of all suffering. If you control your mind, you will never suffer.

Human heart can be compared to the Ksheera Sagara (ocean of milk), but today it has become Kshara Sagara (ocean of salinity). Lord Vishnu reclines on the ocean of milk, which means He resides in our hearts. But if we make our heart into Kshara Sagara, then whales and sharks (bad qualities) enter. Human heart should be pure; only then can Lord Vishnu recline on it. If you understand God, you will not search for Him outside. God is with you, in you, above you, below you, around you. There is no one nearer than God. God is nearer than your physical mother. So, worship God as your mother, who is the embodiment of truth.

I always begin My Discourse with a Sloka or a poem and conclude it with a Bhajan. Do you know what are they? The first poem or Sloka is like a plate, the Discourse can be compared to the various delicious items that are served on the plate, and the Bhajan in the end is like a plate covering the delicious items. Do not treat this as a Mandhu (medicine), thereby taking a little. Treat this as a Vindhu (banquet) and partake of the delicious items that I serve to the maximum extent. Experience and enjoy this banquet.

Students! Embodiments of Love!

You have to learn many things in daily life. First know the mistakes in your life and try to correct them. Love is essential to become a complete human being. If you follow the path of love, everything becomes love.

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Dasara Discourses.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF ODISHA DEVOTEES

*D*EVOTEES OF ODISHA, numbering nearly 1,200, came on a two-day Parthi Yatra (pilgrimage to Puttaparthi) from 27th to 28th August 2016 and presented music and cultural programmes on both the days. On 27th August 2016, a classical music concert "Bhajan Sandhya" (an evening of Bhajans) was presented by a learned musician Pandit Shiba Prasad Rath and party. Mellifluous rendition of devotional songs, Bhajans and an array musical compositions which included "Jai Krishna Jai Krishna", "Easwaramma Tera Sai Yuga Yuga Ka Avatar" (Mother Easwaramma, your Sai is the Avatar of Kali Yuga), "Yaad Sai Ki Aaye" (we remember Sai), "Jai Sai Ram Jai Sai Ram" suffused the entire milieu with devotional fervour.

The programme on 28th August 2016 began with a Tandava dance on stilts, popularly known as Ranapa Dance, by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar,



Ranapa dance by students.

Brahmapur who exhibited their remarkable skill in balance and agility in presenting this semi-classical Odissi dance with total perfection.



Drama "Sai Trayee" by Sathya Sai Youth of Odisha.

What followed next was a very realistic drama "Sai Trayee" based on the three main service initiatives taken up by the Sai Organisation of Odisha. Presented in three parts by the Sai Youth of Odisha, the drama first showed Jyoti Yatra followed by blood donation and provision of drinking water to villagers. What made the drama a sterling performance was its dramatisation of real life incidents which actually happened to concerned persons. This was followed by Bhajans which concluded with Arati.

A NEW INITIATIVE OF SRI SATHYA SAI VIDYA VAHINI

Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini initiated its engagement with Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Schools by distributing educational activities kits to 12 selected



*Distribution of educational activities kits
in Sai Kulwant Hall.*

schools of Anantapur district in a simple function held in Sai Kulwant Hall on 3rd September 2016. By using these kits, schools can conduct a number of activities for effective learning by students. There are at present more than 2,500 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas in India, and 64 such schools are in Anantapur district. The schools were later brought under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (education for all) by the Government of India.

SAI SANNIDHI DAY

Former students of Bhagavan working in Sai institutions celebrated Sai Sannidhi Day on 4th September 2016 to express their love and gratitude to Him for giving them the unique opportunity of serving in the institutions set up by Him. Reminiscing blissful moments of their proximity with Bhagavan, they narrated their experiences of Bhagavan's loving care and divine grace and shared with the devotees the valuable life lessons learnt by them at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan through short speeches and beautiful solo and group songs. Those who spoke on this occasion were: Sri Aravind Balasubramanya, Sri Satyajit Salian, Sri V. Karthik, Sri Chandrasekharan and Sri Jaiganesh. These speeches were

interspersed with touching songs, the spirited rendition of which suffused the entire milieu with devotion and piety. The songs rendered by the students included "O Maa Sai Maa", "Jyoti Jalayenge Hum" (we will light the lamp of divinity), "Kanula Mundara Kadaliyaade, Karuna Roopamu Neevu" (You are the embodiment of compassion moving about in front of our eyes).

GANESH CHATURTHI

Devotional Music by Students

On the auspicious day of Ganesh Chaturthi, 5th September 2016, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning showcased the divine glory of Lord Ganesh through a beautiful music programme comprising Stotras, classical compositions and group songs which included "Eka Dantam Mahakayam" (you have an enormous body with one tusk), "Jai Ganesh, Jai Ganesh, Jai Ganesh Deva" (hail Lord Ganesh), "Ganapati Tum Daya Karo" (shower your grace, Lord Ganesh), "Sri Ganesha Shivuni Kumara" (Sri Ganesh the son of Lord Siva). The spirited rendition of the songs and Stotras with devout feelings made the presentation an impressive vocal concert.

A video clip of a Ganesh Chaturthi Discourse of Bhagavan was thereafter screened, in which He exhorted one and all to understand the unity of mankind as underlined by the bond of oneness between Vyashti, Samashti, Srishti and Parameshti (individual, society, creation and Creator). Referring to the celebration of the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi, Bhagavan emphasised that people should understand the inner meaning of these celebrations and follow the path of unity and divinity. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with

the Bhajan “Suklambaradhara Ganapati Mantram Nityam Nityam Bhajo Bhajo” (chant the Ganapati Mantra everyday). The programme which began at 8.30 a.m. after regular Veda chanting came to a close at 10.00 a.m. with Arati after a brief session of Bhajans which followed Bhagavan’s Discourse.

After the conclusion of the morning programme in Sai Kulwant Hall, ceremonial worship of the idols of Lord Ganesh installed in schools, colleges and other Sai institutions was commenced by the students and staff members of the respective institutions.

Immersion Ceremony

After the worship of these idols for three days, they were brought by various groups of students and staff members in grand processions to Sai Kulwant Hall on the afternoon of 7th September 2016. As they were lined up in the hall, the devotees



Ganesh idols in Sai Kulwant Hall.

witnessed a grand spectacle of about 20 idols mounted on innovatively designed colourful vehicles in various shapes and sizes. Some of the prominent among these were in the shape of Garuda (eagle), swans, parrot, panda, balloon, watch, aeroplane, army tank, musical instruments, temples, chariots, etc. After the arrival of all the idols, the groups of students and staff members circumambulated the Bhajan Mandir while chanting Vedic hymns and singing Bhajans.

Three beautiful dances by the students of Sri Sathya Sai Primary and Higher Secondary School followed this. The students not only showed their talent in dancing, but also displayed their skill in acrobatics and made many attractive formations.

Before the idols were taken out for immersion, the Mandir priest offered Arati to them. The students thereafter brought the idols one by one before the Samadhi of Bhagavan and offered their salutations to Him. After seeking Bhagavan’s blessings, they took the idols out for ceremonial immersion.

ONAM FESTIVAL

A large number of devotees came from Kerala to celebrate the festival of Onam in the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam. Deep devotional fervour and festive spirit marked the celebrations. The entire milieu was surcharged with spiritual vibrations when devotees of Kerala presented a number of programmes for six days, from 9th to 14th September 2016, which included talks by eminent speakers, music and cultural programmes and Yajnas in Poornachandra Auditorium. Regular Veda chanting and Bhajan singing in Sai Kulwant Hall was also conducted by Kerala devotees. They also offered a sumptuous feast on Onam day to all devotees.

Day 1: 9th September 2016

Six-daylong Onam celebrations commenced on 9th September 2016 with the talk of Sri K.S. Sabarinadhan, a Member of Kerala Legislative Assembly. Deploring the modern trend of gross commercialisation of education and medical care, the distinguished speaker pointed out how the exemplary institutions set up by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba were providing high

quality free education and medical care to all. Sai Organisation could play a significant role in these fields, he added. A programme of Sampradaya Bhajans followed next which was presented by Sri Vittal Vinod



Sampradaya Bhajans in Sai Kulwant Hall.

Bhagavathar and party. Sai Kulwant Hall reverberated with Sankirtan of Divine Name when the accomplished singer and his party sang devotional songs and Bhajans which included “Hari Narayana”, “Vanamali Radha Ramana”, “Shyam Sundar Jai Gopi Manohar”, “Chandra Vadana Kamala Nayana”. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 6.15 p.m.

Day 2: 10th September 2016

The programme on 10th September 2016 began with the talk of Justice (Smt.) Anu Sivaraman, a judge of Kerala High Court, who exhorted one and all to adhere to the path of love and unity, considering the entire universe as the manifestation of God’s love. What followed next was a spellbinding Kirtan rendered by a group of talented singers from Sadguru Kulam, Kozhikode district. Starting their concert with the Kirtan, “Narayana Hari Narayana Hari Narayana Hari Narayana”, they sang the glory of Narayana, Siva, Subrahmanya, Ayyappa and other gods and goddesses through devotional songs and Bhajans with a perfect blend of Bhava, Raga and Tala (feeling, tune and rhythm).

Day 3: 11th September 2016

On 11th September 2016, two speakers addressed the gathering. The first speaker was Dr. Gopakumar G, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Kerala who spoke on the topic “Values-based Education”. Referring to Bharat as the land of yoga, values and spirituality, the learned speaker observed that spirituality was the main force which kept India united through the ages. The world today, he said, was in dire need of values which should form the basis of education. The second speaker, Sri P. Gopalakrishnan, President, Travancore Devaswom Board, Kerala, spoke on the topic “Spirituality that Surpasses Religion”. Speaking in chaste Malayalam, the distinguished speaker referred to the ideals and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and advised the devotees to follow the path of love and service shown by Him.

After these two talks, an eminent musician and playback singer of repute Smt. Ambili presented a devotional music concert enrapturing the audience for nearly one hour. Some of the numbers rendered by her were: “Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam”, “Sai Deva Bhagavan” (Sai is God), “Bho Shambho Siva Shambho Swayambho” (Lord Siva who is self-born).

Day 4: 12th September 2016

An exhilarating Carnatic classical music offering by Kumari Rudra and Kumari Bhadra marked the morning programme on 12th September 2016. Some of the numbers rendered by the talented duo were: “Sayeeswara Shankara”, “Bhavayami Raghuramam”, “Vitthala Muralidhara” which surcharged the entire milieu with devotional fervour. Bhajans followed next which concluded with Arati at 9.30 a.m. At



10.30 a.m., Sri Sathya Sai Maha Archana Yajna was performed in Poornachandra Auditorium, in which a large number of devotees took part.

The afternoon programme started with short speeches on Sri Sathya Sai Rehabilitation Programme (SRP) being organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Kerala over many years for the post-operative care of heart patients of Sri Sathya Sai Super Speciality Hospitals at Whitefield and Puttaparthi. First Dr. Anand Mohan, Medical Coordinator of this programme in Kerala, gave an introductory speech. Next, one of the patients offered gratitude to Bhagavan on behalf of all the patients who were the beneficiaries of the programme. Sri Shravan Kumar, in charge of SRP at the Whitefield Super Speciality Hospital, then gave a detailed account of the modus operandi of this programme.

A beautiful drama “Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah” (if you protect Dharma, you will be protected by Dharma) followed next.



A scene from the drama “Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah”.

Presented by the Sai Youth of Alappuzha district of Kerala, the drama showcased the highest ideals of Dharma set by Lord Rama and Bharata through an episode from the Ramayana. While Rama went to forest for

14 years to uphold the word of His father, Bharata installed the Padukas of Rama on the throne of Ayodhya spending 14 years in penance. Good acting of the cast, excellent make-up and costumes and exhilarating dances of the children made the drama an impressive presentation.

Day 5: 13th September 2016

On the morning of 13th September 2016, Bal Vikas children of Kerala enthralled the audience with a brilliant devotional music presentation entitled “His Master’s Voice”. Beginning their programme with a solo, they rendered an array of sweet group songs which included “Omkaara Nadhanu Sandhana Mouganame Sankarabharanam” (the song that harnesses the power of the celestial sound Omkaram is the one and only Sankarabharanam), “Janam Diya Tu Ne Sai Ko Hum Pe Kiya Upkar” (we are grateful to Mother Easwaramma who gave birth to Sai) and a Kabir song “Rama Govinda Bhajore Bhaiya” (oh brother, chant the Name of Rama and Govinda). At 10.00 a.m., Sri Sathya Sai Gayatri Yajna was performed in Poornachandra Auditorium, in which devotees participated with deep devotion.

The programme in the afternoon began with erudite talks by two eminent speakers. The first speaker Sri K. Jayakumar, Vice Chancellor, Malayalam University, observed that Onam was not merely a shopping festival. Its real meaning, he elaborated, was to get rid of one’s ego like Mahabali and surrender to God, and thereby achieve liberation, which was the goal of human life. The second speaker was Sri K.R. Jyothilal, Secretary, Government of Kerala. Explaining the real meaning of celebrating Onam, the distinguished speaker observed that man should surrender to God to achieve



liberation. Surrender to the world, he added, would lead him to bondage.

These two talks were followed by a dance drama entitled “Onam with Mother Sai”. Presented by the students of Sri Sathya Sai



A colourful dance by children in the drama “Onam with Mother Sai”.

Vidya Vihar, Aluva, the drama depicted the illustrious life story of Bhagavan Baba from His birth to adulthood, highlighting the setting up of educational institutions, hospitals and water projects by Him in fulfilment of His boons granted to Mother Easwaramma. Embellished with thrilling dances of children, the drama picturised Bhagavan’s birth and childhood scenes beautifully with the help of LED screen.

Day 6: 14th September 2016

Sai Kulwant Hall, the venue of Onam celebrations, bore a festive look with beautiful floral and Kerala style decorations on the morning of Onam, 14th September 2016. The programme in the morning was a dance presentation entitled “Unity of Faiths” by the Bal Vikas children of Kozhikode district, conveying Bhagavan Baba’s message of unity of all religions. Beginning with a beautiful dance dedicated to Lord Ganesh, the children presented dance numbers representing major religions and appropriately concluded their programme



A dance number on “Unity of Faiths”.

with a dance to the tune of multifaith Bhajan “Allah Bhajo Maula Bhajo, Hey Allah Sai Bhagavan”. Bhajans followed this and concluded with Arati.

The programme in the afternoon began with an erudite talk of Sri K.N.A. Khader, Secretary, Indian Union Muslim League. Beginning his talk with chanting of Vedic prayer *Saha Navavatu Saha Nau Bhunaktu Saha Veeryam Karavavahai TejaswinavadheetamastuMa Vidvishavahai*. (May the Lord protect and nourish us! May we grow in intelligence and valour working together! May we live in friendship without any conflict!), the distinguished speaker observed that Onam symbolised love, unity and good governance as exemplified by Mahabali who was respected by his subjects not for wealth and power but for love. Referring to Bhagavan Baba as the incarnation of love, he said that love was the most powerful weapon to unite mankind, which was the dire need of the world today.

Presentation of gold medals to the winners of the Essay Competition 2016 followed next. Over 30,000 students from about 1,100 educational institutions of Kerala took part in this competition. Three gold medal winners, all girls, thereafter made short speeches underscoring the teachings of Bhagavan. State President of



Kerala, Prof. E. Mukundan then addressed the gathering and outlined the main Seva activities of the Sai Organisation of the State.

This was followed by a Discourse of Bhagavan which was aired on the public address system. In His Discourse, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to realise their unity with God by offering themselves to Him. God, Bhagavan said, is the embodiment of love and devotees should develop love to love and heart to heart relationship with God to attain Him.

Bhagavan's Discourse was followed by a musical presentation by Sri Ramesh Sadashiva and party who enthralled the devotees for nearly one hour with devotional songs and Bhajans. Bhajans followed next which concluded with Arati at 6.15 p.m. With this, Onam celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion.

SAI SAMARPAN

Devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall had a sumptuous feast of Hindustani classical music when the students and staff of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music made a sterling presentation "Sai Samarpan" (offering to Sai) on 18th September 2016. Beginning their programme with a prayer song to Lord

Ganesh "Shravan Sundar Naam Ganapati", they kept the audience spellbound for nearly one hour with compositions in various Ragas (tunes) which included "Mo Pe Rang Na Daro Banwari" (do not throw colour on me, oh Krishna), followed by two songs of Kabir "Bhajan Kaba Kariho" (oh man, when will you chant the Divine Name), "Mo Ko Kahan Dhoode Bande Mein To Tere Paas Mein" (oh man, where do you search for Me when I am close to you?), concluding their presentation with a Marathi Abhang.

ALL INDIA MAHILA CONFERENCE

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation organised a two-day All India Mahila Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam on 24th and 25th September 2016 on the theme: Women – the Foundation of Values-based Society". Keeping this exalted theme in view, the conference deliberated on the ways and means to synchronise the work being done by women all over India and give a new direction to this programme of promoting values in society as taught by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

The programme on the morning of 24th September 2016 began at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting by the Mahila devotees from the States of Kerala and Sikkim followed by a welcome song. Next Smt. Kamala Pandya, National Coordinator for Women's Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation addressed the gathering. Referring to women as the pillars of human values in society, the distinguished speaker exhorted the women to offer themselves to Bhagavan and earn deservedness so as to become worthy instruments of His Divine Mission. After the inspiring talk of Smt. Pandya, a compendium entitled "Woman – the



Music programme "Sai Samarpan".

Torchbearer of Values" was released. After this, the Chief Guest of the Conference, Smt. Vandita Sharma, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka delivered her inaugural address. Referring to the different roles played by a woman like mother, wife, sister and first teacher of her children, the learned speaker observed that woman was the architect of harmony in the family which formed the basis of peace in the world. This was followed by an award presentation ceremony, wherein awards were presented to dignitaries from all the States of India. The concluding item of this programme was an enrapturing devotional music presentation by Mahila devotees from the State of Karnataka who enthralled the devotees with Hindi and Kannada devotional songs and concluded their programme with a Marathi Abhang. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 9.45 a.m.

The programme in the afternoon began at 4.30 p.m. with chanting of Vedic hymns by the Mahila devotees of Madhya Pradesh. After this, Smt. Dipti Gor, Education Secretary, Government of Madhya Pradesh addressed the gathering. The learned speaker in her inspiring talk cited some incidents from her own life and pleaded that girls in the family should be provided equal opportunities like boys for their growth and development. Narrating her experiences with Bhagavan Baba, she observed that one would never go wrong if one installed Bhagavan in the heart and followed His teachings. An award presentation ceremony followed this, in which selected devotees were given awards for their lifetime contribution to the Sai Organisation.

The last item of the programme was a musical dance drama "Nari Ek Shakti" (woman, the embodiment of power) by



A glimpse of the power of womanhood through the drama "Nari Ek Shakti".

the girls students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Mandir, Dharmakshetra and Aksa, Mumbai.

Embellished with beautiful dances of the students, the dance drama showcased the power of womanhood depicting women as the very form of the Divine Mother who is the repository of great virtues like compassion, faith, peace and valour. It also portrayed incidents from the lives of great women like Savitri, Putlibai (the mother of Mahatma Gandhi), Bhagavati Devi (the mother of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar), Mother Easwaramma and women freedom fighters how they performed noble deeds and set great ideals for all women to follow. Bhajans led by Mahila devotees followed next and concluded with Arati at 7.00 p.m.

The programme on the second day of the Conference, 25th September 2016, began at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting by the Mahila devotees from the State of Tamil Nadu. This was followed by a grand procession of women delegates which entered Sai Kulwant Hall at 8.15 a.m. Grandeur and elegance was witnessed when the delegates

continued on page 34...





VENKAT JAYARAM

EGO PRICK BY THE DIVINE LORD

IT WAS SOME TIME DURING EARLY 70's when I was most fortunate to get selected by the Divine Lord to study in his illustrious institution, Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College, Brindavan. How I joined that is a story by itself where I could see the Divine hands of the Lord leading me to the institution. I am trying to narrate another incident which made me realise that we are mere instruments in the hands of the Divine Master and it is His Will which leads us to the right path. For this, we have to surrender – surrender our big ego which is nothing but a balloon filled with air. I will now come to the main story.

After I joined the college, I took great interest in Bhajan singing. Before coming down to south, we lived in Mathura (Sri Krishna's birthplace) for more than five years and there all the south Indians used to join and sing Bhajans every Saturday. As a small boy, I used to sing Bhajans taught by my parents. So, when I heard the Bhajan sung by my seniors, I was totally taken to a different world. Seeing my interest, I was given regular chance in hostel Bhajans by the Warden of the college.

One fine day, there was a lot of activity in Brindavan; many Seva Dal volunteers were doing cleaning work. News came that Swami would be visiting Brindavan next day. After my joining the hostel, this was the first visit of Swami I was going to witness. All of

us were excited with seniors taking charge and guiding us on various issues.

In the hostel, there were five Bhajan groups, namely, Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. Two Bhajan singers were grouped together and were trained by seniors to adhere to Bhava, Raga and Tala (feeling, tune and beat). Discipline was the most important criterion with total silence, and Bhakti Bhava was the ultimate goal.

Next day, Swami's car entered Brindavan and passed through the green lush drive way lined with huge trees. It was Sunday and all the students rushed in to have His Darshan. Swami however did not speak to anyone and went upstairs straightaway.

Seniors later told us that Swami was upset with them as He wanted the seniors to be more disciplined. That evening there was house warming ceremony at Brindavan and we students were eagerly awaiting the arrival of Swami. John Hislop from U.S.A. was also waiting for Swami.

Suddenly, there was a hush and everyone became alert. Very soon Swami arrived at the spot which was near Sanathana Sarathi press. Swami entered the house, and after He beckoned us, we followed Him. Swami was seated in His chair and then He asked Hislop, "Hislop, what do you want"? Hislop replied, "Swami I want Bhajan". Swami immediately looked at us and we rushed to sit near His Lotus Feet. I was new and therefore was not aware of the system. I just rushed to sit near Swami.

Then the Lord asked, "Where is harmonium? How will you sing without Sruthi"? Before anybody could get up, I rushed out to the hostel to bring the harmonium and very soon I was back with the instrument. While keeping it in front of the Bhajan leader, I sat near him. Many discreet



signals were made to me to come back but I stood my ground as I did not want to lose this opportunity to sit near the Lord. Bhajans started and after the 3rd Bhajan, the Bhajan leader signalled another leading singer but unfortunately he had a starting trouble as wrong Sruthi was played by the harmonium player. Swami was looking at us and I did not want to miss this opportunity. I started a Bhajan which suited this Sruthi. Swami, who till then was looking very serious, smiled and asked for cymbals and started playing the same. After this incident, I was inducted into the main group of Bhajan singers in the college as well as the hostel. Whenever there were Bhajans inside Brindavan before the Divine Master, I was given front row along with other lead singers.

On one fine day, a VVIP visited Brindavan. After the evening Darshan, there was a Satsang in the front verandah on the ground floor. Students, college Principal and the teaching staff were seated in the verandah. The VVIP and his family were also seated. Swami entered the verandah after completing the evening Darshan, and sat in His chair. Then He asked the VVIP, "What do you want? Tell me – I will give you right now". The VVIP fell at Bhagavan's Lotus Feet and said, "Swami, I want Your grace and blessings". Swami said, "They are there always. Ask something special". The VVIP said, "Swami, I want to listen to Bhajans in Your Divine Presence". Immediately, Swami instructed the Warden to arrange for Bhajan.

At this point of time, I was in the hostel store room with another student, checking stock of grocery and vegetables as I was part of the management team. After getting instructions from Swami, the Warden immediately assembled the singers and everyone was looking at Swami for His



permission to start. There was no nod and instead Swami asked, "Where is Jayaram"? Everyone was looking here and there frantically, and one of the students who knew where I was told Swami that I was in store.

Swami said, "Bring him". Immediately, this student rushed to the store and chided me, "What are you doing here? Swami is calling you". I dropped everything, ran fast and stood in front of Swami. Swami looked at me and said, "Dunnapothu, come and sit here", showing a spot near His Feet. As soon as I settled, He asked me to start the Bhajan. Usually, at such gatherings, we would be looking at Swami and He would signal who should sing. On that day, He gave me a number of chances. After Arati when we came back to the hostel, other students congratulated me for the special attention I got from the Divine Master.



After a few days, Swami left for Prasanthi Nilayam as His Birthday was approaching shortly. Very soon we also followed Swami. Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of peace, was decorated beautifully for the occasion. Daily Bhajans were sung by great stalwarts like Sri Raja Reddy, Sri Mohan Rao, Sri Panduranga Dixit, Smt. Vijaya, Smt. Jyotsana and we students were asked to sit just behind them to give the back up. These were indeed unforgettable days as we were lost in Divine Music in the presence of the Divine Lord.

A few days passed after the festival, and on one fine day Swami asked a couple of students also to lead Bhajans. It was unimaginable as singing together with such eminent singers like Sri Raja Reddy, Sri Mohan Rao was beyond our thinking. But when the Lord wishes, it just happens.

However, my Karma also started showing its sign. Things went to my head and I started thinking that I was a lead singer. I forgot that it was Sai Sankalpa that I was singing. Very soon we returned to Brindavan. My head was filled with ego and my age made it worse as I was imbalanced with this recognition shown by my most loving Master.

Swami then made a sudden visit to Brindavan, and there was a special Bhajan in the evening. With this recognition as a lead singer, I went and sat in front of Swami and looked at Him for His signal to start the Bhajan. But Swami looked at another student and signalled him to start. I immediately thought, okay, Swami wants me to sing on Lord Siva and that's why He has not given me chance to sing on Lord Ganesh. At the end of the session, I did not get any chance.

After Arati, I looked at Swami very sadly but He smiled and went upstairs.

I thought, He would give me the usual chance in the next session but that never happened. This continued for a couple of months. Instead of feeling sad, I now started looking deep into myself to know why this change. Have I done something wrong?

I was mentally going through all the actions I had performed in the last few months but I could not find any wrong action. Then I looked at my thoughts and questioned myself. Have my thoughts been improper? Swami always prescribes Trikarana Shuddhi (unity of thought, word and deed). And then it was bolt from the blue... It was my Ahamkara... my ego... I immediately realised my mistake and tears started rolling down my cheeks.

Oh my Lord Sai! What a blunder I have done! It was Your grace which made me sing. But foolishly I credited myself with this false pride. I then supplicated: Oh my Divine Master, I assure You I will never ever allow this ego and Ahamkara to enter my head. You have rightly pricked my ego which is nothing but a balloon which has swollen so big but cannot take even a small prick. I fell at the Feet of Swami in the altar and begged for His mercy and forgiveness. After this realisation, I could find a change in my action and my thought process.

Days went by and on one fine day, Swami visited Brindavan. There was a Satsang in the evening and Swami asked the Warden to arrange Bhajan inside. All the lead singers rushed. Very soon, everyone assembled inside. I found a place far away from the verandah near the stairway and sat there. The compassionate Lord looked at

continued on page 29...



How I Saw my Living God

Sharmila Bhattacharya

EVER SINCE MY CHILDHOOD, THE concept of God to me was abstract and nebulous. It was only in July 1976 that I saw my living God and this is how it happened.

In March 1976, my six-year-old daughter was afflicted with an autoimmune disease (I.T.P.) which the doctors said was incurable. After trying out treatment from medical centres in several parts of the country, we became more and more desperate as my daughter's condition did not improve. In July 1976, I dreamt of an orange-robed figure whom I recognised as Sathya Sai Baba. I should make it clear at this juncture that I had no faith in Him or any other religious leader. But next morning, when my husband asked me whether I would like to go to Puttaparthi, I agreed immediately. After this, things started happening as if an invisible and powerful force was making all the arrangements for us. Train tickets were booked, comfortable accommodation at Bangalore (Bengaluru), made available, transport from Bengaluru to Prasanthi Nilayam – everything was ready in three days' time.

Instant Cure of Incurable Disease

In Prasanthi Nilayam, we were given a room for the whole family (consisting of my son, daughter, mother, husband and I). We carried our own bedding, cooking utensils on the advice of other people. The room had one large mat on which we could sleep. My husband slept on a sheet in the verandah outside the room. I remember our room was

on the second floor of West Prasanthi. We attended the morning and evening sessions of Bhajan and Darshan regularly. Baba



came and went but there was no personal contact with Him. Three days went by and my daughter developed high fever on the third day. On the morning of the fourth day, my daughter remained in the room with 103° temperature with my mother.

That morning after Darshan, I saw my husband waving at me and a volunteer informed me at the same time that Baba wanted our whole family for interview. Without a moment of hesitation I sprinted across the whole length of ground to West Prasanthi's third floor room. I just gasped out that Baba was calling all of us and within seconds all three of us were running down the stairs to where Baba was waiting for us. My husband and son were already with Him. Once inside the room, Baba told us the graphic details of my daughter's illness and our failed attempt to cure her. He then materialised Vibhuti, put it in my daughter's mouth, rubbed it on her forehead and throat. Infinite love and compassion was showered on us as He assured us, "Your daughter will be all right. There is no need for further medication or treatment". He also asked my son what he would like to be when he grew up. My 12-year-old son replied that he wanted to become a professional. Baba told him, "Yes, yes; it will happen but you have to read a lot". He then allowed us Padanamaskar after which we came away from His Divine Presence in a daze of happiness and relief. Suddenly, we noticed

that my daughter's forehead was beaded with perspiration. Her temperature was normal after Baba had touched her.

Shower of Divine Grace

Now, looking back over the last 40 years it is not possible for us to recount the innumerable miracles which helped us to overcome the calamities which afflicted us on several occasions. My daughter is now happily married and has an 18-year-old child, though doctors had predicted, she could not lead a normal married life and would never be a mother. My son is a professional (Chartered Accountant and M.B.A.) and he is happy with his work and family. My husband (83 years old and retired Bank Chairman) has been a type II diabetes for the past 40-45 years. Baba gave him several interviews, graced him with His Raksha Kavach (armour of protection) in the form of a diamond ring and Siva Linga for daily Abhisekham and unending supply of Vibhuti. Needless to say, he remains to this day active and reasonably fit. As for me, I feel my Bhagavan's presence in and around me all the time.

– The author is an old-time devotee of Bhagavan from Bengaluru.

...continued from page 27

the Warden and asked, "Where is Jayaram? Why is he not here?"

Everyone started looking for me. I was unaware of this and was sitting with closed eyes. Then one of the students shook me and whispered, Swami is calling you. I sprang to my feet and rushed before Swami. Swami looked at me deeply, smiled and asked me to sit before Him and start the Bhajan.

The Divine Master had repaired the defective mind, removed the unwanted rust and dust of ego and started using the instrument again.

I realised that everything is His Sankalpa and we have to submit ourselves totally to Him.

– The author is a former student of Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College, Brindavan (1972-75).

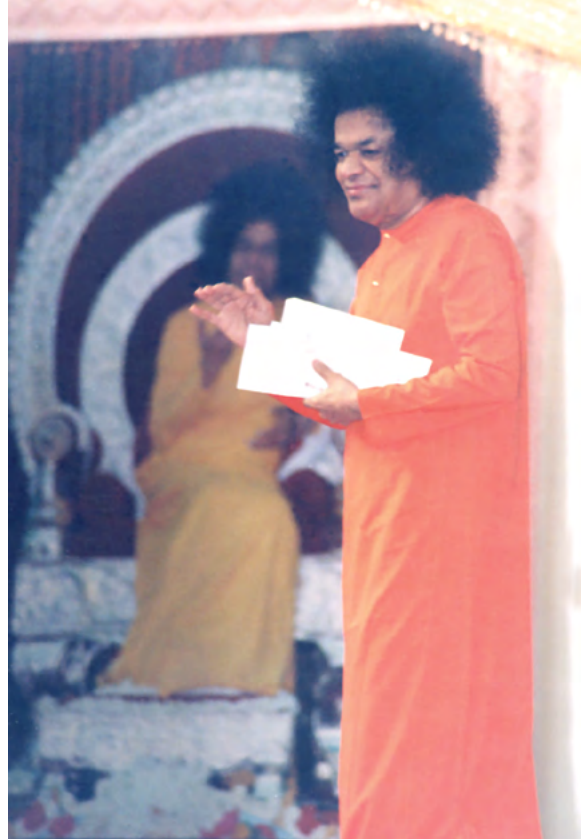
Effulgence of Divine Glory

GOD! WHERE ARE YOU?

THE KALPATARU OF Puttapparthi, the Divine Sai, has also set aside some fruits which are hidden to most people, visible to those only who have eyes to see. There are some immediate fruits, gifts, which He lavishes under everyone's eyes. The first is certainly the hospitality, which Sai Baba reserves for the pilgrims who visit His Ashram.

A majority of those who face the journey to the village of Puttapparthi – an undertaking a lot less tiring than twenty years ago, but nonetheless still uncomfortable – have already in mind a list of things that they expect to receive. In general, the thing most awaited for is that of being received. For that damned habit which characterises man and renders him always careful only to that which he can have and rarely to that which he can give, nearly all fall into the error of expecting that the day on which they arrive at the Ashram, Swami should look at them and choose them among thousands in order to give “interview”. Instead, what happens is that whole days pass without Him looking at us. While it becomes more spasmodic the need to have Him all for ourselves, it seems that He has adopted the pedagogy of waiting.

“If He should call us as soon as we arrive,” – writes Dr. Murthy, “without that unpleasant waiting, we would leave Prasanthi Nilayam satisfied but not sanctified. We would not have become conscious of the more enduring values, nor of the secret of living



always happily in the protective presence of God. We give major value to a gift which we have long waited and languished for”.

The waiting for the beloved person is much more gratifying than the moment of the meeting. When the two meet, they have already consumed the power of attraction. Waiting for a meeting is surely more mystical than the meeting itself. This counts for human relationships; but let's try and think what kind of bearing it assumes the waiting for a beloved of which the definitive meeting cannot happen when we are alive

and therefore leaves an unsatisfied longing. Even when the physical distances from the Lord Himself are reduced, yet there always remains an acute and frustrating need to immerse ourselves in Him.

To be able to enter Sai Baba's Ashram is already a great gift and great fortune. There are persons who could testify how difficult it was for them not only reaching the locality of Puttaparthi, but seeing the face of Lord Sathya. Others, instead, could confirm how hostile they were to the idea of stopping in that village and how their journey had revealed itself particularly guided from above, until being conducted to that Port of Peace for a precise Divine Will.

A few devotees narrated an episode to me, of which they were witnesses.

A small party decided to stop in Puttaparthi, after having passed a holiday in an island of the Indian Ocean. In this company, there was also a woman who did not share the choice of that spiritual excursion, but, pressed by collective needs, she reluctantly underwent the consequences. When they reached Puttaparthi, the breaking points and inconveniences of this locality sharpened the aversion of the lady, who in vain mourned the days upon the white beaches of the island. Not many days had gone by, when Sai Baba received the group. In the interview room the woman, who in spite of herself was involved in the event,

sought refuge in a little corner, hoping to pass unobserved and waiting for it all to finish as quickly as possible. She watched without any interest the entrance of Swami, who, having sat upon His armchair, asked the translator to refer to the woman that in her life there had been a precise period in which she had asked for Him.

The woman readily replied: "It cannot be. In my life I have never sought to meet with a person like Him".

Swami made a second request to the translator and then a third: "Tell her that two years and three months ago, she had looked for Me intensely". The woman started to falter and tried to break off the guessing game, nervously reassuring the translator that it was mathematically impossible.

"Ask her – Swami continued – if she does not remember that night in which it was pouring down with rain... that bridge... that tree... that river..."

At this point, the woman started to frown, paled and then took on colour again; then once again she was startled by that memory. She admitted having passed a night in desperation and, in that sad difficult moment, cried out loud: "God! Where are You"? The woman now perceived Who might be He who was describing a past which she herself had forgotten.

– Excerpted from "The Wish-fulfilling Tree" by Mario Mazzoleni.

Just as a Mariner's compass always points towards north, likewise under all circumstances Love is directed towards God. Time, space and individuals do not affect love. Love is the true sign of Divinity. Understanding love amounts to understanding Divinity.

– Baba

The First School

A POOR WOMAN MADE HER living by selling vegetables in the streets of a town after buying them from the vegetable market. She used to go to the vegetable market to bring vegetables everyday carrying an empty basket on her head. As there was no one to look after her small child, she took him also to the vegetable market carrying him in her arms.

One day, this child saw a woman carrying fruits in a basket on her head. As she came close to him, the child plucked a fruit hanging out of the basket and started eating it unnoticed by the fruit seller. Even after



The mother felt happy that her son was smart enough to steal a fruit from the basket of the fruit seller.

noticing this action of the child, his mother did not say anything. Rather she considered him a smart child who could manage a fruit by himself even at the young age of four and felt proud of the cleverness of her child. Beginning from stealing small things, this habit of thieving went on increasing in the child as he grew up. But the mother never chided the child for these acts of thieving. In fact, she did not mind her child doing this,

and never objected to his misdeeds. With the increase of his acts of thieving, the child grew up to become a big thief. Once while committing a robbery along with a group of robbers, he murdered someone. The police arrested him and put him in jail. One day, the son expressed his wish to the jailor that he wanted to see his mother. Weeping bitterly at the miserable condition of her son, the mother went to jail to meet him. As she came near the iron railings of the prison, the son extended his hands out of the railings and caught hold of her in great anger. Frightened at this act of the son, the jail guard pulled the mother away. Then the son said to the



The mother wept bitterly when her son was put in jail.

guard, "It is she who is responsible for this condition of mine. It is because of her that I have become a thief and have been lodged in jail. Instead of punishing me for my acts of stealing at young age and putting me on the right path, she ignored my misdeeds. It is the responsibility of the mother to put her son on the right path, but she neglected her duty and ruined my life".

Mother's lap is the first school of the child.

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

RUSSIA



ABOUT 40 VOLUNTEERS, including 25 SSIO members, undertook various service projects in their local communities from 11th to 13th June 2016. In Novosibirsk, volunteers cleaned and weeded flower beds surrounding a monastery. In Kemerovo, they washed walls, ceilings and floors of municipal institutions. Near the rivers Yenisei and Aba in Krasnoyarsk and Novokuznetsk, volunteers removed litter from recreation areas. SSIO members also redecorated rooms, cleaned homes of the elderly, repaired houses, and did gardening work in the cities of Omsk, Krasnoyarsk and Barnaul. Members of the SSIO and the public participants felt united and uplifted by the love shared through these acts of service to brothers and sisters in need.

GREECE

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education (ISSE) of South Europe and the SSIO of Greece jointly held a series of seminars to introduce SSEHV to the general public. The free events were organised every Sunday in Sai Prema, near Athens, for a six-month period from November 2015 through May 2016. Consistent with the theme of the



*Seminar on Sathya Sai Education
in Human Values.*

global SSIO Serve the Planet project for 2015, "Human Values in Nation Building", these events included presentations, study circles and musical interludes. The programme covered all five human values and concluded by extending the application of these values by focusing on selfless service. The events were attended by more than 200 people, half of whom were newly introduced to human values. In view of the success of these seminars, the programme is planned to be continued and expanded, this time over a nine-month period, from September 2016 to May 2017.

– Sathya Sai International Organisation

BHARAT

Kerala: Sri Sathya Sai Bhagavata Saptaham was organised at Thiruvananthapuram on Monday, 25th July 2016. The weeklong full day numinous event disseminated the divine life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Each day the programme commenced with sanctifying Nagar Sankirtan, followed by chanting of Vishnu Sahasranamam, Ashtottaram and Sri Rudram. Spiritual, motivational talks by eminent personalities took the audience to a new transcendental realm. The programme was well received and the venue remained a congregation of devotees on all the seven days.

Rajasthan: On 14th August 2016, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Rajasthan in collaboration with Sri Sathya Sai Heart Hospital, Rajkot organised a daylong free heart check-up camp at Udaipur. The camp was inaugurated by Sri Gulab Chand Kataria, Home Minister of Rajasthan. Speaking on the occasion, the Home Minister



Sarva Dharma Stupa at Bhubaneswar.

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Procession of Mahilas in Sai Kulwant Hall.

came into the hall dressed in the traditional dress of their State, which also gave a glimpse of rich cultural heritage of India. A Report on the deliberations of the conference including the future course of action was then presented by Smt. Neeta Khanna, National Coordinator for Women's Wing of the Sai Organisation. Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, thereafter addressed the delegates. Advising the delegates to

wholeheartedly praised the selfless service rendered by the Rajkot Heart Hospital to the public at large. Addressing the gathering, Sri Manoj Bhimani, Managing Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Heart Hospital, Rajkot explained the principles and guidelines laid down by Bhagavan Baba at the time of setting up of the hospital. On this occasion, Sri Manoj Batra, State President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Rajasthan highlighted the objectives and activities of the Sai Organisation of Rajasthan.

Odisha: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Odisha constructed a 36 feet tall Sarva Dharma Stupa at Sri Sathya Sai Mandir, Bhubaneswar, similar to the Stupa inaugurated by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam in 1975 on His 50th Birthday. The Sarva Dharma Stupa at Bhubaneswar was inaugurated by Sri R.J. Rathnakar, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust in a grand function held on 6th September 2016.

work with faith in the Divinity of Bhagavan, he advised them to shun the sense of doership, which was the greatest barrier between God and man. He exhorted them to consider Bhagavan as the only Doer and work for the transformation of the world through self-transformation.

An award giving ceremony was held after this, in which awards were presented to women functionaries for their lifetime contribution to the Sai Organisation. The final item of the programme was a devotional music concert by the Mahilas of Delhi-NCR. Beginning with a song dedicated to Bhagavan "Sai Maa Sai Maa Sathya Sai Maa" (oh Mother Sai), they next sang a Mira Bhajan "Mohe Chakar Rakhoji" (make me Your servant, oh Krishna) and concluded their presentation with a beautiful Qawali. Bhajans by Mahila devotees followed next and concluded with Arati.

Book Review

A GURU REMEMBERS HER SADGURU BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA



A GURU REMEMBERS HER SADGURU - BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA *

Nimmi Kanwar

₹ 150 /- shipping charges extra,
Code No. 14020 pp. 215

THE BOOK PRESENTS A recollection of Smt. Nimmi Kanwar's wealth of sacred experiences with Bhagavan Baba over a period of 46 years, diligently written by her close friend Smt. Nilambary Chintamani.

Smt. Nimmi Kanwar has been a Joint National Coordinator, Education Wing of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. She has been an ideal Bal Vikas Guru and an able administrator of the Bal Vikas programmes. A large number of children who have been trained by her have today blossomed into ideal citizens, says Sri Nimish Pandya.

Smt. Nimmi feels that Human Values must be inculcated in every student right from a tender age. Her father had been an ardent disciple and close associate of Swami Sivananda.

Speaking about Puttaparthi, she says, "The very earth here (at Puttaparthi) resonates with devotion. Even today... I tell the students, remember there is no place on earth like Puttaparthi"! Delving deep into the omniscient aspect of Baba's Avataric Persona, she says, 'Sitting there (in the Darshan line) I started crying because when I closed my eyes I could see Baba as Rama, Krishna and Jesus... Swami showed me that human beings can reach that stage and they can see God. Such was His grace ... Then Swami came and asked me "Kaisa Laga (How was it?)". The experience of Smt. Nimmi is but a statement of reality pertaining to Baba's unfathomable powers of Divinity; apart from the fact that He grants visions in whomsoever He wishes. There were many instances when Bhagavan Baba's grace had extended lifespans of devotees by several decades, leaving astrologers in wonderment. Smt. Nimmi's husband was one of those innumerable blessed souls, whose life extension by the grace of Bhagavan had baffled all.

The lessons learnt by Smt. Nimmi Kanwar at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan over many decades are indeed lessons for the entire humanity at large.

— P.P.S. Sarma

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

The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

- 1) The publication and distribution of spiritual, religious, and educational Sai Literature and the production and distribution of audio and visual multimedia, photographs, calendars, and diaries, educational software etc for the benefit of visiting pilgrims and devotees all over the world. All the literature and publications are based on the teachings, philosophy, message, and values of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- 2) The publication and distribution of 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, which covers all the major activities taking place in Prasanthi Nilayam, and publishing an e-newsletter 'Sai Spiritual Showers' - for free distribution.
- 4) Organising and conducting seminars and conferences on spirituality, religion, education, and human values.
- 5) Providing library and Reading room for visiting devotees, with a very large collection of various spiritual and religious books.

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23 feet tall Siva statue outside Sri Sathya Sai Mandir in Rishikesh.



Primary School students performing a dance sequence before Ganesh idols were taken out for immersion.



Ganesh idols being brought in a procession on decorated chariots.

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Purify your Heart

No water will come in the tap if the pipe is not connected with the regular supply system. Have you connected your act of service with the reservoir of love in the heart? Are you doing it with good consciousness or is it merely a superficial ceremonial routine act for pride and publicity? Diagnose and rectify. No worship can succeed unless the heart is pure and the senses are mastered.

— Baba



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