

Special Issue

**Sathya Sai Youth in the
Service of Mankind**

Sanathana Sarathi

NOVEMBER 2016

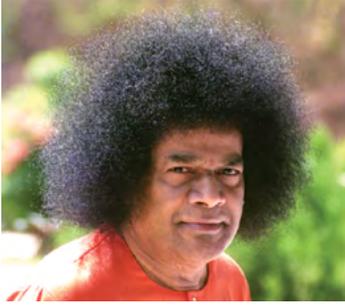




Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA



"In spite of his high education, scientific knowledge, name and fame and high position, man follows the path of selfishness and becomes worse than even an animal. What for is education? Why accumulate wealth? Of what use is the sharp intellect? He uses all of them only to deceive people. He thinks that he is deceiving others. No! He is deceiving himself."

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AMBASSADORS OF GOD

EDITORIAL

ONE OF THE GREATEST MIRACLES OF BHAGAVAN IS THE transformation of youth across the globe belonging to all faiths and nationalities (some stories of their transformation have been given in this issue). Perhaps this forms His greatest legacy for the future generations of mankind. These youth in general, and Swami's students in particular, were most fortunate that the Avatar Himself taught them and showed them by His own example another much more fulfilling noble life, far superior to the worldly life of sense gratification. Swami gave these youth the message of selfless service because it was service of others which purified human heart and destroyed his ego, and that there was no holier shrine than a purified heart where God liked to install Himself. He enriched their life by the touch of His Divinity and showed them the simplest and easiest path of peace and bliss which worldly people and youth search in vain in the objects of the senses. He told the youth: "Youth, wealth, status, authority are all subject to quick ups and downs. When motives are pure, the knowledge will be pure; when knowledge is pure, liberation is ensured".

Bhagavan's words had a lasting impact on the youth because He walked His talk and practised what He preached. In the World Youth Conference held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 18th November 1999, He declared: "This body has been engaged in service right from birth. You should also spend your life in serving others. This is My Message. I practise what I preach. I love all and serve all, and expect you to do the same". There is no wonder that today we find thousands of Sathya Sai Youth engaged in loving and selfless service of mankind in all parts of the world, following this command of Bhagavan. They have taken up the noble task of feeding the hungry, helping the needy, nursing the sick and relieving the misery and suffering of the distressed all over the globe. Thus, these Ambassadors of God are carrying forward the Divine Mission of Bhagavan and preserving His legacy by adhering to the exalted path shown to them by Him.

This issue of Sanathana Sarathi is offered at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan with the hope that more and more youth will follow the noble ideal set by Sathya Sai Youth and make their life sublime by joining the Divine Mission of Bhagavan for the transformation of the world and redemption of mankind.

– Editor

AVATAR VANI

RISE FROM HUMAN TO DIVINE LEVEL

In this illuminating Discourse, Bhagavan cautions the youth to limit their desires and control their senses by using their power of discrimination. He advises them to be aware that unchecked gratification of senses can ruin their life.

MAN SHOULD REMAIN CAUTIOUS IN YOUTH

Human life is as unstable as a drop of water on a lotus leaf. This body is a den of diseases and attachment. The entire world is riddled with sorrow and misery. Therefore, oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda.

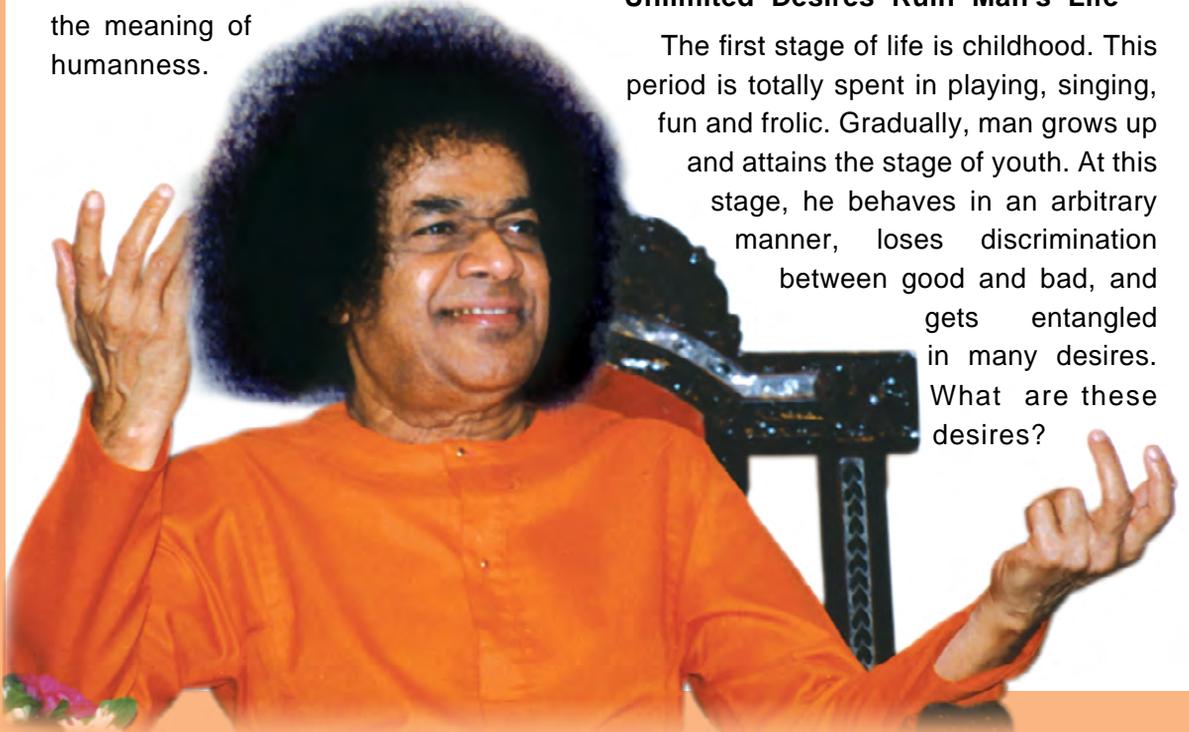
(Telugu Poem)

THERE ARE MANY STAGES IN the life of man. At every stage, he embraces only untruth and unrighteousness. He never makes any effort to seek truth and righteousness. He thus turns his sacred heart into hard stone. Today human being himself is not able to understand the meaning of humanness.

Humanness implies harmony of thought, word and deed. What is the use if you say one thing, think another thing and do something else? Man passes through divine experiences at every stage of his life. But, does he make any attempt to know their import?

Unlimited Desires Ruin Man's Life

The first stage of life is childhood. This period is totally spent in playing, singing, fun and frolic. Gradually, man grows up and attains the stage of youth. At this stage, he behaves in an arbitrary manner, loses discrimination between good and bad, and gets entangled in many desires. What are these desires?



Do they befit a human being? He does not question himself: Am I a human being or an animal? Along with education, he acquires ego and other perversions. Before he completes his education, he is filled with ego and attachment from top to toe. Due to the effect of the present education system, man loses his sense of discrimination. He considers selfishness and self-interest as the main objectives of his life. He wants to possess all that he sees, and wants to fulfil all his desires. To desire all that you see is the quality of an animal, not that of a human being. Unchecked fulfilment of desires makes a man demonic.

Man should use his sense of discrimination to know what he should see and what he should desire. But at this stage of youth, he is not able to understand that fulfilment of all sorts of desires can put him to danger. He thinks that he can derive pleasure and happiness by the gratification of his senses without knowing that these senses are verily the emissaries of Yama (the god of death). Senses lead man to the path of ignorance and burn his humanness to ashes. So, man should remain absolutely cautious in youth and should exercise control over his senses. Otherwise, senses will gradually destroy his humanness. What does humanness actually mean? Humanness implies treading the path of discrimination, quietude and self-enquiry without haste and anxiety.

Spend the Period of Youth in a Sacred Way

Young people do not realise how everything changes with the passage of time. A water drop shines like a pearl on the lotus leaf. How long does its beauty last? The moment a gust of wind comes,

the shining pearl-like water drop will merge in water. Similarly, a youth today shines like a pearl on the leaf of desire in the lake of Samsara (worldliness). He does not enquire where the water drop has emerged from. It came out of water. It is born in water, grows in water and ultimately merges in water. A human being is a water bubble. Lord Narayana is water. Man has no other choice except to merge in Narayana. But man does not realise this truth. Thereby, he destroys his humanness and turns it into animality. Born as Manava (human being), man should rise to the level of Madhava (God). He should not degenerate to the level of an animal. This truth has to be realised by everyone. The stages of man may change, money may come and go, and man may acquire any amount of worldly knowledge and wealth, but man's lifespan must end one day. He cannot bring back even one moment of the time that is gone. Therefore, man should not waste time; he should sanctify it by using it in a sacred manner. Having been born as a human being, he leads the life of an animal. Even an animal has a reason and a season. But man today has no reason and no season.

In spite of his high education, scientific knowledge, name and fame and high position, he follows the path of selfishness and becomes worse than even an animal. What for is education? Why accumulate wealth? Of what use is the sharp intellect? He uses all of them only to deceive people. He thinks that he is deceiving others. No! He is deceiving himself. Man today is not using his capacities and potentialities in the right way. The stage of youth is not meant to while away in careless abandon. The youth stage comes in between. It does



not come with us and does not go with us. It is transitory like passing clouds. Even intelligent people are not able to recognise this truth. The so-called intellectuals have a high name but low thoughts. Such persons cannot be called human beings at all. One who is unable to improve himself is, in fact, a fool. Therefore, it is necessary for youth to follow the right path, utilise their authority in a proper manner and earn a good reputation. Then only will their humanness shine brilliantly.

The third stage of human life is old age. In old age, man keeps brooding over past events and past deeds. As the old age of man starts, even his wife and son do not respect him. What is the reason? One will be respected in old age only when one's conduct in young age has been good. Nobody will respect him when his conduct has not been proper in younger days. Ultimately, brooding over his past misdeeds, he will spend his time in repentance. He will not be able to derive any happiness from the money earned by him through unrighteous and devious means. All the money amassed by him will ultimately reach either a wicked son or a wicked relative after his death. Therefore, man should take to the right path before it is too late. Prahlada said:

If one does not worship the Lord wholeheartedly,

If one does not sing His glory till his mouth aches,

If one lacks truth and compassion in his heart,

He is a curse on the womb of his mother.

(Telugu Poem)

Education should Develop Divine Feelings in Man

Eyes are one of the main organs of the body. That is why Netra (eye) is called

Man should use his sense of discrimination to know what he should see and what he should desire. But at this stage of youth, he is not able to understand that fulfilment of all sorts of desires can put him to danger. He thinks that he can derive pleasure and happiness by the gratification of his senses without knowing that these senses are verily the emissaries of Yama (the god of death). Senses lead man to the path of ignorance and burn his humanness to ashes.



Sastra (scripture). Ninety-five percent of man's actions in his daily life are done through the eyes. All that we read, all that we watch, all that we perceive is based on the eyes. Without the eyes, man cannot recognise even a small object nor can he walk even an inch forward. Though the eye is so small, it can see stars that are millions of miles away. Apart from such powerful physical eyes, man should develop his inner eyes. He travels lakhs and lakhs of miles in space. But does he go even an inch within himself? Do you know why eyes are given to man? Are the eyes meant to see anything and everything? No! no! Eyes are given to man to see the Lord of Kailasha, Siva. Do you know why has God given hands to man? Hands are not given to man to do whatever he likes to do. The hands are given to worship God.

What is human birth for? Is it to give pain to mother's womb? Even dogs and foxes have birth. What is the use of man's birth when he does not render any help



even to his parents. Is that education? No! This is no education at all. What is meant by education? Real education is that which develops divine feelings in man for his elevation. That is true humanness.

One may acquire a high academic qualification such as M.A. or B.A. and attain exalted position,

One may amass wealth, perform acts of charity and attain name and fame,

One may have physical strength and enjoy a long and healthy life,

One may be a great scholar studying and preaching the Vedas,

But none can equal a true devotee of the Lord.

(Telugu Poem)

Devotion, devotion, devotion! What is this devotion? Does it mean deceiving others? To deceive others in the name of devotion amounts to deceiving God. Devotion means obeying God's command implicitly. Under any circumstances, you should not harm anyone. Help Ever! Hurt Never! That is the essence of the eighteen Puranas (mythological texts). But, unfortunately, some people go on harming others all their lives. All this is selfishness, selfishness, selfishness.

We are born in society, we grow up and progress in society. But what help are we rendering to society? We don't have that social awareness. All that we know is I and mine. Is that the entirety of life? No! We should travel from 'I' to 'we'. From 'we' we should progress to the principle of 'all' and merge in it. This kind of broad feeling is not found in the present system of education. What should I study so that I can prosper? What type of education should I acquire to attain high position? How can I deceive others and earn money? This is how the

minds of people are working today. Rather they should ask themselves – how can I do good to society, in what way will my education help society? But people in general are lacking such broad ideas. Those who lack this broad-mindedness cannot be called human beings in the true sense of the term. All that they study is no education at all. Even a monkey can learn to ride a bicycle by training as we see in a circus. This is also a kind of education. Real education is not what you learn by reading books. It is only bookish knowledge or superficial knowledge. It is the practical knowledge which is important. You have been listening so much. How much of it have you put into practice? Nothing whatsoever!

Put your Knowledge into Practice

Years are rolling by. You are aging. But you have not developed your intellect and discrimination; no practice whatsoever. It is not the way you can progress from human to divine level. Put at least one or two teachings into practice.

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and a mean-minded person will not give up his evil qualities.

(Telugu Poem)

Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom. What is the use of acquiring education which cannot lead you to immortality? Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.

(Telugu Poem)

Why should we study? Just to die one day! Then better die without education rather than die with education. Man should acquire the education which will

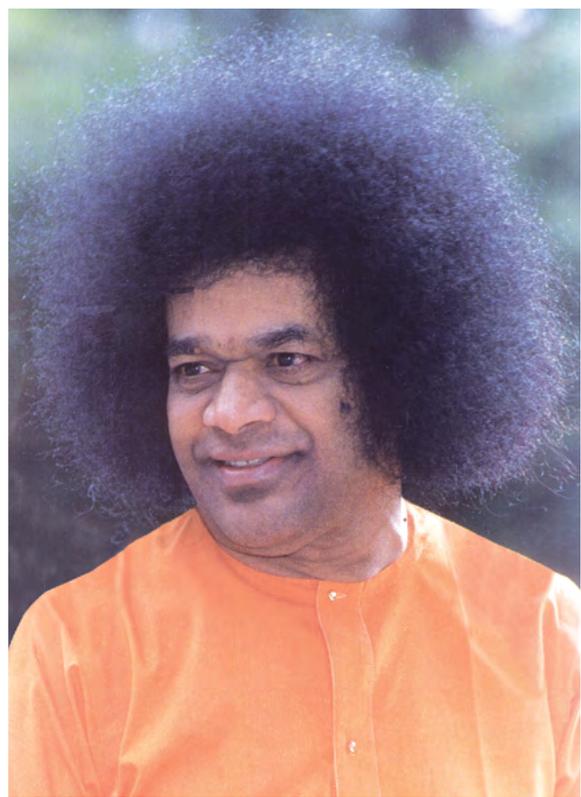


make him immortal. There are so many educated people in the country. What service are they rendering to the country? They should enquire why their country is degenerating. The fact is that people are immersed in utter selfishness and are behaving like a frog in a well. They lack broad feelings of welfare of others. They have only two considerations, 'I' and 'mine', 'I' and 'mine', nothing else. This is not the quality of a true devotee. It is a bad quality. Swami sees many people. There

This is the essence of Bhaja Govindam of Adi Sankara.

An old man was sitting under a tree on the bank of the Ganga and repeating, "Dukrun Karane, Dukrun Karane". At that time, Sankara along with his disciples was going to the Ganga for bath. When he heard this, he went to the old man and asked, "Oh scholar! What is it that you are memorising"? The old man said, "I am memorising the rules of grammar written

Due to the effect of the present education system, man loses his sense of discrimination. He considers selfishness and self-interest as the main objectives of his life. He wants to possess all that he sees, and wants to fulfil all his desires. To desire all that you see is the quality of an animal, not that of a human being. Unchecked fulfilment of desires makes a man demonic. Man should use his sense of discrimination to know what he should see and what he should desire.



are some true devotees also. But if they waste all their time in worldly pursuits, then when will they have the experience of divinity? When you spend all your life in studying books, then when will you put your knowledge into practice? It is only practice that gives you bliss, not learning. All that you do should make others happy and should spread happiness in society.

by Panini". Sankara asked him, "What is the benefit of this"? He replied, "I will become a scholar in grammar". "What is the gain when you become a scholar in grammar?" Sankara asked. He said, "Being a scholar in grammar, I can go to the court of the king and receive hefty rewards from him". Sankara then asked



him, "Out of the rewards you get from the king, what happiness will you have"? "What happiness? My family and I can eat well and lead a happy life." "How long you think you can enjoy all this?" Sankara questioned him. "I will enjoy until death." Sankara then asked, "Do you know what happens after you die?" The old man said, "I do not know". Then Adi Sankara chanted this Sanskrit verse:

*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam,
Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe,
Samrapthe Sannihithe Kale,
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane.*

(Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda; the rules of grammar will not come to your rescue when the end approaches.)

Neither your knowledge of grammar nor your near and dear ones will protect you. Oh foolish man, think who will protect you. It is only Lord Govinda. Bhaja Govindam. Do Namasmara and sing the glory of the Lord. This chanting is a boat that will take you across the ocean of Samsara (worldliness). To cross this ocean, you don't need a very big boat. Even a vast ocean can be crossed with a small boat. Similarly, this small Name of Hari will mitigate all your sins. But man today worships Siri (wealth), not Hari (the Lord). He craves only for wealth. How long will wealth remain with you? Nobody will follow you after your death. All your relatives will follow you up to the cremation ground. No one will follow you thereafter. All the wealth you earned, you have to leave it here. Even the clothes you are wearing have to be left behind.

*Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam,
Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam,*

*Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare,
Kripayapare Pahi Murare.*

(Oh Lord! I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death; time and again, I am experiencing the agony of staying in the mother's womb. It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly life. Please take me across this ocean and grant me liberation.)

Time and again, you are born from your mother's womb. You take birth and die again and again. Is that the essence of human life? No! Not at all.

Once there was a thief whose routine had been to commit thefts and spend jail terms again and again. At one time, he committed a very big theft and was imprisoned for six months. At the end of the period of jail, the Jail Superintendent came and said to him, "Your period of imprisonment is over. You can leave with your bag and baggage tomorrow". The thief said, "Sir! Why should I take my bag and baggage? I am going to return to the prison soon; let it be here". In spite of suffering punishment, he is not prepared to leave the bad habit of thieving. He does not have the awareness that he should not commit the same mistake after suffering so much punishment. Human beings are also like that. They are born and they die again and again.

*Man is eternal with no birth and death,
He is the primordial principle without a
beginning or an end,
He is neither born, nor does he die nor is
he slain by anyone.
He is the Atma which is the eternal
witness. (Telugu Poem)*

continued on page 15 ...



PIETY AND AUSPICIOUSNESS MARK DASARA CELEBRATIONS

FOUR EVENTS OF FAR REACHING spiritual significance marked the holy and auspicious celebrations of Devi Navaratri and Dasara held at Prasanthi Nilayam from 1st to 11th October 2016.

They were: The worship of the Divine Mother in the form of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, performance of Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna, conduct of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha and Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva 2016. An array of music and cultural programmes during this period added value and richness to the celebrations. All these events were performed with the spirit of love and devotion for Bhagavan which suffused the entire milieu with divine vibrations.

VEDA PURUSHA SAPTAHA JNANA YAJNA

To offer worship to the Divine Mother, Kalasha Sthapana (ceremonial placement of sacred Kalasha) was done in the Bhajan Mandir on 1st October 2016, after which the Mandir priest started the worship of the sacred Kalasha signifying the worship of the Divine Mother.

Worship of the Kalasha was carried out by the Mandir priest from 1st to 4th October 2016 in the Bhajan Mandir, which was attended by a large number of devotees. On 5th October 2016, the sacred Kalasha was taken to Poornachandra Auditorium by Veda chanting Ritwiks in a procession led by Nadaswaram musicians and accompanied by Veda chanting group of students. Proceedings of Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna started after the

arrival of the Ritwiks at the Yajnasala (platform for conducting Yajna) which was magnificently decorated, on the left side of which a beautiful throne was placed for Bhagavan to preside over the conduct of Yajna as Veda Purusha. Soon after the priests took their seats on the Yajnasala, the sacred fire for Yajna was produced by two priests in a traditional way by churning one piece of wood over the other. After the sacred fire was placed in the Yajna Kunda, four priests started offering oblations in the Yajna Kunda amidst chanting of sacred Vedic Mantras. Simultaneously, four priests started the recitation of the hymns of Krishna Yajur Veda, one priest started performing Surya Namaskar, and another started Sahasra Lingarchana. While the head priest and his wife began the worship of Kalasha placed on the left side of the dais, three elders started the Parayana of scriptures and students started Vedic chants.

Thus began the sacred Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna for the peace and prosperity of the world and for purifying the environment by spreading spiritual vibrations on all directions. After continuing the proceedings of the Yajna for nearly one hour, the Ritwiks and students started collective chanting of Vedic Mantras which reverberated in the entire Auditorium. Arati was offered to Bhagavan at 10.45 a.m., after which the priests continued the Yajna. The performance of the Yajna continued in this sacred manner for seven days, in which a large gathering of devotees and students took part daily.





Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna.

On the sacred day of Vijaya Dasami, 11th October 2016, Poornahuti (final oblations) was offered in the Yajna to mark its conclusion. The proceedings of Poornahuti started at 9.30 a.m. with arrivals of Ritwiks in Poornachandra Auditorium in a grand procession carrying Poornahuti material and a Dharani (large spoon). Meanwhile, all preparations had been made for Poornahuti on the Yajnashala and a silver chair was placed for Bhagavan near the Yajna Kunda. After the Ritwiks and Veda group of students took their seats on the Yajnashala, precious material of Poornahuti was offered in Yajna Kunda at 9.43 a.m. amidst full-throated Vedic chants and loud musical notes. Finally, oblations were offered in the Yajna with the help of the Dharani. As the hall reverberated with Bhajans led by the students, Vedic priests and students went round the entire hall and sprinkled Tirtha (sanctified Kalasha water) on the entire assembly of devotees. The proceedings of the Poornahuti came to a happy conclusion with Arati at 10.45 a.m.

PRASANTHI VIDWAN MAHASABHA

Talks by Eminent Speakers: The first session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha began with an erudite talk of Dr. Sai Sathish Ramamurthy, a faculty member

of Prasanthi Nilayam Campus of the Institute on 5th October 2016. Quoting the saying of Bhagavan "I separated Myself from Myself to love Myself", the speaker observed that the basis of all creation was love. Man, therefore, should redeem his life on earth by loving God with all his heart and soul and should develop love to love and heart to heart relationship with God when He incarnates on earth in human form, he said.

The speaker in the second session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha was Sri Aman Jhaveri, a Research Scholar in Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. Sharing the lessons learnt by him at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan, the speaker described many incidents of Swami's grace which taught him valuable lessons for life which included the following: if you want to do Seva, all that you need to have is good intentions, all resources would come to you automatically; to love God is to follow His teachings implicitly; a new dimension of life happens when you turn your mind inward because God is nowhere else except within you.

On 7th October 2016, a learned Telugu scholar, Sri Jandyala Mahathi Shankar from Guntur addressed the gathering. Speaking in chaste Telugu, the distinguished speaker described the Divine Glory and Leelas of Bhagavan Baba who, he said, was the embodiment of all gods and goddesses and had incarnated on earth to redeem the life of man by inculcating human qualities and virtues in him through His invaluable teachings.

Sri Ruchir Desai, a faculty member of Brindavan Campus of the Institute, was

the speaker in the 4th session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha held on 8th October 2016. Sri Desai elaborated on the genesis of Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna by narrating the story of Rani of Chincholi and Kamandalu of Shirdi Sai Baba. He observed that man should perform Yajnas for spiritual advancement, without desire for fruits to attain the goal of his life.

Dr. P.L. Rani, a faculty member of Anantapur Campus, was the speaker in the session held on 9th October 2016. She observed that those who got the opportunity of Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan of Bhagavan were most fortunate. Referring to the dilemma of the devotees after the Maha Samadhi of Bhagavan, she said that Bhagavan is omnipresent though we cannot see Him, just as we cannot see the pilot when we fly in an aeroplane.

A noted Telugu scholar Sri Mallapragada Srimannarayana Murthy from Vijayawada spoke in the final session of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha on 10th October 2016. Referring to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as Divine Mother, the learned speaker reminded the audience that Bhagavan was present in every inch of the universe and He loved everyone considering the entire mankind as one family. Man, he said, should practise expansion love as exemplified by Bhagavan and redeem his life.

Divine Discourses: The talks of the speakers in Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha were followed by Bhagavan's Divine Discourses which were aired on the public address system. In His Discourses, Bhagavan dwelt upon the importance of the Vedas and described them as the very

form of God. Omkara or Pranava, He said, was the essence of all the Vedas and was itself the form of Brahman. Explaining the importance of actions in the life of man, Bhagavan exhorted man to perform good and Sattwic actions to please God. Performance of Yajnas, Bhagavan said, sanctifies man's life. Therefore, man should perform Yajnas, obey his parents, revere saints and sages, be compassionate towards birds and animals also and uphold Sathya and Dharma. But people today, Bhagavan said, follow the path of Adharma (unrighteousness) and cause agony to others. It is the duty of those who have authority to prevent such people from following the evil path. If they just remain spectators and do nothing, then they also become partners in the sins of the evil-doers, He said. Bhagavan advised the devotees to develop purity, patience and perseverance. When they have these three virtues, Bhagavan added, they will have everything. He further advised them: Do not walk in front of Me because I may not follow, do not walk behind Me because I may not lead; walk beside Me and be My friend. He exhorted the devotees to develop virtues like Rama and attain the goal of life through inner transformation.

MUSIC AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMES

The first devotional music presentation was made by the students of Muddenahalli Campus of the Institute on 5th October 2016, who won the hearts of the audience by their mellifluous rendition of devotional songs which included "Hare Sai Ram Hare Sai Ram", "Krishna Murari", a popular composition of Kabir "Mana Laga Mere Yaar Fakeeri Mein" (I am in love with adversity)



and a brilliant musical ensemble. The second musical presentation was made by the students of Brindavan Campus on 6th October 2016. Starting with a beautiful group song, they next presented a solo “Krishna Govinda Saranam” (I take refuge in Krishna) and followed it with a popular



Devotional music presentation by Brindavan Campus students.

Bhajan “Ram Ka Guna Gaan Kariye” (we should sing Rama’s glory). An exhilarating musical ensemble presented by them then added to the beauty of their presentation. The students of Anantapur Campus offered their musical presentation on 8th October 2016. Beginning their programme with a prayer song dedicated to the Divine Mother “Jai Maa, Jai Maa Jai Maa Jai



Musical presentation by Anantapur Campus students.

Maa”, they next sang a Devi Stotra and followed it with a beautiful song dedicated to Mother Sai “Janani Sathya Sai Janani”. On 9th October 2016, students comprising

Prasanthi Dance Group performed thrilling dance numbers, enacting the story of the Ramayana as described in Bhagavan’s book “Ramakatha Rasavahini”. Excellent dances of the students, colourful costumes



A dance number based on Ramakatha Rasavahini.

and sweet music made it an impressive presentation. A brilliant devotional music concert by a noted musician Smt. Savita Narasimhan was the last presentation of the programme. The musician enthralled the devotees for nearly one hour by her talented rendition of an array of compositions which included “Narayanaya Namō Namō” (salutations to Lord Narayana), “Bhavayami Gopalabalam” (I take refuge in Krishna), “Deejo Darshan Sai Sankar” (give Darshan, oh Sai Siva), “Govinda Madhava Gopala Keshava”.

SRI SATHYA SAI GRAMA SEVA 2016

Initiated by Bhagavan Baba Himself in the year 2000, Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva is a unique village outreach programme which is conducted by the students and staff of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher learning as part of Dasara celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam. This year, nearly 2,400 students and teachers of the Institute served about 50,000 households of about 150 villages of the three Mandals of

Anantapur district, namely, Bukkapatnam, Kothacheruvu and Puttapparthi. A total of three lakh villagers were thus served Swami's Prasadam in the form of food and clothes at their doorstep with love and reverence from 3rd to 10th October 2016. Every morning, the students and teachers circumambulated the Bhajan Mandir while singing Bhajans and chanting Vedic hymns and departed to the designated villages after seeking the blessings of Bhagavan. On the sacred day of Vijaya Dasami, 11th October 2016, Grama Seva was performed by the students of Anantapur



Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva 2016.

Campus of the Institute who distributed Swami's Prasadam to the inmates of Prasanthi Nilayam.

... continued from page 10

Man has to Go Back to his Source

Strive to attain this exalted state. You should see to it that after coming to this world once, you do not come again. As I told you the other day, "Birth is like a newspaper. You read it once and throw it away as waste paper. How foolish it is to read it again and again! We have come, we have seen the world, and we have seen good and bad in the world. We have experienced some good moments also. It is enough. This life is now a waste paper which we do not need again. So, we should search the path that will help us not to come again". That is what Prahlada also said. He sought good intellect to find this path. What is this path? Devotees say, "Swami! Show us the path to liberation. What path is it that we should go"? I tell them, "You go the same way you have come. Where have you come from? You have not come from Madras (Chennai), Bombay (Mumbai), Delhi. You have come from the Atma. So, go back to the Atma".

For all the living beings, the destination is their source. We put a clay pot to many uses. When it falls down, it breaks and becomes

ultimately clay again. It came from clay and became clay again. An inert earthen pot goes back to its original state. Man's real nature is Chinmaya (consciousness) and he should strive to go back to his original state. But, unfortunately, he follows the wrong path which takes him to the state of Mrinmaya (inert matter). So, even a clay pot is superior to him. What is the education you have acquired? What college have you attended? How many degrees have you earned? What is the high position you have attained? All this is utterly useless if you do not have this awareness. Birds and animals follow rules and regulations in their life. But with all his education man does not have even that much Viveka (discrimination). Does he observe any rules and regulations? Is there any limit to his desires? No! Even foxes and dogs exercise some limit to their desires. But man is madly pursuing his limitless desires. Therefore, correct your thinking and uphold humanness. Contemplate on your divinity and merge in God.

– Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 20th April 1993.



From our Archives

THERE IS NO TRACE OF SELF-INTEREST IN ME

REGARD ALL MANKIND AS ONE FAMILY

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

FROM THE MOST ancient times, Bharatiyas considered Sathya (truth) as God, loved it, fostered it and protected it, and thereby achieved divinity. They were devoted to Dharma (righteousness) and esteemed morality in society as the foremost duty. Today because people have forgotten truth and righteousness, they are unable to solve national problems or end communal differences. We have the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west and both merge in the Indian Ocean. Likewise, Bharat exemplifies the combination of worldly prosperity and spiritual progress. Bharat is the country, where the unity of Jiva (individual soul) and Brahman (Cosmic Being) was established.

Bharat Denotes Entire Human Family

Goddess Saraswati is described as Saraswati, Bhagavati and Bharati. Saraswati is the goddess of speech. Hence, every man



Do not regard what I am going to say as an exaggeration. There is not a trace of self-interest in Me. Whatever I do is only for the sake of others. I do not regard you as others. All of you are My own people. Such an all-encompassing feeling cannot be found anywhere in the world. Have you seen anywhere else an organisation which has grown so stupendously in fifty years?

born with the gift of speech is a Bharata. The name is not associated with any particular individual or country. The term Bharat is applicable to the entire human family. "Bha" refers to the principle represented by Divine Knowledge. "Self-knowledge" is "Bha". "Bharatas" are those who take

delight in Self-knowledge. Hence, everyone who shines by his own self-luminous power is a Bharata.

Bharat is a naturally well-endowed country. It is the primary source of all morality, spirituality and worldly wisdom. It is Annapurna (a land of plenty). To regard such a sacred land as a poor country is a mental aberration. We are not a destitute nation. It is a richly endowed country. If this had not been a wealthy country, why did the Mughals, the Europeans and others invade this country? Though we have been well endowed, we have not been able to safeguard our riches. What is the reason? It is because the people lacked unity. Freedom has been won, but unity has not been achieved. It is because there is no unity, Bharat is subject to all kinds of calamities. In spite of being born in such a land of wealth, it is a pity that people do not take pride in their country. Wherever you turn, you see only Swartha (rampant selfishness).

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Eschew selfishness. Promote unity. Enjoy the bliss of harmony. It is high time you realised what a sacred country Bharat is. In this holy land, nothing is lacking. "What cannot be found in Bharat cannot be found elsewhere" is an ancient saying. In spite of these multifarious endowments, this country is being regarded as poor and backward. This thinking is born of delusion. Only when we free ourselves from this delusion can we experience Atmic bliss. We can experience Brahma (Divinity) only when we can get rid of Bhrama (delusion).

Develop the quality of love. Fill your entire life with love. This was the prayer which the Gopikas addressed to Krishna in the former Yuga. A life without love is utterly barren. Man is the embodiment of love. Love has to

be directed towards what is true. Such love is man's life-breath.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Esteeming love as the essence of divinity, you have to engage yourselves in loving service to society. You have to restore the glory of Bharat. Bharat has been in the past the preceptor of all nations. All other people are coming here to acquire peace and enlightenment. In this situation, it is a great misfortune that Bharatiyas themselves are not conscious of their greatness. Bharatiya history reflects the achievements of Bharat in the realms of the physical, the mental, the spiritual and all other aspects of life. We have to fill our hearts with this heritage.

Today we are dedicating our lives to material and worldly comforts. Of what avail are all these appurtenances? We have to realise the Atmic principle which is the source of enduring bliss. All the knowledge that one acquires, all the positions one may get are of no use if there is no love in the heart. The acquisition of good qualities is more essential than the pursuit of knowledge.

The Magnet of Divine Love

Why is it that so many lakhs of people have gathered here today? There must be some compelling reason for it. You must be seeking something which you have not found in your native place. There would be no need for you to incur all this expenditure if you could find what you wanted in your own place. Here there is Divine Love. It is this powerful magnet of Divine Love which has been attracting all the iron filings in the form of human beings. Not a single invitation was sent to anyone. No one was asked to come. What has drawn all people here is the power of Divine Love, the bonds uniting hearts. At the root of all this is purity. Where there is purity, there love grows. When purity and



love come together, there is Ananda (bliss). Whatever work we do, whatever sacrifices we perform, they are not of much use in the absence of love.

In yoga practice, some types of breath control are adopted. Kundalini yoga is also practised. In the breathing exercises, inhalation is described as Puraka, exhalation as Rechaka and holding the breath as Kumbhaka. These do not constitute the means to achieve yogic power. To breathe in all that is good is Puraka. To give up all that is bad is Rechaka. To retain in the heart what is good is Kumbhaka. Everyone is qualified to practise this kind of yoga. This divine type of yoga should be practised by every human being. This is the primary goal of every Bharatiya.

This Puttaparthi is a small hamlet. How has this village attained this eminent state? Each one can find the answer for himself. This should not be considered as yoga or good fortune or a lucky charm. It is due to the power of thought. Every sacred thought has the power to find fulfilment. This is why Vedanta declared: *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as are the feelings, so is the result). Hence, every man should develop good thoughts. Thereby he gets entitled to the right of fruits.

Free Hospital in Prasanthi Nilayam

Although in this Prasanthi Nilayam adequate facilities and conveniences are not available, you have submitted yourselves to a kind of yoga by which you have adjusted yourselves to all the inconveniences. You should regard this experience as Sadhana (spiritual exercise). Enjoying all comforts cannot constitute Sadhana. It is through difficulties that you experience happiness. Happiness cannot be realised without going through trouble. Such difficulties

must be regarded as a form of penance. Easy life cannot become a penance. The fact that lakhs of people have gathered here, putting up with many difficulties and inconveniences, is striking testimony to their sense of unity.

We decided yesterday to establish a big hospital here. Many persons appealed to me to set up the hospital in an urban centre. There are many medical institutions run as a business in several cities. When any educational or medical institution is established, the sole aim is to make a business of it. There are few who are ready to set up such institutions to provide free facilities for the poor. Therefore, from the start we decided to set up a hundred crore hospital near Prasanthi Nilayam itself. Even as higher education is free here, "higher medicine" also will be free. People spend some lakhs to get heart surgery done in the U.S. What is the plight of the poor? Who looks after them? If they go to the cities, they will not get even coloured water (mixtures). Recognising this fact, we have launched this big hospital project. Whether it is heart bypass operation or a kidney transplant or a lung operation or brain surgery, everything will be done free. This has been decided upon from the very start of the project. The hospital will be opened on 22nd November 1991. No one can understand Sai Sankalpa (resolve). Thought and action are simultaneous like the light and sound that come out when a gun is fired. Hence, it is not easy for everyone to understand Sai's resolve.

The Sathya Sai Saga

Do not regard what I am going to say as an exaggeration. There is not a trace of self-interest in Me. Whatever I do is only for the sake of others. I do not regard you



as others. All of you are My own people. Such an all-encompassing feeling cannot be found anywhere in the world. Have you seen anywhere else an organisation which has grown so stupendously in fifty years?

In the case of earlier Avatars, their fame grew only long after their passing. In the case of the present Avatar, in His own lifetime, a university, a big hospital, an aerodrome and many other things have been established for the benefit of the villagers and many more will follow in the years ahead. Many persons have doubts as to how all these are being accomplished. The Advent of this Avatar took place 64 years ago. All these years, this hand has not been stretched at any time to seek anything from anyone. I have not asked anyone. I will never ask anyone and there will never be an occasion for it. How then are these things happening? For any good work, there is no impediment in Bharat. When you want to do any good work wholeheartedly, money flows in torrents. The narrow-minded who undertake any work will never be satisfied. They cannot understand the actions of those who are large-hearted and broad-minded.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

I do not expect anything from you. Only develop love within you. Regard all mankind with fraternal feelings. Recognise all as the children of God. Bear no ill-will or hatred towards anyone. Do not hurt anyone's feelings. Only such a large-hearted attitude will confer on you limitless bliss. If you are celebrating Swami's Birthday, this is all that I desire from you. Have unity among yourselves. Strive to revive and promote the glory of Bharat.

I am Always Filled with Infinite Bliss

As I was coming here, some people greeted Me with the words: "Happy Birthday!

What has drawn all people here is the power of Divine Love, the bonds uniting hearts. At the root of all this is purity. Where there is purity, there love grows. When purity and love come together, there is Ananda (bliss). Whatever work we do, whatever sacrifices we perform, they are not of much use in the absence of love.

Happy Birthday!" I am always happy. I need no "Happy" greetings. Convey your greetings of "Happy Birthday" to those who are not happy. I am filled with infinite joy. I have never had any worry at any time or place. What is the reason? All things are transient like passing clouds. Why worry about them? We should not be elated or depressed by births or deaths. We came naked into the world. When we leave, we cannot leave our address with "our" kith and kin. How can they be "our kinsfolk?" All these are worldly phenomena. As long as we live, we should spend our lives in harmony and fellow-feeling. All our difficulties can be overcome by contemplation on God. Forgetting God and immersing yourself in worldly concerns, what do you achieve? Have firm faith in God. Don't give room to differences of caste, creed and nationality. All names and forms belong to the Divine. All that you see is a manifestation of the Cosmic Form of the Lord. With firm faith in the Divine, chant the Lord's name and redeem your lives.

– Excerpted from Bhagavan's Birthday Discourse in Hill View Stadium on 23rd November 1990.



IN THE ANNALS OF TIME, GREAT and mighty leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln have walked upon the earth. Whilst much has been written and discussed on their life, I would like to draw the attention of mankind to a very unique and special leader, a leader with great humility, compassion, a loving and selfless heart, an unsung hero who will probably never make to world's history books, a silent worker. This leader has pride of place in the heart of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This leader is no other than Swami's Youth. For it is His Youth that the world is waiting for, it is His Youth that the elders are

Swami's Mission. As far as I am concerned, if you serve, if you guide, if you offer hope and support to others then you are a Sai leader. Sathya Sai Youth are all special. Swami has given each one of them special skills, talents and qualities. They simply have to turn inward and tap into this resource, this hidden treasure chest of jewels. They are all but one facet of a multi-dimensional jewel.

A spiritual revolution is unfolding before our eyes, changing the way we connect with Divinity and in turn serve mankind. I see and experience this whenever I travel around the world addressing Swami's youth and seeing all that they are accomplishing in their lives.

At the same time, we are living in a world faced with huge social challenges. Last

Shitu Chudasama

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD!

Never has the energy of young people been more relevant. I am convinced that the best hope for transformation in human society and a future of peace, equality and justice lies not in the hands of governments but in the minds and hearts of individuals who will devote themselves to individual spiritual transformation to bring about transformation of mankind.

looking to for the future sustenance of the Sai Organisation and it is on their shoulders that all of Bhagavan's hopes and aspirations for the future rest.

Harbingers of a New Social Order

Sathya Sai Youth are sometimes under the impression that only a few can become leaders. That it is a place given to a chosen few. Let me assure them that they are all leaders, not just any leaders but Sathya Sai Leaders, ambassadors of His Mission. Each one of them has an important part to play in

year, the world reached a historic milestone with 7 billion people. I cannot help but be optimistic when I see the commitment of our Sai Youth around the world. Over the next decade and beyond, if we are to solve the most pressing issues of our time, we need to tap into the dynamism of our Sai Youth, for they have the potential to dispel inertia and be the most creative forces for social change. There is, therefore, a need to better support and empower Sai Youth to achieve social progress in the world in the light of





Swami's life and message. But if we do not harness the incredible power and agency of Sai Youth now, we risk missing out. Swami knew this and hence He gave the Sai Youth so much importance and time during His lifetime.

This year, our world's youth population (18-35 years) hits 1.8 billion, becoming the world's largest ever youth population. It is, therefore, important that we harness the energy and enthusiasm of our Sai Youth. Never has the energy of young people been more relevant. I am convinced that the best hope for transformation in human society and a future of peace, equality and justice lies not in the hands of governments but in the minds and hearts of individuals who will devote themselves to individual spiritual transformation to bring about transformation of mankind. Sai Youth are co-creators of a new spiritual order. This new world order or awakening is taking place, is unfolding, blossoming before our very eyes.

History has demonstrated that young people have been catalysts of change in every era, in every century, and at this point of time, it is the Sathya Sai Youth of Bhagavan. They have it in their hands to be those catalysts. The question is: what do they want to do about it? Do they want to play their role in Swami's Mission? Do they want to take on the baton from the elders, who are eager to pass the torch to them as the new generation of young people?

Sathya Sai Youth can actually lead in shaping the destiny of their country. They are the real catalysts of change. They have led communities, they have led nations, and they have upheld the values in which civilisations were built upon. One day they will inherit the work of the Sai Organisation in their respective countries whether they choose to or not. They have a historical part to play in shaping their society, in making a difference to someone's life and taking Bhagavan's Mission to the next level. This decision is now for them to make and I am confident they will make the right choice.

I hope they will take on this historical role as agents of change with the objective of spiritually transforming themselves, spiritually transforming the Sai Organisation, and spiritually transforming the world in which we live. I believe in my heart of hearts that Sai Youth are destined for something greater than themselves.

Make your Life My Message

How are we to be ready for the grace and responsibility that Swami has bestowed on us? Swami says that youth are the future leaders of tomorrow. However, to be the future leaders of tomorrow, youth must first be participants of today. In order to be participants of today, we all need to



do a lot of work on ourselves. What is this work? This work involves both inner work and outer work. Inner work – we must focus on our spiritual development and transformation and the outer work should be our active participation and involvement within the Sai Organisation. This is the fundamental objective of the International Youth Programme.

Inner work deals with strengthening our faith and relationship with Bhagavan. The one question that I get asked all the time by youth is: how can I get closer to God? What is the secret, what is the magical formula, what is the mystical incantation? This is possible only by making God our sole refuge, making God our goal of life, and making God our best friend. The outer work deals with our active participation and involvement within the Sai Organisation.

Swami has said, "My Life is My Message". So, what legacy are we creating in His name? Swami left behind a huge legacy for the world. Now we must ask ourselves what are we creating that will live long after we have gone, if our lives are to be the Message of God. If we follow His Message, if we follow His life, the answers are all there. If we follow His principles, if we follow His values, Swami will be very happy. Sai Youth must set an example to the whole world.

We have heard only about Swami until now; the whole world should now see, observe and learn from Sathya Sai Youth. The world heard His Message; now the whole world should see each one of us practising His Message. The world saw Swami as an embodiment of selfless service; now the whole world should see each one of us as men and women of selfless service and sacrifice.

His message lives on, His spirit lives on through us. Whenever we gather in His name, this strengthens our resolve, it gives our soul the nourishment, the sustenance that we need to march onwards towards the goal and the path set by Him. Swami's lifetime of achievements is incomprehensible to the mind. Though Swami is physically no longer with us, we must remember that He continues to speak to us, guide us and teach us. We merely have to go within, and in the stillness of our hearts and minds is where we will hear His voice.

Follow the Voice of God

We must never forget that the work which He started through us will always continue. We must remember that Swami works through us in two ways, the work He does in us and the work He does through us. In Swami's unique style, the work He does in us always results in work He does through us. The work He does through us accomplishes one central thing; it makes us Divine.

Swami gave a lifetime of service to mankind. Today, Sathya Sai Youth from all over the world should strive to become the torchbearers of His sacred mission. We must promise to continue His work, His life and His message during our lifetime. Then our lives will become His message and we will be blessed. Each and every one of us has been privileged, because we have been touched by a great master, a great teacher, a great inspirer, who has given us a message, a message to live by. And if we live by this message, we will become one with the teacher, we will become one with God, one with Swami.

Back in 1988, I was sitting with Swami and I was staring into the palm of His



hand whilst He was talking to someone. He suddenly stopped, looked at me and said, "Do you know what is in this hand"? He continued: "The whole world, this whole Jagat is in My hand. What is Jagat? Jagat means coming and going, coming and going". He continued, "Do not think about the world. Do not spend time thinking about the world or about your relationships to individuals. These are all impermanent. They will not last. Pay attention to that which lasts, to that which is permanent. All things involving the world and human relationships have to do only with the body. The body is like a water bubble. The mind is like a mad monkey. So, do not follow the body or the mind. Follow the voice of God".

Sai-Fi not Wi-Fi

We must be cautious of getting addicted to the modern world, modern values and modern traditions. The world today is a mess. There is an obsession about everything prefixed by "I", iPhone, iPad, iTunes, etc... There are so many I's, but mankind is failing to understand what the ancient Vedas declared: I am Brahman "Aham Brahmasmi" or I am "Soham". We should be focusing on the questions: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? Answers to these questions cannot be found on Facebook but in one's own Faith-book. Today, we are obsessed about Wi-Fi wherever we go, we look for Wi-Fi connection so that we can be connected to the modern world at all times. Instead, we should remain connected to Sai-Fi not Wi-Fi! When we remain connected to Sai-Fi, super consciousness can be found within, for God resides within.

Global Spiritual Awakening

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba continues to change hearts and transform lives in all

A spiritual revolution is unfolding before our eyes, changing the way we connect with Divinity and in turn serve mankind. I see and experience this whenever I travel around the world addressing Swami's youth and seeing all that they are accomplishing in their lives.

corners of the world across the seven seas in this world and countless other worlds with the weapon of His Love. And he has chosen each one of us to help in this mission. Never before has any Avatar done this. We must never forget that the work which He has started through us will always continue. What a great privilege to have known the Divine Being, who turned so many lives towards the path of selfless service. Such was the effect of Swami. Therefore, the legacy of our Beloved Swami will not only live on in His teachings but also the sublime effect on the lives of the millions if not billions of devotees that He touched and will continue to touch for many generations to come.

Swami gave a lifetime of service to mankind. Today, we, His Sai Youth must promise to continue His work, His life and His message during our lifetime. Our lives will become His message and we will become blessed. Swami has not gone, our Lord, our teacher is very much alive, as long as that which He taught lives in our heart.

The question is: what do we want to do about it? Do we want to play our role in Swami's mission? Do we want to do God's work?

It is important to remember that we are engaged in history's most important



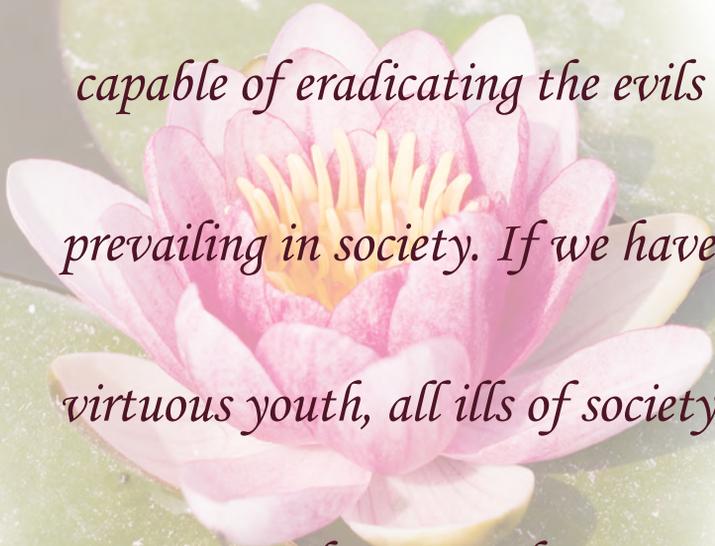
event; a global spiritual awakening that is transforming every dimension of our lives. This transformation has been building now for many years right from the Advent of the Avatar, and is now slowly blossoming amongst us.

Swami has entrusted us with His mission. Let everything we do and everything we say be a message about how life should be lived for generations of people to come. The time is Now, we must not delay, we must not give up and we must not get sidetracked by other attractions and gimmicks or tricks. Swami chose each one of us because we have something special. We have that special something, that gift which He wants us to share with the world in His name. The purpose of life is to discover this gift. The

work of life is to develop it, and the meaning of life is to give your gift away.

It is therefore now that we should prepare to make our contribution. With Swami's grace and love, we will make a difference. Having attained this degree of wisdom, our compassion and love will surely leave footprints of Love wherever we walk. These footprints of Love in turn will light up the pathway to God for others to follow and reach their final destination back home to God.

– The author was appointed the first International Youth Coordinator by Bhagavan Himself and now serves as a Trustee of the United Kingdom Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.



*Only young men and women are
capable of eradicating the evils
prevailing in society. If we have
virtuous youth, all ills of society
can be removed.*

– Baba

LIVE WITH SAI

Vinay Kumar

*Sarva Rupa Dharam Santham,
Sarva Nama Dharam Sivam,
Sath-Chit-Ananda Rupam Advaitam,
Sathyam Sivam Sundaram.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

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

IT WAS ONE MORE OF THOSE blissful evenings in Prasanthi Nilayam with thousands witnessing joyous rendition of a musical dance drama by the youth from North India. Their devotion and dedication at that young age touched the Ocean of Infinite Mercy, Bhagavan Baba. At the end of the programme, Swami graciously went amidst the blessed youth and showered the love of a thousand mothers upon each one of them! He distributed clothes, granted them the highest blessing of Padanamaskar, posed for photographs with them and even materialised a beautiful chain for one of the main artistes as a token of His love and grace!

Ask What I have Come to Give

Even as my moist eyes watched this divine outpouring of love on the youth, I suddenly realised Swami was just a few feet away from where I was seated. He stopped, looked into my eyes and asked, "How was the drama"? I simply replied, "Very nice,

Swami. You gave them so much Ananda". He then said something which impacted me very deeply. He said, "I gave them whatever gave them joy – clothes, photographs, Padanamaskar. But no one asked Me what I have really come to give". I went back to my room that evening and kept recollecting the sacred words spoken by Bhagavan. It took a while for my human

mind to realise the deep import of what He meant. This was a great message for the youth of the world. He wanted each one of us to seek the ultimate gift from Him – the gift of Self-realisation. It is so easy for Swami to satisfy our materialistic and worldly desires but having had the great fortune of being His contemporaries and more importantly getting drawn into His fold, I feel the youth must only seek the Eternal Truth which can be got only from the One who is in each one of us!



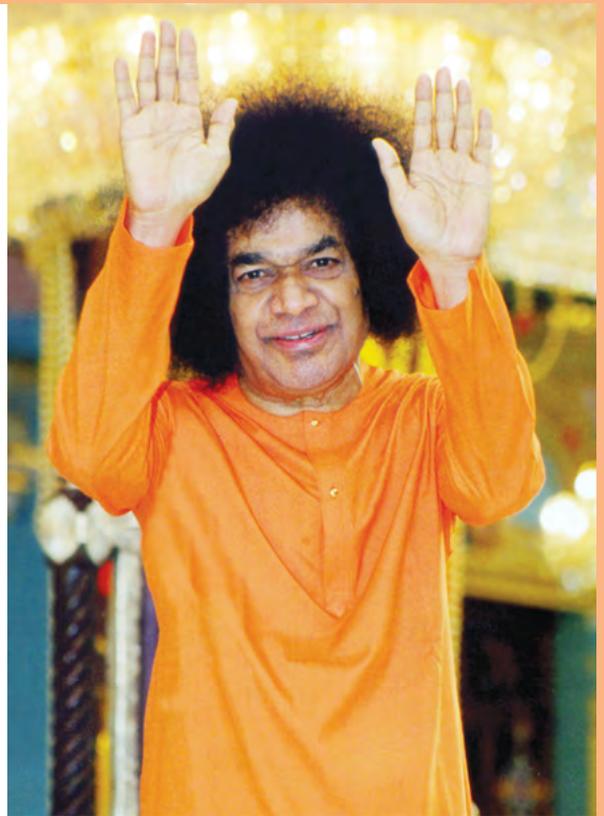
We can attain completeness in our lives by remaining rooted to our inner Self (the core) and constantly expanding the radius of our performance (selfless acts of love and service). This will help expand the circumference of our life until it attains oneness with Him!



Focus on the Inner Self

I once asked Swami, “Swami, how do we control our senses”? and Bhagavan graciously said, “Live with Sai and your senses will fly”! He explained, living with Sai was not the physical living but living in His thoughts and making Him the core of our very being. He wanted us to remain focused on the inner self which was the only means to attain Him. Slowly but steadily I began to understand, with His grace, that focus is not only our ability to stay attracted to the ‘One’ within but also the discipline to avoid the distractions of the other ‘ninety-nine’ without.

Bhagavan had mercifully entrusted me with some responsibilities for a major Yajna He had willed at Prasanthi Nilayam in 2006. One afternoon when I was summoned by Him in the midst of my chores, He asked me, “Are you ready”? and I muttered, “The trousers are a bit dirty, Swami. Will go to the room, have a bath and change my clothes and return”. He was not happy with the reply and did not say anything further on that day. After almost a month, the compassionate Lord decided to drive home the truth and dispel the ignorance that fogs our inner view. He said, “Readiness is not about having a bath and wearing new clothes. You should be eternally ready to even give up your Prana. That is the state of readiness”. He went on to say, “Never have any attachment to the body. Only remain immersed in the Self within. Keep doing your duties but never identify yourself with the actions done by your body”. This was a profound message for me! I learnt that in the Eternity of the Ocean I am after all yet another bubble. That’s all it is! We are just the passing clouds.



One afternoon, Bhagavan graciously taught my wife and me the deeper understanding of life. He said, “Life is about three relationships. Your relationship with yourself (intra-relationship), your relationship with others (inter-relationship) and the most important being your relationship with Existence (transcendental relationship)”. He said the youth must design their destiny by sanctifying this transcendental relationship through prayers, meditation, selfless service, pure feelings and spotless character. Bhagavan said, “Existence is not this or that, but it is this in That”. He meant materialism and spirituality were just two sides of the same coin, the coin called Existence. We must not ask for this or that but become the lotus which blooms even in dirty water. We need to allow spirituality to thrive within the realms of a materialistic life. This, I understood, was Bhagavan’s expectation from the youth.



My Love for you is Pure Love

Each time I would get to see Him, it was a deep sense of oneness with peace and happiness. Bhagavan's love was the real connect that drew each one of us to Him. One afternoon, after granting us a long interview He permitted us to leave for Bengaluru. We rushed back to our room and were getting ready to leave Prasanthi Nilayam when a student hurriedly came to our room and said, "Swami has asked you to come back to the Mandir immediately". I was taken aback since we had spent almost an hour with Bhagavan and were leaving only with His permission! I rushed back to the Mandir and was seated right outside the Bhajan Mandir door. Bhagavan was immersed in the soulful Bhajans being rendered by His students. My mind just could not focus on the Bhajans. It kept wondering why I was summoned and drifted away into the realm of a confused state. The most beautiful form in the cosmos was just a few feet away from me and I was not even able to admire the beauty of that Effulgent Being for a second.

The Bhajans ended and Swami accepted the Arati that was offered to Him. He then gracefully walked towards me. I did not know what to expect. He gave me a beautiful smile and said, "Bangaru, you forgot to take Padanamaskar after the interview. I called you back only to grant you Padanamaskar. Take Namaskar and then leave for Bengaluru". This was the love of more than a thousand mothers. He called me back to shower the benediction of kissing His Lotus Feet!!! Only God can pour out so much love. I broke down instantly and bathed His feet with tears of repentance for not having understood the deep love He has for each one of us. His love is unconditional. He once told me, "My love for you is love



I once asked Swami, "Swami, how do we control our senses"? and Bhagavan graciously said, "Live with Sai and your senses will fly"! He explained, living with Sai was not the physical living but living in His thoughts and making Him the core of our very being. He wanted us to remain focused on the inner self which was the only means to attain Him.



only. What you do and what you do not do does not alter My love for you".

I was destined to see Bhagavan for the first time when I was still in high school. Swami had graced a senior devotee with His divine visit to their house and my parents decided to take me along with them for His blessings. Swami spoke to my mother. Like any other concerned mother, she complained to Swami about my pranks and my craze for cricket over academics. I did not even want to look into His eyes and was curled up next to my mother. He materialised Vibhuti and rubbed it on my head, gave some to my mother and gave her the Divine assurance, "Don't worry about him, I will take care of him". A few years after this, my mother merged in Him and that left me completely shattered. Some time after this, I was seated in the sands of the Sai Ram Shed in His Ashram at Brindavan. As Swami walked up to the Darshan lines, I went up on my knees with a heavy heart and said, "Swami, my mother passed away"! and my dear Mother Sai immediately responded, "But I am there for you"!!! He had promised



my mother He would take care of me. Could I have asked for more in this life which has been punctuated only with His Love at every step!

The Youth have a Great Role to Play

I was supposed to coordinate an epoch-making event at Prasanthi Nilayam in 2006. A few hours before the inauguration, with oodles of last minute arrangements still remaining to be done, Swami called me to His residence and said, "You are looking very tired. If your parents had been there, they would have taken care. I am telling you now. Go to the room and sleep for a while. Have a bath and come fresh to the hall. I will take care of everything". I told Him that I had not even prepared my talk on the inaugural day. He simply said, "You only stand in front of the mike and move your lips. I will talk"!!! I did not know how to handle so much love. There was so much concern in His eyes when He said those words. I had never experienced anything like this before! In a low voice, I whispered into His ears, "Thank You, Swami". Bhagavan put His hand on my right shoulder and questioned in Kannada "Tayyee ge Thanksaa"? (thanking your mother?) Only Swami can give so much Love. Nobody and nothing can ever fill us up with more Ananda.

I personally believe, we need to just tap inwards and continue to remain the recipients of His infinite love forever. Whatever I am today is only due to His mercy. I only keep praying to Him to permit me to serve in His mission as His effective instrument till the last drop of blood and the last breath in this body given to me by Him.

The youth have a great role to play in strengthening the institutions He has set up and left behind as His legacy of love and compassion for all times to come. Without shifting the centre, by just expanding the radius, youth can draw bigger circles and achieve greater circumference. The core of our being is the centre. We can never afford to trade our principles, innate nature, character or our spiritual alignment for anything in the world. The radius is measured by our performance which has to progress from good to better and better to best. The results are the circumference.

We can attain completeness in our lives by remaining rooted to our inner Self (the core) and constantly expanding the radius of our performance (selfless acts of love and service). This will help expand the circumference of our life until it attains oneness with Him!

– The author, a Chartered Accountant by profession, is a Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Karnataka.

There are thousands of intellectuals, scholars and eminent educationists in the world today. But all the worldly knowledge and skills will be a mere waste if one does not know oneself. The primary duty of man is to understand who he really is.

– Baba

SEVA AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF EDUCATION

KALIDASA IN HIS MAGNUM OPUS Raghuvamsa describes how the kings of Ikshvaku clan lived, depicting the various stages of their lives from birth to death. They spent their childhood and youth in the pursuit of excellent knowledge and education. In the middle age, they led the life of a householder and upheld truth and righteousness. In advanced age, they lived like a hermit, and finally at the end discarded the body through yoga.

Ancient Gurukula System of Bharat

This was the ideal life of kings of the Raghuvamsa in which Sri Ramachandra was an illustrious king. The ideal life which the poet has described indicates that the pursuit of knowledge or learning was the very soul and breath of young people and children in ancient times. Swami always referred to Rama, the doyen of this clan, as the embodiment of all virtues who set highest ideals in Sathya and Dharma for all mankind to follow, so that He came to be called Dharma personified.

Indian culture respects knowledge and learning. These two attributes broaden the horizon of every human being. The acquisition of knowledge should be with the object of imbibing good things, good thoughts, good ideas and good knowledge. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba repeatedly exhorted “Education is for life and not for a living”. The pursuit of education as an

important requirement of spiritual progress has been recognised in India for several thousand years. We are aware of famous Indian universities of Takshashila and Nalanda. These were Gurukulas, where the teacher and the taught used to live together,



eat together, play together, study together and most importantly pray together. The ideal life led by the teachers used to be a source of inspiration to thousands of students who lived in the Gurukula. The education was formal and at the same time informal. Mere bookish knowledge was replaced by an overall development of the personality of the child. While being taught the basic subjects of secular learning like history, science, mathematics, etc., a great deal of emphasis was given on moral values, ethical principles and the overall development of the child. In this quest, five important principles formed the bedrock of the education system. They were Sathya (truth), Dharma (right conduct), Santhi (peace), Prema (love) and Ahimsha (non-violence). These eternal values got imbibed in the youth in the course of their stay in the Gurukula.

Sai System of Education

In modern Indian universities, the emphasis is more on learning the textbooks and academic achievement. Most universities do not include in their curriculum moral or spiritual education, inculcation of human values, Indian philosophy or religion. Somehow, all these ideas have got the label of being “non-secular”. It appears that anything other than normal subjects taught in the university are characterised as extraneous to education. Bhagavan Baba ploughed a lone furrow when he set up Sri Sathya Sai Institute of High Learning, a Deemed to be University. Baba emphasised that along with learning the so-called secular subjects, a great emphasis had to be given on education in human values. Bhagavan coined the word “Educare” to emphasise that education with human values inculcated many key qualities in the youth, which changed their outlook in life. It sensitised the

youth to the essential human values, which are of great importance for overall, all-round development of the human personality. To achieve this end, Baba exhorted the students to take up service of mankind.

Many phrases were coined by Bhagavan Baba to emphasise the point. We can recall a few of them:

Hands that serve are holier than the lips that pray. Manava Seva is Madhava Seva. Hands in society and head in the forest.

It is obvious from the above that Seva or service is an essential part of learning process for every Sathya Sai Youth. Towards this end, all students who go through all Sai Institutions, whether at the school level or at the college level, are given a great opportunity to pursue service activities. The students from all over the country have to undergo formal academic teaching called “Awareness Classes”. The emphasis is to expose the students to the great spiritual, inspirational, cultural and scientific ideas and development of mankind and also acquainting them with realities of the global village that we live in. It also highlights the importance of the five basic human values and their importance for the development and blossoming of human personality. On the non-academic front, students have to participate in service activities, which include visits to villages, many social service projects, distribution of essentials to the poor and needy with due respect and humility at the doorstep of recipients.

Participation of Youth in Service Activities

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation also has a separate Youth Wing, which is well organised and well structured. Any person in society can join Sri Sathya Sai Movement



by becoming a part of a Samithi. All youth are provided opportunities to join other young people and chalk out programmes to enable them to undertake Seva in their respective communities. As part of this Seva, youth participate all over India in a number of service activities such as conducting of medical camps, cleaning of villages, provision of pure drinking water, building of schools and community centres, providing vocational training, helping in improving functioning of schools and other infrastructures at village level, conducting of classes, organising Bhajans and other spiritual activities, distribution of food and clothes called Narayana Seva, participation in other institutions like old age homes, destitute homes, homes for physically and mentally challenged and so on. All these programmes are conceived, planned and executed by the youth, forming part of Seva Organisations. The performance of Seva is an essential part of every Sai Samithi member's duty. Thousands of youth come to Puttaparthi throughout the year in a very organised manner from all States and render yeoman service in the upkeep of Prasanthi Nilayam Ashram, General and Super Speciality Hospitals at Puttaparthi and Whitefield, Bengaluru, university and all its four campuses. All these activities kindle good qualities of humility, empathy, charity and gratitude. Last but not the least, they also significantly increase the devotion of the youth.

This year, specially taking note of the call from the Prime Minister of India, Sri Narendra Modi for Swachh Bharat or Clean India, the All India Sai Organisation has galvanised the youth throughout the country to take up the Seva of ensuring cleanliness

through Samithis throughout the country. This movement is not only to clean the cities, villages and habitations but also to sensitise the people to the need to maintain a clean environment.

Performing Seva Selflessly

Another important Seva activity carried out all over India and indeed in all overseas Sai Organisations is disaster relief. Sai Youth play a key role in immediately launching relief operations in areas hit by natural or man-made disasters such as earthquake, flood, typhoon, hurricane, landslide, terrorist strike, accidents and so on. Sai Youth are an army of volunteers who are ready to jump into the fray when the call comes to aid humanity, fellow beings and others in distress. All this is done without any expectation of monetary gain or other forms of appreciation or returns. Seva is done selflessly with humility and in a self-effacing manner in keeping with the dictum of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita: *Karmanyevadhikarasthe Ma Phaleshu Kadachana* (your right is on actions only, not the fruits thereof).

The Seva is done to achieve the daily prayer chanted by all Sai devotees all over the world: *Samastha Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the beings of all the worlds be happy!).

How can we forget these beautiful words of Swami, which He uttered incessantly in every situation when devotees thronged to Him:

Be Happy – Be Happy – Be Happy

This is the motto of Sri Sathya Sai Youth.

– **Sri S.S. Naganand is a Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.**





HOLD ON TO THE LOTUS FEET OF SWAMI

R.J. Rathnakar

You can visualise the divine manifestations of both Siva and Shakti in Me. Do not limit My power and grace to any one particular place. My power has no limits. I am the repository of infinite power and grace.

— Baba

RECENTLY, I HAVE HAD THE privilege of taking part in two historic events, which will be etched in letters of gold in the annals of the Divine Mission of Sri Sathya Sai Avatar. The first one is the unveiling of Sarva Dharma Stupa in Odisha and the second, the inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Ghat in Rishikesh. These two glorious events bear ample testimony as to how the governments and public, in general, are inspired by the Divine Mission of our Beloved Lord.

Sarva Dharma Stupa at Bhubaneswar

Bhagavan, in His infinite mercy, bestowed upon me the blessed opportunity of unveiling the Sarva Dharma Stupa in the precincts of Sai Janani Mandir, Bhubaneswar, Odisha on 6th September 2016. The unique feature of this Stupa is that it is built on the sacred foundation of Likhita Nama Japa (Divine Name in writing) books. I was flabbergasted to know that the cellar which forms the foundation of the Stupa houses Likhita Nama Japa books containing not just one lakh or one crore, but one hundred crores of Divine Name "Sai Ram" written by the devotees of Odisha. Thousands of devotees in every



nook and corner of the State participated in the sacred Yajna of Likhita Nama Japa for three years to reach this mind-boggling figure of one hundred crores.

Bhagavan accorded utmost importance to religious harmony in His teachings. He Himself designed the logo of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation containing the symbols of all major religions of the world to make it represent religious unity and harmony. The teachings and activities of an Avatar are always in consonance with the needs of the contemporary times and prevailing circumstances. Lord Rama never preached



religious harmony. Lord Krishna never made a mention of the unity of faiths. The reason was that the entire humanity was considered as one race in those Yugas. But with the passage of time, people developed differences as they started following their own beliefs and ideologies which resulted in the formation of various religions. But today man has degenerated to such a level that he is causing untold devastation, and is killing his own fellowmen in the name of religion. Therefore, an urgent need has arisen like never before in the history of mankind to unify humanity by establishing religious harmony.

That is the reason Bhagavan has willed unity of religions as one of the main objectives of His Avataric Mission. He endeavoured to achieve this by transforming the Mathi (mind) of man who is causing unrest and agitation in the name of Matha (religion).

*All religions impart only good teachings.
One should understand this truth and
act accordingly.*

*If Mathi (mind) is good, how can any
Matha (religion) be bad?*

Listen! Oh valiant sons of Bharat.

(Telugu Poem)

He declared: *There is only one religion,
the religion of Love.*

One of the most memorable events of Bhagavan unveiling the magnificent Sarva Dharma Stupa in Prasanthi Nilayam on the auspicious occasion of His 50th Birthday celebrations in 1975, as a sacred symbol of religious harmony, is still fresh in my mind. I witnessed this grand event as a six-year-old child, standing alongside my mother. After the inauguration of the Stupa, as Bhagavan came to the balcony to shower His blissful benedictions on the mammoth

congregation, He flashed a beautiful smile at me and made a gesture. Now when I look back on this, I realise that it was an indication from Bhagavan then itself that I would be instrumental in unveiling the Sarva Dharma Stupa in Odisha. This Stupa is not a mere concrete structure but a sacred monument built with the concrete of Divine Love. Unifying all religions by the power of His love, Bhagavan is making the lotus of human heart blossom and bloom, spreading the fragrance of human values all around.

The Sarva Dharma Stupa in Bhubaneswar is 36 feet tall. $3+6 = 9$, which being a divine number is naturally dear to Bhagavan. In my humble opinion, every devotee in Odisha symbolises this divine number as they are very dear to our Lord and occupy a special place in His heart. Swami always used to shower His infinite love and grace on the Odisha Seva Dal taking part in Prasanthi Seva. That they continue to come for Prasanthi Seva with renewed zeal and commitment even after the Maha Samadhi of our Lord is a testimony to their unwavering faith and devotion. This is amply demonstrated by the ever-increasing number of Odisha Seva Dal volunteers coming to Prasanthi Nilayam. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation (SSSSO) of Odisha deserves to be commended and appreciated for taking the Divine Mission forward with such sublime spiritual activities, and filling the hearts of devotees with inspiration and enthusiasm.

*My Mission has just begun. From now
onwards it will gain momentum and
continue at a much faster pace. It is up
to you to take part in this Divine Mission
which is aimed at granting freedom to
man from the bondage of ignorance.
Never before in the history of any of the*



previous Yugas were people informed about the Advent of the Avatar in such unequivocal terms so many times.

– Baba

Sri Sathya Sai Ghat at Rishikesh

In recognition of the yeoman service being rendered by SSSSO of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand for the past many years, the Government of Uttarakhand has named a bathing Ghat of the holy river Ganga at Rishikesh as “Sri Sathya Sai Ghat”. I was privileged to take part in its momentous inaugural event.

My heart leapt in joy and ecstasy when I came to know that Mother Ganga, having descended on earth as a result of King Bhagiratha's intense penance and after cascading down the majestic peaks of the mighty Himalayas, receives its first Mangala Arati at Sri Sathya Sai Ghat. And it is from this place that it commences its eternal and ethereal journey across the holy land of Bharat, making it fertile, quenching the thirst of millions and fulfilling the spiritual aspirations of sages, seers and seekers of truth. As part of the inaugural function, Bhagavan's Padukas were installed at Sri Sathya Sai Ghat. Even Bhagiratha, the mighty king of yore, who with his severe penance pleased Lord Brahma, persuaded Mother Ganga and brought her to earth with the help of Lord Siva, would have felt a sense of fulfilment seeing the sacred bathing Ghat named after our dear Swami who is the very manifestation of Lord Siva Himself. Even the river Bhagirathi would have felt blessed as the Divine Footprints are installed on its bank.

Bhagavan visited Rishikesh for the first time in the year 1957. While travelling in that area by car, all of a sudden Bhagavan asked the car to be stopped. He then

alighted from the car and walked down the hill briskly as if He was very much familiar with the surroundings and entered a cave, walking barefoot on stones and pebbles all along. That cave is known as Vasishtha Guha. When I visited Rishikesh for the inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Ghat, I got the opportunity to fulfil my long cherished dream of visiting this cave, sanctified by the Divine touch of our Lord's Lotus Feet. Nestled in the lap of Nature in the most enchanting, elevating, serene and sublime surroundings, this cave has been a silent witness to the gurgling waters of the Ganga flowing nearby, right from the beginning of the creation, I suppose.

Sri Purushottamananda was a most venerable spiritual giant of those days. He chose Vasishtha Guha to perform his penance and remained there till his last breath. It was only to confer His Divine blessings on Sri Purushottamananda that Bhagavan got down from the car and walked into the cave. Sri Purushottamananda and his disciples were struck with awe and devotional ecstasy seeing the most beautiful and resplendent form of our dear Lord, who at the age of 30 years embodied infinite cosmic power. After conversing with Sri Purushottamananda for almost two hours, Bhagavan, acceding to the prayers of the venerable sage and his disciples, sang a few Thyagaraja Kritis in His mellifluous Divine voice, immersing them in transcendental bliss. As Kalikananda, a disciple of Sri Purushottamananda, was suffering from ill health, Bhagavan materialised Vibhuti, rubbed it on his chest and restored his health. Bhagavan visited Vasishtha Guha again after two days, spent some time with

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IDEAL SATHYA SAI YOUTH

Dr. Narendranath Reddy

“The world needs today youth full of universal love, enthusiasm to serve and disciplined emotions.”

*Sathya Sai Speaks, vol. 15.56,
23rd November 1982*

THE YOUTH HAVE ALWAYS BEEN very dear and near to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He has emphasised their contribution, their pivotal importance and their key role in His supreme task of transforming mankind and uplifting the world.

Putting Youth on the Highway of Divinity

Lord Sai has come to transform and uplift the human consciousness through the three royal paths of selfless service, devotion and



self-enquiry, namely, the paths of Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga. This is exhibited as loving service, adoration with pure love for the Lord, and the contemplation and practice of the nectarine words of Sai. His divine words are the essence of all scriptures. This threefold path shown by Bhagavan leads to the transformation of the heart,

which is beautifully exemplified by the youth, whose lives He transformed from the worldly path to the spiritual highway towards divinity. Finally, this leads one to the inward spiritual journey, where one always has an inner experience of BABA – Being, Awareness, Bliss and Atma. Once this goal is attained, the spiritual aspirant also realises that SAI and I are one, because the whole purpose of spiritual practices, according to Swami, is to realise one's innate divinity and help others to realise the same truth.

Swami says that modern youth are making every effort to know all that is happening in the world but are not making any effort to understand the fundamental truth of human existence. All the worldly knowledge and skills will be a mere waste if one does not know one's true Self. The primary duty of man is to understand who he really is. Our true nature is pure love and service is love in action. Selfless service is perhaps the single, most efficient and universal tool for understanding, experiencing and expressing this divine principle of love.

Swami gives a lot of importance to the youth in His divine mission. He exhorts us to start early, drive slowly and reach safely for a journey by car. Similarly, He advises the youth to start their spiritual journey at an early age so that they can reach their ultimate goal safely. The youth are gifted with

energy, enthusiasm and talent which they can use positively to divinise and sanctify their lives. However, distractions are many and young adults are frequently led away by sensual pleasures and diversions, spending their lives without purpose. It is important for young adults to maintain focus on their innate divinity and practise fundamental discrimination to reach the supreme goal of their life.

During my travels around the world to attend many pre-world conferences in 2015, I was happy to see the Sathya Sai Youth actively participating in these events with energy and enthusiasm. I came to know many youth whose lives were transformed by Swami, even though they did not have close interactions or audiences with Bhagavan. Their faith, dedication and love for Swami moved me greatly, and I was impressed with their earnestness, sincerity and spiritual transformation.

Swami advises the youth to keep good company, and Avoid Bad Company (ABC). It is beautiful to see so many youth working together with unity in the Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO), surrounded by good company, which makes their spiritual journey easier and more enjoyable. Swami gave many examples of how bad company could take one away from one's spiritual goal, such as the example of Karna in the Mahabharata. Karna was a noble soul, man of great valour with magnanimous charitable nature but had a miserable end because of his bad company with the Kauravas. The youth should be careful to always avoid bad company.

Developing Fundamental Discrimination

I was fortunate to be working closely with Swami during the Sathya Sai World Youth Conference in 2007, where He lovingly guided us in every step of the

planning, preparation and implementation of the event. As the youth leaders are no doubt aware, we learnt many lessons from Bhagavan, some of which I would like to share with the readers.

Attention to detail was very important for Swami. He personally inspected the badges, banners, books, bags and pens to be given to the conference delegates to make sure that they were of good quality and worked properly. For example, He took a pen from the package to be given to the delegates, and wrote on the back of a paper pad – to make sure that the pen worked, while wasting no paper. Thus, He showed us how to check the quality, while avoiding wastage of paper.

Swami is always sensitive to the needs of the devotees and guests. It is amazing to see how intently and carefully He reviewed the menu of the food to be served to the delegates. He noticed that most of the food items were South Indian and He asked us to also include Western and North Indian dishes to cater to the taste of foreigners and people from other parts of India.

Swami emphasised the aesthetics and presentations during the conference, and checked the colour coordination of badges, banners, and other collaterals Himself, to ensure that the event was successful and enjoyed by everyone.

Bhagavan says that a young adult should be like Arjuna, who had absolute faith in Lord Krishna, one-pointed concentration on the goal and fundamental discrimination before action. The youth should have absolute and unwavering faith in their Master, and follow His teachings to cross the ocean of life. They should have one-pointed concentration on their goal, instead of frittering away their energy and enthusiasm on unnecessary



frivolities. Swami also wants one to develop fundamental discrimination to examine the consequences before jumping into action, so that the action can benefit society at large, instead of using individual discrimination for personal benefit only. He gives the example of Arjuna, who thought about the pros and cons of the great war of the Mahabharata, before engaging in it. With the guidance of the Lord, Arjuna was able to proceed in the right direction and discharge his duty with detachment and one-pointedness, not expecting the fruits of his actions, and offering all results to God.

Youth in the Service of Mankind

Bhagavan says that only young men and women of virtue are capable of eradicating the evils prevailing in society. He asks the youth to serve the needy and the distressed without any thought for recognition or reward. Love and service are the two most powerful antidotes to remove all conflicts, sorrow and misfortune that engulf mankind today. Swami exhorts the youth to discharge their duties, mindful of the truth that everyone is an embodiment of Atma. The youth should serve society with joy and love, thereby sanctifying their lives.

Realising this truth, Sathya Sai Youth serve the community throughout the world by participating in many projects of the Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO), including humanitarian service projects, disaster relief activities, interfaith meetings, and education in human values programmes. The youth thus become living examples of Bhagavan's divine love and message, inspiring their fellow beings by making His message their life. A few examples of the multifaceted youth activities around the planet are described briefly below.

Sathya Sai Youth took the initiative to start a new project in 2013, Serve the Planet, with the guidance and cooperation of the senior members of the SSIO. These projects have embraced different themes over the years, including serving the needy, serving the children, promoting human values, and most recently, serving the animals – thus encouraging one to see divinity not only in humans, but in all creation, including animals. Hundreds of service projects are held globally for the benefit of the neglected sectors of society by the international Sathya Sai Youth.

In honour of Swami's 90th Birthday, Sathya Sai Youth poured out their love for their Lord through delightful musical programmes such as, One Sai One World, which consists of 90 songs of devotion in 37 languages (available at Sathyasai.org). These musical renderings are not only masterpieces but also soul-stirring expressions of pure love for the Lord.

The Sathya Sai International Youth Leadership Programme (SSIYLP) was developed in 2014 to provide standardised leadership training to the youth based on Bhagavan's teachings. The SSIYLP graduates are now practising their leadership skills by serving the SSIO in many capacities, working hand-in-hand with the senior office-bearers of the organisation.

The momentous Sathya Sai World Youth Festival (SSWYF) held during July 2016 allowed 3,000 Youth from 70 countries to come together in the holiest of holy places, Prasanthi Nilayam, to reflect on their spiritual journey, to share experiences, to rejuvenate their Sadhana, and to rededicate their lives to Bhagavan.

The Sadhana of Love is a guidance document (available at Sathyasai.org),



which is a compendium of the ambrosial teachings of Baba on various topics for the redemption of the spiritual seeker. Created as part of the activities leading up to the SSWYF, Sathya Sai Youth have been practising these recommendations with enthusiasm and dedication, as shown by their exemplary service activities.

Role of Youth in the Divine Mission of Bhagavan

“God is Love, Love is God, Live in Love.” Bhagavan teaches us that one has to control one’s outgoing senses and turn the mind inward, to be in touch with the ultimate reality. Bhagavan advised the youth to follow the example of Hanuman, who was the master of His senses and mind and was endowed with indomitable physical, intellectual and spiritual strength to serve His Lord with pristine love and one-pointedness. He exhorted the youth to develop the head, the heart and the hands. Ideal Sathya Sai Youth should have a heart filled with love, a head with discrimination to tread Sreyo Marga (good path) not Preyo

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Sri Purushottamananda, took photos with him and materialised a Sphatika Japamala (rosary made of quartz beads) for him. One of the direct disciples of Sri Purushottamananda, who was blessed to witness these blissful events, shared all these details with me, shedding tears of joy. When we recapitulate such Mahimas (glories) of our dear Lord, our entire being is filled with immeasurable bliss.

The service activities being carried out by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in accordance with the teachings and ideals of Bhagavan are highly commendable. Our Seva Dal volunteers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana won the appreciation of one

Marga (pleasant path), and hands engaged in selfless service.

The youth have a major part to play in the Divine Mission and it is good that they have started at a very young age. With wonderful talent, new initiatives, and innovative ideas, they have demonstrated their leadership and abilities at the Tenth World Conference in 2015 and again at the Sathya Sai World Youth Festival in 2016. I am confident that the Sathya Sai Youth will be able to lead the world and the Sai Organisation in the future, following the path laid out by Bhagavan for world peace and prosperity, and the transformation of mankind.

Let us pray to Swami to guide the youth along the path laid out by Him so that they can transform themselves and transform society through love and selfless service, for an unparalleled era of world peace and prosperity.

– Dr. Narendranath Reddy, M.D. is the Chairman of Prasanthi Council, Sathya Sai International Organisation.

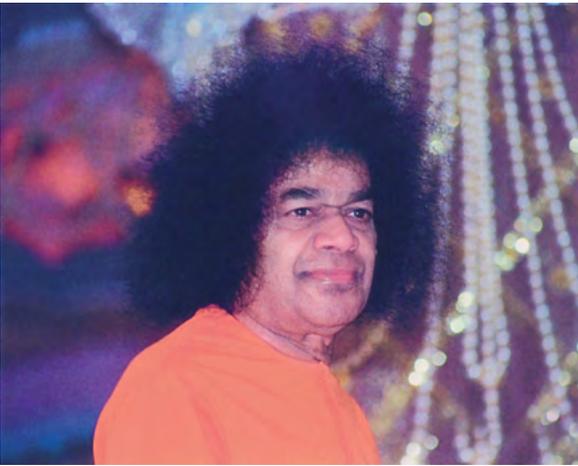
and all for their spirit of service during the recently concluded Krishna Pushkaram. The glory and grandeur of our Lord and the magnitude of our service activities continue to expand forever. The blessed opportunity of Sai Seva is attained only as a result of merits accrued over many past lives. It is our great good fortune that we are able to bathe in the eternal stream of Divine Love and sanctify our lives. Needless to say, when we hold on to the Lotus Feet of our Lord with unflinching faith and perseverance, we are bound to attain the goal of our life.

Samastha Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu.

– The author, Sri R.J. Rathnakar, is a Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

GOD'S HELPERS

A GREAT EDUCATIONIST OF India stated recently that the violent patterns of behaviour so widespread in the universities of the West have come to India. Drug addiction, licentious living, alcoholism, political agitation, with threats of violence are part of the pattern. Indian parents are very reluctant



to send their children into this corrupting and demoralising atmosphere. But what alternative do they have?

Even a brief association with Sri Sathya Sai colleges is enough to show that student life in them is in complete contrast to the ugly, depressing patterns that are becoming common elsewhere.

Dr. S. Bhagavantam, who is a close and keen observer of the Sai colleges, paints the picture much better than I could. In an article in the Golden Age of 1979 he writes, *inter alia*:

“One has only to see how any one of the Sathya Sai colleges is run, and to visit

one of the college hostels, even as a casual guest, to see what the inmates are like, and to know what the practised ideals and ways of living are... In these colleges, dignity of labour and simple living are not merely talked of, but practised... students work in the kitchen, in the dairy, in the hospital and in villages. It has been said that there is not a skill nor a branch of learning in which the students of these colleges do not acquire a high degree of proficiency...

Amongst them one can find dancers, singers, cooks, servers and nurses; public speakers, orators, electricians, radio mechanics and Vedic Pandits exhibiting their skills in an expert manner, but with commendable humility. Readiness to serve the needy and the sick in a selfless manner is so obvious amongst the students that persons who are put into the hostels to live temporarily with the students often feel ashamed of the pride and ego they bring with them.

What is not easily explainable is the fact that amidst all the other activities, academic excellence stands out, and is demonstrated each year by the several high ranks which the students of these colleges secure in all the examinations conducted by the respective universities.

One noteworthy feature is the fact that there are quite a few students who are, as it were, the spoilt children of affluent parents, educated in other schools until they are completely corrupted, and given up by their parents as irretrievable. Such youngsters, after joining the Sathya Sai colleges and hostels, so change that their parents and

former teachers cannot believe their own eyes when they see the changed products. One only has to speak to such parents, as I have often done, to realise how grateful they are to Providence for having brought their children into a unique educational institution, providing a new way of life for youth. This transformation of young people is the biggest miracle, and the most astonishing one, amongst all the miracles I have seen Sri Sathya Sai Baba perform. Each delinquent is handled in a way that suits his case, and no two are alike.”

‘He changes us from street dogs to street lamps’, wrote one student, succinctly.

Adding my own testimony to that of the worthy doctor, I have been amazed and enthralled to see the way in which these students serve their elders with alacrity and sincere respect whenever the opportunity arises. All of them are quiet, speak only when necessary, and their manners are perfect. It is a joy to be with such young sons of God, and to address them in their lecture rooms, as I have had the honour of doing on several occasions.

Once, for instance, when I had just arrived back in India, I went, unsuspectingly, into an assembly of students and teachers to hear Swami speak. But before He began, He called me forward and said: “Give these students some advice! About ten minutes”.

I was taken unawares. How was I to give advice to these young men who seemed well-nigh perfect? But when Swami says, ‘Speak’, one speaks. The theme of my short address was their good fortune in being in such an institution of learning, under the direct influence of the Avatar. My advice was that they should prepare themselves to be, what I was sure they had been chosen

to be, the perfect instruments for use in the Avatar’s divine mission. Wherever they found themselves after student days, they should always remember, their role as God’s helpers for the salvation of mankind.

Swami then stood up and spent about an hour giving them a verbal thrashing. I was amazed. But, sitting out in front of them, I was able to watch the sea of eager young faces. Strangely, they seemed not at all downcast by the stern censure they were getting from Swami. Their faces continued to glow with love and veneration as they drank in every word.

I began to think that perhaps I was wrong in praising them when Swami was doing just the opposite. But afterwards, as He went out, He looked at me, smiled and said, “That was good advice you gave them”.

Then I spoke to the college Principal, our old friend Professor D. Narender. Why, I asked him, was Swami chastising the students in that way?

“Oh,” he replied, “one or two of them have been misbehaving themselves. Those whom the cap fits, wear it. The others get a healthy reminder of the high standards required”.

“But they looked so unperturbed – quite happy, in fact!”

“Well, they are always happy to be at Swami’s Feet, and hear Him speak, whatever He might be saying. They know He loves them,” Narender explained.

That is the key. Swami is a strict disciplinarian, but his great love heals any wounds that might be inflicted by sharp verbal caning.

– Excerpted from “Sai Baba: Invitation to Glory” by Howard Murphet.

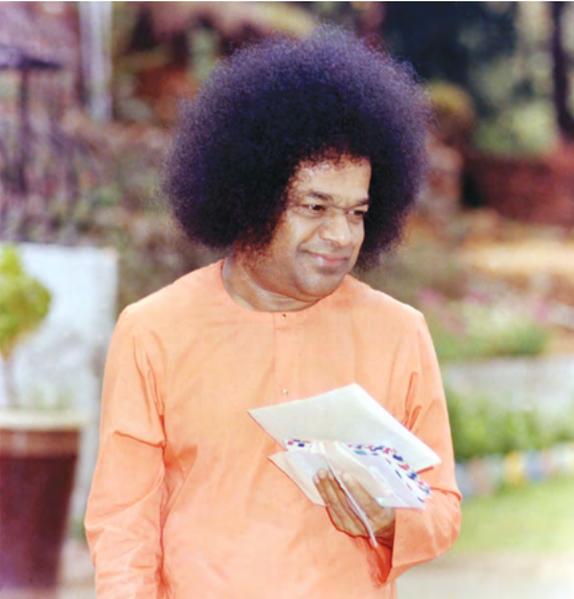
THE COSMIC CONDUCTOR

Abhirami Ajai

Indeed for every step we take towards God, He takes hundred towards us. He has the most unique way to make us realise that we all are His dear ones born to Him, and it is He who speaks, acts, sings through us. We are mere instruments in the symphony of the Cosmic Conductor.

YOUR HEART ONCE STRUCK BY the beauty of the Lord can never come out of its enchanting spell.

I was four years old when our Beloved Swami granted me His Divine Darshan for the first time. Little did I know then that it



was this 'enchanting form of God' that was going to be my love and life after a few years. Nevertheless, His charming form in ochre robe with a unique mop of hair, donned like a crown, created an unknown wave of magic in my life.

Sai Timing is the Best Timing

Perhaps one of the greatest blessings Swami gave me is my parents who are doctors (Dr. Ajai and Dr. Aswathi), Bhagavan's worthy servants, serving Him through each of the ailing hundreds who come to them everyday for mental and physical solace. They are indeed the most vital and special characters in His Divine drama. If not for their sincere spiritual fascination and dedication, I would not have had the amazing fortune to feel His loving grace on me, day and night.

Being active members of the Perambra Samithi (Calicut, Kerala), He made us fall head over heels for Him with each passing moment, making us dive deep into His beauty and glory through Bhajans, Sai literature and Satsangs. However, things took a turn when we shifted our base to Dubai. All our frantic searches for a nearby Sai Centre went in vain and thus months ran into years when Swami chose to temporarily remain invisible from the scene. But all the while, we continued to feel His unmatched presence and love in our lives, from the most mundane to the critical events.

It was in August 2013, after I had sung for a couple of films, when I got a call from a music director in India asking if I could

record a Sai Bhajan for an album being produced in Dubai. This was all in the flash of a second. In paramount excitement, I rang up my parents for their nod (It was close to asking if I could breathe). The next day, I found myself standing in front of the mike singing out 'Sai'. What a way to restart our journey with Swami! After a few months, my father decided to call the producer of the album to know the progress.

God's timing is the best timing. Father was filled with gratitude to hear that his call had been one of the miracles of Swami. In fact, he made the call just moments after Swami blessed the CD stack with heaps of Vibhuti and a beautiful golden Lingam at the Dubai Sai Centre. Since the CD was to be released that evening for Swami's Birthday celebrations, the producer invited us for the release. When you are ready for the responsibility of commitment to Him, Swami Himself will reveal the Divine plan to you. By His pure grace, He made me render three devotional songs including Sadasiva Brahmenda's "Sarvam Brahmamayam" in an unexpected way that very evening as if He was welcoming us back into His Divine embrace!

Miracles and Materialisations

Soon after this incident, Bhagavan prompted us to go to Shirdi to get the Divine Father's blessings before my first full-fledged concert. Baba so mercifully granted us His Darshan and Ararti which still linger in our hearts with absolute freshness. While I was standing in the devotees' line, my programme invitation card was taken from my hand so naturally by one of the priests at the Mandir. He kept it at Baba's Samadhi for a while and gave it back to me filled with his spiritual blessings. The powerful glance of Baba squeezed all the bad Karmas and negativity out of me through an attack of

chicken pox I had been diagnosed with on the day of our return. However, the most compassionate Lord made our trip smooth and fine in spite of my terrible condition and made the programme a great success.

With these incidents, we were once again finding our way back home to our Mother Sai. Soon He made us dedicated members of the Dubai Centre, giving me chances to sing His glory, granting my parents opportunities to speak of His Love and gifting us His wonderful miracles every now and then to make our lives 'Sai-full'. Swami, being the indweller of our hearts (Antartyami) made us busy in His work just to bless us with more and more miracles. Vibhuti, Sindoor (vermillion) and idol manifestations at home became a cause of transformation of our hearts, filling us with tears of joy and gratitude. Every time Swami materialised a Divine idol for us, He explained even the minutest detail of His wondrous creation, reminding us repeatedly that there is none like our Bhagavan who cares and loves us so deeply and purely.

In the month of May 2015, the Bhajan group of the Dubai Centre was granted the blessed opportunity to sing for Swami at His Abode of Supreme Peace, Prasanthi Nilayam. Being the junior most member of the group I was thrilled to go to my Homeland, Parthi after 12 long years and bask in the warmth of my Mother Sai. However, on the D-Day, the terrible news was broken that the ladies of the group were not allowed to sing. Who knew that it was a test paper of Swami! Everyone expected me to be shattered by this news, being a young, tender girl filled with wild love for her Bhagavan, but Swami took over the situation and He spoke through me. "Swami comes where His glory is sung with 100% devotion. He is bound to listen to us wherever we sing. Let us accept this



as His decision. Swami is going to give us something bigger,” said the Swami residing in me as my conscience. On the day we bid farewell to Parthi, as our car passed the Ganesh Gate, streams of hot tears were flowing out of my blurred eyes and looking at my dearest friend in Parthi, Sai Ganesh, I prayed to him internally to call me back as soon as possible.

Concerts at Prasanthi Nilayam

A few months later, I received a message from the State President of Kerala, Prof. Mukundan saying, ‘His Will and her prayers have materialised’. Swami gave me the most blessed stage in Sai Kulwant Hall to sing for Him on the auspicious day of Onam, 28th August 2015. What followed next was a period of intense prayer and practice. It was the time when Swami was busy at work with cutting, grinding and polishing me, transforming me into literally His Bangaru (gold). From the selection of songs to the attire for the day, He did it all as the most loving Mother and Father.

A few days prior to my concert, Swami astonished us once again with His love. Even it is for the millionth time, His miracles and love never fail to amaze us. As always, my father kept the list of songs I was going to sing for the Parthi concert, at His Lotus Feet in our altar in the morning. Swami so planned it that it was co-incidentally a holy Ashadi Ekadasi Day. Evening as father returned from work, He was welcomed by the strumming of a Tanpura from the house. Within a few minutes, the Tanpura tone ended with a snap. When father entered the altar to pay His obeisance to Swami, He was dumbfounded to see Swami’s holy Padam (footprints) imprinted on Vibhuti which materialised at home for the third time. What was even more delightful was

He has never ever broken His promise to sing through me, for I experience it all the time I sing. The ease with which the melody comes out through your vocal chords undoubtedly indicates that it is the Cosmic Musician, Sai Nadarupini who is singing through you. When the Bhava of the song pierces into your being, you can be sure that you have been taken over by Bhagavan to make the song His own.

that our Beloved Bhagavan materialised a Hanuman idol that was stuck to the left footprint of Swami!!!

After a thorough introspection into this Leela, we learnt that Swami wanted to teach us that all His children, His chosen ones should strive to be like Hanuman who is the embodiment of devotion, personification of surrender and the very symbol of sincerity and obedience. Likewise, each of us should be Swami’s powerful, steadfast ‘Sai Doothas’ (messengers) to carry the message of Swami to the hearts of millions across the world. Bhagavan wants us to place the illusory, ego-filled ‘I’ at His Lotus Feet and take the real, love-filled ‘I’ from Him.

After the maiden concert at Prasanthi, He most lovingly called me again to present concerts four times back to back at His abode at Prasanthi and Brindavan. Last year for Bhagavan’s 90th Birthday celebrations, He Himself made me a humble part of it by giving me opportunities to present concerts at many places of His holy presence all over Kerala.



None of this should be ever credited to us, for these are only the manifestations of His greatness, graciousness, ultimate compassion and infinite love. Indeed for every step we take towards God, He takes hundred towards us. He has the most unique way to make us realise that we all are His dear ones born to Him, and it is He who speaks, acts, sings through us. We are mere instruments in the symphony of the Cosmic Conductor.

I will Sing for you Everywhere

Each concert is a chance He gives me to get closer and closer to Him. The list of songs He inspires me for every concert is kept at His Lotus Feet. Out of sheer Divine Love, Swami blesses it every time with heaps of fragrant Vibhuti and Sindoor along with His signature of "Baba Bless" without fail. Swami so lovingly inflates in me the confidence and faith in Him by writing with sindoor "Sai Sings". It is these very simple yet profound words of Bhagavan that have instilled in me the quality of complete surrender (Sarvaswa Saranagathi) which overpowers me even while singing a concert. As said in the Bhagavadgita, everything is already done by Him. The future has already become the present for the Lord, and we are just His humble instruments for Him to carry out the operation in this world.

Through Personal Letters (total of 9) and Divine Messages He writes to my parents (materialisations), He time and again reminds us to see, experience and love the Sai in all. In one of His letters, He wrote to me, "You are My child. I gave you My cosmic waves, Naada. I will sing for you everywhere. I sing. I listen. Begin with My praise everywhere you sing in your life with folded hands, surrendered ego".

This is indeed Bhagavan's message to all the young singers who surrender themselves

at His Lotus Feet. We really don't have anything to surrender since this life, this body, this mind, this voice, everything which forms this 'I' is His. This realisation is verily what Bhagavan expects from 'Surrender'. It is His unconditional love, as clear as the morning dewdrop and as deep as the ocean which is poured upon me through the world and I am so grateful to all the wonderful souls who were instrumental in tying me closer and tighter to Bhagavan.

As I write this now, my eyes well up with tears of gratitude for my Lord's supreme compassion, generosity and grace. He has never ever broken His promise to sing through me, for I experience it all the time I sing. The ease with which the melody comes out through your vocal chords undoubtedly indicates that it is the Cosmic Musician, Sai Nadarupini who is singing through you. When the Bhava of the song pierces into your being, you can be sure that you have been taken over by Bhagavan to make the song His own.

These glorious miracles of Bhagavan's Sankalpa, which have gained greater momentum after 2011, reiterate the plain truth that our sweetest Bhagavan is living in each cell of this universe, and in each of our hearts as Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Actions. He is the 'Parabrahman', the 'Naada' (waves) of the Cosmos' as He graciously revealed in one of His Magnificent Letters to us.

Let us change, for Bhagavan needs us as His weapon of Dharma (righteousness) to dim humanity and lighten divinity. He wants us as His arrow of love to strike humanity and establish Divinity.

He is waiting for us to be His Light of unbounded bliss and joy to spread amongst

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YOUTH: THE TORCHBEARERS OF SAI MISSION

Nimish Pandya

Swami used to lovingly call these youth groups as “Tlly Boys”. He proudly owned them. These youth in India today move like an army with absolute resolve and surrender to serve society as per the divine dictum. Some of them today stand as true leaders of the Sai Organisation leading by example not only in India but across the world.

BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA is truly a unique phenomenon of our times... an epitome of pure love and selfless Seva whose greatest miracle is transformation of man. His humanitarian



projects have offered sustainable solutions to long-pending problems of our society. What is unique about Sri Sathya Sai Baba's projects is that they are free to the beneficiaries, run by kind-hearted

volunteers, offering world-class quality and enduring relief to huge systemic level problems. These projects not only benefit the end-users but also the volunteers as well. Volunteers, in the process of helping, learn the importance of servitude, selflessness, responsibility and care – which are verily universal human values.

Inspired by such noble and idolising aspects of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, India is frequently undertaking free, volunteer-driven projects in the area of Agricare, Educare, Medicare. The Sai phenomenon is unique because of this midas touch, i.e., not only did He role-model the work, but He also inspired millions across the world to live out the values that are core to mankind.

Sathya Sai Youth in India with this divine inspiration have been marching forward as per the divine dictum of Bhagavan to render service in society. Today, “Transforming Self to Transform the World” is the motto of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation. Bhagavan in His infinite love and grace has endearingly interacted with thousands of youth across the world bringing in them a silent transformation and leading them into the path of service to their motherland.

Bhagavan Himself is a shining example as the Leader of leaders in this direction of spreading selfless love to beings. Today, I am happy to announce that Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, India has a clear-cut vision for the youth of India across the board. I pray to Bhagavan to bless these youth to be the torchbearers of the Sai Mission in India and abroad in the years to come.

I have personally witnessed many youth groups that had close interactions with Swami and they were and are also very close to Bhagavan's heart even today... Youth groups from Karnataka, Kerala, Mumbai and Hyderabad have been specially blessed and personally mentored by Bhagavan rendering service directly under His divine supervision. Be it the Grama Seva programme, slum development programme, skilling the rural youth for livelihood or Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Jyothi initiatives of the Organisation... all these have a clear vision of contribution for the development of society. The inspiration for these projects is our Divine Master Bhagavan Baba.

Swami used to lovingly call these youth groups as "My Boys". He proudly owned them. These youth in India today move like an army with absolute resolve and surrender

to serve society as per the divine dictum. Some of them today stand as true leaders of the Sai Organisation leading by example not only in India but across the world.

The directions of Bhagavan are universal and are borderless. Appreciating and supporting these youth groups for their sincere efforts, I commend the work being taken up across the nook and corner of the country and wish to thank these countless youth members that have been greatly benefited and are actively rendering Seva in His Mission.

As All India President, I shall personally strive to contribute and support my bit in every step the youth of India take up in their path to serve the nation, with Bhagavan being our eternal partner to guide, direct, mentor and bless our endeavours.

May the legacy of the Sai Mission surge forward with the youth of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation leading it from the front today, tomorrow and ever after!

With Love at His Lotus Feet.

– Sri Nimish Pandya is All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, India.

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humanity, His Divinity. It is never too late for He is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient. It is just that from His five feet frame He has flown out to occupy the whole universe, with each atom echoing His name and glory. Come, let us join our hands and run along the Spiritual Path, for my beloved inner Sai says:

"O My child, wake up and come!
slow and steady,
run forth into My arms

outstretched to receive you
into My loving embrace.

Hear your heart's yearning for the
priceless gifts of Mine,
and come running, slow and steady
into this Universal Mother's
widespread arms!..."

– The author Kumari Abhirami Ajai is an accomplished singer who has presented many concerts at Prasanthi Nilayam.





SHRUTI SAMANTRAY

LIFE WITH LIVING GOD

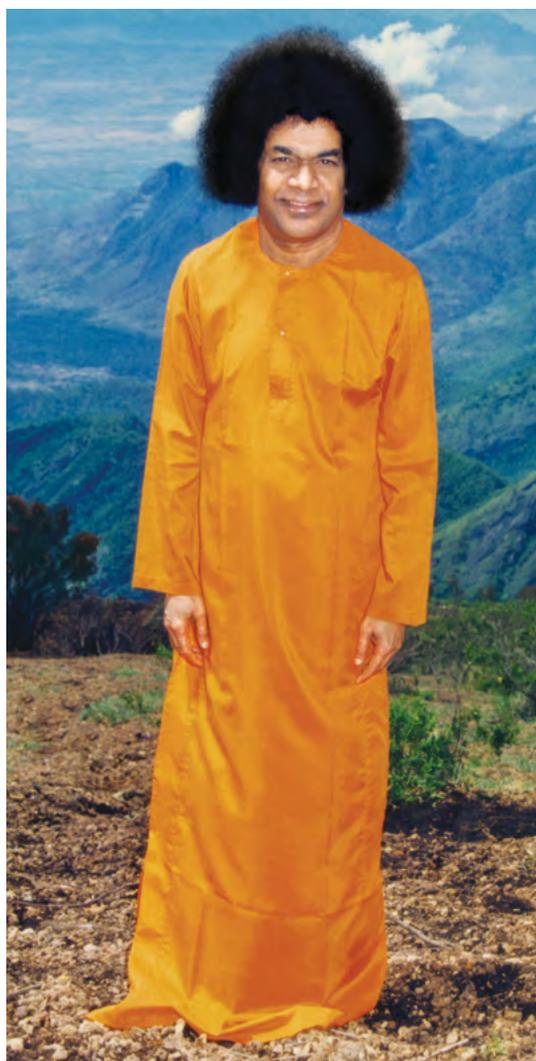
FOR A TREE TO GROW, THE ROOTS have to be strong, without which the tree has no stand. Similarly, Sai education is the foundation and root for personal growth and development in every sphere.

Being born in a family where every second, every thought, every word and deed is dedicated to our Swami, I knew it from tender age that life without Swami was zero. It was in the year 2006 that I joined Sri Sathya Sai Primary School in 11th grade. Only then I realised that even though from a tender age my parents and I were very much involved in Swami's Bhajans, Bal Vikas classes, Nama Sankirtan, etc., yet it was completely a new phase and story of my life for which I had been dreaming all those years to live with the living God, and it made my base and roots and beliefs stronger and firm.

Swami always says, "If you take one step towards Me with love and devotion, I shall take 100 steps towards you". This was well proved by this incident which happened in the year 2007. It was in the month of March when we were on final preparations for our 12th grade Board exams. On 27th March morning, I slipped and hurt my legs and was even unable to move due to severe pain. It was the worst thought ever as I knew because 29th March was my birthday,

and we always got a chance to take Padanamaskar from Swami and give letters to Him and take blessings on such special days. I was in tears and pain. I wrote letters to Swami and kept them in our dormitory altar, conveying how badly I wanted Swami with me and bless me on my birthday.

The morning of 29th March was not exciting for me as I knew I would not be able to see Swami. I was disheartened but at the same time I wished desperately with tears rolling down if Swami could in some way come down and I get one glance of His, it would make my day. We had morning



preparation study hours; so, we all were scattered in the premises preparing for the same. Suddenly, I heard the siren and crowd on the road screaming out “Swami... Swami”... Primary School and other nearby campus students ran to the gate to figure out Swami’s car on the road and I was so happy but due to the severe pain I could not even move and find a place for me near the entrance to have the Divine Darshan. I sat there helpless, crying and yet thanking Swami to have come out of the Mandir which at times Swami does.

Just before the Primary School Campus main road, there is another road which directly connects to the back gate of our school and I could not believe my eyes when I saw children running back again to this gate shouting, “Swami is coming to school”. Immediately Munni Aunty, our Principal made the Arati Thali ready with a coconut and she gave it to me, saying “Swami came for you, it’s your moment with Him”. The car reached the portico of the school and I was right there. The car door slid and Swami turned to me saying, “Birthday... birthday, Padanamaskar Teesko (take Padanamaskar)”. I just could not ask and think of anything else and I was blank. I took Arati, blessings and the Lotus Feet. His smile was the entire universe to me. My tears washed Swami’s feet and He blessed me abundantly and two other birthday kids and left the campus. For 10 minutes, Swami was with us and I was overwhelmed that Swami who is my mother, father, guide, mentor and everything came down all the way to give me Darshan and show His love for His children.

Swami has always shown His presence and proximity to us as students, and the

best phase of my life was being with Swami, singing His glory, singing in front of Him and living with Him. Our day started and ended with Swami, every second of which was dedicated to Sai Maa. Swami used to take care of every minute detail as to the menu for meals, the timings, schedules, and He pampered us all the time. Thus, we never missed home as the love we got from Swami is beyond words.

Experiences with Swami are numerous, each single day came up with new experience and was magical. Swami always answered my prayers even before I told Him. He blessed me and my family and gave us the understanding that our life was all His. He is the guardian of my family, silent guest to every meal and decision maker of everything, and till this day we feel His presence and know that Swami is there with us every time. My father and mother, who have dedicated every bit of their breath to Swami, know only one place to visit, i.e., Puttaparthi, the Divine abode. For us, life is Saimaya (full of Sai, His thoughts, His teachings and His Message).

Swami, you gave me ample chances to perform, sing Your glory during Akhanda Bhajans in Sai Kulwant Hall and that is the best ever gift I could ask for and imagine. I immensely thank You, Swami for making me a part of Your Mission. Even after years of my passing out from Your university, You still give me chances to perform for programmes from my State, Odisha (Odisha Parthi Yatra). I thank You Swami for everything and I dedicate it all to You as without You I am nothing, with You by my side, I can conquer everything.

– The author is a former student of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School and Anantapur Campus of the Institute.



Gopi Krishna Pidatala

OUR BEST FRIEND SRI SATHYA SAI

YOUTH IN INDIA AND ACROSS the world are getting carried away by certain influences which are not true and real to their own cultural heritage. Values of the yesteryears which have been so closely safeguarded from generations are getting shattered with the



new age technology. Youngsters are getting entangled in wrong actions. India, known for its rich and ancient spiritual heritage, is also one of the countries facing this challenge despite its rich ancient cultural heritage.

Walk Towards God

It is at this point that our Divine Lord Sai has provided succour to all of us with His Upadesha – (Divine words) for over 85 years and the Hyderabad Youth Group

in particular has been one of those large groups in the world which has had the unique and very great fortune of being under His guidance right from the early 1980's. In the following few paragraphs, I shall be sharing a few of such divine thoughts for the welfare of youth across the world. I am blessed to share the care and love our Divine Mother Sai showered, especially on young adults.

During one of the group interviews, one of the boys asked the Lord, with a lot of concern, "Swami, we are all in Maya (delusion). How do we come out of this delusion"? Swami, the all-knowing Lord, smiled. With a surprised look, He asked, "Where? Where is Maya"? He continued, "There is no Maya. For example, let us consider that you are walking in the opposite direction of the sun and you see a shadow in front of you. Right? Consider yourself walking towards the sun, the shadow is behind you and you don't see the shadow. Correct"? We all nodded in agreement. "In a similar manner, Maya is seen when you walk towards worldly things. Instead, walk towards godly things. Dear boys, walk towards God... then Maya will be left behind you like the shadow you see. Understand?" This is a great lesson from the Almighty Lord to make us understand as to how we can stay away from Maya, lead a life of values and Seva and get nearer to God.

On another occasion, as we were all seated at the Divine Feet of our Mother Sai in that small, beautiful most-sought-after room in Prasanthi Mandir, the interview room, Swami said, with a lot of love, "My dear children, from today, all of you need to develop love in your hearts". With a twinkle in His eyes and a bewitching mischievous smile, Swami continued, "This love, I am talking about is not that love which you have,



think all the time and see in the cinemas. That is mad love! All the love that is shown in the cinemas is contraction love! What I am speaking about is expansion love”.

Immediately, one of the boys, with audacity, asked the Lord, “Swami, what is the difference between the two”? Swami, in all His love, explained in this manner, “When we talk of something as ‘mine’, it is selfish. The love that comes with selfishness is called contraction love. This love does not expand and is limited and has a boundary. When we talk of ‘thine’ with the feeling that all that exists is of the Almighty, the love that emanates from such a divine feeling is expansion love which has no limitation and no boundary”!

I am sure that you all now understand what Bhagavan was trying to hint to all of us. The love that He gives has no limitations, no boundaries, beyond caste, creed, region, religion and colour... Pure Love! Does it not remind us about a Bhajan that Swami so melodiously sings... “Love is My form... Truth is My breath... Bliss is My food...” These thoughts give absolute clarity to each one of us to expand our love in His Mission. Come, let us do our bit in expanding this phenomenon of love across boundaries.

Make God the Resident of your Heart

Swami was once narrating to us the story of Mira Bai, a great devotee of Sri Krishna. He mentioned that all His devotees aspire to get close to Him in terms of physical proximity.

“All of you desire to be very close to Me in physical terms – you feel that a few centimetres away is also a great distance! Right?” He asked. We all nodded our heads. He went on to say, with that divine enchanting smile on His face, “Frankly, to tell you the

Attaining perfection in the state of mind is Sadhana. It is only when you are in a state of mind where you are in love with your own Self would you be in a state of mind to love all. When you are in this state, you are ready to serve all. This is Sadhana to Me.

truth, I do not know what physical distance means. I am beyond physical distance! God is beyond physical distances. One should learn to pray to the God within their own hearts”. Swami further explained, “Let Me tell you, My dear children, God is not in a temple outside. Your body is His temple. He resides in your heart”. He added, “When the Rana of Chittor (Rajasthan) did not allow Mira to enter the temple, she immediately realised this truth and practised this form of devotion. She declared for her own self that her heart is a temple where Lord Krishna resides, and it is at this point of time that she rendered the famous and popular Bhajan”:

*Chalo Re Man Ganga Yamuna Teer,
Ganga Yamuna Nirmal Pani Sheetal Hota Sarir* (Oh mind! Go to the banks of the Ganga and Yamuna; the water of Ganga and Yamuna is pure; it will make the body cool and serene).

The Lord then sang the entire Bhajan for all of us... the Divine Lord in Divine ecstasy! We were so fortunate! Things did not stop at that point. Lord Sathya Sai Krishna, seated in front of us, continued to explain with gestures the meaning of the Bhajan.

He explained that Ganga Yamuna here mean the subtle channels in the spine, Ida and Pingala, and Teer denotes the point where they meet in the centre of eyebrows;



the point of concentration where one can feel the presence of God! When man focuses at this point of concentration, the cool breeze of bliss and joy will pervade within. Brothers and sisters, isn't this explanation amazing? Let us all make our hearts the residence of our Lord and derive the bliss and joy of the grace of the Almighty... more so when we do not see the Lord in His physical form in Prasanthi Nilayam.

No Dearth of Money for Good Work

During another interaction, one of the members of the youth group said, "Swami, we have a great passion to do service but money is something..." The Lord did not let him complete the sentence. He quickly remarked, "If you talk about money, you will get a beating now! Tell me, when did you ever feel the pinch for money for service? Did I not give you all enough money whenever you wanted? Remember each one of you, whenever you have an inclination to do good work, money will automatically come. Good work is God's work and God will take care of the money"! We, as mortals, still have that doubt despite witnessing as to how the Lord had taken up huge service projects with His Sankalpa! It is time that, as devotees of the Divine Lord, we follow His message and His Divine Steps to do good work which automatically becomes God's work and He takes care of it! It has happened with us and we are sure it will happen to everyone who takes up Seva as God's work.

This reminds me of yet another incident which actually proves and substantiates His words. This is not to prove His divinity but more so to reaffirm the faith we should have in Him. We were all seated (about 15 of us) in the interview room. Swami was talking about service. I was one of the eldest in the group along with another brother called

Uday Bhaskar Reddy who actually was leading the team of the Hyderabad Youth Group. At this point of time, in fact, I was the only earning member in the Hyderabad Youth Group with a definite income every month. As the conversation shifted to the topic of Seva, suddenly, the Lord cast a stern look at me and chided me, "Pakoda, I do not like what you are doing! (Swami lovingly used to call me Pakoda which I cherish till date (Pakoda is a delicacy in India made of Bengal gram which bloats when fried in oil). He also used to call me Bonda (which is another delicacy in Southern India), double size, Ghatotkacha, son of Bhima.

The stern look sent a chill down my spine. I immediately said, "I am sorry, Swami". The readers at this time may be wondering as to why I immediately gave in and apologised. Let me tell you, dear brothers and sisters, I have learnt over the years that it is always the best approach to accept what the Divine Lord says. I am sure that you would all agree that the omniscient Lord knows how many mistakes we commit every second, knowingly or unknowingly. If I had asked Him, "What did I do, Swami"?, the Lord would have pulled out a list of wrongs that I had done. So, why challenge? Meekly accept – this is the best way with the Divine Lord. So, I apologised.

When I did so, His stern looks became a little softer and He said, "Why are you taking loans, that too at a high rate of interest, and doing Seva? I don't like it at all". I humbly said, "Swami, we started the project and we were stuck for funds. I took this loan to complete so that we do not get a bad name for Sai". His immediate reaction was, "Don't do that. As a leader, you are setting a bad example for others. You are doing good work. You should come and ask Me, I shall



give you money. Never take a loan from outside. What will people think? They will think that this Sai Baba is asking children to raise money through loans, that too on high interest and do Seva... it will send a wrong message... your intention is good but the society out there will not understand". He assured us that for good work, Swami would make money rain and see that there was no dearth of funds at any time. He further said that money actually would flow like a perennial river for good work.

Importance of Darshan

We all aspire to be called for an interview by Swami. Once Swami called the youth group. During the interview, one of the brothers had the audacity to say, "Swami, these days you have not been calling us for interview". Immediately, Swami said, "I have called you now". The boy's response was, "Swami, please call the entire group". We were only a few of the group in Prasanthi Nilayam and hence that plea. Swami smiled and said, "You are all busy people. You never wait. You boys come, work in the canteen and leave. You never come for Darshan too. Your focus is on Seva but you should also have Darshan. You should come when I am free, not during festival time... but also remember if butter has to melt there is a need for heat. Right? Similarly, if you want Me to call you, you should also practise what I have taught you. Then I shall definitely call you. I shall be always with you, beside you, behind you, in front of you and all around you! So, start practising from this second". Isn't this true? We always seek the grace of the Lord without getting into perfection mode. We also learnt that day the importance of Divine Darshan!

Having said all this, dear brothers and sisters, let me emphasise that the divine messages that Swami gives us or has given

us are for a lifetime which we should pass on from generation to generation. The need of the hour is to transform ourselves to be better human beings, follow our ancient cultural heritage and not get influenced by unwarranted influences of society. We need to realise that Swami lived in Prasanthi, lives in Prasanthi and will live in Prasanthi Nilayam besides residing in our hearts as the embodiment of Divine Love. Let us not get carried away by Swami being seen in a light body... speaking through someone else... my take is that Swami is the purest form in the universe and definitely does not need someone's polluted body to speak through... If at all He needs to speak to us... He will do so... as ours is a heart to heart relationship with Him...

We have all read about Lord Krishna's Divine Leelas and teachings. Similarly, over the last century we have read the messages and Leelas of the Divine Master Shirdi Sai. I recall that our Lord Mother Sai had declared, addressing the devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall, and in specific the Hyderabad Youth Group, on 3rd March 1996 that there would be a day when His messages, His Leelas and the Seva that His devotees have undertaken would be spoken about by our great great grandchildren. Are we not fortunate to be contemporaries of the Lord? If we feel happy about it... let us all together move forward to put into practice His teachings and take the legacy of Sathya Sai forward...

May Sai bless us all to be worthy instruments in His Mission... which is His-Story to create History!

– The author is a founder member of the Hyderabad Youth Group and a Trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva Trust.



MY JOURNEY TO BHAGAVAN

Julio Vivenes Villavicencio

Sai is omnipresent, infinite love, present everywhere, all the time. We feel touched, loved and blessed by His presence. He has always been, and will always be, with us, in us, above us, below us and around us, leading us to experience the divine and true reality that we are one and the same with Him – Supreme Love.



OUR BELOVED BHAGAVAN HAS declared: “The first quality every member of the Sathya Sai Organisation should have is firm faith in God. This faith must be based on the awareness that God is omnipresent”.

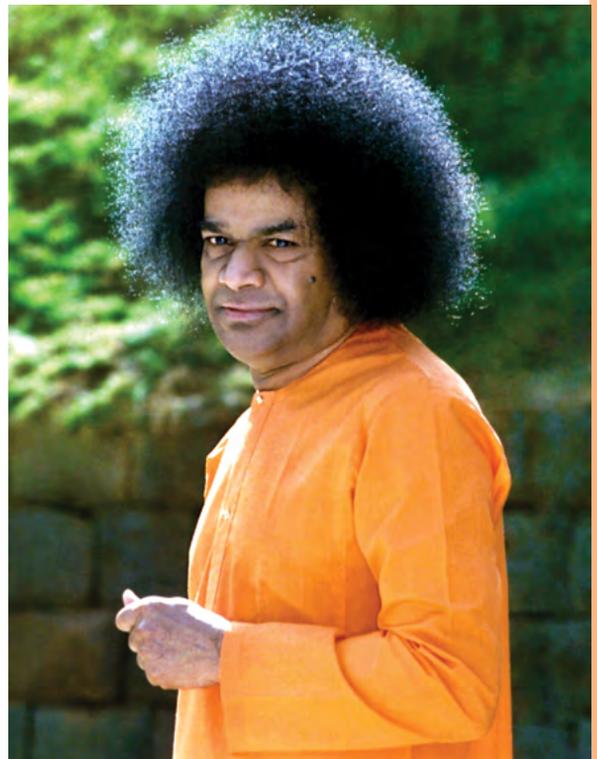
In His infinite love, Sathya Sai Baba performed many wonderful Leelas for our family, filling our hearts with faith and hope. When I was four years old, I fell seriously ill with meningitis. My fever was so high and the illness so advanced that doctors at the hospital doubted I could survive more than two or three days and if I did survive, they said that I would be left with permanent brain damage.

Shirdi Sai as Santa Claus

My parents were completely devastated, and the doctors said only a miracle could save me. So, my parents began to pray intensely to Baba with absolute faith, chanting “Om Sai Ram” for hours until sunrise, placing Vibhuti all over my body. The next morning, they were surprised to observe my fever had gone down. The doctors also questioned what happened and began new tests and check-ups, and suddenly the disease simply left me. The

doctors could not believe what they had just seen and had no explanation. That same day, the medical board concluded that my case was a miracle. Soon after, an elderly man dressed in a Santa Claus suit entered my room in the hospital, handed a piece of candy and blessed us with his hand. Without speaking, the person with a mysterious face and eyes full of love, left the room. My father opened the door of the room to thank the man, but he was not there! He had vanished completely!

My father went to the nurses’ station located right in front of my room and asked about the Santa Claus figure to thank him for the kind gesture. But to his surprise, the nurses told him they did not know who he was talking about as no one had entered



my room, let alone a person dressed like Santa Claus. My father could not believe it, so immediately returned to the room and looked out of the window, which faced an avenue in the city. Then, he saw the Santa who gave us candies, greeting my father from afar, before he disappeared. We were all very surprised, and it was not until my father saw a picture of Shirdi Sai Baba that he realised who the mysterious Lord was.

Sai is omnipresent, infinite love, present everywhere, all the time. We feel touched, loved and blessed by His presence. He has always been, and will always be, with us, in us, above us, below us and around us, leading us to experience the divine and true reality that we are one and the same with Him – Supreme Love.

Swami in the Car of my Sister

I want to share another wonderful experience with Sai, where we witnessed His infinite love and omnipresence. It all started in the year 2000, on 12th April, which is the birthday of my older sister. That day, she was coming out of the office building where she worked with two friends. They decided to create some memories and began to take pictures with her friend's camera. In those days, cameras were still using film rolls, and they took some photos outside the building. A few days later, the friend who owned the camera called my sister to come over and take the developed photographs. He also said that he had a question to ask her. When she arrived, he showed her the picture of her car in the background and asked her who was the guy in the photo? And guess who it was? It was our Beloved Swami, sitting as a passenger in the back seat of my sister's car! My sister had no words of explanation. She told him that He was a holy man in India who our family prayed to. Her friend gave the photo to my sister, but not the negative.

A couple of years later, in 2002, I travelled to Prasanthi Nilayam, and one July afternoon, during a wonderful interview with Swami, I asked Him several questions that had nothing to do with this miracle. Suddenly, I thought about the photo and I immediately said aloud, "Swami, did you appear in the photo"? He immediately burst into a big smile saying, "Yes, yes. Inside the car of your sister. You know that Swami is everywhere". He continued laughing, and I laughed with Him. What a wonderful way to confirm His omnipresence!

In 2005, one of my cousins came to Prasanthi Nilayam carrying letters from everyone in the family. My sister had included that same photo. My mother told her, "The photo is a gift from Baba and you should have it and preserve it". But my sister insisted that she wanted to send it back to Swami. So, my cousin gave Swami the letters.

In 2007, in preparation for the World Youth Conference, the youth were asked to share stories and experiences for a publication that would be released at the conference. My sister now felt sorry that she did not have the picture any more, and she began writing letters to Swami asking Him to return the photo.

One fine day after we returned to our country in South America, Venezuela, my sister was looking for something in the closet of her room, and lo and behold! The picture was there right on top of a box! My sister was astonished. On top of that, my mother had a dream in which Swami appeared and said, "I have already returned the photo to her, to share it with everyone". The Love of Sai melted our hearts completely. The photo was framed and is currently placed in

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EXPERIENCING THE DIVINE LOVE OF BHAGAVAN

Dr. Shivendra Kumar

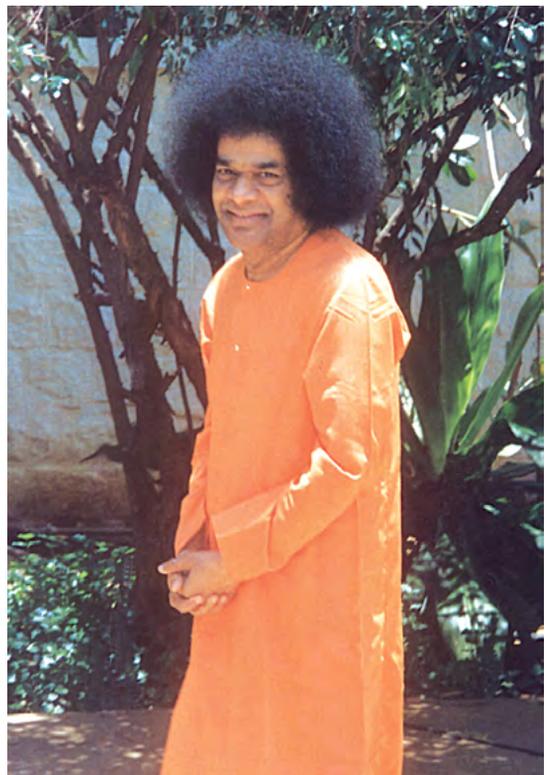
Transformation of individuals is the miracle of the present world and this is how Sathya Sai Baba is continuing His Mission of restoring Dharma with His Love.

THE MARVELLOUS SATHYA SAI World Youth Festival (SSWYF) held during July 2016 attracted 3,000 youth from 70 countries to come together at Prasanthi Nilayam. This was possible only due to the divine blessings bestowed by Bhagavan Baba on His cherished youth. Let me share some of those memories in this short article.

A group of us, Sathya Sai Youth, were brainstorming about ways to get the entire global Sathya Sai Youth population to Prasanthi Nilayam, and the idea of a colourful, engaging and unique Sathya Sai Youth Festival was born. With Sathya Sai Baba's blessings, the idea progressed through the approval process and preparations commenced for what was to be a life-changing event for me as well as many others.

Being part of the Sathya Sai Youth programme for the last 17 years and the Sai Spiritual Education programme before that had provided me the opportunity to always connect with Swami through the people I interacted with. For me, the interactions grew globally as the International Youth Coordinator and all of a sudden, the big world of the Sathya Sai Organisation was in front of me. Hundreds of youth were working long hours, many of them after long hours at their day jobs, to complete their assignments for the festival. What was interesting to see

was that volunteers did not require fancy team building workshops and retreats to get engaged and many were working virtually without having ever physically met their team members. Through this experience, I learnt that Bhagavan's love is what makes things happen – it is the source. The celebration of being a Sai Youth for me was just beginning, having experienced the vastness of the Sai Mission through interactions with youth globally.



As planning progressed and the Sathya Sai Youth Festival drew closer, venue arrangements at Prasanthi Nilayam had to be made. As the venues were getting finalised, it seemed that Prasanthi Nilayam was designed and built to host events of such magnitude and grandeur. I experienced the vision and foresightedness of Baba's work. Not only that, throughout the planning process, I worked with several teams and experienced collaboration enriched with human values that Swami always talked about. It was all real, with real people and was yet another example of the world He created. During the planning and preparation process, many a times, as one would expect, there were challenges and problems to be solved. There were many such moments where answers would come from His own life, teachings and philosophy. What made this journey more breathtaking was that Baba's teachings related to ceiling on desires and mind control were still relevant for all of us. Within me and many working on the festival, the process was quickly evolving into a joyful experience and celebration of His life, teachings and philosophy.

The Sathya Sai World Youth Festival was to become a platform to share Swami's message and love. It did not take much time to assemble high-quality talent to help create original art, literature and music to capture Baba's life, teachings and mission and share it using modern tools, such as social media. There were top-notch graphic designers, website developers, musicians, content developers, audio-visual technicians, photographers and media personnel within the Sathya Sai Youth programme. While most of them had never met before, all of them had very unique

The biggest lesson however came in the form of being able to experience Him throughout the journey of organising the Sathya Sai Youth Festival. There were numerous moments when I was lost and short of solutions; where I had to surrender and rely on divine intervention. In those moments, like a parent, Swami carried me in His arms and helped me find a solution.



experiences with their Beloved Swami. It quickly became evident to me that while we were preparing for the Youth Festival from 2013, our Master had begun preparations long before, much earlier than most of us were born. How else would every talent required for the Sathya Sai Youth Festival be at our disposal in such a short time and for a project of such magnitude?

Amongst the many rewarding instances the Sathya Sai World Youth Festival provided me was the experience of working with the elders of the Sai Mission, many of whom had spent their entire lives serving Baba. Elders, sometimes almost twice my age, were working round-the-clock ensuring each and every requirement of ours was attended to promptly. Moreover, through their experiences working with Swami in similar events, they were able to guide us on developing a programme that would be worthy of offering at the Divine Lotus Feet. I learnt how He would review every detail of a programme and ensure it was completely ready so that the presentation was perfect



and pleasing. The biggest lesson was in the form of experiencing this through the elders who worked with us. Although the Sathya Sai Youth Festival was for the youth and we were taking lead in organising it, the elders selflessly, with care and love for the youth, collaborated with us in the true spirit of love and unity. At times, it was their excitement and energy that got us going. It became apparent that while Baba was not physically working with us, He was working through others and many a times making it obvious that it was He who ran the show.

One of the lessons I take away is that when the cause is noble, grand and prompted by pure intentions, the universe finds ways of supporting it and seeing it through successful completion. I also learnt that while technology and modernisation were often cursed as contributors to the practice of Adharma, they are also tools for spreading goodness and values – to accelerate the restoration of practices of Dharma.

The biggest lesson however came in the form of being able to experience Him throughout the journey of organising the Sathya Sai Youth Festival. There were numerous moments when I was lost and

short of solutions; where I had to surrender and rely on divine intervention. In those moments, like a parent, Swami carried me in His arms and helped me find a solution. The innocent smile on my face was difficult to hide when people commended me for how I resolved challenges for organising the festival. It could not have been me. If it was not for Baba, who else could assemble hundreds of volunteers who would work long hours to plan the festival, who else could execute most of the planning and make sure everything got arranged in time? Who else could ensure that thousands of youth had leave from work, funds for air travel and were available to participate in the festival? Who else could guide this young boy from a village in Fiji Islands to one day be worthy of sharing this experience?

Transformation of individuals is the miracle of the present world and this is how Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is continuing His Mission of restoring Dharma with His Love.

Dear Swami – thank You for this experience. Thank You for everything!

– **The author is International Youth Coordinator, Sathya Sai International Organisation.**

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our Sai Centre in Valencia, Venezuela, for everyone to see!

I will end with one more experience of Bhagavan's divine grace. During the World Youth Conference in 2007, 18 young adults from different countries including myself were handpicked by Swami for an interview in which He gave an orange robe to each one of us, indicating that it was a symbol of His presence and His constant guidance in our lives. I remember that wonderful

moment, and how this loving gesture of Swami has developed the necessary faith and confidence in my heart to reach the goal of my life. By Sai's grace, may we love and serve all, and experience infinite bliss and happiness at all times, living in unity with the eternal God of Love, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba!

– **The author is Youth Coordinator, Zone 2B of Sathya Sai International Organisation.**



ADHERE TO TRUTH ALWAYS

Shilpa Popat

Swami is the beginning, Swami is the end. I would like to quote Mother Sai's words: "Whatever work Swami gives you, always be prepared and ready to do it, just like Hanuman". This is the only message for all of us to be the recipients of His eternal and infinite loving grace.

MY SAI JOURNEY OF THIS BIRTH began in the year 1987 when I joined Bal Vikas class. A five-year-old kid was asked to join a Bal Vikas class. The first and obvious response was: Oh! One



more tuition class... No... but over a period of time, it changed into an eagerness and willingness.

Swami's Welcome

I remember my first visit to Puttaparthi as a family tour to South India in November 1989. When we reached Puttaparthi, we came to know that Bhagavan was in Whitefield at that time. We went to Whitefield and had Swami's first Darshan in Brindavan. After morning Darshan, we started our tour as planned by my father. But the Divine

Mother's plan is always awesome. Due to the unfamiliarity of the areas in an unknown city, our family got separated into two groups. One group was my parents and other was of we three siblings, my grandmother and an aunt. My father took the help of local police and started searching all of us. But all efforts went awry. At the end in the night around 10.00 p.m., my father voiced, "Swami, if You are an Avatar then find my family", and started crying. After half an hour, a policeman came running to him and said, "Sir, your family has been found and they are safe". We cancelled all plans and went to Darshan again in the morning. Sai Maa came to give Darshan from His divine abode in Brindavan. That was for the first time I heard Swami's voice. He told my mother "Family Milagayaa, Santosam... Santosam" (family got united? Very happy) and we had Padanamaskar. This experience has pulled my family into Sai Mission. We three siblings have completed our Bal Vikas and are now continuing as Sai Youth. Presently, my mother is an active Bal Vikas Guru and my father is an active Seva Dal member.

Life Message

I remember Bhagavan's interaction – a strong message – with me in the year 1996. Bhagavan had gifted our State of Gujarat under permission to perform a cultural programme



in Poornachandra Auditorium. Swami as usual came early and sat in the back side of the stage. He was interacting with children. He asked me, "What is your name"? I replied 'Shilpa'. He said, "No, in drama"? I said, "Swami we are performing Garba (Gujarati folk dance), not drama"! Then He said, "No, you performed drama in last Easwaramma week at your Samithi. In that, what was your name"? As I had performed the character of Sathya in that drama themed "Five Human Values", I replied "Sathya". He lovingly and promptly said, "Yes! Hamesha Sathya Hi Banake Rehana" (always remain as truth) and graciously granted Padanamaskar to me. This is a life message of Bhagavan to me that always adhere to truth. Next day morning, he blessed all of us with Kumkum and Sari. Swami always wanted His devotees to stick to truth in all circumstances in life.

Divine Attraction

Bhagavan's showered His grace on me in numerous ways in my life. I distinctly remember the year 2009, the year I got married as well was given the responsibility of State Youth Coordinator. Swami had entrusted a great responsibility to me as I was married in a non-devotee family. I was continuously praying to Bhagavan for this crux in my life. I got married in May 2009, and in June 2009 I requested my husband to join me for Prasanthi Seva. Hesitantly, he agreed and said while leaving the house, "See, I am coming because of your wish but don't force me to perform any activity and worship there, and, of course, not for Sathya Sai Baba's Darshan". I was left with no choice except for praying Bhagavan. Swami answered my prayers and after reaching Puttaparthi, my husband himself joined the Seva and got a chance to serve at Swami's residence as a Seva Dal member. Even after completing the Seva, he was not believing



Malhar is associated with the atmosphere of torrential rains. Many Bhajans sung by Mira are in Sur Malhar Raga. She symbolised the highest form of surrender and devotion. Swami wanted all of us to imbibe these qualities. With the grace of Bhagavan, the performance was up to the level that it literally rained when we were singing Sai Sur Malhar in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam.



that Swami is an Avatar. In the same year, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation (SSSSO), Gujarat organised Youth Parthi Yatra. Again, we went to Parthi because of Swami's call. That time also, he was not a firm believer of Bhagavan. He came to Puttaparthi due to my emotional force.

On the first day of Parthi Yatra when we were sitting for morning Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall, Bhagavan called me during Darshan and lovingly asked "Kitna youth Aaya Hai"? (how many youth have come?) I replied with the statistics available to me. And He started moving ahead. I was heavily loaded with emotions and worries regarding my husband's lack of belief towards Swami as an Avatar. With all love and compassion, Swami stopped two-three steps ahead from the place I was sitting. Again He called me. As I was crying, I could not respond. One of the security sisters sitting next to me asked me to get up and go nearer to Swami. This was the moment I burst with emotions, crying aloud as I could not speak anything except two words "Swami husband..." My Sai Maa lovingly granted me another



Padanamaskar and compassionately told “Aayega Amma, Aayega (he will come, he will come). Don’t worry”. From that day itself Bhagavan gave a new charm to my married life and family to become His devotees. My husband became an ardent devotee of Bhagavan and also an active Sai Youth in Sai Mission. Swami always used to say “Pura family devotee, Swami Bahut Khush” (Swami is very happy, the entire family is Sai devotee). He is the only Doer of this miracle in my life. Of course, it took quite some time for other family members to come to Swami’s fold but it happened and is happening also. Therefore, I would like to give a message to my Sai sisters who get married in non-devotee families; please have patience and full faith in Bhagavan. He will certainly answer your prayers.

Omnipresent Lord

Even after His Maha Samadhi, my Swami is showering His abundant grace on us at all periods of time. There are series of experiences happening in my life where I feel Bhagavan’s presence every time. Since last many years, Bhagavan blessed the Sai Organisation, Gujarat with opportunity to celebrate Deepavali and Gujarati New Year in Prasanthi Nilayam, with different types of cultural performances. We, the Sai Youth Sisters of Gujarat, got the opportunity to sing devotional songs in Sai Kulwant Hall. Every year, song performance happens with Bhagavan’s divine guidance only. In the year 2013 also, I was told to start preparing the songs. That year, I was struggling a lot with the selection of songs. I talked to sisters and brothers for help for song composition, and they were also not getting any clear idea. Again I prayed to Bhagavan. One night, I even remember the time. It was 3.30 a.m. early morning. Swami appeared in my dream and told, “Wake up. Perform

Sai Sur Malhar”. And with His Divine Grace, we performed the same. The composition of Sai Sur Malhar is still a surprise for all of us. Sai Sur Malhar is a classical song based on Sur Malhar Raga. Sai Sur Malhar comprises Slokas, Sargams, Bandish and Taraana. Sur Malhar is one of the Malhar-related Ragas that use the Malhar signature phrase. Malhar is associated with the atmosphere of torrential rains. Many Bhajans sung by Mira are in Sur Malhar Raga. She symbolised the highest form of surrender and devotion. Swami wanted all of us to imbibe these qualities. With the grace of Bhagavan, the performance was up to the level that it literally rained when we were singing Sai Sur Malhar in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam. Most of the girls who took part in this song were like me, who hardly know anything about music. They not only learnt to sing Bhajans but they could also sing His glory in all facets of classical music.

Once a devotee asked Bhagavan, “Swami, I must have done a lot of Punya (merit) in my previous birth that I am with You in this birth”. Immediately, Bhagavan replied, “Not only previous birth, in hundreds of previous births”. I am grateful to Swami for choosing me as an instrument in His Divine Mission. I express my gratitude to Sai Maa for all Her love and care. Whatever I am today is only because of Bhagavan and Sai Organisation. Swami is the beginning, Swami is the end. I would like to quote Mother Sai’s words: “Whatever work Swami gives you, always be prepared and ready to do it, just like Hanuman”. This is the only message for all of us to be the recipients of His eternal and infinite loving grace.

Samastha Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu

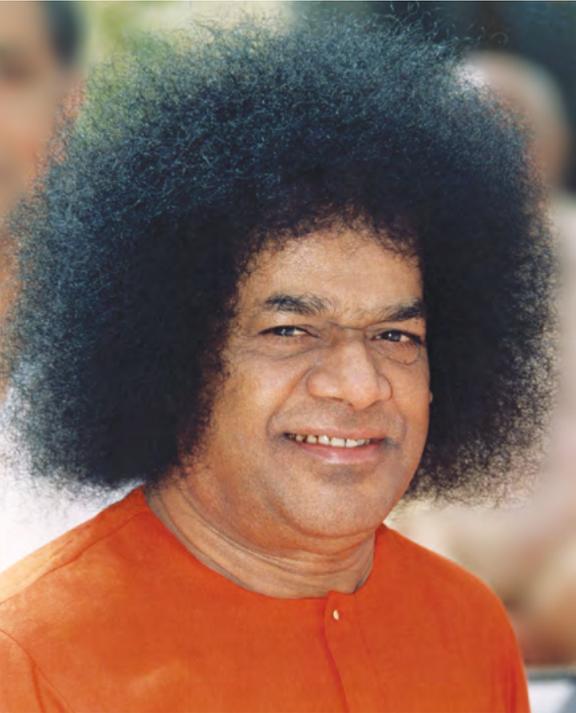
–The author is State Youth Coordinator of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat.



This Life is His Divine Grace

Ravinesh Chetty

I CAN EASILY SAY THAT THIS life is truly a gift from my Beloved Sai. I come from a family that prayed humbly to Swami at the prayer altar without any knowledge about His message and teachings. It was only when I joined the



Educare programme that I really gained an appreciation and understanding of Sathya Sai Baba's mission and teachings.

I eventually got involved as Sai Youth, which was such a blessing to my spiritual and personal development. It also led to my active participation and involvement in the broader work undertaken by the Sathya Sai International Organisation.

However, this journey was not always a bed of roses. I went through a difficult childhood and was left mentally scarred as

a result. The constant presence of family conflict and my parents' separation for a few years during the early stages of primary school took its toll on me. My father's alcoholism ripped our family apart. I had to juggle between both parents with a younger sister and also found it difficult to study with limited resources at the remote rural school that I attended. Financially, things were also tough for us which made the situation much worse.

The only reason that I survived through these hard times was by the grace of our Beloved Bhagavan. It was only through His love, blessings, constant guidance and teachings that I rose above it all. By being part of Educare and then the Youth Wing, I was provided a platform that led to a positive diversion of my attention towards a calm state. It also opened up opportunities to take life in its stride by practising human values. Every single minute has been totally under His care.

I still recall discussing my family problems and personal challenges with a wonderful friend. Her siblings and she were also undergoing a similar situation and her brother had ended up taking drugs. However, she commended me for the fact that I had not fallen a prey to such effects. I could merely offer gratitude to Swami for keeping me under His wings and transforming me into a much stronger person.

If it was not for Swami's love and guidance, I would have ended up in some regretful situations. Swami guided me to complete

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An Amazing Experience of Swami's Grace

Katarzyna Andersson

THE MOST TRANSFORMING, beautiful and touching moments that I have experienced are from doing service during the Sai Boundless Service Camps, organised annually by the Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO) of Poland. These moments are forever imprinted in my heart, because they are full of Swami's boundless love and compassion. They have changed me in many ways, including making me humbler.

I recall one such experience during the fifth camp. Before the event began, one of the devotees, who was part of the renovating team, had a strange urge to bring his new MP3 player. He could not understand where this feeling was coming from and why, as surely he would not need it. He even tried to ignore the feeling, but it was so strong that he finally brought it with him.

That year, the SSIO of Poland was renovating a community daycare centre in a very poor village. The lady who worked there was taking care of a young girl, who was around 10 years old. The young girl's situation was very tragic as her mother had committed suicide and her father had severe drinking problems. She was one of seven siblings. The financial situation was also tough and the girl was very shy and sad.

During the time of the renovation, the devotee who had brought his MP3 with him was talking with the lady who worked at the community daycare centre and she mentioned it was the young girl's birthday.



The devotee went to the girl and asked her "What do you want for your birthday"? But the girl was too shy and she said, "Nothing". So, the devotee told her, "Ok, but let us suppose it is Christmas and you would write a letter to Santa Claus. What gift would you like him to bring you? Could you write a similar letter to me"? The girl nodded her head, took a paper and wrote: "MP3 player". The devotee ran to his room and brought

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Orphaned by Nature Adopted by God

Ajay Bussawon

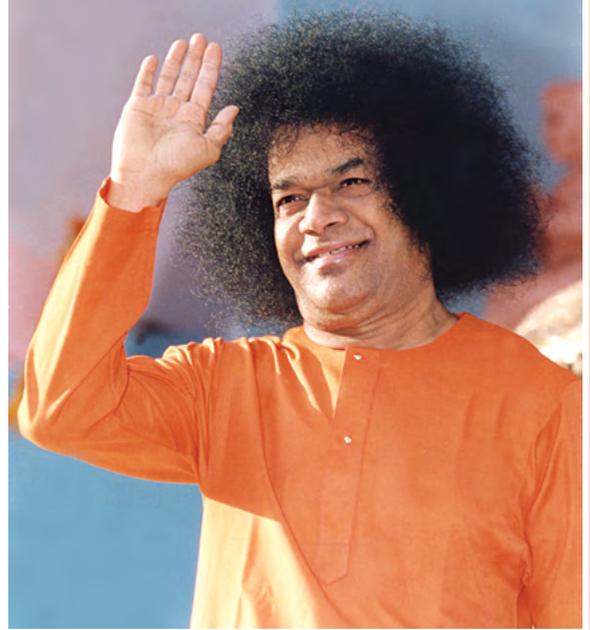
I STILL REMEMBER THAT FATEFUL day, 15th March 1997, when my mother passed away. I was only seven years old. Life became unbearably tough for me because my father would rarely come home. He was totally lost as he started drinking alcohol in excess and could not take care of me.

In the Orphanage

Then, I was placed in a shelter by the Ministry of Child Development Unit, Mauritius. In the shelter, there was a lady who used to teach us how to sing, and I remember the first song she taught us – it was “Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam”. At that point, I did not know who Sai Baba was. After spending a year at the shelter, I was told that I would be transferred to another orphanage and I was not happy with the news. I was afraid as I didn’t know what would be awaiting me at the next orphanage. Also, I did not want to be separated from my friends and the people who had become close to me.

I clearly remember the day when I was brought to Anandam and I was very scared on my way to this place. However, when I arrived, I was welcomed by an aunty named Jaya Koonjul, who was a Sai student. I received so much love that my tears dried up. I did not have any words to describe or quantify the love and affection I received at Anandam which helped me to grow up.

I learnt a lot about Swami during my stay at Anandam and lived the life of a Sai



student under the guidance of aunty Jaya. She also taught me the five human values and inspired me greatly. She taught us the importance of time management – how to balance our academic life with other activities, which has greatly helped me. It was then that I felt that Swami had really come into my life as the Divine Mother. After aunty Jaya went away, uncle Pravine started to take care of the Ashram. I learnt a lot about living a disciplined life and how to live up to Swami’s expectations from uncle Pravine. During my stay at Anandam, I also learnt how to become a better person. It goes without saying that my stay at Anandam shaped me into what I am today. My experience at Anandam helped me throughout the various stages of my life and shaped my life so far.



Swami has always told us to surrender to Him and He will take care of everything. For me, this was difficult. I would always ask myself: "Is Swami really seeing me? Does He know what I am doing"? Before I met Swami physically, I always thought that whatever was happening to me was all due to my own efforts. I thought I was the doer. But all that changed during the World Youth Conference in 2007. During my first Darshan, Swami came to me and asked, "Where do you come from"? I was simply dumbstruck looking at His glowing face, while the youth sitting behind me replied: "Mauritius". Then Swami came nearer to me and asked me why I was worried about life. He then lovingly told me: "I have always taken care of you and will always do so," and He blessed me. At that moment, I got my answer. I knew that He had always been watching over me.

An Instrument of His Divine Mission

Swami used to say, "When more is given to you, more is expected from you". I can say that this is very true in my case. I never thought that one day Swami will choose me in His Divine Mission as the National Youth Coordinator of Mauritius. This year, with His

... continued from page 62

his new MP3 player and gave it to the girl. She was both shocked and happy when she got it and if that was not enough, one of the devotees gave her a bike that she had brought to the camp the same day. It was a great gift for the child as she had to walk a long distance every day to get to school. In the evening, the SSIO of Poland organised a feast for the village people with music and drama presented by the children and some vegetarian food. At one point, the whole village stood up to sing "Happy Birthday" for the girl. It was so touching to see her full of joy and happiness.

blessings, I have been given the opportunity to work at national and international level. It seemed as a challenge at first. But to me, this is my Sadhana as I am only an instrument for Him. I will happily and gladly let Him work through me. Whatever I have learnt so far, be it in my SSE and youth classes or elsewhere, I try to do and give my very best to carry out Swami's work.

Every day is a learning experience for me. While I do His Work, it not only helps me to transform myself into a more loving person but also helps others, because I lead youngsters across my country to serve Swami in various service projects, such as blood donation which is one of the major Seva activities in the Island. We also participate in a Love in Action project which provides food to the homeless.

I am ever thankful to every person who has introduced and guided me to My Divine Mother, Swami. Last but not the least, I pray to Swami that He always looks after me and uses me as His Divine Instrument.

– The author, Ajay Bussawon, is the National Youth Coordinator of Mauritius, Sathya Sai International Organisation.

Thanks to this experience, my faith in Swami grew. To see how He knew everything and how He lifted her soul with His grace and filled it with love and bliss was an amazing experience. I was so grateful that I could be a witness to this "miracle". I am full of awe to see how Swami always finds a way to touch broken and distressed hearts and gives them strength and hope, so that they can carry on. Thank you, Swami!

– The author is Seva and Youth Coordinator, Sathya Sai International Organisation of Poland.



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

A CARNATIC MUSIC CONCERT



CARNATIC MUSIC CONCERT was presented by the renowned vocalist Smt. Anuradha Krishnamurthy at Prasanthi Nilayam on 26th September 2016 as part of birth centenary celebrations of the legendary singer, M.S. Subbulakshmi. Beginning her concert with a prayer song "Mudakaratha Modakam" (salutations to Sri Vinayaka who holds the Modaka, a sweetmeat in his hand) to Lord Ganesh, the talented singer sang some of the most popular songs of Subbulakshmi, namely, "Raghuvamsa Sudha", "Pyare Darshan Deejo Aaj", "Jagadodharana", which kept the audience mesmerised for nearly one hour. Some of the other songs sung by her were a Bhajan "Koti Pranam Shata Koti Pranam Hey Deenanatha Sai Ram" (salutations to Sai, the refuge of the destitute) and the popular song "Bho Shambho Siva Shambo Swayambho" (Siva, the self-born).

AMBARISHA VIJAYAM: A DRAMA

On the eve of Navaratri celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, the students of Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam English Medium School, Rajamahendravaram enacted a drama "Ambarisha Vijayam" (victory of Ambarisha) on 1st October 2016. The drama highlighted the power of devotion through the story of King Ambarisha, an ardent devotee of Lord Narayana, who was saved by the Sudarshan Chakra of Lord Narayana when sage Durvasa pronounced a curse on him, thereby giving

the message of the Lord that whosoever was devoted to Him in thought, word and deed, his protection was His responsibility. Sublime theme, excellent make-up and costumes, fabulous sets and good acting of the students made the drama an impressive presentation. Bhajans followed next which were also led by the students of this school.

61st ANNIVERSARY OF SRI SATHYA SAI GENERAL HOSPITAL

The 61st anniversary of Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital was celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 2nd October 2016. The programme themed "Reliving the Divine Memories" comprising short speeches interspersed with group songs began at 4.50 p.m. with the introductory speech of Air Marshal (Dr.) V.K. Varma, Medical Superintendent of the hospital who stated how this hospital inaugurated by Bhagavan on 4th October 1956 had made spectacular progress in providing quality medicare to needy patients totally free of cost. He also informed that a new block had been added to the hospital in 2015 to provide better facilities to the patients.

Beginning with a welcome song "Swagatham Suswagatham" (welcome, hearty welcome), the singers rendered two more beautiful songs, viz, "Sai Nama Smarnam Sai Rupa Dhyanam" (chanting the Name of Sai and meditating on His Form) and "Yenni Janmaletthamo Ee Janmalo Chusamu Sai Rama" (we could





Devotional music programme by General Hospital staff.

have Your Darshan in this life due to merits of many previous lives). The speeches of senior staff members described their experiences of Bhagavan's Divinity. Bhagavan's Discourse followed next, in which He exhorted the doctors to serve the patients with the spirit of sacrifice considering service to man as service to God. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram". Bhajans followed next which were also led by the hospital staff.

A DEVOTIONAL MUSIC PRESENTATION

As part of Devi Navaratri celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam, the students and staff of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music presented a devotional music programme "Shakti Swarupini Sai Maa" (Mother Sai, the embodiment of Divine



Devotional music concert "Shakti Swarupini Sai Maa".

Energy). Beginning their programme with a composition dedicated to Lord Ganesh, they followed it with compositions dedicated to the Divine Mother which included "Sharade Maa Sharade". Their next composition was a Hindustani Bandish followed by an exhilarating Sitar recital. The evening ended on a high note of devotion with the masterly rendition of the composition "Ananda Karshini Amruta Varshini" (Divine Mother, the giver of bliss and bestower of shower of nectar) followed by a spellbinding Jugalbandi.

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM WEST GODAVARI

More than 1,000 devotees from West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh came on a two-day pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam on 18th and 19th October 2016 and made two presentations on these two days. On 18th October, they presented an array of nine devotional songs which included "Sai Shankara Bhakta Kinkara" (Lord Sai is the servant of His devotees),



Devotional songs by the devotees of West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.

"Jagamele Paramatma Sai" (Oh Lord, You are the ruler of the universe) and "Amrita Rupa Neeve Sai" (You are the eternal Divinity). Their second presentation was a musical dance drama "Twameva Saranam Sai" (You are our only refuge, Sai) which was performed by Bal Vikas children of

this district on 19th October. Embellished with beautiful dances of the children, the drama highlighted the power of devotion through the life stories of legendary devotees of God such as Prahlada, Sabari and Gopikas.

AVATAR DECLARATION DAY

It was on 20th October 1940 that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba declared His Divine Mission of incarnation on earth for the reformation and redemption of mankind. In commemoration of this momentous declaration, rich tributes were paid to Bhagavan by Daughters of Mother Sai, a forum of alumni of Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning through an absorbing programme organised by them on 20th October 2016. They made soulful musical offerings to Bhagavan through devotional songs and Bhajans both in the morning and evening.



Devotional music offering by the Daughters of Mother Sai.

... continued from page 61

tertiary education successfully despite the hardships that I endured. Swami even provided me with excellent work experience opportunities in leading organisations. He protected, provided and persevered with me all along my journey.

This life and every breath is His divine grace. Swami took me from being fragile and made me strong through these harrowing

The evening programme began with offer of homage to Bhagavan by two speakers. The first speaker was Ms. Mallika Chandrasekhar. Narrating her experiences of Bhagavan's Divinity from her Primary School days, the speaker offered her loving gratitude to Bhagavan who transformed her life while she watched Him closely during those golden days. The second speaker was Chief Dietician of SSSIHMS, Prasanthigram, Ms. Indumati, who recalled how Bhagavan trained His students on the path of service, one of the foremost components of Swami's Mission. This was followed by a video presentation on the significance of the Avatar Declaration Day, illustrating the unique Sai Path. The last item of the programme was a devotional musical presentation by Ms. Rupali Goswami, an alumna of Anantapur Campus of the Institute. Beginning her concert with the song "Aaya Hai Sathya Sai Avatar" (Sai Avatar has come), she enthralled the devotees for nearly one hour with melodious rendition of an array of devotional songs and concluded her presentation with a Sufi song "Ali Dam Dam". Bhajans followed next and concluded with the Bhajan "Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam" in the golden voice of Bhagavan.

experiences. My practice of human values is totally dedicated at the Divine Lotus Feet of Swami. I am deeply thankful to Swami for also calling me to Prasanthi Nilayam so many times and for giving me the bliss of experiencing His physical presence and receiving His love forever and ever.

– The author is a member of Sathya Sai International Organisation, New Zealand.

BAL VIKAS SETS ONE ON THE DIVINE PATH

Chaitanya Dang

*H*E WHO KNOWS THAT life is a journey also knows that he is a traveller; and every traveller knows that the journey is more important than the destination.

Happiness, success, failure and regrets are all a part of life's journey. What we experience is largely based on our attitude, values and morals. The journey depends on the path we take and the song we choose to sing. Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas in itself is a journey that the young minds embark on, holding the hands of Beloved Bhagavan.

Remember the confidence that you had as a child knowing that your mother would help you cross the road. That is the kind of confidence Bal Vikas students have in Bhagavan throughout their life!

Bal Vikas Gurus instil the seeds of virtues in the students, educating them to nurture and grow the seeds on their own. This is how they are set on a Divine Path to discover the purpose of their life, have faith and courage to sing their own song.

Bal Vikas students grow up to do noble deeds by helping society and by setting heroic examples in society so that everyone is inspired. Their character, integrity and behaviour have received a lot of acknowledgement and recognition. They



stand unique in the crowd and have proven their mettle as good leaders.

One never stops being a Bal Vikas student. The bliss never stops. I am still holding the hand of my Beloved Bhagavan, crossing roads together, adding new stanzas to my song... singing it out loud... together!

– From “**Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas: The Path Divine**”.

Valuable Maxims

Given below is a valuable maxim of Bhagavan. Contemplate on it and search the following words in the given word maze:

Education, devotion, humility, purpose, adoration, melody, truth, music, justified, erudition, wisdom, sagacity, discrimination.

Education sans wisdom, mere wisdom bereft of discrimination, erudition lacking sagacity, power not justified by credentials, statements not based on truth, music wanting in melody, adoration not sustained by devotion, a person devoid of common sense and character, a student not endowed with humility and a Discourse that fails to inspire – these serve no useful purpose.

C	D	E	V	O	T	I	O	N	W	I	T	H	S	E	O	D
R	E	D	I	S	C	R	I	M	I	N	A	T	I	O	N	E
E	D	U	C	A	R	V	E	E	S	R	E	W	I	S	E	L
E	N	C	I	G	D	E	R	U	D	I	T	I	O	N	S	A
T	I	A	O	A	P	U	R	P	O	S	E	M	P	T	E	C
A	L	T	U	C	O	M	T	E	M	E	L	O	D	Y	R	K
C	S	I	S	I	C	O	N	J	U	S	T	I	F	I	E	D
H	T	O	B	T	R	U	T	H	S	E	N	T	L	A	V	I
R	R	N	O	Y	M	H	U	M	I	L	I	T	Y	L	I	N
A	D	O	R	A	T	I	O	N	C	H	A	U	N	T	C	G

Swami's Tips to Students

Our students behave in an exemplary manner. Whatever their background before joining the Institute, within a month the new students are transformed into ideal students. They develop commendable qualities.

Boys and Girls! Wherever you may go and whatever institutions in which you may work, bring a good name to the Institute and earn a good name for yourselves. Girl students who may get married should serve their in-laws in such a way that the good name of the Institute is vindicated. The mother-in-law should be proud of a well-educated daughter-in-law coming from the Sai Institute. The good name you earn will rejoice Me. Do your duty wherever you may go. Earn the esteem of your employers. That will please Me. This is My message to you.

How Swami Became My God

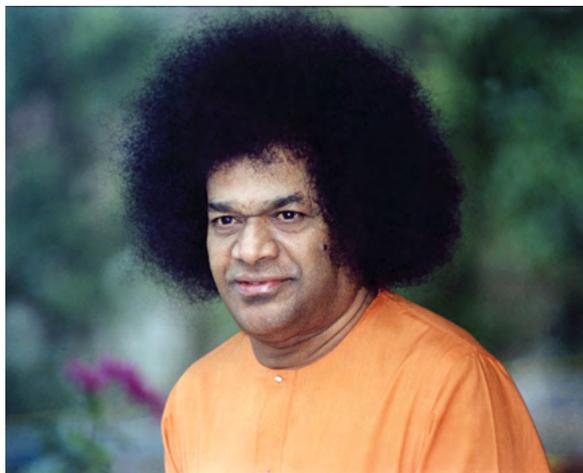
Lakshmi Tata

WHAT WAS GOD TO ME UNTIL the year 2009? A wish-fulfilling entity, who healed my mother, got me through an examination, found me a job, etc.

My first prayer to Baba was during Sivarathri in 2009. I had gone to Puttappathi as a newlywed, only because my spouse had insisted. Prasanthi Nilayam was overflowing with people. There were long lines everywhere – at Darshan, the bookstore, the canteen. When I saw Baba in Darshan, I cried bitterly and for a very long time. I prayed, “I want to see ‘that’ in You what all these people who are gathered here have already found”.

I used to be affiliated with a different spiritual organisation. After my marriage in 2009, I started accompanying my spouse to Sai Centres, but continued to be active in the ‘other’ organisation. I noticed that the Sai Organisation was different. People cared less about where I came from, what I did for a living, what languages I spoke or whether I owned a house. All that mattered was that I knew Sathya Sai Baba. Also, all the spiritual literature was easily available and free of cost!

My connection was through conversations with Baba saying, if you are God, I want to see a miracle today – heal somebody, give a twist to my job hunt, etc. Baba passed every test! By the end of 2011, I still wavered on what Baba meant to me. On some days, I was convinced Baba is God, other times I felt He was just another holy man.



The One Year Experiment

My New Year’s resolution for 2012 was to actively participate in the Sai Organisation for one whole year. I had stopped going to the ‘other’ organisation and started attending Bhajans, speaker sessions, read literature, participated in service projects and co-led events. The experiment caused a shift in my thought process. From ‘asking’ God what I wanted – to ‘doing’ what pleases God. From worrying what ‘others’ thought of me – to what ‘God’ thinks of me. God alone can bring this transformation. Since then, Baba has become my God and my dearest Swami.

Dreams and Reaffirmations

Time and again, Swami reminded me of His message and gave assurance through dreams. Swami has mentioned during a Discourse about the importance of mothers taking care of children. I was inspired by this

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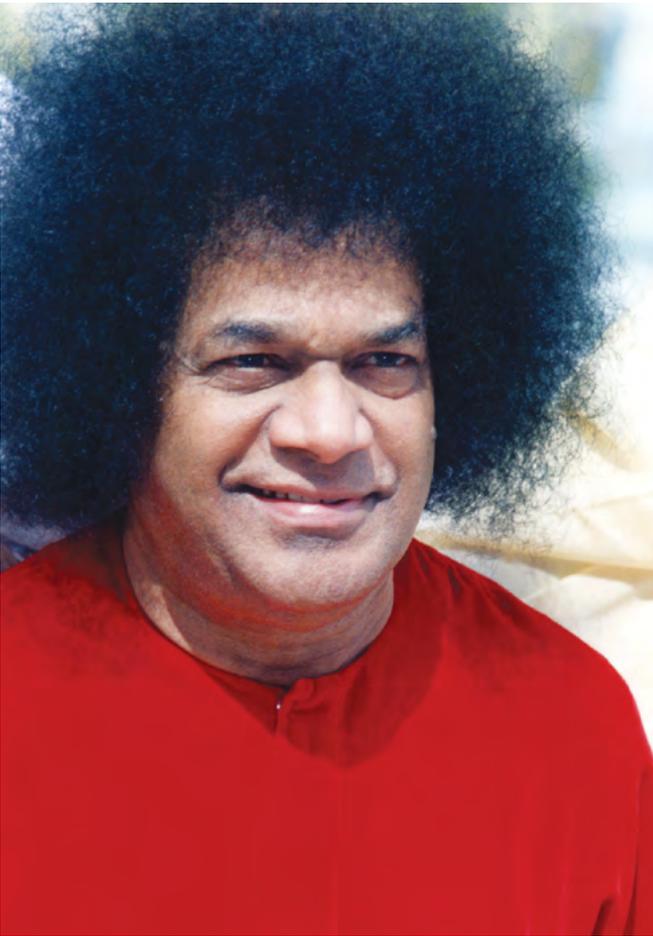
The Power of the Name of Sai

Nataliya Zarubina

I WAS IN EIGHTH GRADE WHEN A classmate returned from India and handed over Sai Baba's calendars, saying that He was God in human form. She also shared her impressions of the interview with Him. Holding the calendar and looking

Bhajans and participated in various service projects. But I did not take them seriously, and I still went to Discos and spent time with various youth groups.

When I was 16, I was returning home late at night with two girl friends. A young man was walking with us. When we were passing a dark place under a tree, he grabbed my friend and put her on the pavement. Then, he put a small pistol to my forehead. I was paralysed with fear. My life shrunk to one black dot. At that moment, I realised that at the time of death, it would not matter how much money you had in your account, how many higher degrees you have, or whether you had children. Other things would be more important: how many good deeds you had done, and to what extent you were a kind and loving person. I also realised my attachment to the material world. With us was also our girl friend who had introduced us to Sai Baba. She tried to help us, and realising the hopelessness of the situation, she said, "Sai Baba, help"! At that very moment, a man in white appeared, and all three of us quickly ran away. The next day, an article was published in a newspaper: "At night, three girls were very lucky that at 3 a.m. a policeman in civilian white clothes was walking his dog. Such a case is one in a thousand".



at the face of Swami, I was absolutely sure that He was God. At that very moment, from the depth of my heart, I asked Sai, "When I turn 18, please call me to You". I attended

This incident was a turning point of my life. At the age of 17, I became an active member of Sathya Sai Organisation, and as



soon as I turned 18, I had my first physical Darshan of the Lord. This incident stayed with me for a long time, especially how strong the name of the Lord is, and that we should just call on Him.

After our trip to Prasanthi Nilayam in November 2015, my sister and I returned to Russia and visited our parents who lived in another city. After seeing our parents, we went home by taxi. I sat in the back seat and was engaged in issues related to the Sathya Sai Organisation. My sister was sitting in the front seat. We were driving at a speed of 100 km/h, when I heard a strange sound from the wheels. When I looked at the driver, I realised that he had lost control of the steering and the brakes had failed. The car overturned and we were hanging upside down. My sister was crying out, "Om Namah Sivaya! Om Namo Narayana"! Looking at the driver's face, I did not understand what was more shocking to him: the fact that we will be crushed soon, or by the obscure Mantras being chanted in an incomprehensible language. I had no fear, but at the same time I had a very clear consciousness. I turned my head to the window and started a quiet dialogue with Swami. The moment seemed to stop. I appealed to Him from my heart, saying that my parents would not survive the pain of losing both me and my sister.

Then the car spun gently. Unaware of it, I simply said, "Sai Baba, help"! There

was a strong storm and the car began to smoke. I unfastened the belt, fell on the roof in the car, and began to crawl quickly, not even noticing that the driver and my sister had already come out of the car and were opening the door for me. When I got out, a few cars stopped by the roadside and people hurried to help us.

When I came home, I looked at a WhatsApp group of Sathya Sai International Youth Leadership Programme (SSIYLP) graduates 2015. On that very day, 13th December 2015, there was a message from a participant of the Leadership Programme, as follows:

"On my last day in Prasanthi Nilayam, I had a dream, which was more of a nightmare. We were all together in an auditorium and suddenly a flood started rising, and the situation pretty quickly became extremely dangerous... Still in my dream I remembered what Swami said: I am there when you call My Name, immediately, not one minute before..."

This was confirmation of the fact that Sai had heard us, and saved my sister and me in this dangerous situation. He reminded me of the power of His Name, and that we should just call on Him.

– The author is former Deputy National Youth Coordinator of Russia, Sathya Sai International Organisation.

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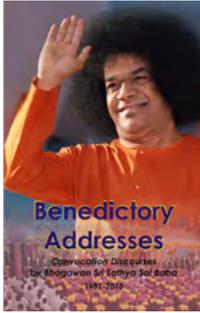
and quit work to be a full-time mother. As a result, our family expenditure doubled and our income halved. I kept thinking of ways to earn money as a 'stay at home' Mom and explored frugal ways of living. A few days later, in my dream I went to a store to buy groceries. After paying, I got a bill that

was very much like a bill we receive at any grocery store, except the bill did not list the items I purchased and the respective costs. Instead, it had Sai, Sai, Sai...

– The author is a Sathya Sai Youth from Northern California, U.S.A.



BENEDICTORY ADDRESSES



BENEDICTORY ADDRESSES

Convocation Discourses by
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
₹ 55/- shipping charges extra,
Code No. 10834 pp. 312

THE BOOK IS A FAITHFUL compilation of Swami's Convocation addresses, starting from the Inaugural address in 1981 up to His last address of Convocation in 2010.

Sri Sathya Sai University had the rarest privilege of having Almighty Lord the Chancellor of the Universe as its founder, mentor and Chancellor, in His human form.

The Convocation had the exceptional benediction of addresses by Bhagavan as its Chancellor; indeed, a great benediction for the education systems of the world.

The concept of Educare as an inclusive system that conjoins practical spirituality with the secular education, had been conceived by Him and propagated through this unique Deemed University and through various wings of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation across the world. Students groomed in this system have the potential to bring together all sects, creeds, religions and nations in a congenial atmosphere of human brotherhood and Divine Fatherhood.

Today, man needs a mind free from attachment and hatred, speech that is untainted by falsehood, and a body that is totally free from violence. A good system of education is that which promotes Unity, Purity and Divinity among all sections of society, says Bhagavan in His last Convocation Address.

– P.P.S. Sarma

* For making email orders: orders@sssbt.org, to make direct online purchase: www.srisathyaaisapublications.com

Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam English Medium School

Alcot Gardens, Rajahmundry – 533101, Andhra Pradesh,
(Affiliated to C.I.S.C.E, New Delhi)

Applications on a plain paper in candidate's own handwriting containing complete Bio-data inclusive of the details of the academic particulars, complete postal address, contact numbers and work experience (if any) along with copies of relevant documents and a recent passport size photograph, are invited from Computer Trained Candidates fluent in English for appointment as Trained Graduate Teacher (Computers). One Post.

Qualifications Required:

- Candidate must hold a first class MCA (Master of Computer Applications) degree.
- Candidate must be able to teach computer Sciences and Computer applications and must be able to maintain the computers i.e., their hardware and software.

The last date for the receipt of the applications is **23rd November 2016**. Selected candidates have to appear for an interview at their own expenses at short notice. **Scale of Pay: ₹14,860 – 39,540 + D.A. and H.R.A.**

Note: 1. Candidates will be given fixed pay per month for a period of 2 years, after which they will be considered for a regular scale of pay. 2. E.P.F. and Gratuity facility is applicable.

– Correspondent

BHAGAVAN'S 91ST BIRTHDAY NEW RELEASES (BOOKS / VCD / DVD)

Code	Title	Sale Price	Add Postage per copy	Author / Compiler
14086	Divya Spurtitho Vaidya Sevalu Part 1 Telugu Book	Rs.45.00	Rs.30.00	Judy Warner
14087	Divya Spurtitho Vaidya Sevalu Part 2 Telugu Book	Rs. 45.00	Rs.30.00	Judy Warner
14093	VEDAS 12 + years English Book (A4 size) (with ACD)	Rs.55.00	Rs.30.00	Joy Lynette Parker
14094	Stories and Inspirations – English Book	Rs.40.00	Rs.30.00	Aravind Balasubramanya
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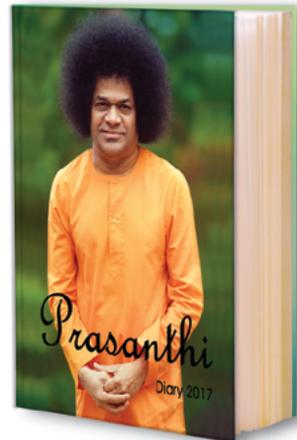
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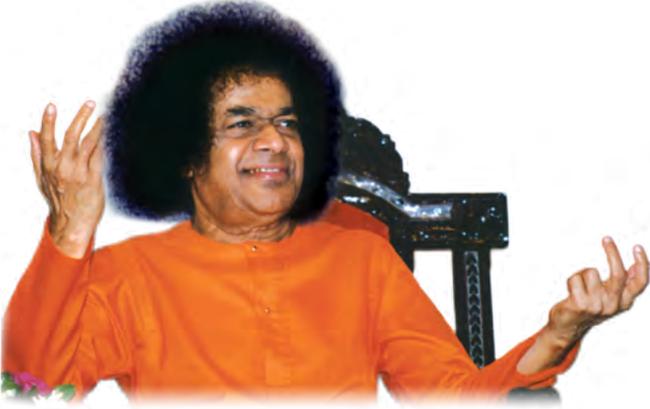
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Love is the Source of all Creation

There is only love in Me. My love lives by giving, giving and giving. It never receives. This is the difference between My love and the worldly love, which believes in receiving alone. That is why My love is ever expanding. A small seed becomes a gigantic tree with many branches and fruits. All of them have their origin in the seed. Likewise, out of love has emerged the creation. Love is God, live in love. Develop love. Love everyone wholeheartedly. You will attain Self-realisation only when you manifest love.

– Baba



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