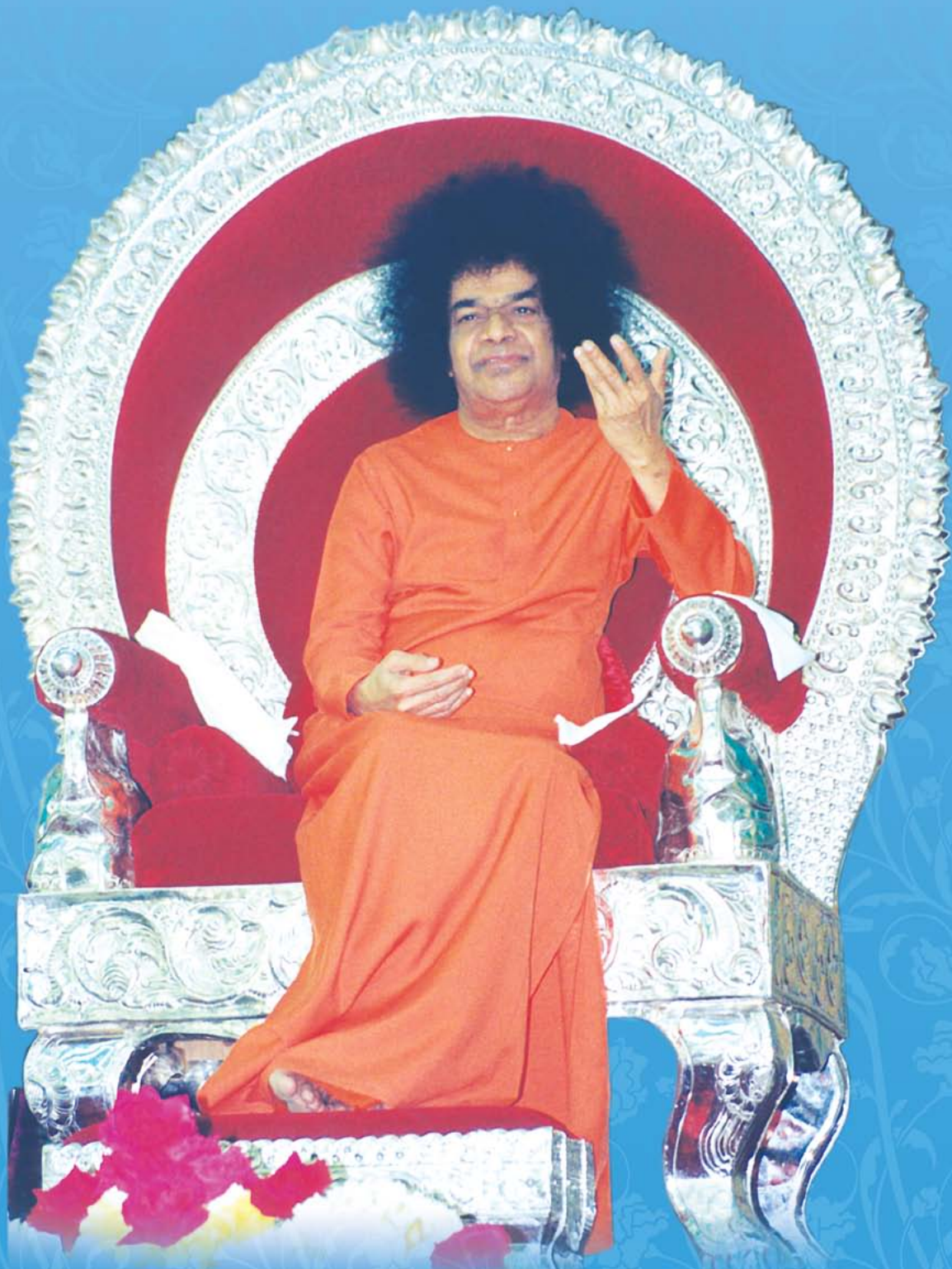




Sanathana Sarathi

MARCH 2020

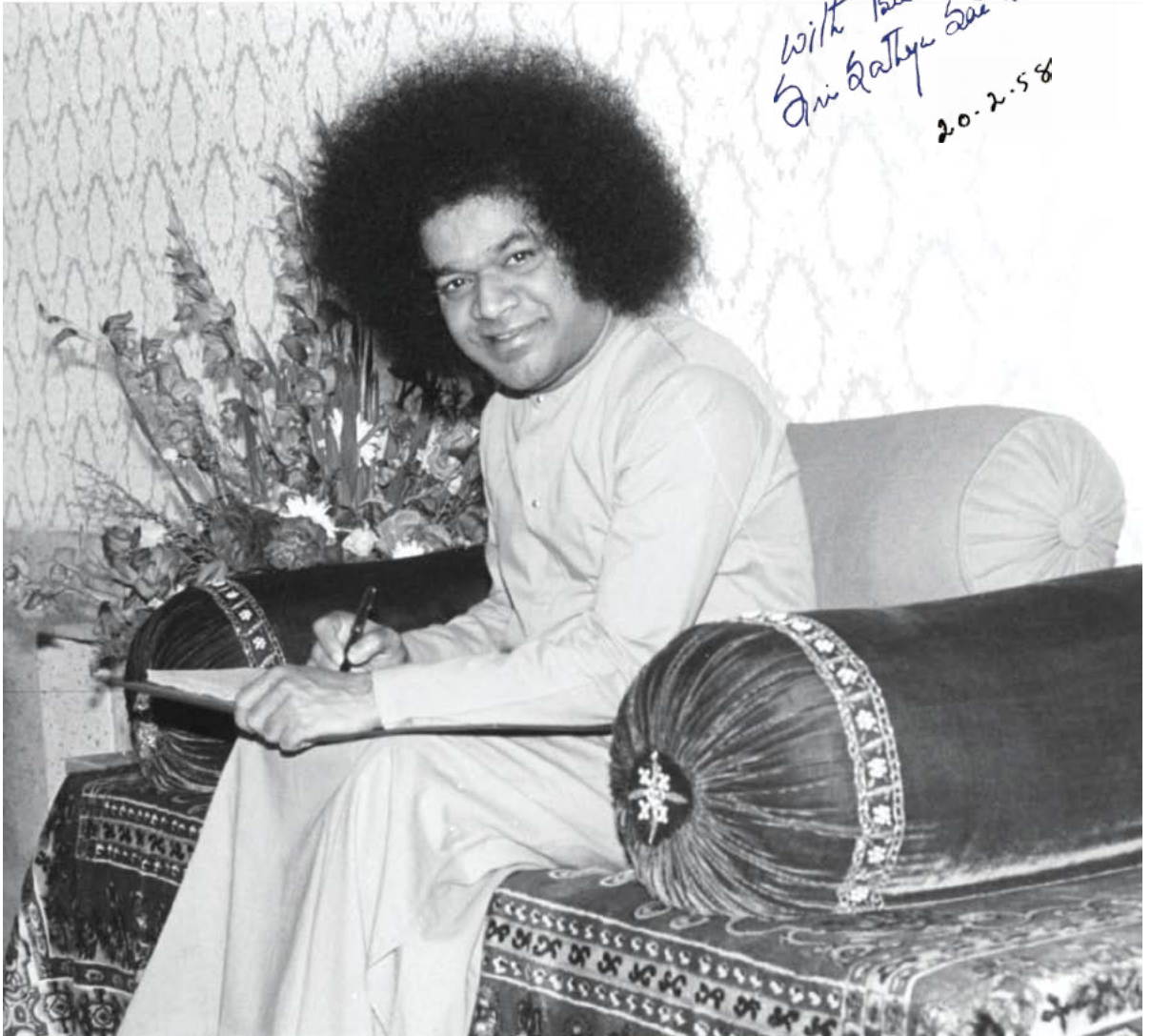




PREMA VAHINI

(SRI SATHYA SAI BABA)

This day, the Sanathana Sarathi, the Eternal Charioteer, starts out on the campaign against Falsehood, Injustice, Viciousness and Evil — the Minions of the Spirit of Selfishness. The Army is the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Sastras; the object is the welfare of the world. When the drums of Victory resound, Humanity would have achieved Happiness and Peace.



*With Blessings
Sri Sathya Sai Baba
20.2.58*

Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

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*"Do not forget that Sriшти
(creation) has a Sriшти
Karta (Creator of creation).
This is the law of Nature.
Follow the laws of Nature.
Do not transgress them. The
law of Nature is Dharma
(righteousness)."*



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AVATAR VANI

THE CREATOR AND THE CREATION

THE CREATION EMERGED FROM PRANAVA

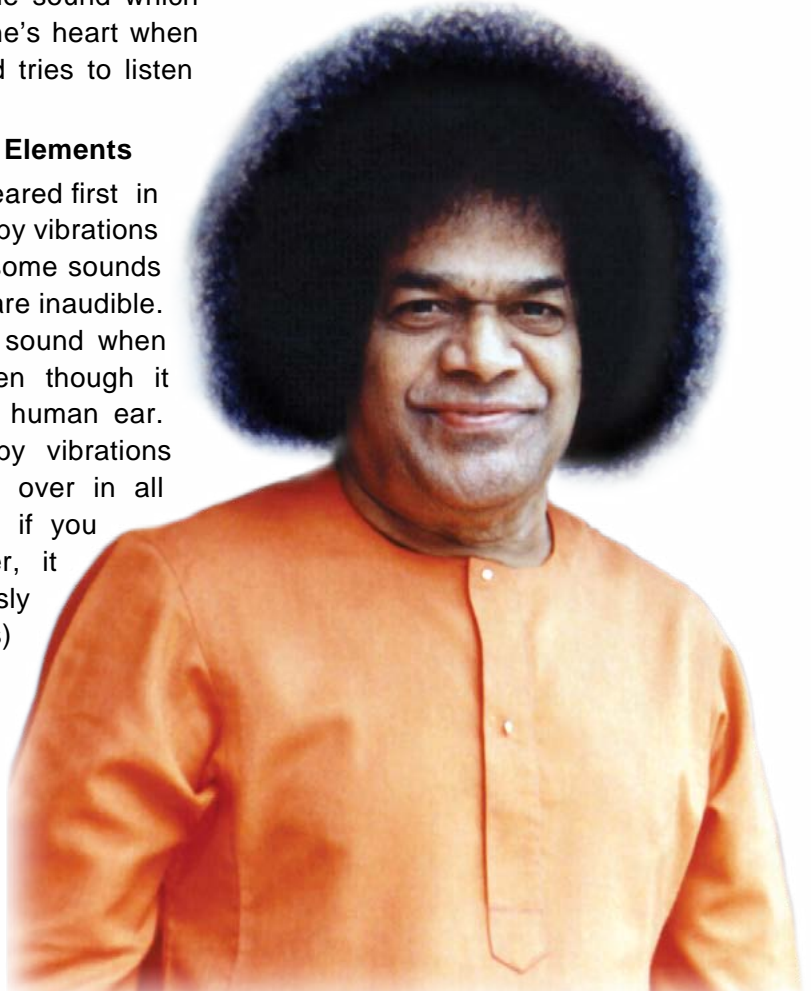
BEFORE CREATION, THERE WAS nothing but darkness everywhere. Then it rained heavily for many years. Afterwards, scattered rays of light appeared beyond the dense cover of clouds. Thereafter, sound became evident. This was like the sound which one hears from within one's heart when one closes the eyes and tries to listen intently.

The Origin of Primary Elements

The sound that appeared first in the creation was created by vibrations caused by the rain. But some sounds are audible while others are inaudible. For example, there is a sound when we bat our eyelids even though it cannot be heard by the human ear. The sound generated by vibrations at one point spread all over in all directions. For instance, if you throw a stone in water, it will create continuously spreading ripples (waves) all around similar to the sound waves in space.

Sound is very subtle. Air was evolved from vibrations caused by sound in space. Friction between air and sound

generated heat, and from heat, water was formed. When you have fever, you get perspiration after the fever is reduced. This is the relation between heat and water. This analogy shows that fire comes from water. Water is more dense than air.

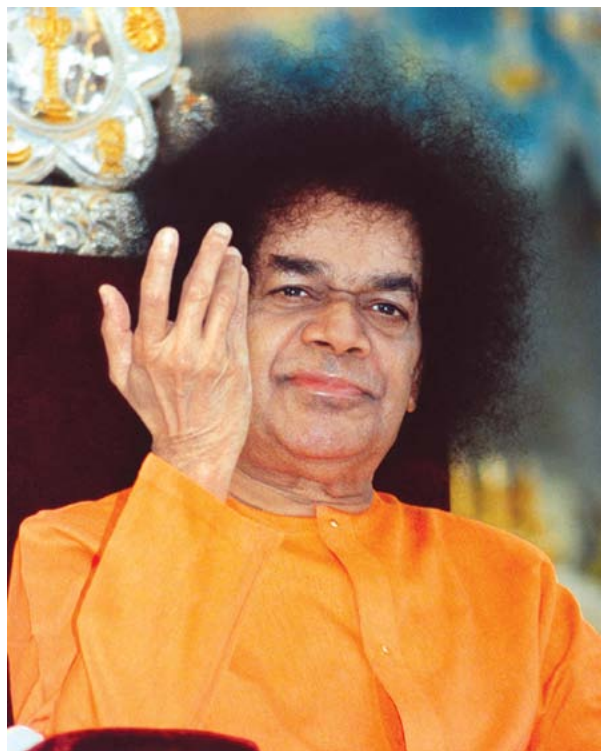




As water became more dense, it formed the earth element. Of all the elements, earth is the most gross and Akasha (sky) is the most subtle. Akasha is everywhere, it is within us, below us, above us and all around us. It pervades the entire space. Earth was formed from water, and from the earth water arose. The earth became like a container to hold water. New forms emerged from the combination of earth and water. As the heat decreased, liquid

water and earth was formed from water. So, sound emerged first and from sound emerged the entire creation including the huge stars. When a huge star breaks up, small stars are formed. There are millions of stars but the scientists are aware of only a few galaxies like the Milky Way, wherein many stars are close together.

The sky appears to be blue because of its immeasurable expanse. Nobody can assess the expanse of the sky. Lord



Cultivate wisdom and discrimination by using your Buddhi (intelligence). Live in Sangham (society) as per its principles, and adhere to Dharma (righteousness). Follow the path shown by noble souls; do not follow the pleasure seekers.

Wisdom, intelligence and righteousness nourish the society.

Why do we prepare food? We prepare food because our body requires nourishment and energy. Similarly, if we sow the seeds of good qualities in society, society will become good and strong.



materials solidified to form hard rocks. The study of this process was called physical sciences.

The Creation of Living Forms in the Universe

In the process of creation, sound emerged from Akasha (ether), air emerged from sound, fire emerged from

Krishna was also blue-complexioned. He had the blue colour as He was all-pervasive like the sky.

At first, the sky, sound, air, water and earth were without any combination. Later, they combined with each other. This combination of elements gave rise to various living forms. There are many ways in which the subtle and gross





elements undergo change. Water is a fluid but it undergoes change when its density and weight increases. In Shimla, water freezes due to cold and becomes solid ice. When you break a block of ice, heat is released. Similarly, materials undergo change due to the effect of heat. Hence, properties of elements undergo change due to heat and cold and due to their combination with each other. The evolution of elements can be understood when we systematically undertake the study of botany and chemistry.

Everything has a Creator

Wherever there is vibration, there exists sound. There is sound even when we breathe. So, sound is present everywhere. Similarly, there is electricity wherever there is magnetism. Earth is a big magnet. Therefore, electricity is generated from the earth. The sea is also a magnet. Scientists talk about the laws of Nature. Sage Manu also wrote about the laws of Nature. Everything that has been created in the universe has a Creator. If there is a rose, it indicates the presence of its Creator. Scientists explain this as law of Nature. But this is not true. For everything, there is Creator.

A swan is able to separate milk from the mixture of milk and water. The scientists say that there is a chemical near the beak of the swan which enables it to separate the milk. But who created the chemical near the beak of the swan? Everything has a Creator. Do not forget that Srishti (creation) has a Srishti Karta (Creator of creation). This is the law of Nature. Follow the laws of Nature. Do not transgress them. The law of Nature is Dharma (righteousness). Lord Buddha said: *Buddham Saranam Gachchhami,*

Dhammam Saranam Gachchhami, Sangham Saranam Gachchhami (I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and society).

Sow the Seeds of Good Qualities in Society

Cultivate wisdom and discrimination by using your Buddhi (intelligence). Live in Sangham (society) as per its principles, and adhere to Dharma (righteousness). Follow the path shown by noble souls; do not follow the pleasure seekers. Wisdom, intelligence and righteousness nourish the society. Why do we prepare food? We prepare food because our body requires nourishment and energy. Similarly, if we sow the seeds of good qualities in society, society will become good and strong.

Earth is the home of all living beings. Life forms that exist on earth do not exist in other planets. There is a relationship between the sun and the earth. Life forms exist on earth because of the heat and light of the sun. So, earth is the daughter of the sun. Similarly, the moon is the daughter of the earth. Moon has no life forms on it. Moon is the granddaughter of the sun. The sun contains mainly hydrogen and helium. These gases are the source of heat and light of the sun. The life forms that exist on earth cannot live in water. Similarly, the life forms that exist in water cannot exist on earth. The fish can live only in water. The life forms in each element are unique. The life forms that exist in water or wind are different from those that exist on earth. However, the life form that exists in the entire universe is the Atma. God is in the earth and also in all the five elements.

God Transcends all Elements

Of all the Pancha Bhutas (five elements), earth is the most gross. It has





five qualities of Gandha, Rasa, Rupa, Sparsha and Sabda (smell, taste, form, touch and sound). It is the heaviest and cannot be lifted. The next basic element is water which has four qualities of the earth except the smell – good or bad. Water has the characteristic of mobility unlike the earth. It always flows downward. The third basic element is fire which is bereft of the qualities of smell and taste. It has the other three qualities of form, touch and sound. Its special characteristic is upward movement. The fourth element is air which has only the qualities of touch and sound. It has the property of moving up, down, forward and backward. The Akasha (sky) is the subtlest of all the elements and it has only the quality of sound. It pervades everywhere like God. But God is present in all the elements and also transcends all elements. The expansiveness of the elements differs according to the qualities they possess. As the number of qualities decrease, the expansiveness correspondingly increases.

Some people talk about flying saucers, but they do not exist. The man-made satellites consist of three parts – frontal, middle and rear. When the satellite travels very fast in space, the rear part is detached, burns off and falls into the sea. People who see this, think that it is a flying saucer. The man-made satellites do not last long. What the scientists produce is impermanent, what God creates is permanent.

Sound was the first creation of God. That was Pranava (primordial sound) or Om. If we examine carefully, the basic sound that comes from the wind is Pranava. Other sounds emanated from this sound. The entire creation has emerged from Pranava, the sound Om. The element of Akasha which denotes the quality of sound is limitless. But the space in which the creation has occurred is limited.

– **Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 20th April 1996.**

To confer on man Jnana. God in His infinite mercy comes down as man; or else, man will degrade himself to the level of beasts. Unless he learns to surrender his ego in complete sincerity, with no reservations, to the Lord, he cannot realise Him, though He is resident in his own heart. The anguish that fills the penitent seeker will move the Lord to manifest Himself. In the ecstasy of that moment, man will experience: I am Thou; Thou art I.

– Baba





GRAND SIVARATHRI FESTIVAL

THE HOLY FESTIVAL OF Sivarathri was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam with much festivity and piety. The celebrations had a magnificent start when Prasanthi Dance Group comprising students from Bhagavan's educational institutions presented a beautiful dance programme



A dance number in the programme "Bhakti Prabhavam".

entitled "Bhakti Prabhavam" (impact of devotion) on the eve of Sivarathri on 20th February 2020. Based on the story of a humble but talented musician Bana Bhadra in the kingdom of Pandya king Varaguna Pandya, the dance presentation showcased how Lord Siva himself manifested before Bana Bhadra in answer to his sincere prayer to save him from a great predicament. As the story unfolded stage by stage, the dancers performed beautiful thematic dances to illustrate the story and offer worship to Lord Siva.

The programme on the sacred Sivarathri day, 21st February 2020, began with Veda chanting at 8.00 a.m. followed by rendition of instrumental devotional numbers by Nadaswaram and Panchavadyam troupes



Instrumental music by the Panchavadyam troupe of students.

of students. An elevating programme of devotional songs and Stotras dedicated to Lord Siva followed next which included "Viswanathashtakam", "Lingashtakam",



Devotional music presentation of the Institute students.

"Siva Shambho Hara Shambho", "Sivoham Sivoham", "Om Namah Sivaya Sai Om Namah Sivaya". Interspersed with insightful commentary on the glory of Lord Siva and significance of Sivarathri, the devotional music presentation by the students suffused the entire milieu with devotional fervour.

The programme in the evening commenced with Abhishekam of Sayeeswara Linga. The ceremonial procession to bring the Linga from





Ceremonial procession in Sai Kulwant Hall.

the Bhajan Mandir to Sai Kulwant Hall started at 4.20 p.m. amidst chanting of Vedic hymns and auspicious musical notes. It was preceded by Bhagavan's



Abhishekam of Sayeeswara Linga.

palanquin procession led by Nadaswaram troupe and Veda chanting groups of students and priests. After the Linga was set up on a beautifully decorated platform in front of Bhagavan's Samadhi, the Abhishekam of the Linga was done by the priests amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras with 18 items which included sugar, honey, coconut water, turmeric, Vibhuti, Tulsi, flowers, etc. The Abhishekam was accompanied by a commentary in English and Telugu, wherein the significance of Abhishekam with various items was

explained for the benefit of the devotees. While decoration of the Linga followed the Abhishekam, the students chanted Rudram. After the decoration of the Linga, Bhagavan's Ashtottarashata Namavali was recited with great devotion and Puja was offered to Bhagavan and the Linga. The Abhishekam ceremony concluded at 5.30 p.m. with offer of Arati to Bhagavan and the Linga. Meanwhile, sacred Abhishekam water was sprinkled on the devotees in the entire length and breadth of Sai Kulwant Hall.

The devotees were then blessed with the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, in which He stated that man can have direct connection with God by surrender and faith. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin". This marked the commencement of Sivarathri Akhanda Bhajan for 12 hours. The Bhajan was led by students, groups of devotees and staff of various departments in the Ashram. The Akhanda Bhajan which started at 6.00 p.m. on 21st February 2020 came to a close



Nightlong Sivarathri Bhajan in Sai Kulwant Hall.

at 6.00 a.m. on 22nd February 2020 with Arati to Bhagavan. After the conclusion of the Bhajan, Prasadam of tamarind rice and sweet rice was served to all.





BAL VIKAS INCULCATES VALUES IN STUDENTS

Justice V. Ramasubramanian
Judge, Supreme Court of India

All the educational institutions, universities, schools and colleges will make you acquire a lot of wealth, prosperity, status in life, but Bal Vikas will make you acquire character and contentment in life which no institution in the world can give you. In fact, one of my teachers used to say, "Contentment is natural wealth and luxury is artificial poverty". It is artificial poverty which is given to you by all your degrees and diplomas but it is the natural wealth of contentment that is taught to you, that is given to you by Bal Vikas. Your regular curriculum in the institutions will improve your Intelligence Quotient (IQ) but Bal Vikas will improve your Emotional Quotient and Spiritual Quotient (EQ and SQ).

TWAMEVA MATACHA PITA
Twameva, Twameva Bandhuscha
Sakha Twameva,

Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva,
Twameva Sarvam Mama Devadeva.

(Sanskrit Verse)

(Oh Lord! You alone are my father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth. You are my everything).

My humble Pranams at the Lotus Feet of our Beloved Bhagavan. Respected elders, revered Bal Vikas Gurus, parents and my dear Bal Vikas children. After seeing all of you, my memory went back

fifty years. It was in the year 1969 that Swami started Bal Vikas in a few metropolitan cities such as Madras (Chennai), Bombay (Mumbai), etc. Our family was blessed to have many firsts. My father and mother joined the Seva Dal when Swami started Seva Dal in 1967; they belonged to the first batch of Seva Dal. In 1969, when Swami started Bal Vikas, my elder brother and me were put in the Bal Vikas class which was held in Shantamma's house on Lang's Garden Road, Chintadripet, Chennai. I still remember the house where we played as Bal Vikas children. There were no Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 at that

time. Bal Vikas was full of fun and provided education in human values, and there was also no examination at the end of Bal Vikas course. Therefore, there were also no diplomas and certificates either as there are today.

As Sri Nimish Pandya pointed out, I stand here more in my capacity as an alumnus of Bal Vikas than as a Judge of the Supreme Court of India. It makes me much more proud to proclaim that I was a Bal Vikas student than to proclaim that I am a Judge of the Supreme Court of India. The reason is simple. By June 2023, I will



retire when I will no more be the Judge of the Supreme Court of India but I will always remain an alumnus of Bal Vikas, from which there will be no retirement.

Bal Vikas Makes you a Good Human Being

Dear children! The certificates that all of you have received today are more valuable than the certificates that you may receive from your schools and colleges. In fact, Bhagavan used to say, degrees and diplomas have now turned into begging bowls because people take them to various industries and to the governments seeking employment which they don't get very often. Therefore, Swami said that our education has to be delinked from two things, namely, money and employment. But, unfortunately, it is a reality of life that the degrees and diplomas that you secure from the educational institutions and the universities are always linked both to employment and to money. Either you get admitted with money or you pass out with money for the purpose of getting employment. And that is the reason why Swami called those degrees and diplomas begging bowls. But the certificates that you received today are jewels in the crown of your life which will not make you go to anybody seeking either of the two, namely, money or employment.

The regular schools, colleges, educational institutions, universities, all of them may make you doctors, engineers,



lawyers, judges, IAS officers, bureaucrats. But Bal Vikas is the only institution which will make you a good human being. All the educational institutions, universities, schools and colleges will make you acquire a lot of wealth, prosperity, status in life, but Bal Vikas will make you acquire character and contentment in life which no institution in the world can give you. In fact, one of my teachers used to say, "Contentment is natural wealth and luxury is artificial poverty". It is artificial poverty which is given to you by all your degrees and diplomas but it is the natural wealth of contentment that is taught to you, that is given to you by Bal Vikas. Your regular curriculum in the institutions will improve your Intelligence Quotient (IQ) but Bal Vikas will improve your Emotional Quotient and Spiritual Quotient (EQ and SQ). What is the ultimate outcome of a person acquiring a great IQ without SQ was amply demonstrated by what happened to a gold medalist from IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) about ten years ago. In the year 2008-09, when there was a world economic crisis, a gold medalist from IIT married and settled in the city of Chicago, committed murder of his





wife, children and mother-in-law and then committed suicide because of the economic slowdown. But during the same period, we saw people who were less fortunate in life in terms of material prosperity, living a very happy family life because of the values inculcated in them. Swami started this Bal Vikas in 1969 when our system of education started moving away from the purpose of education. Swami Vivekananda proclaimed, "I want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased and the intellect is expanded; and by which one can stand on one's own legs". But today persons who hold degrees and diplomas are the persons who face a lot of turmoil in life.

Swami Emphasised Spirituality in Education

When sixty students undergoing a Masters course in agriculture in the University of Wisconsin were taken to an agricultural field, they met a farmer about seventy years old who appeared to be unlettered and uneducated. When the students who were undergoing postgraduation in agriculture ridiculed the farmer for lack of education and asked him as to what did he study in life, the farmer replied that he had five years of schooling and sixty years of learning in the farm which was more valuable than the postgraduate degrees that people got. Therefore, life is not what our schools and universities teach us. Today our engineering colleges produce automobile engineers who do not know how to fix a stepney. Our engineering colleges produce a lot of electrical engineering graduates who do not know how to put a fuse in a bulb. Of what use is this education? Therefore, when our system of education started

moving away from its purpose, from its core object, Swami started this Bal Vikas for the purpose of inculcating human values in the minds of children. At the same time, it was not the purpose of Bhagavan Baba to wean children away from the materialistic pursuits. Please remember, Swami never discouraged success in life. Swami never discouraged materialistic pursuits but He only encouraged spiritual identity in everything you do in life.

Today Swami would be taking pride in the educational institutions run by the Sathya Sai Trust and the children belonging to Bal Vikas succeeding in life. Without taking credit to what I say, I can tell you that in the year 2006 when I stood before Swami as a Judge of the Madras High Court for the first time to give a talk in this very same Sai Kulwant Hall, I heard Swami tell His students, "Look, he was our Bal Vikas student, and he is today a High Court Judge"! Why I tell you this is, Swami never weaned children away from materialistic pursuits. Swami wanted all of us to be successful in life but that success should be combined with a set of human values. That was the object of Swami creating this Bal Vikas fifty years ago.

Testimony of the Success of Bal Vikas

Dear students! On 16th December 2019, there was a news item in a leading English daily. The news item said that in Rajasthan an eleven-year-old school-going girl killed her classmate over a dispute regarding a pen on 11th December 2019. Why did this happen? Parents, teachers and society at large will have to think about it. Today we parents make every endeavour to make our children race horses. We want all our children to secure first rank in every





subject that is taught in schools. But when you train children to become race horses, eventually those children also behave only as race horses and not as human beings. It is only this malady that Swami wanted to redress and remedy and that is how the Bal Vikas was born fifty years ago.

Today apart from me there are a lot of individuals who stand as a testimony to the work done by Bhagavan in creating Bal Vikas. Huge trees grow only after 30-40 years after the seeds are sown. Very small plants grow within ten days and die within ten days. But if you want to grow huge trees, you will have to wait for thirty years. This institution blessed by Bhagavan had to wait for forty years for the seeds which were sown in the Bal Vikas forty years ago, fifty years ago to become huge trees, and that in my humble opinion is the greatest miracle performed by Bhagavan Baba.

Dear students! I was ordained to give a Benediction Address on this occasion. Benediction is a word which literally means a short invocation for Divine help, blessing and guidance. In fact, such a benediction, the first ever benediction to be found in the whole world, is in Sikshavalli which is

part of the Taittiriya Upanishad. When the student goes to the teacher and asks him, the teacher says, "What are you supposed to do? What are your duties as a student? Sathyam Vada Dharmam Chara (speak truth, practise righteousness). Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava, Yany Anavadyani Karmani, Tani Sevitavyani, No Itarani (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God, Whatever actions are free from egoism, they should be practised, not others). This is the first ever benediction given in the whole world and that is found in the Taittiriya Upanishad – Sikshavalli. Therefore, as the literal meaning of the word benediction goes, may all of us join together and make this short invocation for the Divine help of Bhagavan Baba and seek His blessings and guidance for us to become useful instruments in the service of the nation and society. Thank you very much. Jai Sai Ram.

– From the Benedictory Address of Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Judge, Supreme Court of India, on the occasion of 10th All India Convention of Bal Vikas students at Prasanthi Nilayam on 4th January 2020.

Right education leads to refinement of conduct. With refinement of conduct, one's life gets sublimated. Good intellect alone can lead to happiness which is the source of peace. Proper education brings about association with good people. The company of the good is peace itself. Good education redeems one's life and ensures liberation as a consequence. When one receives education that is based on truth and eternal values, one will be able to achieve liberation without having to go through the process of submergence in Samsara.

– Baba





BHAGAVAN'S UGADI MESSAGE

TURN YOUR THOUGHTS TO GOD

"What we should be concerned about is not a New Year but a new way of life. We must seek to secure a new source of joy. But unfortunately we do not think about this. We speculate on what the New Year signifies. We have to look to ourselves and not to the succession of years for changes in our lives. Think within yourself about your condition. Turn your thoughts to God. Then you will realise what you desire," said Bhagavan in His Ugadi Message on 29th March 1998.

DEVELOP LOVE FOR GOD

Embodiments of Love!

YOU CANNOT FIND IN THE entire cosmos any place or object in which God is not present. The Divine is present on the mountains. The Divine permeates the oceans. The Divine dwells in villages and cities. The Divine is omnipresent.

Man's is Endowed with Unlimited Potentialities

Only those who recognise this truth can redeem their lives; they alone can achieve the goal of human existence. The powers of the Divine are limitless. Every living being in the world is governed by some limitations. Birds, beasts and insects are all taken care of by the Divine in respect of their essential needs like food and drink. Among all living beings, however, the life of human being is supreme, as it is governed by morality and good conduct. The Divine has placed some limitations on the physical powers of man but has set no limits to his mental powers. Man can

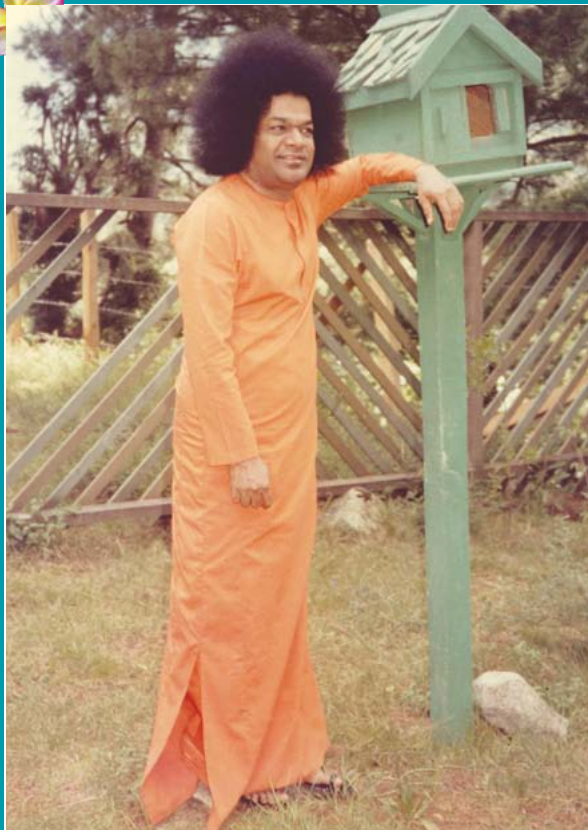
achieve whatever he resolves to achieve. He can even realise God. This divine power is given only to human beings.

Ignorant of his limitless divine potentialities, man suffers from various disabilities by considering himself as a human being. Man today is soaring in the sky as a bird and moving in the ocean like a fish. He has been able to land on the moon. But unfortunately he is not able to live like a true human being on earth. This is indeed a matter for shame. Man can accomplish anything if he surrenders to God. When he submits himself to the Will of the Divine, there is no task he cannot accomplish.

Earn God's Grace by Surrender

Kuchela, a boyhood friend of Krishna, approached Krishna for help on the basis of his old friendship. How did Krishna help him? The Bhagavata bears testimony to what Krishna did for Kuchela. The Ramayana tells the story of what Rama did for Sugriva after the latter became a friend of Rama and sought His help –





Sugriva was able to regain his kingdom. What did Vibhishana get after his constant remembrance of Rama and the ordeals he experienced in Lanka? Relieving him of his troubles, Rama crowned Vibhishana as the ruler of Lanka.

Once a devotee totally surrenders to the Lord, the Divine goes to any extent to help the devotee. An insignificant little stick, by association with fire, burns brilliantly. A drop of water held in your palm evaporates in a trice. But when it is cast into the ocean, it becomes one with it. If man wants to achieve highest human potentialities, he has to achieve proximity to God. He has to merge in the Divine. Then he can manifest his true nature.

Not realising the true nature of the Divine Principle, man wastes his time on rituals and religious practices of various

kinds. God cannot be realised through such practices. It is only by loving God and getting close to Him that one can realise one's aspirations. Swami does not disapprove of Sadhana (spiritual practices). They are good activities for using time sacredly. But without service to godly persons, they are of no use for realising freedom from the cycle of mundane existence.

There is no need for rigorous spiritual exercises to secure freedom from rebirth. Pure love for God is enough. This is exemplified by the Gopis. Immersed always in the love of Krishna, they were always happy and contented.

Change Your Way of Life

We are today celebrating Ugadi, the beginning of yet another New Year. Many new year days have come and gone. Do you expect the New Year to bring you new happiness? Are you imagining what New Year portends for you? New years do not offer you prosperity and pleasure. This New Year day will be like any other day. Many people eagerly expect something to turn up on this day. This is utterly futile. The calendar merely tells you that a New Year has begun.

What we should be concerned about is not a New Year but a new way of life. We must seek to secure a new source of joy. But unfortunately we do not think about this. We speculate on what the New Year signifies. We have to look to ourselves and not to the succession of years for changes in our lives. Think within yourself about your condition. Turn your thoughts to God. Then you will realise what you desire.

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Ugadi Message on 29th March 1998.



SWAMI ADVISED HIM TO READ SANATHANA SARATHI

Sai Mohan

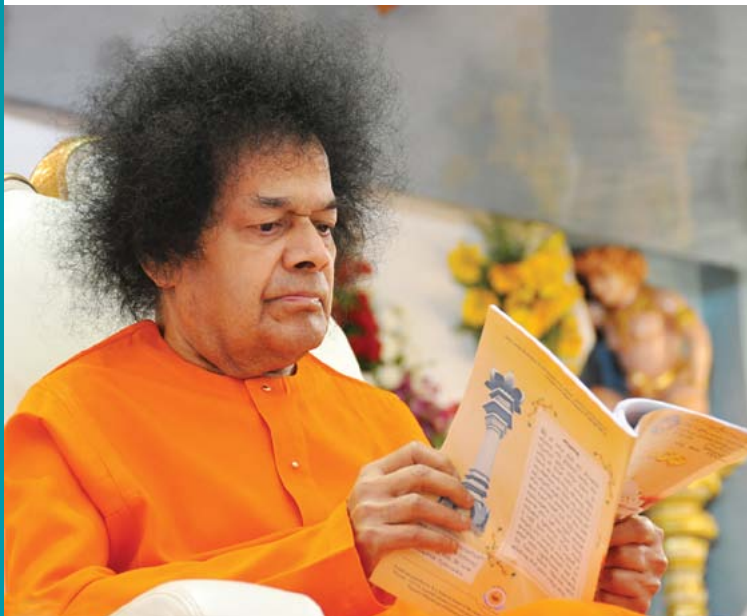
HOW MANY OF US ARE following Sanathana Sarathi, Prasanthi Nilayam's sacrosanct spiritual journal, that had its inception in the Divine Resolve of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba more than six decades ago? Do we realise that Bhagavan's every single resolve aims at uplifting humanity to the highest level of Sai consciousness?

launched by Him reflecting His infinitely infinite 'cosmic designation.' Here is a beautiful tale orchestrated by Bhagavan Himself on the incomparable glory and significance of Sanathana Sarathi.

At the Feet of Swami Nityananda

This story dates back to a decade and a half approximately, as the protagonist

Sri Kunhiraman Nambiar does not keep a well-judged track of time anymore, being in his late eighties. The story happened in Northern Kerala, precisely in Thalassery, a municipal township. Before settling in, he, who was into a diligent soul-searching, had landed in Ganeshpuri at the tender age of 14/15, more than seven decades ago, seeking only G-O-D!!! Here he became a staunch disciple of famed Siddha Swami Nityananda of Ganeshpuri, who shed His mortal frame on 8th August 1961 at Ganeshpuri, Mumbai (Maharashtra).



Aiding this priceless gift of human life in the right and most-befitting way, man must go back to his root, knowing and acknowledging Bhagavan as the Sanathana Sarathi. And here lies the supreme significance of the journal

He had an incredible stint with Swami Nityananda at the Ashram, serving the Master for over two-and-a-half years along with another youngster, who went on to become the famed Swami Muktananda later. As advised and blessed by Swami



Nityananda, Sri Nambiar then sought out a specified preceptor in Kerala, following the path of Brahma Vidya. At the end of a successful course, the Guru advised him to get into Grihastha Ashram, the householder's life, to clear off many a Karmic knot.

Life was never a bed of roses for him, with many knots waiting to be released, yet he was always immersed in his Swadharma, while performing every single earthly duty with utmost diligence. During his official stint in Mumbai, then Bombay, decades ago, he had the rarest blessing of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai's Darshan, twice. All that he knew then about Bhagavan was that his elder brother was Bhagavan's ardent devotee, who would frequent Prasanthi Nilayam to earn incredible personal attention.

Face to Face with a Divine Visitor

It was one beautiful morning at his Thalassery home, post his retirement from service. He was resting in his room, on a cot, blissfully immersed in 'Sudhdha Bodham' (state of pure consciousness). All of a sudden, he jerked himself out witnessing a magical experience. He was face-to-face with an 'Unknown Guest', who appeared there in a trice as if manifested out of thin air.

He was caught off guard by the sudden appearance of this orange-robed Radiant Persona with a crown of hair, sitting right next to him, exuding an indefinably radiant smile – Pure Love!!! With that cosmically enchanting smile, He slowly leaned over to the other side of the cot, crossing over Sri Nambiar, settling His right palm on the other edge of the cot. Bending forward, looking deep into his eyes, the 'stranger' then asked in a nectarine mellifluous

tone... "Do you get Sanathana Sarathi"? Sri Nambiar was in a kind of cosmic-trance, where he could feel only Love...Love... Love! The eye with the eye and the Soul with the soul!!! ...and time almost stood still, allowing Love to operate!!!

The 'visitor' continued with His course: "Get it and read it; share it with others and help them to consciously evolve". ...And lo! The moment next, the 'magic figure' was gone, vanished in a trice, back into thin air!!!

Sanathana Sarathi...? 'Divine' visitation...? ...he could not immediately connect the right dots, and thus allowed it to be slipped, allowing the 'right' time to ripen, unveiling the 'real' story.

Day-2, same time, same place. As he was lying down on the same cot, the same crown-haired orange-robed Persona appeared there, before him, and averred the same sentence, ditto, as if delivering a carbon copy! "Do you get Sanathana Sarathi? Get it and read it; share it with others and help them to consciously evolve." ...And He was gone!

He turned more curious now but still found himself wanting, lacking clarity and thus slipped back, allowing the 'right time' to tell the story.

Day-3, same time, same place, and yet another encore of the same incident, repeating the message in a slightly different tone, "Will you read Sanathana Sarathi? Get it and read it and share it with others and help them to consciously evolve". ... And again the vanishing act!

Three times in a row, the same incident about an unheard-of Sanathana Sarathi and he was wide awake now, a conscious thrust from within. He thought for a moment, ...three times, ...the same message, ...





from the same Persona, with that infinitely mesmerising effect! Never had it struck him then about Sathya Sai Darshan he had had long back, in Mumbai, during his Mumbai days.

Read Sanathana Sarathi and Spread the Divine Message

The same evening, he set out to a nearby junction to do some errands. As was his wont, he went to a nearby studio, Prabha Studio, owned by an acquaintance. As he went in, his attention was impulsively drawn to a beautiful photograph of a resplendent figure, a familiar photo hung over there. Curious enough, he turned and asked the studio owner as to who He was? Pat came his reply, “Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi”. He was the same Radiant Persona with the hallowed crown of hair who appeared before him last three days on the trot, giving him the ‘dosage’ of Sanathana Sarathi.

Hardly was this conversation over that he heard from behind the name, Sanathana Sarathi. He turned back and found another acquaintance in the middle of a conversation, speaking on Sanathana Sarathi and subscriptions. Curious enough, he asked him as to what this Sanathana Sarathi was all about. The person, a devotee of Bhagavan, explained it in one line... “Sanathana Sarathi is the spiritual journal from Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi, the Divine Abode of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, which comes out every month”.

Adept only in one language, vernacular Malayalam, apart from the language of Brahma Vidya, he lost no time in ensuring his subscription for the priceless journal, in his only readable language.

Later, when he had a short stint of three months’ stay in Puttaparthi, he would often read out Sanathana Sarathi messages to a selected few, explaining the purport and beauty of Bhagavan’s words from an elevated level of understanding. He would often remind them, “Read Sanathana Sarathi with diligent attention and loving reverence, paying complete attention, knowing that you are reading the words of God Himself”.

About his personal experience with Sanathana Sarathi, he later confessed, after he started reading the holy messages, many of his psychic knots (grandhis) got cleared off. The sacred “Sri Lalita Sahasranamam” describes various Grandhis, glorifying the Supreme Mother... as ‘Manipurantharuditha Vishnu Grandhi Vibhedini...’, ‘Ajna Chakrantharalastha Rudra Grandhi Vibhedini...’, that help one in conscious evolution, step by step, stage by stage.

I was sitting with this revered person a month ago, in the same room, next to the same cot, when he was lying down awaiting the final call. I had a request to him then, for an encore of the narration, recalling the same story once again. He obliged instantly, even in his trying times of physical ill-health. Narrating the story, he blessed me to share the ‘Story of the Glory of Sanathana Sarathi’, a mandate given by the Lord Supreme Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai, who had advised him then... Read and spread the message to help others in conscious evolution.

...And about Beloved Mother Sai, who appeared before him three times on the trot, he had beautiful words full of love and gratitude. He said, “With Bhagavan looking deep into my eyes, I had that





experience of Love, which I had had never before". Referring to that eye-to-eye Divine Romance, he said, "Never in my life have I experienced such Beauty of Love"!!! Indeed, Bhagavan looked deep into his eyes, and through those eyes, deep into the soul within'!

To those who were around him, and into the fold of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai, he would always serve one reminder, "The seat that you are blessed to be devoted, the feet that you are holding on are the highest

in all the worlds in the entire creation. Hold on to Him ever and ever after. Human minds fail to describe or define Him. The only way to express Him is that neither one can add anything unto Him, nor can delete. He is Paripurnam, Sampurnam!!! He is the Lord Supreme, Sri Sathya Sai, the Eternal Charioteer, Sanathana Sarathi"!!!

– **The author is a Senior Manager in Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division and an inmate of Prasanthi Nilayam.**

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(Sd) **K.S. RAJAN**
(Signature of Publisher)





SUNITA RATAN KANAL

HANDS THAT HELP ARE HOLIER THAN LIPS THAT PRAY

IT WAS IN MY 10TH GRADE THAT I realised the boundless power of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It was a rainy day at Parthi, and we were all seated on the sands of Prasanthi Nilayam soaking in the showers, unmindful as we sat dazed in the sunshine of our Lord's majestic countenance. Unperturbed, Swami continued His Darshan, granting us benediction and solace in the beauty of His smile and sliding gait even as He got drenched in the rain. He looked at the enormous crowd assembled for His Darshan, and the benevolent Lord that He is, waved His hands across the sky and in an instant, the rain stopped! That was the day I realised that if there was any place on earth that I wanted to be forever, it had to be where He was. And thus, I prepared myself to join the Anantapur College for girls, as that was my golden chance to be always around Him, living under His direct Divine guidance.

In the Service of the Sick and Needy

As a Sai student, my first surprise came in my 1st year of undergraduation when my father got a heart attack. I was awaiting Swami's directions, sitting worried when that evening Swami materialised Vibhuti for my father, and asked me to go home and take care of him, patiently even instructing

how the Vibhuti should be given. Needless to say, father recovered as he started taking the divine medicine. However, Swami had different plans for me. Even as I spent my days at the hospital taking care of father's needs, I realised that I was slowly falling in love with this whole experience of serving, especially caring for my sick father. The passion to serve was not only towards my father, but it extended to whoever came my way. From that moment, a seed for service was sown in the deepest recesses of my heart. It was a pristine desire, or a noble need rather, to dedicate my life in the service of the sick and needy.



The author with Bhagavan.

When Swami built the Super Speciality Hospital at Whitefield, I was on cloud nine, eager to discover an opportunity to serve in His hospital, caring and loving the sick while enjoying His proximity throughout my life. I vividly remember the winter of 2000, when on the 27th of December, Swami decided to gift Saris to us, the alumni of the Anantapur Campus. It was my turn to receive the gift from His Divine hands, and that day happened to be my first day of work at the Whitefield Hospital, and thus I conveyed it to Him (He had blessed my resume earlier, instructing me to join the Whitefield Super Speciality





Hospital). He blessed me with the Sari and Padanamaskar, and said, “Baaga Pani Chesuko, Naa Ashirwaadamundi,” which means “do good work, My blessings are there with you”. I have never looked back since that day!

Learning the Lesson of Patience

Being In-charge of the Patient Registration and Screening Department in SSSIHMS, I had to deal with a lot of patients daily, and even though my student days at Anantapur had instilled a lot of patience and compassion within me, at times I used to get irritated at the patients. I used to lose my temper when so many of them would come to me with silly doubts.

There was however one incident that changed this attitude of mine. It happened on the morning of 23rd August 2012 when I was crossing the road opposite SSSIHMS, Whitefield, a bike out of the blue rammed into me and threw me up in the air. I got up with the help of a few Seva Dal volunteers and they helped me to somehow drag myself till the main hall. The distance from the gate that I used to cover in a minute, suddenly felt so long and tiring to cross. I guided the Seva Dal members to take me to the emergency from where the doctors took over with great care. However, that day I realised how a patient would feel when he / she would come for the first time to our hospital. I had always looked at them from the eyes of a staff who knew her hospital inside out until that day when I realised how overwhelming it would be for an already exhausted patient who had to travel miles to reach here, to be able to absorb the humongous building and its departments. It would be obvious for them to be a bit nervous and confused, given that a lot of them would not know how

to even read or write. Though our loving Seva Dal volunteers help them reach their departments safely, for the first-time patients it would be still be a chore to come to terms with the enormity of the whole place and the directions.

From that day, I have treated every patient with patience and compassion, taking the minor accident as a timely guiding light from Swami. It was an experience that truly helped me empathise with the patient. I still do get angry at times, but I quickly remember the lesson Swami taught me and since then, I have been a witness to a lot of grateful smiles, hopeful faces and unsaid blessings of many such beautiful souls who come to His Temple of Healing. I am forever grateful for this opportunity to do a little bit in making them feel loved, cared for and at peace.

Listen to the Swami's Promptings from within

Being with Swami (however short a span I was blessed to spend in His proximity, under His direct Divine guidance), I have realised that we should never neglect His promptings that stem from within our heart. The moment we place our foot on the soil of Parthi, we must realise that He has taken charge of our lives and thus we should pay close attention to the voice within, which is none other than His voice, guiding us all through. On the 6th of September 1996, my husband Sri Ratan Kanal (also Swami's student from the Brindavan Campus) and me, were on our way to Goa by car. The driver was speeding and that was when I heard that voice from within me, asking me to tell him to slow down. I tried to persuade Ratan to tell the driver to go slow. Being a thrill enthusiast himself, Ratan dismissed my fear as unnecessary.





After a few minutes, the driver lost control and our car slipped and went crashing down into a large ditch. I shouted, "Swami" as the impact of the accident had thrown me to the front. After a few blurry moments, I realised that I was bleeding profusely from my forehead. Ratan had regained his consciousness by then and found that I was the one who was severely injured among the two (driver ran away), and that I needed help immediately. We both were chanting Sai Gayatri Mantra continuously, when all of a sudden a jeep stopped beside us and took us to a nearby hospital. My forehead had torn open due to the impact and there was blood all over. The doctors at that hospital said that they did not have the facility to suture such a deep cut and that I would need to be taken to a bigger hospital in Manipal with better facilities. We reached there four hours later, still bleeding, and having Sai Gayatri on our lips. We met the doctor we had been referred to.

Call it divine providence, but his colleague, a doctor from abroad happened to be there at that very time. He incidentally even had the best suturing apparatus available with him that he had got from the U.S. In a trice, He consented to do everything necessary to get me back to normal again. Because of the right treatment administered in a timely manner, I recovered fast. As soon as I got better, I wished to see Swami at the earliest.

That November, my husband and I went to Parthi, and on seeing me, Swami came near me and said, "Maathey Pe Kya Hua"? meaning, "What happened to your forehead"? "Swami, accident," I replied. "Haan, Maalum Hai. Bahut Bada accident Tha! Tune Mujhe Pukara Naa?" meaning,

"Yes, I know. It was a major accident! And you called out for Me"? I replied in the affirmative.

Being on security duty, I managed to pass a handkerchief to Him by then. He wiped his fingers and placed the handkerchief on my forehead and said, "Naya Janam Diya Hai" meaning, "I have given you a new life". This was the day when I realised that He always keeps prompting us from within. All we need to do is to listen to Him and follow His directions without any doubt.

To reaffirm this belief, I had another experience. One day, I was driving to Brindavan Ashram for my security duty when I noticed a huge truck carrying loads of iron rods going pretty slow ahead of me. I felt an urge to overtake, but then, that was when I again heard that voice that prompted me to slow down and park my car on the side. Keeping in mind my previous experience, without a blink, I adhered to the instruction of that inner voice and parked my car to the side. To my utter astonishment, a few metres ahead, the truck had a head-on collision with another vehicle, and it had caused a lot of fatal damage to the people in its immediate proximity. I could have been one among them, had I not followed His voice within me. Since then, there have been many such instances when I have been a witness to His mysterious ways of warning and guiding us.

Rare Opportunity to be a Part of His Divine Mission

Having been blessed with the opportunity of lifetimes to serve in His hospital for the past twenty years, I have witnessed thousands of such miracles. I have seen countless souls like me being

continued on page 27...



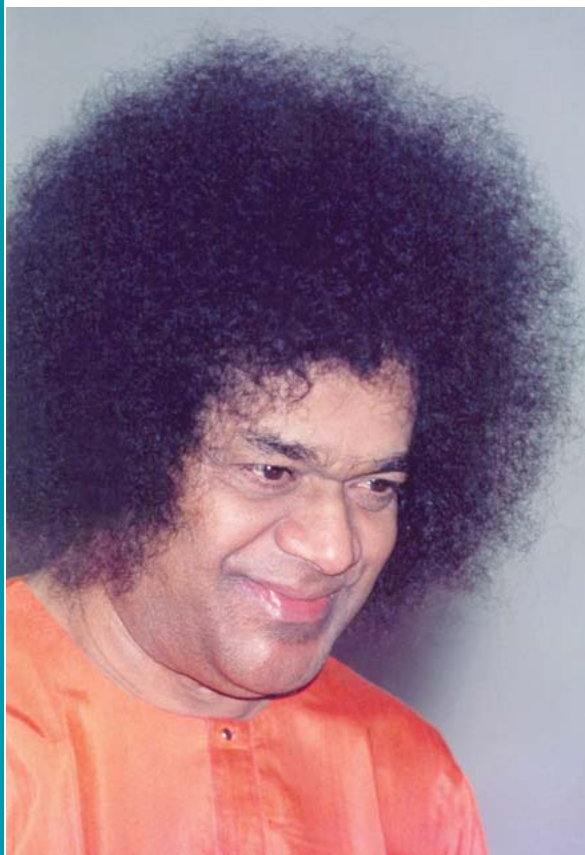


SEARCHING THE TRUTH ... UNDERSTANDING TRUE LOVE

Arthur Hillcoat

MY MOST HUMBLE AND LOVING Pranam at the Lotus Feet of our Beloved Lord and our very best Friend.

I heard something mentioned a little while ago about the fact that Swami calls me a 'lion' but I don't want you to have any



fears! I am really only a little pussy cat. I don't have a lot of time for stories. But

I'll tell a couple of short stories to begin with. Swami – when we were planning to come away on this journey – said to talk about Unity and Love. So, that's something that I have to do.

Bring on the Smiling Lion

But, of course, we must see the love and the fun-loving side of Swami. One day, He was talking to the students inside. And then He came outside where they couldn't see Him. He called me and I said: "Yes, Swami"? He said: "The boys just want to see you". I said: "See me, Swami"? He said: "Yes, they want to see you. Go inside"! And so, I stepped inside.

There was a great roar from the students – hilarious; and then I knew that Swami had been up to mischief. When I saw one of the students later, I asked: "What was the roar about when I came in"? He said: "Oh, Swami was teasing us". I said: "What do you mean by teasing"? He said: "Swami pulled up His sleeve, and started to move His hand and said: 'Would you like to see a lion'? And the students said: 'Yes, Swami'! So, He called me.

You see, our Lord has a beautiful sense of humour and He teases the students and you become a part of it and it's wonderful. But you also make mistakes sometimes...

Golden Dancer

We were down here in the Hill View Stadium on the 65th Birthday of Bhagavan





and there was a cultural programme in the evening. Swami was in the orchestra pit. I was a few feet away from Swami. And the children put up a drama.

After it was stated that a special dance of Siva would be demonstrated; and since that was near to my heart, I looked forward to it. And this beautiful lady had come on stage in gold – fully in gold, with long and beautiful eyelashes – and started to dance.

Then I started to get concerned: “What’s this young lady doing dancing in front of Swami”? As you know, in India, once girls reach the age of 12, they don’t dance any longer in front of all. So, I was a bit concerned about it. I just looked to see if Swami was alright. But there was nothing showing on His face; it was just blank!

When it was over, Swami walked across quietly towards me and asked: “Have you ever seen that dance before”? I said: “No, Swami, it was very, very beautiful”. “Oh yes,” He said. There was a twinkle in His eyes and He leaned over to me and said: “But that wasn’t a girl; that was a boy”! So you see, these are the things that happen sometimes.

Loving God, not Limiting God

That’s a lot more of these, but I really must move into more important things. When I was very young, in my teenage years, early teenage years, I had this yearning to speak about God, a very deep yearning. Fortunately, no one asked me to because I wouldn’t have known what to say. But the yearning was there.

I would go to any church, and I was with one particular one. And there was a fight and I had to order the ice-creams. There was a last meeting and I said: “The soft drinks will be here, and the ice-creams

will be here”. One lady rather fiercely said to me: “Who did you order the soft drinks from”? It didn’t sound too good to me but I said: “Tramackeys” and then she really abused me. “How dare you do that? How can you do this sort of thing?” I said: “What have I done wrong? I don’t know, they have the best soft drinks”! She said, “That’s beside the point; they are Catholics”!

So, I stepped back because here one moment they were talking about a loving God; but only for us; not for anyone else. We can never limit God but it limits us if we think that way.

Anyway, I am side tracked just a little bit. I want to talk what Swami told me to talk about. And I probably only used these words in the beginning “Unity and Love”. Firstly, we cannot have unity unless there is love. Secondly, unity just doesn’t mean in our centre.

So, firstly we have to look at our self and that’s what I want to talk about mostly today. Because, unless we can understand and find the Truth, we will be coming back lifetime after lifetime. Jesus said two thousand years ago: “The Kingdom of God is within”. How much notice did we take at that time? Of course, communication wasn’t as good those days as it is now.

Years ago, I used to ask over and over again: “Why of all the people in the world, why me? Why has the Avatar drawn me to Him”? I asked that many times. But Swami eventually said to us one day, “If it’s your good fortune in coming to Me, you must give thanks to the merits earned in previous lives”. So, it is good if we can play our roles well in this particular life.

Change and Understanding

What is it that we need to do? It’s very simple to say that we should change or we





should do this or that. But how do we go about that? First, we must understand that the only thing in life – Swami tells us – is change. However, Swami has also said to us if you are looking for self-realisation or if you're looking for enlightenment; then you are selfish. He said that because you are looking for something for yourself when you should be looking for something to share with others.

So, what is it that is the most important thing to search for? In my mind, it's your search for understanding. Understanding what life is all about. Understanding what steps one has to take to come to know the Truth. The more one understands, the more simple life becomes. We must continue to search to understand so that the time will come when we are open to the total Truth.

The search we have must come from an understanding. We must continue to search, make the effort that at such times as our understanding reaches a point that we realise that even the effort is a stumbling block – because there is nothing to reach! You are that at this moment; but don't know it. Most misery is caused because one has forgotten who one really is.

Swami tells us over and over again: "Embodiments of Love". He also tells us that we are Divine. But do we really listen to Swami? Swami tells us beautiful words and they are lovely; and we get a good feeling about it but when we leave, do we think about that? Do we take time to search for understanding? Without that, without the understanding, how can we ever know the Truth? What are the things that get in the way? Things that get in the way are the fact that firstly we believe we are separate,

and that we have free will and that we can do things and we can achieve things. How sad it is that we think that!

Light Bulbs Lesson

We think we are separate. I remember once in a hotel in Bengaluru, it was evening and I wanted to write a letter. But I couldn't see right; all the lights were on. I looked at the globes – they were all 25 watts. But you see, if you had a 100 of those, you still wouldn't have had good light. So, I went to the manager and I said: "Look, I can't see out there! Would you have a 100 watt lamp"? "Oh yes, of course!" he said and gave it to me and I took the 25 watt out and put the 100 in and then I had plenty of light!

Then it dawned on me there's only one current that comes into this building. And that electric current there was waiting to express itself as light. But the amount of light depended on the quality of the bulb! I thought: "Isn't it just like God? The Divine current is ever ready to express itself as Love and Light through every one of these human globes. But it depends upon the quality of the globe as to how much Love and Light can be expressed".

So, we need to ask ourselves, what sort of a globe am I? How much love and light am I expressing? One might be satisfied with a 25 watt. One might say well, perhaps 75 is okay or a 100. But whatever it is, we have to ask ourselves then how much do we really want to express? Some might say, I would like to be a 100 watt globe; some might say a 500 watt or even a million watt; others may want to express that which can't be expressed. But we can't do that without understanding and making the effort to understand.





Video View

You know, a video is a great concept. What happens when we are watching a video? Our eyes tend to go a little bit square; and we are looking at it. We are looking at what's on the screen. We are not sitting there worrying about that bit that's being played – which we might call the past; and we're not fearing that little bit of the tape that still has to come – which we might call the future! We are watching what's on the screen at that very moment; right at that very moment. You see, if we can live our lives that way, life would be much more simple.

The Search and the Suffering

Once you start searching, then you will start to see changes. I used to see that years ago; I went through some heavy parts in my life and I used to look up and say, "Lord, why me? Why me again?" And it was as if the Lord was saying: "Why not you? And here's a little more for you!" You know the feeling? Because I was so upset, I was asking the question: "Why me? Why me? Poor me!" But when one gets enough suffering – that's why I say; suffering, pain, loss, grief – any type of suffering is God's grace at its very best. Because when we get enough of suffering, we will start to question. And then one starts to ask, "What's the purpose of my existence? What is life all about? Why is there suffering? Why do some seem to suffer more than others? Who am I? Who am I really?" And it's only then that we start to get answers. Then God reaches out a hand to us and our life begins to unfold with greater understanding. But we first must ask those questions.

You know, life is very beautiful. Wherever we go in the world, we find

love. And you know it is interesting; I used to simply say that you find love mostly in countries which have suffered – like Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Russia – but that's not quite true – but the intensity is a little more. Because they are forever asking, asking, because they are searching so much for understanding. But as Swami says: "All this is only in our imagination". What an imagination! And this is hard to understand; very hard to understand. But if we keep working towards it, it will be understood.

You see, only God exists. It's very simple; only God exists. And all else that we can see, touch, smell, taste, exists within God; like the fish in the fish bowl. But that which you are is that in which all exists. Swami tells us that over and over again.

He says: "You are God"! The only thing is that if you come to understand this and feel that to be so; then you don't go down the main street tomorrow calling out that you are God! Know it within yourself! If you call it out too much around the ridges, you'll find a vehicle come and two men with white jackets will take you for a drive somewhere! But this is what Swami is here for! It's the Avatar. Why do we keep putting it off all the time? Why is it that we don't seek to understand what He is telling us over and over again?

Our True Nature

You know, a couple of years ago, a tragedy happened! Swami got up to give a Discourse, and then walked off; and didn't give a Discourse! And said, He would never give a Discourse again! It's terrible; when the Avatar is here and He has to do this to try and get our attention! Two days





later, He gave a Discourse to explain. He said: "Why are you not listening to Me? Nobody is listening! I've told you in every way possible. Tell me what you want Me to do so that you'll understand?"

You see when the Avatar does this, He is not doing it for fun: "Oh this is the thing that I'll do today". He is trying to get our attention that one's own true nature is that which you have always prayed to; that – that which is expressing itself through the form of Sai is who you are! And we have to make an effort to reach this. Isn't it worth it?

As I said earlier, Jesus said the Kingdom of God is within. Why do we deny ourselves? Years ago, I used to say why should we limit Sai; why should we limit God by not making this search? But

of course I realised later one cannot limit God; we limit ourselves by not listening, by not taking some action to understand; and to understand the purity of His teachings.

We must come to understand that our own true nature is Divinity. Some people say: "Well what am I going to do? If I realise that, who's going to do my work"? You see, that's a misunderstanding. The body must remain until its appointed time to leave. The body must still carry out the role that it has been given in this lifetime.

(To be continued in the next issue...)

– The author was the Chairman of Sathya Sai Council of Australia, and for many years he was in-charge of the Christmas celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam.

...continued from page 22

given a second chance in life, at this Temple of Divine Healing.

Today, this hospital is nothing less than my own home. In fact, once Swami told my husband, "She takes care of My Hospital just like how she takes care of her own home". I am sure that He is always there with us, watching us, guiding us when we take a detour, scolding us at times, and yet, lovingly taking care of us every moment of our lives, in ways we would never understand or appreciate. He sends His children to our hospital to get healed, and serving them with love and compassion, is our way of reciprocating His love that He keeps showering on all of us. It goes without saying that all the staff here work for Him as an offering for blessing them the

opportunity to be able to be a part of His Divine Mission.

As for me, in spite of being in a volatile city like Bengaluru, I still feel that nothing has changed, for I continue to be His student and adhere to His principles.

Back then, He was my loving teacher in Anantapur, and after I graduated and took up this job, today, He's my Master! All I ever wish is to be able to serve Him till the last breath of my life. That is the only way I feel that I can pay my gratitude to Him.

– The author, a student of Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, has been serving in Bhagavan's Super Speciality Hospital, Whitefield, Bengaluru since the year 2000.





CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM KHAMMAM

MORE THAN 2,000 DEVOTEES came on a two-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam on 27th and 28th January 2020 from Khammam district of Telangana and presented music



A dance number by the Bal Vikas children of Khammam district of Telangana.

and cultural programmes on both the days. Their first presentation comprised an array of beautiful dances performed by the Bal Vikas children and Sai Youth of this district on 27th January 2020. The dances performed by the dancers to the tunes of the songs on a variety of themes highlighted the glory of Bhagavan, Bal Vikas, Chitravathi, etc. It was indeed a spectacular presentation.

This was followed by the screening of a video film which showcased the service activities being performed by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of this district.

On 28th January 2020, singers and musicians of this district offered a garland of soulful devotional songs at the Lotus

Feet of Bhagavan, the music and melody of which suffused the entire milieu with devotional fervour. The melodious songs rendered by them included "Sri Sathya Sai Baba Neeku Saranamu" (Sai is my refuge), "Pranava Swarupa Hari Om Sai" (Sai is the embodiment of Om), "Sai Saranam Baba Saranam Saranam".

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Deep devotion and piety marked the celebration of Chinese New Year 2020 at Prasanthi Nilayam. The theme of the two-day programme held on 31st January and 1st February 2020 was "Heaven Lies at the Feet of the Mother". More than 500 devotees from Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand came to participate in the celebrations which were packed with magnificent music and cultural programmes.

The programme on 31st January began with lighting of the sacred lamp followed



Offerings by the Eight Immortals on Chinese New Year.

by traditional offerings at the Samadhi of Bhagavan and chanting of sacred Buddhist Mantras.





Chanting of sacred Buddhist Mantras.

In his Welcome Address which followed next, Sri Billy Fong, the Coordinator of the Chinese New Year celebrations stressed on the supreme significance of filial piety and exhorted one and all to love and respect their parents which was their primary duty. This was followed by an instrumental music offering by Ms. Paramita Putri Santosa from Indonesia who enthralled the audience with sweet musical notes on Guzheng.

What followed next was an inspiring talk on the topic "Filial Piety from the Perspective of Buddhism" by Ms. Letisia Lauw from Indonesia who narrated how the teachings of Bhagavan Baba and following of Buddhist traditions helped her and her siblings to grow in virtues. The next presentation was a song "Dang Ni Lou Ler" (when you are old) sung melodiously by Sri Fendy from Medan, Indonesia who brought forth the magnificence of filial piety in a beautiful way in his well-rendered song. This was followed by a most inspiring talk delivered by Ms. Mickey Thum, a young adult from Malaysia. Though born with a congenital defect in the spine, the speaker revealed how her life became meaningful by her journey to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. She concluded her talk with the inspiring remark that doing Seva was her medicine.

The last item of the programme was chanting of hymns dedicated to Kuan Yin



Hymns dedicated to the goddess of mercy rendered by Chinese devotees.

Avalokiteswari, the goddess of mercy, by the Chinese singers, both ladies and gents. The programme concluded with Bhajans which were also led by Chinese devotees.

On the morning of 1st February 2020, the second day of Chinese New Year celebrations, devotees from Indonesia offered a beautiful programme of Bhajans and Bhajan medley at the Lotus Feet of



Bhajans and Bhajan medley presentation by the devotees of Indonesia.

Bhagavan which spread a wave of ecstasy throughout Sai Kulwant Hall by its music, melody and spirited rendition.

The evening programme began with chanting of sacred Buddhist Mantras. Addressing the gathering after this, Sri Manoj Kumar Singh, Chairman, Zone 4B of SSIO stated that the mother represented sacrifice. Referring to the teaching of Bhagavan to consider your mother and father as God, the eminent speaker called upon the devotees to take a vow that they would never allow their parents to suffer.



A Chinese orchestra presentation followed next which was participated by eight talented musicians on various Chinese instruments. The musicians rendered traditional Chinese New Year songs and Bhajans which included “Keshava Madhava Jaya Deva Madhusudana”, “Sivaya Namah Siva Sivaya Namah Siva Sivaya Namah Om Namah Sivaya”, “Siva Maheswara Siva

transformed by the love and sacrifice of his mother, for whom he finally shed tears of repentance and prayed to Bhagavan for her life when she met with an accident. Sublime theme, good acting and direction made the drama an impressive presentation.

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM NALGONDA

A soulful devotional music concert was presented by a noted carnatic classical singer, Smt. Soumya Varanasi and her team of fellow musicians on 9th February 2020 as part of the pilgrimage of the devotees from Nalgonda district of Telangana. The talented singer not only rendered carnatic classical compositions in her sweet and melodious voice but also followed them with Bhajans and Kirtans which included “Mangala



Chinese orchestra presentation.

Maheswara Siva Maheswara Sai Ram”. The grand finale of the Chinese New Year celebrations 2020 was an elevating drama entitled “Heaven Lies at the Feet of the Mother” which was also the theme of this year’s Chinese New Year celebration. The drama depicted how a wayward son was



Devotional music concert by Smt. Soumya Varanasi and her team of fellow musicians.



A scene from the drama “Heaven Lies at the Feet of the Mother”.

Shubhakari Maata Maheswari” (the Divine Mother is the bestower of all good and auspicious), “Govinda Govinda Venkataramana Govinda”, “Vitthala Vitthala Vitthala Panduranga Vitthala”. Besides, the rendition of “Siva Tandava Stotra” and evergreen number “Brahmamokkate Para Brahmamokkate” (God is one) added variety and richness to the concert.





NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

AUSTRALIA



ON 15TH NOVEMBER 2019, THE Sathya Sai College of Murwillumbah, New South Wales (NSW) won the People's Choice Award for Schools for sustainability, presented by the local Tweed Council at the inaugural Sustainability



Sustainability Award to Sathya Sai College, New South Wales (NSW), Australia.

Champions ceremony. NSW's Tweed Council is taking a pro-active role in encouraging sustainability, recognising the importance of the environment for social and economic well-being as well as for the future. The slogan for the College's submission was, 'Learning about Litter, Living Life Cleaner and Making it Greener'. The practises implemented at the school include: red-bin free school grounds with the goal of avoiding rubbish for landfill; creating healthy habits by eating natural and raw food (reducing packaging); connecting with Nature through activities such as a day of outdoor classroom, weekly gardening activities, developing

edible gardens by growing a "Juicy Fruit Patch" and adopting the 3R's: Refuse, Reduce, Recycle. These initiatives have gradually changed the culture of the school community.

BRAZIL

Since 2011, students of the Sathya Sai School of Ribeirão Preto have been participating in the Brazilian Olympics of Astronomy and Astronautics. In 2019,



Bronze medal to a student of Sathya Sai School, Brazil.

Leska Maria Andrade, an exemplary Grade 4 student, secured the Bronze Medal, amongst thousands of students in this nation-wide competition. The Education Secretary of the City of Ribeirão Preto, Sri Felipe Elias Miguel, presented the medal in a ceremony. The Councilman Rodrigo Simões, made a motion approved by the City Council, recognising the important achievement of Leska and the Sathya Sai School. This award is especially relevant considering that the school caters to students from an underprivileged community. While research indicates that it takes 25 to 30 years for educational institutions to establish themselves,





the Sathya Sai School has achieved excellence, despite many challenges, through love, commitment and sacrifices made by students, staff and parents.

PHILIPPINES

Mindanao island, the second-largest island in the Philippines, was hit by three devastating earthquakes in October 2019, affecting more than 260,000 people. SSIO volunteers in Philippines immediately



Disaster relief to victims of Mindanao earthquake, Philippines.

sprang into action, collecting nearly 900 kg of relief goods and made plans to distribute essential food items to the earthquake victims. Partnering with volunteers from the Asian Development Bank, SSIO volunteers visited Mindanao on 9th and 10th November and served about 2,500 people. They distributed grocery packs with rice, noodles, milk powder, biscuits, clothes and blankets.

RUSSIA

In early August 2019, 132 volunteers from USA, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and UK took part in an international volunteer camp in the northwest region of

Russia. Organised about 240 km from St. Petersburg, the camp included activities in medical services, repair and construction, social services and education. The medical team served more than 2,500 patients, who also received information on healthy lifestyles and how to prevent illnesses. The 18-member repair and construction team worked at six different sites. They installed electrical equipment in a nearby city, renovated a local school ground and sealed cracks in the walls, and updated the facades of a local polyclinic. The social service team prepared packages, which contained pasta, buckwheat, cookies, and soap and other essential items.

The education team organised a programme titled, "The Way of Good". Some classes included character development, overcoming obstacles and community service. SSIO volunteers held



International volunteer camp, Russia.

about 80 classes, serving 267 children and 9 seminars were given on spiritual matters for 79 adults. At the end of the camp, the volunteers staged a musical concert for the community and served many delicacies.

SRI LANKA

On 13th September 2019, as a part of Sathya Sai Village Integrated Project





(SSVIP) in Kathaliyar, Samalankulam, and Oddusuddan, SSIO volunteers in Sri Lanka initiated a new water purification project to provide safe drinking water for 2,500 local residents. The project, assisted by the Vision of Love, UK, and the 23rd Vijayabahu Infantry Regiment, Sri Lanka Army, is expected to supply 2,000 litres of water daily. This is the 20th village adopted by the SSIO of Sri Lanka. The military presented an award to the SSIO in appreciation of the outreach efforts.



As part of the SSIO's global initiative to adopt 95 communities, the SSIO of

the children to attend school regularly. The project has evolved over the years and currently, volunteers provide staple grains and groceries every month to 100 needy families identified by the Santa Ana School District. Sometimes, this provides meals to children who would otherwise go to school hungry. During 2018, the SSIO of Southern California donated about 125 pairs of shoes and 200 containers of lice shampoo as well as mattresses.

As part of the 95 Communities project, the SSIO of the Mid-Central Region of the USA adopted the World Bird Sanctuary in Valley Park, Missouri. The Sanctuary provides refuge to eagles that are permanently injured and cannot be released back to the wild. Its mission is to



Serving underprivileged children in Southern California, USA.

the Pacific Southwest region of the USA took care of needy school children and their families in Santa Ana, California, starting in 2014. In response to a request from a school counsellor in the Santa Ana School District, SSIO volunteers distributed shoes, eyeglasses, shampoo to treat lice, and other items, thus enabling



World Bird Sanctuary, Missouri, USA.

secure the future of threatened bird species including the US national bird, the bald eagle. The bald eagle is also considered a sacred bird by Native Americans, whose feathers are used in many religious and spiritual ceremonies. SSIO members served at the sanctuary twice a month, weather permitting, taking care of the grounds and providing needed supplies. During the Annual Regional Retreat of





the SSIO, an interactive educational session was held, and participants joined in a walk for birds, carrying placards with the five human values and informative posters about the birds at the sanctuary. The staff at the sanctuary appreciated the SSIO volunteers for completing the tasks efficiently with love.



BHARAT

Odisha: The 44th State Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Odisha was held at Paradip Port of Jagatsinghpur district from 27th to 29th December 2019. The conference was preceded by the Festival of Joy programme on 25th and 26th December commemorating 50 years of Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas. Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, SSSSO inaugurated the conference. Various focus areas for the coming year were deliberated upon by over 2,000 delegates. A symposium commemorating 50 years of the Odia edition of Sanathana Sarathi was held on the sidelines of the conference. On this auspicious occasion, Sri Nimish Pandya inaugurated a drinking water project in Pradhanagheri village and a Vocational Training Centre at Paradip.

Telangana: Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, Telangana celebrated Bal Vikas golden jubilee year at Sri Sathya Sai Aradhyha Dhamam, Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar School Campus, Hyderabad on 15th September 2019.

The celebrations were centred around the twin objectives of felicitating senior Bal Vikas Gurus and bringing together Bal Vikas alumni of Telangana State. 150 senior Bal Vikas Gurus who had been taking Bal Vikas classes for more than 25



Felicitating of senior Bal Vikas Gurus.

years were felicitated. About 800 Bal Vikas alumni participated in the event.

Delivering the Inaugural Address, Sri H.J. Dora, Convener, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana appreciated the work of the Gurus and their dedication. The contribution of a Guru in one's life was of great significance and felicitating Gurus with reverence was of utmost importance, he said. After this, felicitation ceremony was conducted, and all the Gurus present there were felicitated by senior members of the Organisation in the presence of their students who were accomplished citizens of the country today. Inspiring talks were delivered by many eminent speakers on this occasion, which included Sri P. Venkat Rao, Smt. Sasi Bala, Smt. Ganga Pidatala and Dr. S. Manjula.



Contentment is Real Heroism

THERE WAS A PUPIL ONCE, in the kingdom of Raghu, who asked his preceptor at the



The disciple insisted on offering Guru Dakshina to the Guru.

conclusion of his studies what Dakshina (thanksgiving offering) he would accept from him. Dakshina means offerings made in gratitude for service rendered. The Guru told him that he needed no other Dakshina than gratitude; it was enough if he lived according to his teachings and brought honour to his preceptor thereby. But the pupil insisted that he must indicate his need and tell him some sum of money or gifts that he would accept. So, just to ward him off and get rid of him, the Guru named an impossible sum of money, "You learnt sixteen Vidyas (branches of knowledge) from me; well, bring me sixteen lakh gold Nishkas (coins)". At this, the pupil went off to collect the sum.

The pupil went to Emperor Raghu, and got from him the promise that he would

fulfil his every desire. Then he placed his petition for sixteen lakh gold Nishkas before him. Raghu was rendered desperate by the vast sum needed; though emperor, he was too deep in austerity to have the sum on hand. Still, in order to keep his plighted word, he invaded the realm of Kubera (the god of wealth), and brought back as loot enormous stocks of gold. "Take all this and give your preceptor what he has asked for; keep the balance for yourself," the king said.



When the king asked the disciple to keep the remaining wealth with him, he humbly declined to accept.

The pupil refused to take a coin more than what he had to offer as Dakshina to his Guru. "I have brought them for you; it is all yours, take them," insisted Raghu. But the young man resisted the temptation and stood his ground.

That is real heroism. The discontented man is as good as lost. Rely on the Lord and accept whatever is your lot. He is in you, with you. He knows best what to give and when.



About Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust Publications Division

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 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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Traditional Chinese New Year offerings.



A dance on the theme of patriotism by the Bal Vikas children of Khammam district.



A dance number to illustrate the glory of Lord Siva in the programme Bhakti Prabhavam.

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Develop Sacred Habits from Early Age

Mere Bhajan or chanting Rama, Govinda is not enough. Cultivate good habits. One should develop exemplary qualities and earn a good name. Swami is happy when students earn reputation for good character. The children's behaviour should be good right from the start. That is why I say, "Start early, drive slowly and reach safely". If you develop sacred habits from early age, you grow into an exemplary person.

– Baba



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