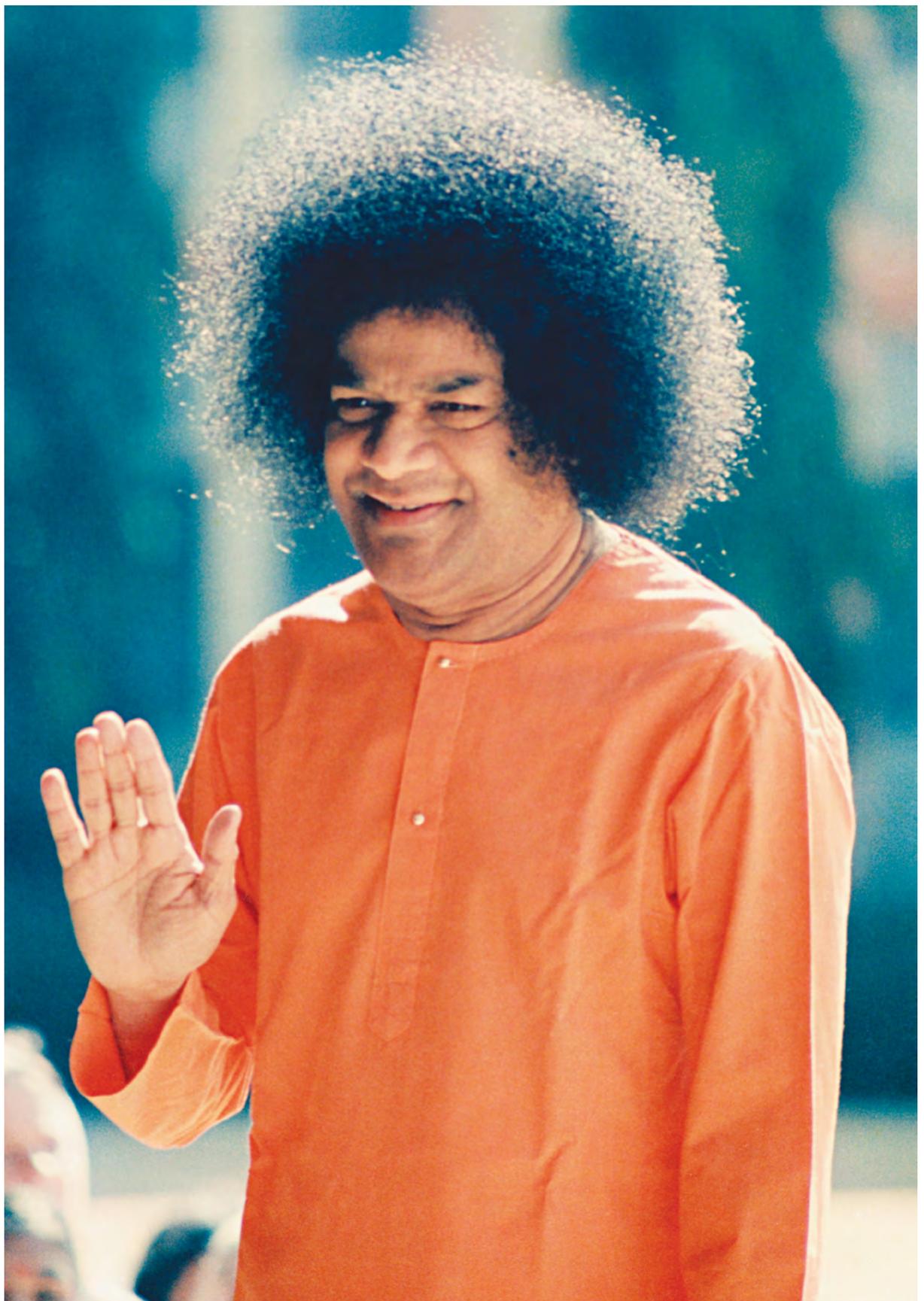




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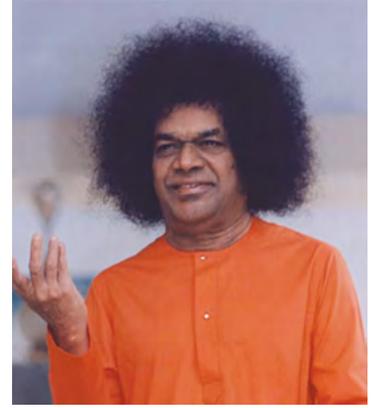
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*"Wisdom at individual or physical level
is like a bulb in a room where the light
is confined to the room only. Societal
wisdom is like the moonlight which spreads
all around, both inside and outside, but
it is not luminous. Universal wisdom
is like sunlight, which is all-pervasive
brightness. This is Brahma Jnana
which is infinite and wholesome."*



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AVATAR VANI

SOCIETY SHINES BY THE HUMAN QUALITY OF INDIVIDUALS

Do you get any benefit by revelling at the rainfall without sowing seeds on earth? Do the seeds you sow sprout in the absence of rain or water? For a sapling to grow, both the aspects of sowing and watering are complementary necessities. Similarly, human effort and Divine grace are essential for the success of any endeavour.

(Telugu Poem)

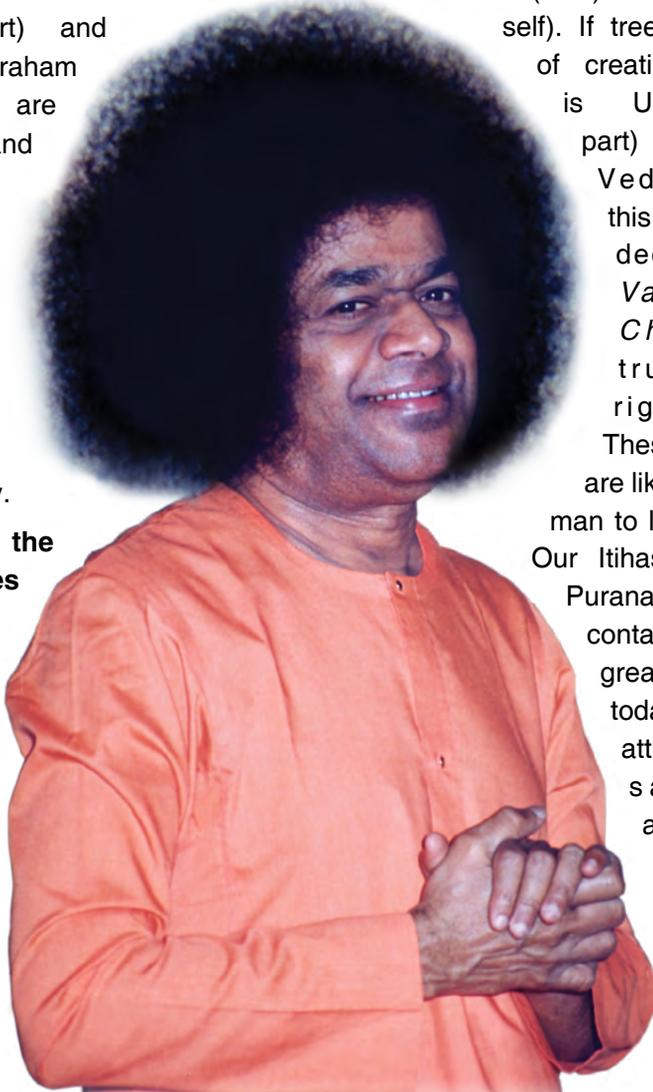
GOD'S GRACE DEPENDS ON YOUR DESERVEDNESS

PURUSHA PRAYATNAM
(human effort) and
Daiva Anugraham

(God's grace) are like positive and negative currents, each of which is necessary for the bulb of life to shine. In the absence of God's grace, any amount of human effort will not fructify.

Knowledge of the Self illumines Everything

A child cannot survive without the help of mother. A branch cannot survive without the support of the tree trunk. This is the kind of relationship that exists between



Deva (God) and Jiva (individual self). If tree is Amsa (part) of creation, the branch is Upamsa (minor part) of creation. The Vedas propound this truth. They declare *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness).

These sacred edicts are like the two eyes of man to lead a divine life. Our Itihasas (epics) and Puranas (mythologies) contain many such great truths. People today do not pay attention to these sacred texts and thereby invite untold miseries unto themselves. All sacred texts are meant for

the uplift of mankind. We should know how to make proper use of them. God created food for the protection of man's body. Just because plenty of food is available, one should not indulge in too much eating. It may result in indigestion or even disease. Also one should be careful about the quality of food before eating. You should observe Mitham (moderation) in whatever you do. God's grace depends on your deservedness. Do not aspire for things which you do not deserve.

People should develop heart-to-heart relationship. Those who seek happiness in life should introspect what is ephemeral and what is permanent. This is real Jnana (wisdom). Jnana is of three types: Vijnana, Sujnana and Prajnana (worldly knowledge, higher knowledge and constant integrated awareness). Ajnana results in Tamasic (slothful) actions, Vijnana in Rajasic (passionate) actions and Sujnana and Prajnana in Sattwic (serene) actions. Jnana is also categorised as individual wisdom, societal wisdom and universal wisdom. Wisdom at individual or physical level is like a bulb in a room where the light is confined to the room only. Societal wisdom is like the moonlight which spreads all around, both inside and outside, but it is not luminous. Universal wisdom is like sunlight, which is all-pervasive brightness. This is Brahma Jnana (knowledge of the Supreme Self) which is infinite and wholesome. This is the divine wisdom of Atma Jnana (knowledge of the Atma). Man's Prajna (divine wisdom) is only an infinitesimal part of the Prajna of Almighty God.

Atma Jnana illumines everything. Just as hands, legs, eyes, ears, etc., are the limbs of the body; individuals are the limbs

of society, society is the limb of Nature and Nature is the limb of God. All limbs of Nature are interlinked and interrelated. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavadgita: *Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). You are a limb of society. Society shines by the brilliance of the human quality of individuals. When society shines, the Nature will also shine and manifest Divinity.

Sanctify Time to Sanctify Life

The mind is above the senses, the intellect is above the mind and the Atma (Self) is above the intellect. It is the light of the Atma which illumines the intellect. As intellect is in the close proximity of the Atma, the intellect controls the mind and the mind controls the senses. Man carries out his sojourn on earth with the help of senses.

Who is man? Man is none other than the mind, which is the combination of Sankalpas and Vikalpas (thought currents and agitations). Man's actions and behaviour depend on them. Pleasure and pain are the result of Sankalpas and Vikalpas. If one wishes to be really happy, one should endeavor to shape up one's conduct. When individual quality turns into divinity, society becomes divine.

Good and bad things happen in accordance with time. Everything is subdued and subsumed by time. Everybody is bound by time. Everybody has to yield to time. Howsoever mighty one may be, one will be swept away by the stream of time. Good accrues when time is utilised well. Bad accrues when time is defiled. All beings are bound by the principle of Karma. *Karmanubandheeni Manushya Loke* (man in the world is bound by action), say the

Vedas. Human society is bound by action. In the present time, man is not making good use of time.

Oh man! You struggle hard in life merely for the sake of filling your belly. You acquire myriad types of knowledge from various fields. Examine and enquire for yourself what great happiness have you achieved by spending all the time from dawn to dusk in acquiring worldly knowledge and earning wealth while forgetting God. (Telugu Poem)

Life can be sanctified when time is sanctified. So, perform those actions which sanctify time. This should be the aim of life.

Full Wisdom Gives Total Clarity

Embodiments of Love!

Individual wisdom is narrow and limited. This wisdom can be broadened with proper effort. With God's grace, it can be developed into Divinity. In order to obtain God's grace, one has to divert the mind towards God. God's grace is not possible if the mind is turned towards the world. You cannot see things clearly in darkness. You cannot see ups and downs in darkness and encounter dangers. Individual wisdom is of this kind. Through mutual consultation, wisdom can be broadened. Then only can you have a broad vision and clear thinking. A doubting mind is like darkness and shadow. In darkness, the mind mistakes a rope for a snake and a snake for a rope. This is narrow wisdom; at one time, yes and at another time, no. It is the combination of wisdom and ignorance. Full wisdom gives total clarity. It sees divinity within and without. *Antarbahischa Tatsarvam Vyapya Narayana Sthita* (That all-pervasive God is present within and without). Narrow vision is destructive while broad vision is

constructive. Individual wisdom is on the rise in the present-day world. Its narrow vision leads to ego, ignorance and delusion. When someone is sleeping really, he can be easily woken up. When he is pretending to sleep, no amount of effort can make him awake. God knows everything; but He pretends that He does not know anything. So, devotees have doubts. This is the effect of illusion.

Chanting of Divine Name Destroys Illusion

The Gopikas understood Krishna's reality well. They yearned and pined for Krishna. Their devotion for Him was total. When Krishna once pretended to sleep, one Gopika said, "One can wake up a person who is in sound sleep. But how is it possible to wake a person who pretends to be sleeping with eyes closed? Can anyone understand Krishna's Leelas"? Krishna's Leelas are meant to broaden the vision of people. Gopikas realised that there can be no sleep for God. If God goes to sleep, the entire universe must face calamity. Only true devotees like these Gopikas could understand God's ways.

Only Bhakti (devotion) can impart understanding about God; devotion alone is capable of granting Moksha (liberation). The principle of devotion is the real medicine for the disease of worldliness. The infinite power of Bhakti must be understood by all. Bhakti (devotion) gives Shakti (power), Shakti begets Rakti and Anurakti (yearning and attachment to God), Anurakti bestows Virakti (detachment) and Virakti leads to Mukti (liberation). Total love is devotion. Mere rituals without true devotion denote only Yukti. Intense love has the power to relieve any person from the dualities of Sankalpas and Vikalpas by purifying the heart.



Radha was once in a dilemma, “If I open the door of the heart, Krishna might escape, but if I close the main door, He may not enter the heart”. The next moment, she had second thoughts, “Where is the question of opening or closing the door of the heart when Krishna is present everywhere”? Can any door prevent Krishna from entering one’s heart? But there is the main door, that is the ecstatic feeling of surrender which is

temple of God, there is no main door. To realise this truth is true divinity”.

The Gopikas never had any problem with regard to Sankalpas and Vikalpas because they realised the true nature of Divinity. The one who knows the principle of the Atma is Gopi, and the one who is ignorant of this principle is Papi (sinner). Man does not know the difference between Gopi and Papi due



Atma Jnana illumines everything. Just as hands, legs, eyes, ears, etc., are the limbs of the body; individuals are the limbs of society, society is the limb of Nature and Nature is the limb of God. All limbs of Nature are interlinked and interrelated. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavadgita: Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhuta Sanathana (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). You are a limb of society. Society shines by the brilliance of the human quality of individuals. When society shines, the Nature will also shine and manifest Divinity.

experienced when the strings of Sushumna are played in deep devotion. It is said in yogic parlance, “Oh man! You endeavour to see Kailasa by controlling life breath and senses, and by playing on the strings of Sushumna with tears of joy. That state is verily Kailasa or Vaikuntha, and that is the main door of entry of Krishna. There is no other door. When the entire universe is the

to the formidable effect of Maya (illusion). Maya is compared to a Nartaki (dancer). The word Nartaki has three letters – Nar-ta-ki. If you reverse the letters, it becomes Kirtana (chanting of Divine Name). So, Maya Nartaki can be controlled by Kirtana of the Divine Name of God.

– **Bhagavan’s Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 15th April 1993.**



SRI SATHYA SAI ARADHANA MAHOTSAVA

SRI SATHYA SAI Aradhana Mahotsava was held at Prasanthi Nilayam with profound solemnity and piety on 24th April 2017.

On the eve of the Aradhana Mahotsava, 23rd April 2017, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning enacted a drama entitled “Daivam Manusha Rupena” (God is in the form of a human being) which showcased the timeless supreme love of the Divine for mankind, drawing parallels between Treta Yuga Avatar, Lord Rama, Dwapara Yuga



Sai Pancharatna Kritis by carnatic classical singers.

260 carnatic classical singers, both ladies and gents, from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra. With their hearts full of devotion for Bhagavan, the singers rendered five beautiful gems of Telugu compositions dedicated to Him with verve, virtuosity and flawless harmony, suffusing the entire milieu with deep devotion and sacredness. The compositions rendered were: “Pranamami Sayeesha”, “Sada Bhavayami”, “Charana Sevanam”, “Kali Yuga Avatari” and “Sathya Sai Avatara Vaibhavam”.



A scene from the drama “Daivam Manusha Rupena”.

Avatar, Lord Krishna and Kali Yuga Avatar Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba through selected incidents from their lives. Good direction, excellent acting of the cast and relevant multimedia support clearly brought out the theme of the drama, depicting how man should follow the ideals set by Avatars and lead a life of self-sacrifice and service to mankind.

The programme on the morning of 24th April 2017 began with soulful presentation of Sri Pancharatna Kritis by more than

Two speakers addressed the gathering after this. The first speaker was Sri S.S. Naganand, Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Quoting a saying of Bhagavan that He had come to light the lamp of love in the heart of man, the distinguished speaker reminisced how Bhagavan showered love on all and held their hand in times of difficulties. Referring to Bhagavan’s exhortation that Annadanam (offering food) was a primary means of service to mankind, Sri Naganand announced that Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust had decided to offer





Narayana Seva in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium.

free food to devotees who visit Prasanthi Nilayam, for which a new building was being constructed. The second speaker was Sri Nimish Pandya, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation who observed that Bhagavan's main message was love and exhorted all devotees to give unconditional love to mankind and serve them selflessly. Sri Pandya also gave details of the phenomenal growth achieved by Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Jyothi programme which was inspiring, empowering and energising the students and inculcating values in them.

These talks were followed by a Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, an audio clip of which was played on the public address system. In His Discourse, Bhagavan exhorted the devotees to shun ego and ostentation and develop the virtues of humility, compassion and courage to become fit instruments in His Divine Mission of service to mankind. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha

Santhi Nahin". Bhajans followed this and concluded with Arati at 10.20 a.m.

After the conclusion of the programme in Sai Kulwant Hall, Narayana Seva was performed in Sri Sathya Sai Hill View Stadium, wherein more than 40,000 people were served food and offered clothes. Meanwhile, all the devotees were served sumptuous lunch in a specially erected Pandal behind North Block.

In the evening, a renowned classical singer, Sri Anantha Narayanan presented a devotional music concert which was a befitting concluding programme of Sri Sathya Sai Aradhana Mahotsava. Beginning his presentation at 5.30 p.m. with a prayer song to Lord Ganesh "Vatapi Ganapatim Bhaje" (I worship Lord Ganesh), the singer kept the devotees mesmerised for nearly one and a half hours with excellent rendition of an array of devotional songs and concluded his concert with the composition "Siva Sankari" at 7.00 p.m. Bhajans followed by Arati marked the conclusion of the programme.



From our Archives

RESPECT YOUR PARENTS WITH THE DIVINE IN YOUR HEART

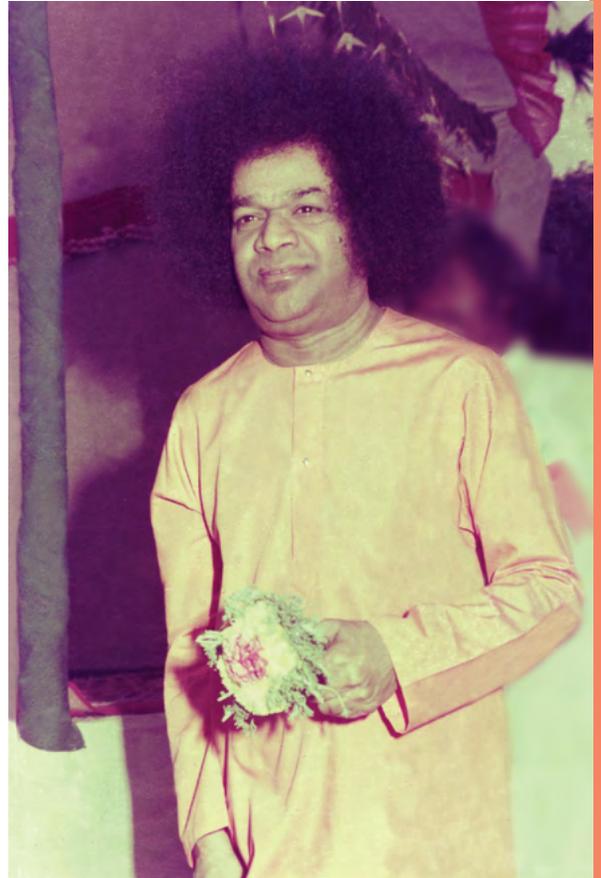
LOVE AND TRUTH ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO MAN'S EXISTENCE

Embodiments of Love!

THERE IS NO NOBLER QUALITY in the world than love. It is wisdom. It is righteousness. It is wealth. It is truth. Everything is permeated with love. Everything in the cosmos arises from love, grows by love and merges in love.

mother's love and enjoys many things in life because of the mother. He enjoys all happiness in life because of the mother's love. Hence, there is no higher divinity than the mother. But this divinity relates to the body alone.

Noble mothers give birth to noble sons. Mothers should also feel lucky to have noble sons. Kondama Raju used to tell his daughter-in-law, "Easwamma, you have no idea of your great good fortune. You are not an ordinary woman. The Lord Himself is with you. What a lucky woman you are"! Easwamma was the daughter-in-law of Kondama Raju. Has there been any instance of a father-in-law adoring his daughter-in-law? He used to say, "Easwamma, your name has been vindicated. Easwara's mother is Easwamma".



Every human being is born from the mother's womb. He is fostered by the

Man has to recognise the truth that the food which sustains his body is derived from



the sun. The sun helps food crops to grow. Hence, without the sun man cannot have food to sustain life. The term Sathyam (Truth) is made up of three syllables Sa, tha, yam which represent life, food and sun. It follows that man is inherently an embodiment of truth. As such, he should lead a life based on truth. Unfortunately, man today leads a life divorced from truth. Consequently, he becomes a prey to innumerable troubles. He has no peace. He is racked continually by many afflictions.

Man has to recognise the significance of love and truth, which are fundamental to human existence. The mother represents these two basic qualities.

Love the Mother and Revere the Father

Rama attained godhood because He was the son of Kausalya. Lava and Kusha became heroic children because of their great mother, Sita Devi. It is the noble thoughts of the mother which make the children great. A mother may go wrong in other respects, but she will always strive for the well-being of her children. Hence, every son should love the mother as his primary duty. Then he should love the father and revere the preceptor. The mother confers the body, the father protects it, the preceptor imparts knowledge and wisdom. For every human being, all three are essential for getting on in the world.

It is because of the blessings of noble mothers, the wives of great sages, that many men were able to perform heroic deeds. Sankaracharya taught that the sons who did not get the blessings of their mothers suffered from various vicissitudes in life. Those who had the blessings of their mothers often secured freedom from rebirth. Many high-souled men have extolled

the greatness and power of mothers. It is the foremost duty of children to secure the blessings of their mother for their well-being.

However, spiritually man's obligation is different, according to Vedanta. Here, there is room in the heart only for the love of God. Affection for the mother and reverence for the father are necessary. But parents and preceptor are transient. Even friends are impermanent. God alone is permanent and unailing. God alone should have the permanent place in the heart.

Use the Body as a Divine Instrument

The human body acquires its sacredness from the fact that it is the abode of the Divine. The Gita refers to the body as Kshetra (sacred field) and the Divine Indweller as the Kshetrajna (knower of the field). Because of the sacredness of the body, it should be used properly as an instrument of the Divine. Man should develop faith in God. Without faith, life will be meaningless. Man can have no happiness or satisfaction in life without the grace of God. Men today are too much immersed in affairs of the world. The result is they have no peace of mind. They can have peace only from the supreme embodiment of peace: God. He is the abode of infinite love and enduring peace. God's love should be secured by chanting the Lord's name. You should be grateful to your mother for endowing you with a body which enables you to chant the Lord's name.

Hence, every person, man or woman, should respect the parents, install the Divine in the heart and pray to God constantly. It is everyone's duty to bring a good name to his parents. When the children are good, they bring a good name to the parents. It was because of the noble behaviour of Lava and Kusha that their mother, Sita,



became renowned. When Lava and Kusha were engaged in a battle with Rama, Lava aimed an arrow at Rama with the prayer that if his mother Janaki was a Sadhvi (a supremely noble woman) the arrow should render Rama unconscious. Rama became unconscious when the arrow hit Him. See what happened. The mere thought of his mother lent so much power to his arrow! This shows that when you cherish the mother and seek God's grace, the blessings of the mother become more powerful.

God-realisation is the Supreme Achievement

In the world today, such mothers are rare. Many mothers are worried about the future of their sons if they adhere to the righteous path. They fear that such children may not be successful in life. In ancient days, mothers thought otherwise. They would be immensely happy if they found the children devoted to God. They would feel happy with the thought: "My son will be a good man. He will earn a good name".

Even now, in this sacred land of Bharat, parents should strive their utmost to bring up their children on right lines. Children also should revere their parents, who account for their physical existence. But they should realise what they owe to God, who is the basis of all life. Recognising this double obligation to the mother and to the Divine, they should redeem their lives by purposeful living. There are greater things than even life itself. The supreme achievement is God-realisation. It is the summum bonum of human life.

Offer your Love to Mother and Enjoy Life

Noble mothers give birth to noble sons. Mothers should also feel lucky to have

noble sons. Kondama Raju used to tell his daughter-in-law, "Easwaramma, you have no idea of your great good fortune. You are not an ordinary woman. The Lord Himself is with you. What a lucky woman you are"! Easwaramma was the daughter-in-law of Kondama Raju. Has there been any instance of a father-in-law adoring his daughter-in-law? He used to say, "Easwaramma, your name has been vindicated. Easwara's mother is Easwaramma".

This was the way they praised Easwaramma. Kondama Raju was one of those rare persons who could perceive the truth. Those who cannot recognise the truth will never be able to understand it. They are like a blind man who cannot see the sun even during the day.

Those who are on the spiritual path and who have love for their mother can accomplish anything in the world. Many grown up men belittle the role of their mothers saying that they might have done them some good in childhood. They feel proud about their job and position. But they forget to whom they owe their position.

Adi Sankara got the blessings of Mother Parvati as a young boy of seven years while doing worship to the goddess in the absence of his father. After getting the blessings of the goddess, he achieved great distinction in mastering all the Vedas and scriptures within a short period.

You have to offer your heart to God as He is the indweller of heart while father and mother are only dwellers in home. Respect your parents with the Divine in your heart. Tasting the sweetness of your mother's love, offer your love to her and enjoy life.

– Excerpted from **Bhagavan's Easwaramma Day Discourses.**



Madhuri Manohar

FAITH—This Gigantic Five-lettered Word

THE SAI COMMUNITY HAS THIS standard conversation starter, or at least I use it to start up a conversation with “strangers” I meet at the Sai Centre: “How did you come to Swami?” An excellent question indeed to break all silence. Instantaneously, it ignites a twinkle in the eyes of the responder and assures hours of good rapport with this so-called stranger. It has always amazed me to hear the many wonderfully fascinating stories and loving ways, in which our dear Lord has touched the lives of lakhs of people, by casting His Divine umbrella of grace over them.

Whenever I have been asked this simple question, I had this very typical boring answer: I came to Swami through my parents. I always wished I had a super interesting, completely climactic and suspense-loaded story. Alas, you come to Sai the first time only once. No ways to tweak or alter that story! As I grew up, and currently am a young adult, part of this elite Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO), I have, time and again, pondered over that “anticlimactic” story of mine. Wait! Does how I came to Swami actually matter? Agreed, my parents showed me the path to Sai and for that, I shall always be indebted and ever grateful to them. But, is it really a one-time incident? Boom! And here you are with Him. To bare my soul honestly, there have been hundreds of times, when I had my suspicions, ruffling up my faith in Him. So, having this awesome story of coming to Him for the first time, right at the start; does that actually matter, if the whole of

me never came completely? My constant introspection and His guidance as always, led me to realise that more than how I came to Swami, it is even more important to realise how I always came back to Swami time and again, when the pendulum of doubt swayed my faith away from Him.

Being a young adult in this modern aeon, as a scientist, logical reasoning is



the fundamental cornerstone of my thought process and beliefs. Pre-2011 era, it was a piece of cake. He was right in front of me, clad in His orange robe and walking amongst human race. That glance of Him justified all the reasoning. The proof was right in front of my eyes. But now, I, and all my fellow young adults, shall be living a major chunk of our lives, bereft of His physical form. This is when, the question of how we come back to Swami, which is inherently based on our faith, becomes more imperative.

My little inexperienced brain may not be capable of giving a wholesome, all-encompassing, spiritually high-level

continued on page 16...



EMBODIMENTS OF LOVE!

Dr. Umakanta Subudhi

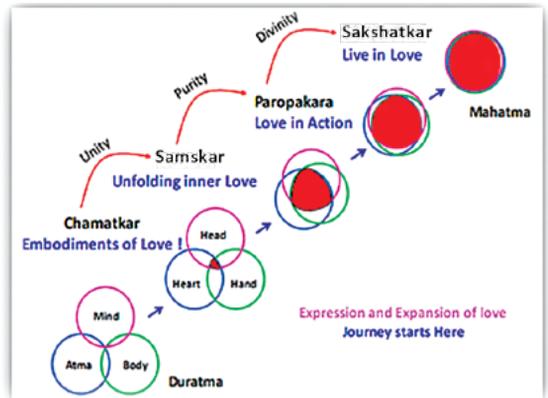
DURING THE COURSE OF OUR life, we are addressed as son, daughter, father, friend, uncle, teacher, scientist and so on. But all these denote partial truth and each one of them is associated with the body, secular education or societal recognition. But I was overjoyed when I heard for the first time 'Embodiments of Love' from Bhagavan Himself. Pause for a moment, close your eyes, imagine Swami, the Purnavatar, the embodiment of all gods and goodness, addressing us as Embodiments of Love! This is the greatest Chamatkar (miracle) of Bhagavan Baba. This is the greatest divine discovery that we are all embodiments of love, embodiments of truth and embodiments of divinity. This is the highest truth. "Unfolding the truth to unfold the love within" is the basis of self-transformation.

Unity of Head, Heart and Hand

The miracles of Bhagavan signify the manifestation of His divine powers of omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. But, Bhagavan points out that His most potent power is His Love which can melt even the stoniest of hearts and fill the mind with the peace that 'passes all understanding'. Bhagavan calls miracles His visiting cards and says that His Chamatkar (miracles) draw people to the Divine Presence for undergoing the process of Samskar (refinement, unfolding the inner love). This refinement brings about an attitude of Paropakar (service, love

in action). By serving one's fellowmen, one earns the grace of God and reaches the ultimate stage of Sakshatkar (Self-realisation, living in love).

Whenever I come across "Embodiments of Love", I am rejuvenated and realise the real I. This spark itself is the beginning of the spiritual journey. And to move forward, to experience love, we must unfold the love within through the process of transformation (spiritual practices, Sadhana). Samskars are human values



(virtues) intended to transform, transmute, reconstruct and reform mankind. That's how Chamatkar leads to Samskar. At this stage we understand unity, the first step in the spiritual ladder. To unite head, heart and hand is the very goal and purpose of life. *Manasyekam Vachasyekam, Karmanyekam Mahatmanam* (those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones). It is only for this reason that we all are here in the Sai Organisation.

Realisation of Love as Universal Identity

We should not forget that for unity among the 3Hs, (head, heart and hand) love is the undercurrent. Bhagavan says, 3HV is EHV.

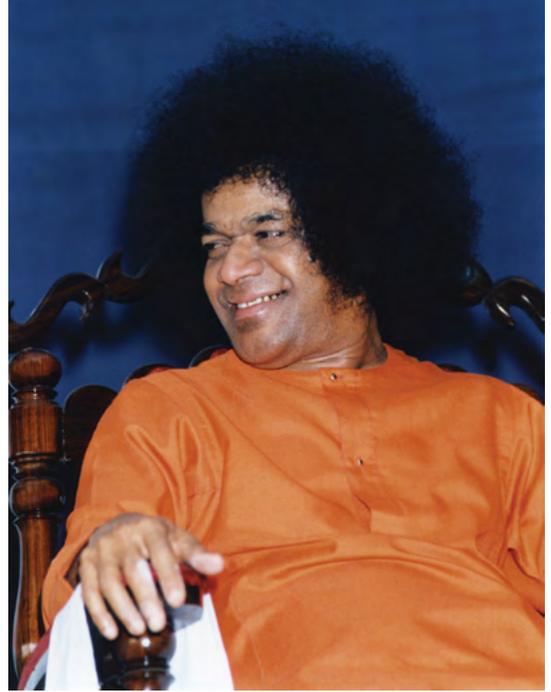


For unity, we need love only, and the force which can unify body, mind and soul is love. The similar force when expressed outside results in unity in the organisation. This is the secret of happiness in the home, order in the nation and peace in the world. Through Samskar, the mind tends to follow the Atma and we undertake various service activities. Samskar makes a person humble servant of society. Once love is there, all other values manifest on their own. When we water the plants, automatically the soil is made fertile and the root system enables the plants to grow. Similarly, when love pours out from Swami, we become pure. This purity drives us to do Paropakara. Paropakara means obliging and helping others in distress. The expansion of love through Paropakara makes a person aware of the Cosmic Love. This is Sakshatkara or Realisation of Self as universal Identity.

Swami is love, His instrument is love, His message is love, and the path as well as the goal of man is love. Therefore, the transaction that happens between the devotee and the Lord is love, nothing else. With love we are heroes, without love we are zeros. Only love can make us dearer and nearer to Swami. In fact, the essence of Sadhana is love and the reflection of love is service. But simply saying 'I love Bhagavan' is not enough. The truth of this statement comes to light when we reach the poorest ones through service. Therefore, the means of realising divinity lies in engaging ourselves in selfless service to them. For this reason, Bhagavan named His organisation as Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. It is only through service we can realise Sai and become Sai. Obviously, there is no season for service, no reason for service. Very often, our Beloved Swami says, "Love All, Serve All". Let me share an experience how I realised the presence of Swami during Seva activities.

Sai Maa in Amma

By Swami's loving grace, we, the members of Sai Youth of Bhubaneswar,



have the opportunity of rendering service at the Infectious Diseases Hall (IDH ward) in the capital hospital. In the year 2007, one lady patient named Amma was being attended to by us. Many a time, I fed her lovingly. One night in May 2007, Swami appeared in my dream. In the dream, the youth members of Odisha had assembled in Sai Kulwant Hall. It was packed to its capacity and all were anxiously waiting for Swami. Swami came in His wheelchair. I noticed a little change on His face. His face had been replaced by Amma's face (in the IDH ward). Though I felt uncomfortable and searched for Swami's real face, I could not. After a while, Swami arrived on the stage and asked me to come. I went to Him. Swami told me something in Telugu. I could not understand and I just smiled. But the students told me that Swami wanted me to walk with Him. Bhagavan



held my hand and I too responded. Swami covered a few steps with me. He asked for a chair. It was arranged by the students. I was sitting at the Lotus Feet. Bhagavan smiled at me, held my hand and blessed me with His divine words, "You are doing good work, I am happy with your work, I am always with you". He wanted some water and I offered Him a glass. He drank half of it and blessed me raising His divine hands and signalled me to leave. Thus, my dream came to an end. But throughout my dream, I was face to face with Swami with the face of Amma.

Then in the month of June 2007, I was in my village with my parents. When I returned to Bhubaneswar, my mother gave me some homemade sweets. On Saturday evening, I reached my place and came to know that the previous night Amma had fallen down from her bed and she was very serious. Sunday morning, I rushed to the IDH ward with the sweets brought from home. We cleaned the room and clothed Amma properly. She was sitting in the bed, I offered her some food along with the sweets. She took them happily and said that sweets were very tasty. Then she held my hands and sat on the floor. Though Telugu was her mother tongue, she spoke to me in Odia. She told me lovingly, "You are doing good work, I

am happy with your work, I am always with you". The same lines had been uttered by Swami in the dream. I felt I was with Bhagavan. She asked me for water which I offered. She was accustomed to drinking a full glass of water at a time, but that day she took only half a glass. I was overwhelmed with joy as Amma's actions were replicating those of Swami in the dream. I indeed found Swami's presence in Amma.

Journey with Sai has taught me that the more we have internal unity, the more are the chances for us to reach out to a larger community. Community means come-in-unity. Our motto should be to make Bhagavan happy with all our work. We should remember that Swami is always with us and pervades the entire creation. Owing to His immense grace, Swami has selected us to realise our true nature. We are essentially divine and embodiments of love. Let us follow the divine message of love and practise love in action so that we can live in love and offer our gratitude at the Lotus Feet of Swami. SWAMI may be interpreted as See Within And Move Inward.

– The author, a scientist by profession, is serving as State Youth Coordinator, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Odisha.

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definition as to what faith is! Yet, I believe, that faith is that which comprehensively describes the various facets of our lives.

*When a day in my life is going rough,
Faith is knowing, He is making me tough.
When my mind questions during crisis,
Why me?*

*Faith is understanding, master plan it is
of He.*

*When I just can't take the burden any
more,*

*Faith is feeling His pull, taking me to the
shore.*

*When the rough tides of life finally settle
down,*

*Faith is internalising, it was all a waste of
frown.*

*When the world around seems so
inhuman,*

*Faith is following His teachings, as the
only ordain.*

Faith, this gigantic five-lettered word,

May it make my life, always Sai centred.

**– Madhuri Manohar is a Sai Youth from
Baltimore, U.S.A.**

SAI IS DOCTOR OF DOCTORS

Dr. S. Jagadeeswara Rao

AFTER COMING INTO THE loving orbit of Swami, a devotee, with faith and devotion feels His invisible hand in every action and circumstance. We know about many devotees who had blissful experiences with Avatars like Shirdi Sai Baba. Some of the experiences appear to be very unbelievable. Many experiences are related to both worldly and spiritual domains.

How Swami Cured my Skin Allergy and Sinusitis

Swami's Darshan and blessings upon my parents and uncle in 1954 helped us to progress well in worldly matters and also in spiritual Sadhana. I used to worship Swami along with other deities in an Ashram in my village near Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh) from my school days. I joined Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal of Tirupati Samithi, visited Prasanthi Nilayam in 1975 and had Swami's Darshan for the first time. The loving impression prompted me to visit Parthi occasionally as Seva Dal member. In 1986, by Swami's Will and compassion, I joined Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning as lecturer in chemistry, and I am continuing even today as honorary faculty in chemistry after retirement. I consider this opportunity as a great boon which is helping me to understand and experience further the love of Swami. Swami has been taking care of my family at so many times and in different circumstances in unique ways. Now I would like to narrate how Swami took

care of health problems in my family like a Doctor of doctors.

In 1986, after joining the Institute, I got severe skin allergy with eruptions particularly on face and hands. The injections and tablets given in Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital could not help in curing. Homoeopathic medicine also did not work. At that desperate stage, with a feeling of "Anyatha Saranam Nasthi" (there is no other refuge), I approached Swami, gave a letter and explained the problem. Then Swami went into the interview room without any word to me.

After completing that session, He came out and enquired about me from students. At that time, I was sitting near the garage. Swami with all His love and concern came to that place and said, "Do not worry. Homoeo medicines you have taken may not work. Take this Vibhuti Prasadam. The skin allergy will go". Swami materialised Vibhuti for me. He tore a piece of blank paper from a devotee's letter and gave me to pack. I took Padanamaskar and told Swami that this problem was very severe and I was not able to teach in class. Swami, the omniscient Divinity, said that it was due to deficiency of vitamin-B and then materialised two yellow coloured B-vitamin tablets and asked me to take them along with Vibhuti. Then I told about my father's similar type of skin problem. Beloved Swami said, "Your father's problem is due to defect in blood; yours is



only vitamin deficiency. You will be alright". I was thrilled to see the materialisations of Vibhuti and tablets for the first time. I took one tablet and a little Vibhuti before going to bed and another dose the next day morning as 'prescribed' by Swami. During morning Darshan time, Swami enquired and I told that it was much better now. "Chala Santhosham" (very happy), said Swami. For two days, during morning and evening Darshan, Swami used to enquire about my problem. I was relieved totally of the allergy problem. I cannot explain in words the experience of divine love showered on me. The way in which Swami has taken care of me is really thrilling. One may not experience that kind of love anywhere and at any time. Another interesting incident is that I sent the remaining Vibhuti to my father. After taking that, my father also was relieved of his skin (photodermatitis) problem. This is how the Doctor of doctors, Swami, takes care of His devotees totally without any need of medical examination and equipment, sequence of tests and prolonged time. When the creation (Srushti), the protection (Sthithi) and the dissolution (Layam) are happening by His mere will (Sankalpa), where is the need for equipment and tests? There is no wonder to call His love as love of a thousand mothers.

Swami, with love, has cured my sinusitis problem also and now I am free from it. I used to suffer very severely from sinusitis particularly in winter and rainy season. Sometimes, I could not take classes also. I was holding a letter written to Swami about this during Darshan time. Swami called me and read the letter. Then He asked like a doctor, "Do you have pain on both sides of nose, back side of the head and below the eyes and on the temples"? When I told 'yes, Swami', He said, "Then it is sinus only".

Swami materialised yellow-coloured Vibhuti and He Himself packed it nicely in a paper and gave it to me, telling me, "Apply the Vibhuti on either side of the nostrils before going to bed, you will be alright". Then Swami blessed me with Padanamaskar. That night, after a long period, I had a very good refreshing sleep and by next day I felt much relief. I used it for three nights as suggested by Swami and on the fourth day I was relieved significantly. So, I wrote a letter thanking Him and Swami took that letter. Swami observed my face for a few seconds and said, "Still it is there". He again materialised yellow-coloured Vibhuti and I continued for another two days. After that, I was totally free from the sinusitis problem. So, I wrote another letter thanking Swami. Swami read the letter. I told Swami, "Now I am alright, I even ate brinjal curry, guava fruits, etc. No problem at all". Swami said, "Chala Santosham, Chala Santosham" and materialised the same yellow coloured Vibhuti for the third time, packed it and gave it to me. I wondered why He created again when I was alright! I took Padanamaskar and kept the Vibhuti safely.

After a week, the Deepavali festival was celebrated by students and staff in Swami's Presence in front of Poornachandra Auditorium. On that night, I had a severe asthmatic problem as I was exposed to crackers smoke in the evening. Then I prayed to Swami and opened the third packet of Vibhuti and applied as He advised. Next day, I was healthy and free from sinusitis once for all. Swami anticipating the problem had blessed me with Vibhuti beforehand. That is the unconditional divine love of Swami. *Vaidyo Narayano Hari* (doctor is verily God), I remembered. Lord Narayana Himself is taking care of His children as a doctor.



Once, in my dream, Swami told me to get up and spit out the phlegm; otherwise it would slowly slip into throat and cause infection. The care is total with love by Swami. That is why Swami is Doctor of doctors: *Sainathudu Vaidyanathude*.

Divine Healthcare Mission of Bhagavan

Swami as Divine mother and father cured my mother's cancer and relieved my father of gastrointestinal and skin problems with Vibhuti Prasadam, without any operation, and finally they attained His Lotus Feet. He has taken care of my wife and children also in health aspects. Like this, our Beloved Swami has taken care of health problems of countless number of devotees and non-devotees also as Divine Parent and Doctor with Love. Swami's love indeed is the most effective and efficient drug; it cures any illness much quicker. Some health matters may not be cured by medicine or doctor but they are cured by Divine Grace.



*Dr. Bikkina Seetharamaiah
with Bhagavan.*

Swami is the Divine Healer and Lord of Infinite Compassion. Swami's great mission of mercy and compassion took a distinctive turn through the setting up of an extraordinary hospital which was opened on 4th October 1956 in Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhagavan conferred the post of the Medical Superintendent on Dr. Bikkina Seetharamaiah, who had retired from Andhra Pradesh Government Medical Service. This was in response to Mother Easwaramma's desire. In the Inaugural Address, Swami said, "Madhava Himself does Manava Seva in order to make Manava do likewise and thereby earn the grace of Madhava". On another occasion, Swami said, "The hospital is constructed for many who are hungry for medical treatment and they are satisfied only if drugs are given and injections administered. Their faith in grace is not yet strong". For those who have complete faith in Swami, they are cured of even incurable diseases by Vibhuti materialised by Him.

Dr. Narendra Reddy says, "Swami cures people of physical diseases and mental disorders by His very look, His loving touch, His compassionate words, His Vibhuti and materialised medicines". He has cured the diseases of many people in dreams as answer to their sincere and intensive prayers. Swami started Mobile Medical Service in 1974 to create health awareness among the villagers apart from treatment in the neighbouring villages. At present, there are many mobile vehicles, fully equipped with sophisticated medical equipment, which are serving thousands of people in rural sector with dedicated doctors specialised in different specialities. Sri Sathya Sai Mobile Hospital headed by Dr. K. Narasimhan is a novel outreach programme that was

Effulgence of Divine Glory

THE MOST WONDERFUL MIRACLE OF SWAMI

A HIGHLY VALUED FACET OF Sri Sathya Sai Baba, at least it is so for me, is that one can love Him with all one's heart, without fear and without restraint. Every person wants to love greatly, with an open heart, but experience has made us afraid.

We may observe how natural it is for young children to love wholeheartedly. With what richness and sweetness do very young children embrace parents, brothers, sisters, and close playmates! How much joy there is for an adult when a child of three or four years embraces him with the sweetest of smiles and says, "I love you, I love you."

It is the river of love rushing from the open heart of the child that makes the child so incredibly sweet and so overflowing with bliss. It is this rich treasure of love and affection that touches even the dullest adult and makes him share the child's bliss for a moment or so.

But, as each of us leaves the innocent open-hearted years of early childhood, something very sad and tragic happens. Worldly experience invades the shelter of early years, and the heart suffers betrayal and rejection. One loves someone and love flows to that person. But, if the response is indifference, or a harsh word, or outright rejection, then the resultant hurt may be deep and agonising.

The child tries again and again, and here and there he is hurt again and again. In time, a natural self-protection arises and the child's love is qualified with caution.



A person learns that when he loves, he is unprotected; love destroys his self-protection and makes him vulnerable to suffering. With each year of worldly experience, additional self-protective factors come into one's life. Ambition, business cares, competition, gratification of the senses, greed, resentment, hatred, jealousy – the whole range of narrowing tendencies exert more and more influence on body, mind, heart and intelligence. The open, natural heart-expansion of early childhood is by now a thing of the past.

Is not this obstruction of the flow of love a fundamental reason why the life of another person is often dry and joyless?

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C. Lakshmi Kutty Amma

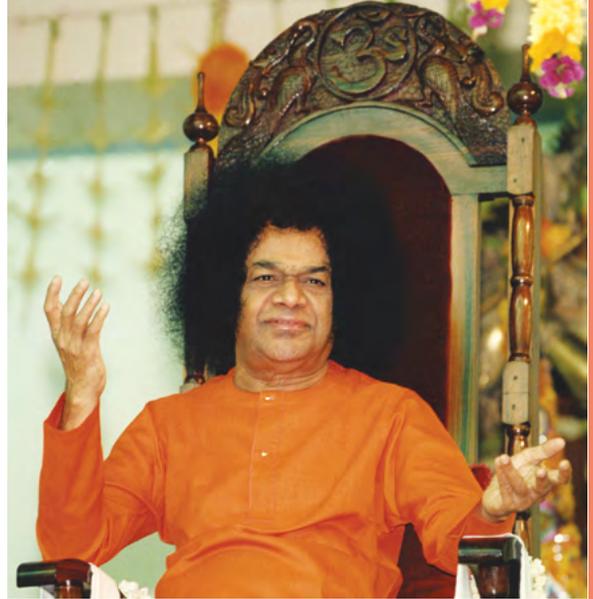
HOW I EXPERIENCED SWAMI'S DIVINITY IN MY LIFE

I AM A BAL VIKAS GURU AND in charge of Alappuzha district, Kerala. My mother became a widow when she was only 24 years of age. She brought me up along with my two brothers bearing all types of hardships. I became a devotee of Swami in 1986.

In the year 2000, my mother had low blood pressure. She once fell down from her bed. After this, she feared to walk. I went to stay with her and prayed to Swami to give her courage to walk. She had a photo of Swami in her Puja room. When I prayed and cried for her, fragrance of Vibhuti came from outside and Vibhuti was seen coming from the Abhayahastam (blessing posture) of Swami. My mother without any fear came from her bed and used the Vibhuti. All my family members came, saw the miracle and collected the Vibhuti. After this incident, my mother was very healthy and expired in November 2007.

Once Swami came in my dream and told me about a lady. He said, "She is a teacher named Saraswati. You help her to start a Bal Vikas class". I asked Swami, "Bhagavan! Kindly tell me her whereabouts". Swami told me, "She is a native of Karipuzha, a village in Alappuzha district". This was a dream. I enquired about her for three months and ultimately found her. I approached her and told her about the dream. She was not a Sai devotee. But she had heard about Swami. She was in great mental agony. She had so many worries. She had two daughters. Her

elder daughter died of cancer. Her second daughter had no children and her husband was bed-ridden due to stroke. Saraswati herself worked in a private school and was now retired. She was now taking tuition to children. She told me that she always prayed to Krishna with tears to help her. I



told her that Bhagavan Baba is omnipresent and He is Krishna, Siva, all gods. He has heard your prayers. Anyhow, she agreed to start a Bal Vikas class as commanded by Bhagavan in the dream.

On 22nd December 2016, I had a dream. A doctor in white dress came before me and asked me to lie down on the table. I did as told and the doctor put gloves on his hands. I did not know what he was doing with my stomach. He showed me a red coloured lump of flesh and said, "Your nuisance removed". I was in deep sleep. Early morning when I woke up, I told it to my son. He reminded me, "Amma, you please watch whether your piles is healed". Yes, I was suffering from piles, bleeding regularly. In the dream,

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CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

UGADI FESTIVAL

TWO-DAY PROGRAMME was held at Prasanthi Nilayam to celebrate the joyous festival of Ugadi, the Telugu New Year.

The programme on the eve of Ugadi, 28th March 2017, began with an insightful talk by Justice V. Rama Subramanian of the Telangana and Andhra Pradesh High Court who spoke on the subject "Practising one's Precepts". Narrating his experiences of practising Bhagavan's teachings in his life, the learned speaker stressed the importance of putting Bhagavan's teachings into practice and reminded the devotees that it was practice alone which could bring transformation in their life.

This talk was followed by an exhilarating musical session titled "Twameva Saranam Mama" (You alone are my refuge), presented by Sai Youth from Sivam,



Devotional music presentation by Sai Youth from Sivam.

Bhagavan's abode in Hyderabad. The 70-minute session was a rare compilation of thematically arranged Telugu

compositions interspersed with snippets of Bhagavan's poems and Discourses in His golden voice, illustrating His life and teachings. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati.

On the holy Ugadi morning, 29th March 2017, Panchanga Sraavanam (listening to the new almanac) was presented by noted Vedic scholar Sri Kuppa



Panchanga Sraavanam in Sai Kulwant Hall.

Siva Subrahmanya, Principal, Veda Pathashala, Tirupati who spoke about the significance of listening to the new almanac and predicted various events in the New Year named Sri Hevalambi. In the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan that was played on the public address system after this, Bhagavan explained the various traditional features of Ugadi celebrations and exhorted the devotees to realise their Self which was the goal of man's life. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati at 9.40 a.m.



A soulful Carnatic music concert in the evening by noted vocalist Ms. Sushma Somasekharan from Singapore marked the conclusion of the two-day Ugadi celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam. Beginning with a composition dedicated to Lord Ganesh “Vakratunda Mahakaya”, the singer transported the listeners to a higher plane with her mellifluous vocal virtuosity singing a variety of compositions which included “Rama Nannu Brovara”, “Bhajare Manasa Sri Raghuveera”, “Jagadodharana”. Bhajan’s after this concert were led by the singers from Sivam, which ended with Arati.

SRI RAMA NAVAMI

On the sacred day of Sri Rama Navami, 5th April 2017, Sai Kulwant Hall reverberated with the Divine Name of Rama when Bhagavan’s students led the morning Bhajan session, singing choicest Bhajans dedicated to Lord Rama.



Students singing Bhajans on Sri Rama Navami Day.

Two speakers addressed the gathering in the evening session and delivered insightful talks on the topic “Lessons Learnt from the Ramayana” before an illuminating Discourse of Bhagavan. The first speaker was Sri Sai Giridhar, a doctoral research scholar, who highlighted one of the main

teachings of the Ramayana that man should get rid of his desires if he wanted unity with Rama. Illustrating his point with incidents from the life of Mother Sita, he said that Sita attained Rama when she relinquished the comforts of Ayodhya and followed Rama to the forest, but she was separated from Rama when a desire arose in her mind to possess the delusive golden deer. The second speaker, Sri K.M. Ganesh, also a doctoral research scholar, in his talk pointed out that Rama was in fact Atma Rama, the indweller of man’s heart, who could be experienced when man developed genuine love and firm faith.

These talks were followed by relay of an audio clip of Bhagavan’s Divine Discourse, in which He emphasised that man should follow Nivritti Marga (path of spirituality) to attain the goal of his life. His life would be doomed if he followed Pravritti Marga (path of worldliness) like Ravana, He cautioned. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan “Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram”. Bhajan’s led by students followed next and concluded with Arati.

VISHU AND TAMIL NEW YEAR DAY

More than 2,500 devotees came from Kerala and Tamil Nadu to celebrate Vishu (Kerala New Year) and Tamil New Year in the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam, and presented a variety of music and cultural programmes for three days from 13th to 15th April 2017 to celebrate these events.

The programme on 13th April 2017 comprised a devotional music presentation by the devotees of Kerala, both ladies and gents, who offered a bouquet of devotional





Devotional music presentation by the devotees of Kerala.

songs at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan with great devotion. The songs mellifluously rendered by them for nearly one hour included “Bhaja Mana Shyam Sundar Nandalal” (Oh mind! Chant the Name of Krishna, the son of Nanda), “Rama Raghava Sri Rama”, “Deejo Darshan Sundar Shyam” (Oh Krishna, bless us with Your Darshan), “Narayan Bhaje Narayan” (chant the Name of Lord Narayana).

The programme on the morning of 14th April 2017, the sacred day of Vishu and Tamil New Year, began with a devotional music concert by a noted vocalist from Kerala, Smt. Laxmi Sai, who enthralled the devotees for nearly an hour with an assortment of devotional songs, Bhajans and Kirtans in Malayalam, Hindi and Marathi, suffusing the entire milieu with devotional fervour. What followed next was an illuminating Discourse of Bhagavan, in which Bhagavan reminded the devotees that spiritual wealth was real wealth which provided real happiness to man, not the worldly wealth, land, property and relations which were all temporary and were the cause of man’s bondage. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, “Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin”. Bhajans followed next and concluded with Arati.

On the evening of 14th April 2017, Bal Vikas students of Tamil Nadu presented an exhilarating dance ballet entitled “Festivals of Tamil Nadu” as part of Tamil New Year Day



In the month of Vaikasi, devotees express their joy by the dance dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya.

celebrations. The dance ballet presented the major festivals of Tamil Nadu in each of the 12 months of the year through beautiful dances of the children accompanied by thematic songs and thrilling music. It was



A dance number dedicated to Mother Mary worshipped as Velankanni.

difficult to determine which dance was more beautiful than the other because all of them were equally superb. Bhajans led by the Sundaram Bhajan Group followed next and concluded with Arati.



Devotees participating in Viswa Santhi Gayatri Japa Yajna.

On 15th April 2017, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Tamil Nadu organised a Viswa Santhi Gayatri Japa Yajna (Gayatri chanting for world peace) in Poornachandra Auditorium, in which thousands of devotees took part. The Yajna began at 10.30 a.m. and concluded with Arati at 12.30 p.m. A

sumptuous lunch was served in the South Indian Canteen to all the devotees after the conclusion of the Yajna.

With this, Tamil New Year and Vishu celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam came to a happy conclusion.

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launched on 30th March 2006 by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to provide holistic health services completely free of charge to patients at their doorstep in their villages. Swami started Super Speciality Hospitals where the treatment is absolutely free. People, after getting back their good health, can serve society in the rest of their lives with the dictum, *Paropakartham Idam Sariram* (human body is meant to do good to others), as humble gratitude to Swami.

Once Swami said, "My body belongs to all of you. I am healthy today because of your prayers. But all your bodies belong

to Me and hence I am taking responsibility and care of your bodies". We are His loving children in every birth and He is our divine parent in all our lives, apart from physical parents. Therefore, let us live up to Swami's expectations by taking care of our health and serving in His Divine Mission for the welfare of all beings with the prayer, *Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the beings of all the worlds be happy!).

– **The author is a honorary faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam.**

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In this modern society, a dry and joyless life is the general experience. Witness the frantic search for distraction and pleasure the world over. An almost universal prayer arises from adult persons caught up in today's culture: "O Lord, may there be a new season of Spring in my heart. May the river of Love flow deep and strong again in my heart".

Here, to me, is one of the most wonderful miracles of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The fettered heart, turning to Baba, can break free from

all its bondage. Seeing Him, being sure that He will never betray, is a most wonderful feeling. With joy, the heart responds to this trust. With each day, love for Baba grows stronger. He is Divine Mother and Father to his devotee. One may love Him without reserve, without guard, without fear, however guarded one may still be with fellow human beings. Of course, one's outward behaviour with Him must remain strictly disciplined.

– **From "My Baba and I" by Dr. John S. Hislop.**

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Swami had done the surgery and removed it. Now I am okay. Swami is God. He is the Guru of all Bal Vikas Gurus and Doctor of all doctors. I like to tell all Bal Vikas Gurus to consider the work as sacrifice, service and love. Now I am 75 years old. Swami is giving

me health for the Bal Vikas work. I have no complaints. My Pranams and prayers at the Lotus Feet of Swami for His blessings.

– **The author is a Bal Vikas Guru and in charge of Alappuzha district, Kerala.**



VENKATESH IYER

ELIXIR OF LIFE FROM THE DIVINE MASTER

IT IS A DAUNTING YET A PLEASANT task to go down memory lane and write an article on our experiences with Swami during our stay at Prasanthi Nilayam as His students. Each of us students has enough material to write a book of his own. Surely, every one of us has some fond memory or the other of the days spent with the Lord. In fact, those memories are what sustain us when we face uphill tasks on a day-to-day basis in the professional, social or even family areas. I would like to pen down a few experiences that I personally had in the last two years of my college life at Parthi.

I completed five years in Parthi – 11th Standard to B.Com. Those five years were good in terms of education and community living. But I did not have any physical proximity or experiences with Swami. Seeing some lucky boys getting so close to Swami used to make me feel quite dejected as there was no way to know what really makes the equation click between an adolescent youngster and the Lord Himself. How could I get the opportunity to experience the joy of physical proximity to Swami as they did? Of course, there used to be (and still are) some inspirational people like Prof. A.V. Lakshminarasimham (Registrar of the University) and some old students working as lecturers in the Institute, who dejected souls like me would approach

for consolation and advice on what we could do to please Swami.

Little did I know that all the pangs of the distance from the Lord would be more than compensated in 25 days of sheer bliss when Swami took us to Ooty and Kodaikanal in the summer of 1988. Verily, the Divine Master fed us the elixir of life in doses large enough to last one lifetime, if not more.

One incident I vividly remember during that trip was when Swami got extremely annoyed at some of us because we happened to pass comments amongst ourselves on the quality of food that was served at the lunch hosted by a devotee at Kodaikanal. Swami immediately reacted very sharply and told us to leave Kodaikanal that very day and that He was no more willing to have us stay with Him for the insensitive remarks that we had made about the food that had been so lovingly served by the devotee for Swami and the students. We literally begged and cried and three of us (including me) had the opportunity of holding on to Swami physically for more than 20 minutes in an attempt to get the blessing from Him, “Okay, I forgive you all. You can stay back for the rest of the days with Me”. A lesson for every manager: Never belittle sincere efforts made by any team member.

One day, one of my classmates was unwell and could not attend Darshan downstairs at Sai Sruthi. He wanted me to stay back with him during Bhajans and Swami’s informal evening session so that I could assist him in case his condition got worse. Making a mental calculation that I would miss 2% of the entire session with Swami (25 days X 2 sessions per day), I stayed back with him. After five minutes of Swami leaving for the Bhajan hall (next door





to Sai Sruthi), my friend asked for a cup of coffee. I went downstairs to fetch the coffee. I suddenly felt someone behind me in the kitchen and was pleasantly surprised to see Swami Himself smiling sweetly. He asked me as to what I was doing in the kitchen, and when I informed Him of the sick boy upstairs, He came along with me upstairs and personally made the boy drink the coffee and also materialised some medicine for him. That incident convinced me that if one were to choose service to fellow beings over a Darshan or a Discourse, there is no doubt Swami would Himself come and give us Darshan wherever we are.

He also allowed us the chance to speak impromptu in front of Him to an audience ranging from 20 to 200 people (unlike now, those days there were very few orators amongst us). He used to lovingly interject many a time when we spoke, adding a few

comments of His own, which would instantly elevate the quality of the speech to a higher plane of thought. I remember during one of the occasions that I spoke and quoted Kahlil Gibran in my speech, Swami interjected and stressed on the point that 'Dearness to the Lord is far more important than Nearness to the Lord'.

Every day there used to be photo sessions when He called us individually or as a group and take photos with us and many a time personally distribute photos that had been taken the previous day. Those albums of photographs with the Lord are treasure troves that even today transport us back to fond memories of probably the best days in our lives.

Times pass and today we 'students' (some of whom are over forty) have reached various stages of growth in our professional careers. But the memories of life in Parthi and the subsequent 'recharges' that we get every once in a while when we return 'home' to Parthi revitalises us to play the 'Game of Life' and willingly accept new challenges everyday.

I am sure most of the students would agree with me when I say that even after 20 years of being away from active Parthi life, when one returns to Parthi for a brief 3-4 days visit, one feels perfectly at home, not with Swami alone, but also with the Institute and hostel – as if we have really returned home. Which other Institute in the world can boast of this unique bonding between alumni?

Most of us say that we are willing to die for Swami. But, we need to understand that it is far more important to live for Swami rather than die for Him. Of what use is our

continued on cover page III...



NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

U. S. A.

EVERY YEAR, THE CITY OF Germantown, Tennessee, organises a holiday parade in December. This year, the Sathya Sai Centre of Memphis participated in the parade by organising a Walk for Values to raise public awareness



Walk for Values on Christmas, Germantown, Tennessee, U.S.A.

about practising human values in daily life and promoting individual and collective responsibility. Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO) volunteers walked approximately 1.5 km holding banners and signs depicting the five cardinal human values of peace, right conduct, love, non-violence and truth, as well as inspirational quotes by Bhagavan Baba, such as “Help Ever, Hurt Never”, “Love All, Serve All”, and “Be the Change You Want to See”. Members of the Rotary Club of Germantown readily joined the walk in a spirit of cooperation and camaraderie. During the parade, the Walk for Values contingent received much applause and encouragement from the public along the route.

The Sathya Sai Centre of Atlanta, Georgia, held special programmes in observance of Christmas and Hanukah. On

Christmas eve, Centre members offered prayers and filled 300 grocery bags with fruits, cheese sticks, snack bars, canned food, juices and sweets. These bags were distributed to the homeless living in a shelter and on the streets. While distributing the food, the volunteers reflected on Sathya Sai Baba’s message that the act of distribution is not charity but service to God, which resonated with Jesus’s words, “When you serve the least of your fellow men, you serve Me”. The devotional programme on Christmas Day began with reading of stories about Jesus and video footage of one of Swami’s Christmas Day discourses, followed by carol singing. The Jewish holiday of Hanukah was celebrated with the chanting of the Jewish prayer, “*Shema Israel.*” Volunteers reflected on the significance of the lighting of the Menorah (Jewish lamp), akin to lighting the eternal light within each person.

GHANA

The Nsawam Orthopaedic Training Centre (NOTC) in Ghana helps disabled children who have lost one or both limbs due



Helping disabled children, Ghana.

to accidents or birth defects. In December 2016, 14 SSIO members distributed loaves of bread, bananas, oranges, fruit drinks, biscuits, toffees, sugar and *jollof* rice to more than 40 children and visitors at the NOTC in Nsawam. The children were given lessons in SSEHV by senior SSIO members to help them focus on God despite any challenges they face.

HUNGARY

In Hungary, the SSIO celebrates Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday through putting His valuable teachings into practice by feeding the needy, serving the aged and the lonely, and organising community singing and creative programmes for all to enjoy. On the morning of 19th November 2016, 10



Serving the elderly on the Birthday of Bhagavan, Hungary.

volunteers distributed 70 food packages to people living on the cold streets of Budapest. The same afternoon, 15 volunteers visited a nursing home for the elderly with severe physical or mental challenges, who have been abandoned by their families. The volunteers performed heart-warming Hungarian songs, inviting the audience to join in, and distributed delicious food to the residents. On Sunday, 26th November

2016, about 100 people observed Swami's Birthday through a programme focused on His teaching, "Nature is the Best Teacher". The proceedings included the screening of a video on Baba's teachings on Nature and the environment, accompanied by beautiful photographs of landscapes; a children's play depicting the value of the forest; and a musical offering of devotional songs from many faiths. Feedback from the audience indicated they greatly enjoyed the programme.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

On 23rd November 2016, the Sathya Sai Centre of Pasea organised a medical camp and SSEHV programme for the public, and distributed clothing, food, and grocery hampers. About 250 volunteers prepared an array of local delicacies and served about 2,000 needy local villagers. SSIO members gave talks on parenting, human values, and positive thinking and led the audience



Distribution of grocery hampers.

in devotional songs of various faiths. Many people received medical services, including tests for diabetes and blood pressure levels. Prescribed medications were dispensed by a pharmacy at the medical camp. All visitors

were served lunch, and 1,000 grocery hampers were distributed, one per family, with each hamper containing about two weeks of provisions for the average family.

THE NETHERLANDS

On 26th November 2016, about 100 SSIO members gathered in a beautifully decorated venue in Houten near Utrecht



Seminar on Unity of Faiths, the Netherlands.

to celebrate the Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The theme for this event was “Unity of Faiths”. Every speaker wore a scarf in rainbow colours and offered a flower at Baba’s portrait. Every symbol of the six religions of the Sarva Dharma emblem was illuminated by a candle, which in turn were all lit from a main candle near Baba’s chair. Each speaker emphasised the unity from the perspective of his or her religion. Then, a hymn from each religion was chanted. The symbols illuminated by the lighted candles presented a beautiful sight, illustrating “God is One but the wise call Him by many names”. The ceremony was followed by a movie about Baba. The afternoon programme included study circles, wherein the participants discussed teachings from different religions that resonated with Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings. The children also presented their understanding of

the unity of faiths through drawings and a song.

AUSTRALIA

In an enduring partnership, the SSIO of NSW Region West has been organising an annual Christmas celebration for senior citizens, in collaboration with SydWest Multicultural Services for the past four years. At an event held in December 2016, the Christmas spirit of selfless love and giving was felt by participants of many faiths and national origins, including Australian, Arabic, Bhutanese, Chinese, Croatian, Filipino, Fijian, Iranian, Indian, Spanish, Serbian, Sri Lankan, Turkish and other communities. The gala occasion featured Arabic, Turkish, Spanish and Serbian dances, a choir presentation by 30 Chinese seniors from SydWest Multicultural Services and the Blacktown Chinese Christian Church Group, a Pacific Islander dance by Sathya Sai Young Adults, and a finale of Christmas carols by Team Expansion, consisting of Sathya Sai children and Young Adults.

NEW ZEALAND

During Christmas 2016, members of the Sathya Sai Centre of Hutt Valley realised that the indigent Maori and Pacific Islander families at a local school were unable to afford basic food items, while everyone else was celebrating Christmas with food and presents. Touched by their plight, Sathya Sai volunteers prepared Christmas hampers with basic grocery items, toiletries, and festive food, and distributed them to 15 needy families identified by the school. The families were very grateful and deeply touched by the generosity. Young Adults and children of the Sathya Sai Centre also performed Christmas carols at a nursing



home for the elderly, where some of the residents were unable to attend church elsewhere because of their disabilities. Christmas gifts were presented to 50 residents of the senior home.

– Sathya Sai International Organisation

BHARAT

Gujarat: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Ahmedabad organised a State-level Bal Vikas Quiz and Elocution Competition for college students on 25th December 2016



Elocution competition for college students.

for winners of the elocution competitions at various districts. The event was held at Gokuldham Medical Centre, Vejalpur, Ahmedabad. The topic for the elocution competition was “Women, the True Architects of Society”. The winners were Sri Abhishek, Vadodara, Sri Wilfred Mukavu, Vadodara and Ms. Radha S. Prajapati, Surat. The winners were awarded trophies and the topper from Vadodara was given the rotating shield which would be kept at the Vadodara Samithi. All the participants were given certificate of participation. The State President of Gujarat delivered a speech

on the Mission of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Seva activities of the Sai Organisation both at global level and national level.

Simultaneously, a quiz competition for all three groups of Bal Vikas students was held in which over 60 students participated. Five groups of Bal Vikas students were formed from participants of various districts. The participants were very enthusiastic portraying spirited healthy competition while answering. All the participants were given a schoolbag, notebooks and a certificate of participation. The toppers were given special prizes as Swami’s blessings.

Himachal Pradesh: On the eve of New Year 2017, a blood donation camp was organised at Dehra in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. 70 persons volunteered for blood donations. During the blood donation, Bhajans were continually sung to suffuse the blood with the spiritual vibrations. Thus, the beginning of the New Year was made by undertaking the activity indicating the feeling of self-sacrifice.

West Bengal: The 42nd State Conference of office bearers of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, West Bengal was held at Maliya, a small and picturesque hamlet in the district of Hooghly from 21st to 23rd January 2017. Participated by around 200 delegates from all the 20 districts of West Bengal, the conference focused on augmenting various activities under different Wings of the Sai Organisation to ensure maximum involvement of all members and take Swami’s universal message of love to one and all. The sessions spread over two-and-a half days included talks, presentations, group discussions and deliberations on various aspects of the functioning of each Wing and initiatives of the Sai Organisation.





SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING

(Deemed to be University)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Asst. Manager, Finance & Accounts - ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, SSSIHL (Men Applicants Only)

Closing Date of Application 31 May 2017

DESCRIPTION

The Asst. Manager, Finance & Accounts shall be responsible for the management of disbursement of salaries, maintenance of accounts related to research project grants of the University and related Management Information Systems (MIS).

RESPONSIBILITIES & REQUIREMENTS

The three major areas of responsibilities include:

- > Verification of the increments proposal every month, and preparation of pay-bill and cash flow statement
- > Scrutinizing proposals / bills in respect of purchase of consumables and equipment under various research projects
- > Investments and correspondence with Banks

The major requirements include:

A B.Com. (Hons.) degree from a recognized university is mandatory (An M.Com./M.B.A. is desirable). Applicants must also have a working knowledge of accounting software applications, especially Tally. Proficiency in Microsoft Excel and working knowledge of income tax and calculation of TDS for employees and vendors is also required.



HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates may send their their resume / CV via email to registrar@sssihl.edu.in before the closing date of application.

Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital

Prasanthi Nilayam - 515134, Puttaparthi, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh

Email: hrmgh@sssihms.org.in, Phone: 08555-287256, Fax: 08555-289409

Applications are invited for the following posts:

1. Senior Consultant / Junior Consultant / Senior Resident (Urgently required)

- Senior Consultant / Consultant
- Qualification: M.D. / M.S. / D.N.B. (OB & GY) with relevant experience

2. Paediatrician

- Senior Resident / Junior Consultant
- Qualification: M.D. / D.N.B. (Paed) / D.C.H.

3. Anaesthesiologist

- Senior Resident / Junior Consultant
- Qualification: M.D. / D.N.B. (Anaes) / D.A.

4. Pharmacist Grade – III

- Qualification: Diploma in Pharmacy
- Should be a registered Pharmacist under the Pharmacy Act, 1948
- Desirable Experience of working in Hospitals + Basic knowledge of working with computers

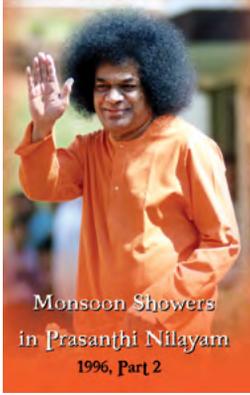
5. Administrative Officer (Honorary post)

- Minimum 10 years experience in administrative matters

– Medical Superintendent

Book Review

MONSOON SHOWERS IN PRASANTHI NILAYAM 1996, PART 2



MONSOON SHOWERS IN PRASANTHI NILAYAM 1996, PART 2

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
₹ 75.00 shipping charges extra,
Code No. 14096, pp. 270

IRRESPECTIVE OF MONSOON, winter or summer Bhagavan Baba copiously showered His nectarine benedictions of wisdom and love on all types of people, coming from whatever nook or community. It could be in the form of a Discourse, a miracle or a mere hint. Means have been many, but universal love and wisdom are the inner stream of Bhagavan's messages.

"Monsoon Showers in Prasanthi Nilayam 1996, Part 2" is in sequence to the Part 1 and contains 25 more Divine Discourses of Bhagavan Baba, addressed to students at Prasanthi Nilayam during the monsoon months in 1996.

Science of spirituality had never been understood so easily by scholars and laity alike until the advent of Baba. Knowledge

is the very form of God. That is the truth, of which the Upanishad says, "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma. Brahman is the embodiment of Truth, Wisdom and Eternity, says Bhagavan. Swami elaborated on three aspects of Advaita (non-dualism) - Padartha Advaita, Bhava Advaita and Kriya Advaita. Padartha refers to material world, Bhava refers to mental conception and Kriya refers to practical dealings of daily life.

Bhagavan cites conversation between Sanath Kumara and Narada while stressing on the superiority of practice over acquisition of textual knowledge. Devotion is the basis to attain knowledge of the Supreme Being. Bhagavan tells a parable about a fox and the earth to highlight the fact that no being can escape God, just as the fox could not escape the earth.

To acquire strong faith in God, one cannot depend on others. If you are hungry, you have to eat food and satiate your hunger. It is you who should take medicine to cure your illness, says Bhagavan. What sort of Seva (service) should you perform? Perform Seva that destroys ego. Just as a powerful army is the life of a fort, honour is the life of a woman, and signature the life of a promissory note; truth is the life of speech. Always speak truth in a pleasing manner. Bhagavan asks, "When you already have a lighted lamp in your house, where is the need for you to seek a neighbour to light the lamp"? "If you forget God, it amounts to forgetting yourself, because you yourself are God," says Bhagavan. – P.P.S. Sarma

NOTICE

BHAGAVAN HAS MADE IT CLEAR any number of times in unambiguous and unequivocal terms that His relationship with devotees is not at a physical level but is at the Atmic level, i.e., Heart-to-heart and Love-to-love. How can there be any agents, media or intermediaries between Him and His devotees when He resides in our hearts?

While delivering His Divine Discourse on 25th May 1975, during the Seva Dal Conference, Bhagavan emphasised this truth. *“When someone does a few funny tricks saying he is possessed by Swami or is receiving instructions from Him, our own Seva Dal members are going to such individuals and encouraging them. When you have got a direct access to Bhagavan Himself, where is the need for you to go to these ‘duplicate’ swamis?”* He questioned.

He also said on 25th March 1965: *“Many persons have also started using My name for the purpose of collecting money for various purposes or material. If such men come to you, send them back with the admonition that they are doing wrong. I ask for Bhakti, Sraddha, Sadhana (devotion, faith and spiritual discipline) – purification of hearts – that is all. Only beggars ask for money; I will never associate Myself with the temporary, the tarnished, the tawdry and the mean. Then, there are some who proclaim that I am “coming upon someone” and speaking through him! They pretend to be My mouthpieces and communicate to others My advice and My suggestions,*

as if I have ‘authorised’ them or as if I am Myself telling so through them. Now hear this. I never speak through another; I never possess another or use another as a vehicle of expression. I come direct, I come straight, I come as I am, to confer peace and joy”.

Showing utter disregard to Bhagavan’s message in this regard, some selfish individuals are committing the most heinous sacrilege of betraying Bhagavan Himself. They have made Muddenahalli as the centre of their nefarious activities and are going to various parts of the country as also to several overseas countries with the ulterior motive of luring innocent devotees with their cheap tricks and collecting funds. In the process, they are making a mockery of spirituality itself by declaring that Swami speaks through so and so while misinterpreting and distorting His message to suit their own selfish ends. How foolish is it to say that so and so is possessed by our Swami, who is the Antaryami (indweller) of all! Instead of making efforts to follow His teachings and ideals, they are even indulging in the most atrocious and deplorable act of imitating His movements and gestures. What is even more appalling is that those committing this sacrilege are causing untold confusion in the minds of innocent devotees all over the world. These are some of the so-called close devotees who enjoyed Swami’s Divine Love in abundance while He was in His physical form. Needless to say, getting carried away by their fraudulent activities amounts to belittling the All-Pervasive and All-Pervading principle of Bhagavan’s Cosmic Reality.



Bhagavan established Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust in the year 1972, keeping the welfare of society in view and with the sole objective of offering loving and selfless service to humanity at large. Devotees are well aware of the promise Bhagavan made to Divine Mother Easwaramma that He would always remain in Puttaparthi and make this sacred land the centre of His Avatatic Mission forever. Accordingly, He Himself established a number of Educational Institutions and Hospitals apart from undertaking various social welfare projects, under the auspices of Central Trust, providing relief and succour to millions.

However, after Bhagavan's Maha Samadhi, some individuals, due to their limitless thirst for money and power, have

stooped so low as to say that Bhagavan is roaming in Muddenahalli in His subtle form and is asking them to build schools, colleges and hospitals. By enacting a cleverly orchestrated 'drama', they are taking innocent and gullible devotees for a ride, collecting money from them in the name of Swami, and in the process, flouting the principles and dicta Bhagavan exemplified.

We, on behalf of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, hereby declare that the Central Trust has nothing to do with those individuals and the institutions run by them. Devotees are hereby informed to follow this cautionary note as a guideline from the Trust and refrain from associating themselves with such individuals and institutions.

– Trustees, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

...continued from page 27

death to Him? It is in our living that we find fulfilment in being His students.

In return for what Swami has given to us during our most vulnerable period in our lives, we need to assess for ourselves, what each of us individually can offer to Him at this stage of our lives when we actually have an opportunity to repay Him in whatever small measure. Some thoughts that I have which each of us can do or attempt to do:

In work life, set an example as a model employee, a model colleague, a model boss. Let our Words, Actions, Thoughts, Character and Heart reflect our willingness to do so.

In family life, try to be a loving and thoughtful son, husband, father and friend to our near and dear ones.

In social life, try in whatever manner we can – spending money and more importantly time – in socially useful projects of relevance

in improving today's world. Projects being undertaken by the Sai Youth across the world are a good example.

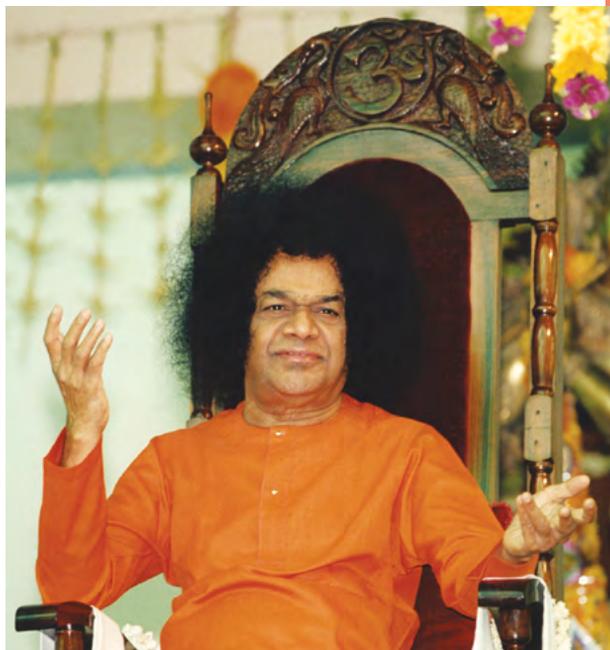
Mentoring – Try to place at least one Sai student every year in one's own or any organisation known to us.

While I am sure most of us are aware of this and are doing much more than the above simple things, I felt it important to list down things which are so easy to do if we would only make up our mind to do so. Swami keeps telling us in His Discourses about students and the high expectations that He has from them.

Let us resolve this year onwards that we will be model students of Swami's whom He would be proud to call His own and hold as examples to the youth of today and tomorrow.

– The author did his B.Com from Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning.

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About Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust Publications Division (SSSSTPD)

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

The Publications Division (SSSSTPD) caters to:

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

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Other Books By SSSSTPD (In English)

1. Sai Sathya Sakha
2. Summer Showers In Brindavan, 1972
3. Satyopanisad I
4. Satyopanisad II
5. Gurudev
6. Namasmarana
7. Bhakthi And Health
8. Life Is Love, Enjoy It!
9. Life Is A Challenge, Meet It!
10. Life Is A Dream, Realize It!
11. Bhagawan And Bhakta
12. Body And Mind
13. My Dear Ones
14. Sevadal
15. Silence
16. Suffering
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18. Atma
19. Do You Know
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24. Purity
25. Memoirs Of A Sai Student
26. A Journey To Self-Peace
27. Dharma
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30. Life
31. Meditation
32. Peace
33. Simple Truths
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1. Sri Sathya Sai Publications – www.srisathyasaipublications.com
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3. Sai Reflections – www.saireflections.org
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Devotional music concert by Sri Anantha Narayanan.



Carnatic music concert by Ms. Sushma Somasekharan.



Devotional music concert by Smt. Laxmi Sai.

Date of Publication: 1st May 2017

Total Surrender to God

People tend to blame God for their troubles and say that even though they have surrendered to God their troubles have not ceased. This is misuse of the idea of surrender. If you have really surrendered to God, you should not be worried about what happens to you. The sense of separation between oneself and God should go. As long as the sense of separation exists, the Divine cannot be realised.

– Baba

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