



Sanathana Sarathi



Special Issue

Journey with Sai

Personal Accounts of Devotees



NOVEMBER 2010



*Dedicated at the Lotus Feet of
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba
on the Auspicious Occasion of
His 85th Birthday
23rd November 2010*





Bhagavan offering Poornahuti (final oblations) in the Yajna Kunda in Poornachandra Auditorium on 17th October 2010.

Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA



"Whatever serious problem you may be faced with, it can be easily solved by following truth. There is nothing that truth cannot achieve in this world."

Vol: 53 Issue No. 11 Date of Publication: 1st November

NOVEMBER 2010

© Sri Sathya Sai
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division
Prasanthi Nilayam
Printed by K.S. RAJAN
Published by K.S. RAJAN
on behalf of the owner, Sri Sathya Sai
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division
Prasanthi Nilayam 515134,
Anantapur District (A.P.),
Printed at M/s Rajhans Enterprises,
136, 4th Main Road, Industrial Town, Rajaji
Nagar, Bangalore - 560044, Karnataka.
And Published Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust,
Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam
515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh
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Cover Page Photograph
Unity of Faiths

CONTENTS

- **Journey with Sai: Personal Accounts of Devotees** 323
Editorial
- **Make Truth the Guiding Principle of your Life** 324
Bhagavan's Discourse: 2nd July 1996
- **Science and Spirituality Complement Each Other** 332
Interview
- **Bhagavan's Visit to Rajahmundry:
22nd to 26th January 1969** 338
B.V. Ramana Rao
- **Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam** 345
A Report
- **Divine Love in East Africa** 351
Indulal Shah, Sarla Shah
- **Experiencing the Bliss of Travelling with Bhagavan** 357
Maj. Gen. S.P. Mahadevan
- **Realise the Divine and Become Divine** 361
From our Archives
- **My Journeys with Bhagavan to Kodaikanal** 367
T.G. Krishnamurthy
- **My Journeys with Sai** 370
Dr. K. Bhaskar Rao
- **A Resurrection** 376
Effulgence of Divine Glory
- **Bhagavan's Visit to Karur, 1947** 378
Smt. Vijayamma
- **A Delightful Half Century of Divine Grace** 384
Krishnadas Eradi, Haridas Eradi
- **God Loves His Devotees** 386
Chinna Katha
- **Two Memorable Trips to Mumbai with Bhagavan** 388
Dr. T. Ravikumar
- **A Wonderful Journey with
Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba** 391
Prema Kanakaraja Gupta
- **News from Sai Centres** 394

JOURNEY WITH SAI

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF DEVOTEES

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF SANATHANA SARATHI ON “JOURNEY with Sai: Personal Accounts of Devotees” carries eyewitness accounts of a few of Bhagavan’s tours by those fortunate devotees who travelled with Him in His car or as part of His retinue or were intimately connected with His early tours to various places.

As Bhagavan says, man cannot understand God; he can experience God and derive bliss therefrom. After declaring His Avatarhood on 20th October 1940 at Uravakonda where He was a student in High School, Bhagavan embarked upon His Mission of giving to mankind the blissful experience of His Divinity. He undertook extensive tours, covered lakhs of kilometres mostly by road and reached out to masses even in remote villages to give them the direct experience of His Divinity. He told them in no uncertain terms that God has incarnated on earth to relieve man of his sufferings and lead him to Godward path and to redeem his life. Simple pure-hearted villagers gathered in thousands to hear Him and to experience His omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence like the cowherds of Brindavan when they found Lord Krishna amidst them in Dwapar Yuga.

These tours of Bhagavan make it evident that there is no limit to His love for His devotees, and His compassion and kindness are boundless. No amount of physical discomfort could deter Him from reaching out to His devotees. Be it scorching heat of the midday sun in summer season or torrential rain, be it the most tedious journey on dusty bullock cart tracks of villages or walk across open fields where no road existed, nothing could stand between Him and His devotees. But in spite of the arduousness of the journey or long hours of travel, sometimes from early morning to past midnight, His co-travellers never saw any trace of fatigue or discomfort on His face which was always radiant and fresh like a rose in full bloom.

It is said, if you take one step towards God, He takes a hundred steps towards you. But compassionate Lord Sai has been taking thousands and thousands of steps towards man even without man taking that one significant step. The present generation is, indeed, most fortunate to find such a compassionate Lord amidst them who is showering His love and benedictions on vast multitudes day in and day out. It is therefore our sacred duty to express our gratitude to Bhagavan for His bountiful grace on us all. Perhaps, one of the best ways to do so would be to identify all those places sanctified by the touch of the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan and preserve them as places of pilgrimage for future generations. This would, no doubt, be our best tribute to Bhagavan on His 85th Birthday.

– Editor

MAKE TRUTH THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF YOUR LIFE

MAN IS THE EMBODIMENT OF BLISS

Embodiments of Love!



ATHYA, DHARMA, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa are verily the five life principles of man.

Truth is the very Form of God

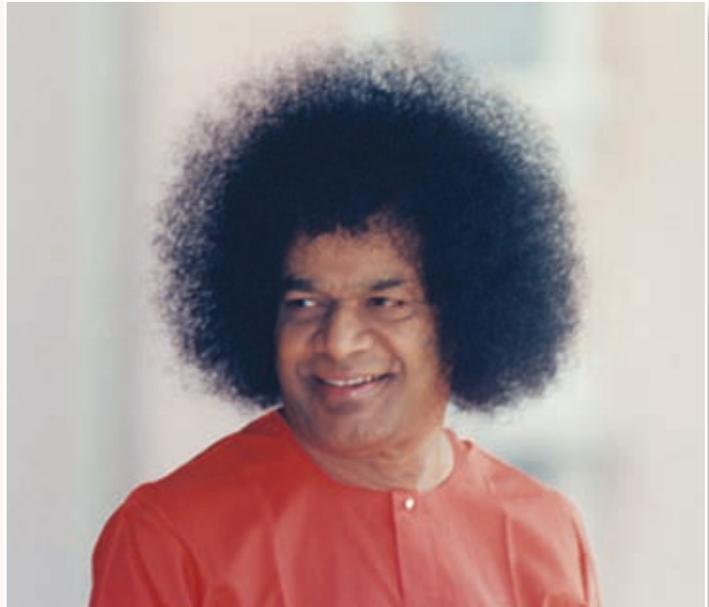
People think humanness lies in performing normal activities which a man is supposed to carry out in his day-to-day life. These activities are only worldly activities, not spiritual. Reporting of events as they are, as you see them and as you do them constitutes only worldly truth. Spiritual truth is different from it. It is beyond the realm of time, space and circumstances and is not related to any particular time, place or individual. It transcends the three qualities of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas (serenity, passion and sloth). This truth is verily God. Everything emerges from this truth.

The creation emerges from truth and merges into truth,

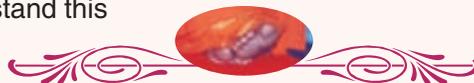
Is there a place in the cosmos where truth does not exist?

Visualise this pure and unsullied truth. (Telugu Poem)

All the five elements have emerged from truth. Unable to understand this



You are the embodiment of Ananda whether you know it or not. It is only due to your ignorance that you feel, you have lost your Ananda. When you get rid of your ignorance and attain Jnana, you will realise that you are the embodiment of Ananda. The divine principle of bliss neither comes nor goes. When you know this truth, you will know everything. What is this truth? It is Trikarana Shuddhi. You should speak what you think and do what you say. The unity of thought, word and deed is truth.



truth, we consider the worldly and physical realities as truth. Worldly truth is what you see with your eyes, hear with your ears and think with your mind. This worldly truth is the cause of both happiness and sorrow. It denotes worldly reality which is subject to change with the passage of time. But the spiritual truth does not change in all the three periods of time. That is why it is said, *Trikalabadyam Sathyam* (Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time – past, present and future). This truth is the basis of entire creation. What do we mean by Sathyam (truth) which consists of three letters, Sath+y+am. ‘Sath’ means life principle; ‘y’ denotes food and ‘am’ stands for the sun. Every being is endowed with life principle, for which food is the basis. The sun is the cause of entire vegetation and crops which provide food to man. The combination of life principle, food and the sun constitutes truth. Therefore, all these three are the embodiments of Brahman. Life is Brahman, food is Brahman and the sun is Brahman.

Sathya consists of three letters ‘Sa’, ‘tha’, and ‘ya’. When we reverse the order of these letters, we get ‘Ya’, ‘tha’ and ‘sa’. ‘Ya’ stands for Yamas and Niyamas; ‘tha’ stands for Tapa and ‘Sa’ denotes God who is the embodiment of truth. Therefore, when you perform penance observing Yamas and Niyamas (restraints and observances), you will have the vision of God. This is what is meant by Sathya. Adherence to Yamas and Niyamas denotes the control of five senses of perception and five senses of action. You should control the senses and perform Tapa (penance). What is meant by penance? It does not mean performing a posture with your head down and feet up. The real meaning of Tapa is Trikarana Shuddhi (unity of thought, word and deed). Speak what you think and do what you say. This harmony between

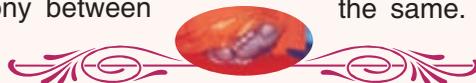
Our ancient Vedic culture teaches, Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara (speak truth, practise righteousness).

But today we do not find one in a thousand or even a million who adheres to truth. People perform Sathyanarayana Vrata once in a year but for the rest of the year, they take to the path of untruth only. Once in a while, they may speak truth and adhere to it, but they resort to untruth for the rest of their life. This is not humanness. True humanness lies in adhering to truth all your life.

thought, word and deed constitutes Trikarana Shuddhi. It is only when you observe Yamas and Niyamas with Trikarana Shuddhi can you have the vision of God. That is to say, *Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma* (Brahman is the embodiment of truth, wisdom and eternity). Truth is knowledge, knowledge is infinitude and God is infinite. Brahman denotes infinity and vastness. Therefore, truth is the very form of God. But man today considers worldly reality as truth. He forgets the spiritual truth, takes to the path of ignorance and is unable to see the light of knowledge.

Spiritual Truth is Changeless

Man’s life is divided into four Ashrams (stages of life) as per the ancient Indian tradition. These are Brahmacharya Ashram, Grihastha Ashram, Vanaprastha Ashram and Sannyasa Ashram (celibate stage, householder stage, recluse stage and renunciant stage). These are the different names of four stages of man’s life. This is the worldly truth. The person who passes through these four stages is one and the same. The stages change but not



the person. That which changes is worldly truth and that which remains changeless is spiritual truth. The changeless truth is the foundation. On the foundation of Sathya, stands the mansion of Dharma. The mansion can be given any colour, any name; it can be decorated in any way. But the foundation cannot be changed. This foundation is what is meant by Sathya. *Sathyannasti Paro Dharma* (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). Sathya is the basis of Dharma. *Dharayati iti Dharma* (that which sustains is Dharma). Dharma is supported and sustained by Sathya. In fact, Sathya is the fundamental basis for everything. But, unfortunately, man today has forgotten this principle of truth. Our ancient Vedic culture teaches, *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness). But today we do not find one in a thousand or even a million who adheres to truth. People perform Sathyanarayana Vrata (worship of Sathyanarayana) once in a year but for the rest of the year, they take to the path of untruth only. Once in a while, they may speak truth and adhere to it, but they resort to untruth for the rest of their life. This is not humanness. True humanness lies in adhering to truth all your life.

You are the Embodiments of Ananda

What is meant by humanness? To conduct oneself without ignorance is humanness. Man should base his life on truth in order to live without ignorance. Then only can he be called a Manava (human being) in the real sense of the term. The word 'Manava' consists of three letters –'Ma', 'na', 'va'. 'Ma' means ignorance, 'na' means without and 'va' means to conduct oneself. Hence, one who leads his life without ignorance is Manava. To define the word 'Manava' in another way, it can be split into two parts, 'Ma' and 'nava'. 'Ma' denotes

not, 'nava' means new. Therefore, the term 'Manava' refers to one who is not new. He is not someone who came into existence only in this birth. He is very ancient and eternal. The term 'Manava' demonstrates these truths. Therefore, man should dedicate his life to these principles of truth and humanness.

The goal of human life is to experience Sat-Chit-Ananda. 'Sat' means being which is eternal. 'Chit' means awareness which denotes knowledge. When man combines 'Sat' and 'Chit', he will naturally experience Ananda (bliss). Since man is not able to experience Ananda, he keeps on searching for it here and there. Truly, man's very form is bliss. Unable to realise this truth, man searches for bliss elsewhere? In fact, he wanders here and there in search of himself! How foolish is he who searches for his own form elsewhere? Can you find yourself elsewhere? People crave for Ananda, saying, "I want Ananda, I want Ananda". They keep on enquiring which object or which person can give them Ananda. They try to acquire several worldly objects and meet several people to derive Ananda from them. Similarly, they pursue various endeavours to get Ananda. But there is no Ananda in objects, individuals and worldly pursuits. Ananda is in you. You yourself are the very form of Ananda. In fact, you are immersed in the ocean of Ananda.

Water bubble is born in water, grows in water and merges in water. Man is the water bubble and God is the water. Listen to this truth, oh valiant sons of Bharat!

(Telugu Poem)

Where is the need to search for Ananda elsewhere? Since man today is not able to realise this truth, he has become an ignoramus.

This is the effect of Maya (delusion).



*Life is a delusion,
Worldly attachments are a delusion,
Family life is a delusion,
Death is a delusion.
Why should one become
A victim of delusion?*

(Telugu Poem)

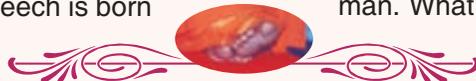
You yourself are the cause of delusion. Maya is not to be seen anywhere. In fact, Maya does not exist at all. Since it does not exist anywhere, it is called Maya. Where is Maya? You can see it only when it exists. You mistake a rope for a snake in darkness. Because of this deluded thinking, you run away from the rope. When you flash a torchlight on it, you realise that it is only a rope. Then your fear disappears. You can even hold it in your hand. When you mistook it for a snake, then also it was a rope and when you saw it as a rope, then also it was a rope. When you throw light on it, the snake does not run away and the rope does not come there. Then also it was a rope and now too it is a rope. Similarly, you are the embodiment of Ananda whether you know it or not. It is only due to your ignorance that you feel, you have lost your Ananda. When you get rid of your ignorance and attain Jnana, you will realise that you are the embodiment of Ananda. The divine principle of bliss neither comes nor goes. When you know this truth, you will know everything. What is this truth? It is Trikarana Shuddhi. You should speak what you think and do what you say. The unity of thought, word and deed is truth. There is an intimate relationship between thought, word and deed.

The other day, I told you that Aham (I) is born out of Atma. Therefore, Aham is the son of Atma. Mind is born out of Aham and hence it is the grandson of Atma. Speech is born

out of mind. Therefore, it is the great grandson of Atma. That is to say, Atma, Aham, mind and speech, all belong to the same family. In the same way, there should be intimate relationship between heart and speech and also between speech and action. This harmony between heart, speech and action is Trikarana Shuddhi and that is Sathya. Sathya is not limited to stating what you see and hear. Sathya is your very form. What is the factor due to which you forget this truth? It can be identified by a worldly example.

Always Take Refuge in Truth

Students! You may not have the experience of this, but it is a fact that a person has to undergo many difficulties when he marries. There is no happiness in Samsara (worldly life). 'Samsara' denotes 'some' + 'sara', that which has little Sara (essence). There is no great happiness in Samsara. It can give you only a little happiness. Many types of troubles and turmoils start in the family when you marry and get a wife. Your troubles will become manifold if you have two wives. Dhruva's father Uttanapada had two wives. As a result, he had to face enormous difficulties. His second wife would not allow Dhruva to sit on his father's lap because he was born out of his first wife. She started arguing with King Uttanapada that only her son had the right to sit on his lap. As a result, Dhruva left for the forest and the king was subjected to great agony and suffering. You also know the story of Dasaratha who had three wives. He completely yielded to the wishes of his third wife and sent Sri Rama, born out of his first wife, to the forest even though Rama was none other than the incarnation of Lord Narayana. What will then be the fate of one who has ten wives? Who has got ten wives? It is the mind. Its ten wives are the ten senses of man. What a great suffering the mind is

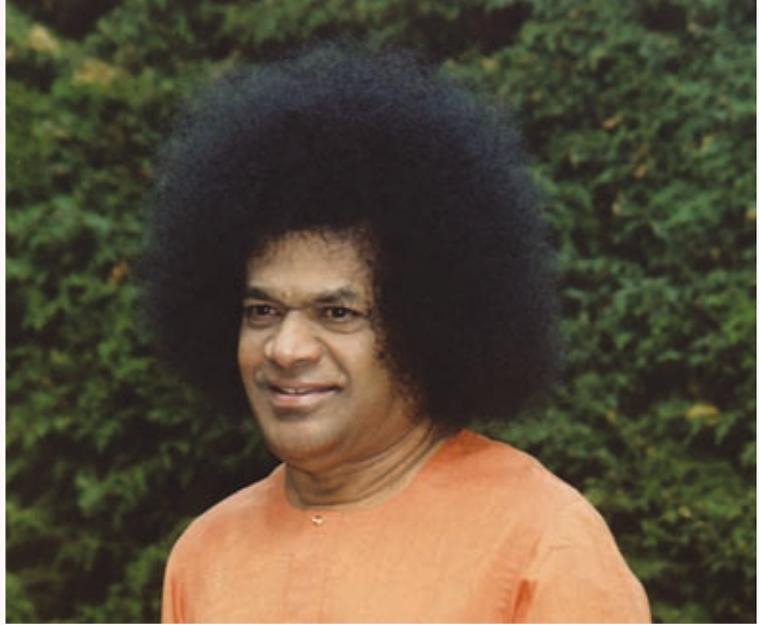


put to by these ten senses! The eyes demand, "Buy me a TV and take me to a good cinema". Then the tongue starts pestering it, "Bring for me the most delicious Masala Dosa, Dahi Vada". The nose tells, "Get a fragrant flower for me". Similarly, the ears also want to hear good music. How is it possible to satisfy the cravings of all these senses? It is difficult to fully satisfy even one sense. Then, how can the ten senses be satisfied? Unable to satisfy the ten senses, the mind is subjected to untold miseries. Only then it prays, "Oh God, I do not want this Samsara" and makes efforts to control the senses. What are the worries that afflict the mind?

To be born is a worry, to be on the earth is a worry; world is a cause of worry and death too; entire childhood is a worry and so is the old age; life is a worry, failure is a worry; all actions and difficulties cause worry; even happiness too is a mysterious worry. Devotion to Swami alone will put an end to all your worries. Oh people! Develop such devotion and love. (Telugu Poem)

Truth Alone Triumphs

Then the mind starts praying, "Oh Lord, I can no longer bear this suffering. Kindly come to my rescue". Till then, it does not think of God. People pray only in times of difficulties. When are you afflicted with worries? It is only when you forget truth. The reason for all the worries of man today is that he



That which changes is worldly truth and that which remains changeless is spiritual truth. The changeless truth is the foundation. On the foundation of Sathya, stands the mansion of Dharma. The mansion can be given any colour, any name; it can be decorated in any way. But the foundation cannot be changed. This foundation is what is meant by Sathya. Sathyannasti Paro Dharma (There is no Dharma greater than adherence to truth). Sathya is the basis of Dharma. Dharayati iti Dharma (that which sustains is Dharma). Dharma is supported and sustained by Sathya. In fact, Sathya is the fundamental basis for everything. But, unfortunately, man today has forgotten this principle of truth.

has forgotten truth. Follow truth and you will be successful in all fields of life. Victory always favours those who follow truth, and none others. You cannot be victorious by your physical strength, intellectual power, enormous wealth and a large number of followers. All these cannot supersede truth. It is the truth



that triumphs. There is nothing in this world that can overpower truth. *Sathyameva Jayate* (Truth alone triumphs). Nothing else can achieve victory. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). You can achieve victory in all your endeavours when you follow truth. Whatever serious problem you may be faced with, it can be easily solved by following truth. There is nothing that truth cannot achieve in this world. It can achieve everything. Sathya has such great power that it can turn earth into sky and sky into earth. Therefore, always take refuge in truth. Truth is God. Life has no meaning if you forget truth. People in this world are victims of so many problems and sufferings because they have forgotten truth. If you forget truth and take refuge in anything else, you cannot achieve victory. You may have high position of authority and high degrees of education, but they cannot lead you to truth. What is the reason? The reason is that all these are worldly achievements and they lead you only to worldly goals. Sathya leads to the path of Nivritti (detachment). It is only when you realise this truth can you be victorious in life.

Students! In any adverse situation of life, keep Sathya as your guiding principle before you. Uphold your promise under all circumstances. If you have given a promise to someone, you should stick to it till the last breath of your life. When Vamana asked for three steps of land, Bali promised to give him what he asked for. Bali's preceptor Sukracharya forbade him from granting Vamana's wish. Then Bali said, "Is there a greater sin than going back on one's promise? I have given him my word; I will not go back on it, come what may". You should emulate such ideals and lead a life of truth. The world can be saved

only when people follow this principle of truth. Do people today follow the path of truth and righteousness? No. They listen to numerous discourses, read thousands of books and go to meet hundreds of noble souls. But what do they follow? What do they practise? How much do they experience? Nothing at all.

Get Rid of the Duality of your Mind

Many people call themselves Pandits (learned men). What does the term Pandit mean? Is he the one who has mastered the Vedas, the sacred texts, the epics and the mythological texts? Or is he the one who is a great exponent of scriptures? Or is he the one who has accumulated enormous knowledge? No, no. The Bhagavadgita refutes this statement and declares, *Pandita Samadarshina* (A Pandit is one who is equal-minded). A real Pandit achieves equal-mindedness. He observes equanimity in happiness and sorrow, praise and ridicule, pleasure and pain. He is indifferent to heat and cold. This has to be there and that also has to be there in this world. These dualities are part and parcel of worldly life. When you suffer from the heat of summer, you want the coolness of winter. But, how long can you enjoy the coolness of winter? You will again desire for the heat of summer. When the heat is severe, then you will say, "Oh God, I am not able to bear this heat", and desire for coolness. But are the heat and coolness under your control? No. They are the gifts of God. These dualities are the hallmarks of this world. Man can enjoy his life and experience peace and happiness only because of these dualities. Nobody wants to eat sweets all the time. If you eat sweets for ten days, on the eleventh day you will feel like tasting pickles. When you eat pickles for a few days, you will again desire for sweets.

Sukhadukhe Samekruthwa Labhalabhau



Jayajayau (one should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat). Pleasure and pain, profit and loss are but natural in this world. However, one should observe equanimity in this duality. You should not focus your mind on duality just because there is so much duality in this world. *A man with dual mind is half blind.* Therefore, do not have a dual mind.

Man's mind oscillates like the pendulum of a clock this way and that way. So long as this vacillation of mind continues, man will experience only duality. But when the pendulum stops, the mind will become still and stable. Only then will he experience the unity of Jiva (embodied soul) and Brahman (God). Therefore, man should try to control the vagaries of his mind. So long as mind oscillates, you are bound by time. When the mind becomes still and you realise the principle of unity, you will transcend time. Time is God. *Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah, Kalateetaya Namah, Kalaswarupaya Namah, Kalaniyamitaya Namah* (salutations to time, to the one who is beyond time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, to the one who is the embodiment of time, and to the one who ordains time).

Reach the Goal of your Life's Journey

God is the master of time. When you take refuge in God, time has no power to do any harm to you. In fact, man should become the master of time. A real human being is one who transcends time. Time is God. God is the resident of your heart. Greatness of man is immeasurable because God Himself is installed in his heart. God is subservient to His devotee. Therefore, it is not proper for man to think himself inferior in any way. *Jantunam*

Nara Janma Durlabham (of all living beings, human birth is the rarest). It is a rare fortune to be born as a human being. Never demean human birth. This Nara Janma (human birth) has to be offered to Narayana. This is the very purpose of human birth. Man should rise to the level of divine. He should evolve from animality to humanness and from humanness to divinity. But, unfortunately, man today is going in the reverse direction and degenerating to the level of animals. Never use the 'reverse gear'. Always use the 'front gear' and move forward. Where should you stop? You should not stop till the goal is reached. This is the purpose of the journey of human life.

How should you lead your life? You should lead your life by following four 'F's, about which I have told you earlier. The first 'F' is: Follow the master. Who is your master? Your conscience is your master. The second 'F' is: Face the devil. The third 'F' is: Fight to the end, and the fourth 'F' is: Finish the game. This is the goal of life and this is the game of life.

Life is a game, play it.

Life is a dream, realise it.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is love, enjoy it.

The life of man is filled with such deep inner meanings and such great mysteries. Today man is demeaning such a sacred, divine, noble and sublime human life. What is the reason? The reason is that he has forgotten truth. Many people think that three-fourth of truth is life. But I do not accept this. What about the remaining one-fourth? Therefore, not three-fourth, but complete truth is life. Truth is God. God is full.

*Poornamada Poornamidam, Poornat
Poornamudachyate,*

*Poornasya Poornamadaya,
Poornamevavashishyate.*



(That is full, this is full. When the full is taken out of the full, what remains is again the full.)

God is full, you are full, the world is full and everything is full. Therefore, truth is full and fullness is truth. Realise this truth and do not resort to falsehood as far as possible. In a situation when speaking truth can be dangerous or can land you in trouble, do not utter either truth or untruth; remain silent. *Anudvegakaram Vakyam Sathyam Priya-hitham Cha Yat* (one should speak only truthful, pleasing and well-intentional words, which are beneficial to others).

Pray with Sincerity of Feelings and Purity of Heart

Once Lord Indra decided to test a great yogi who was observing two vows. His first vow was that he would not hurt or harm anybody, and the second vow was that he would not tell a lie. In order to put these vows into practice in his life, he was performing severe penance. Lord Indra came there in the form of a hunter, chasing a deer. When the deer came running before the yogi, he opened his eyes and saw the deer which hid itself in a bush. The hunter came to the yogi and asked, "Swami, I came here in pursuit of a deer. Have you seen it"? The yogi was caught in a dilemma. If he were to say that he had not seen the deer, that would amount to uttering falsehood. On the other hand, if he were to reveal the whereabouts of the deer, the hunter would kill it. In either way, one of his vows would be broken. Then

he prayed to God to give him a vision or an idea by which he could uphold both the vows. Immediately, God granted him a vision. God at once responds to the prayers of those who pray to Him with purity of heart. Those who utter their prayers without any earnestness, God will not answer their prayers, no matter how long they keep on praying. Those who pray with sincerity of feelings and purity of heart will get immediate response from God. As God granted him a vision, the yogi said to the hunter, "The eyes that see cannot speak and the tongue that speaks cannot see. Then what can I say"? Eyes that saw the deer cannot speak. The tongue that can speak did not see the deer. Seeing one thing and saying another thing amounts to falsehood. In this way, he escaped from a difficult situation.

In this world, whenever man is caught up in such a dilemma, he should try to escape from it by following this path. Do not speak truth that would lead to danger. At the same time, do not commit sin by uttering falsehood. Follow the middle path because the world is illusive. Right from your tender age, never utter falsehood. In a difficult situation, neither tell a lie nor speak truth. Better remain silent.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Hey Siva Sankara Namami Sankara...*")

– **From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 2nd July 1996.**

You cannot understand the nature of My Reality either today or even after a thousand years of steady austerity or ardent enquiry even if all mankind joins in that effort. But, in a short time, you will become cognisant of the bliss showered by the Divine principle, which has taken upon itself this sacred body and this sacred name. Your good fortune which will provide you this chance is greater than what was available for anchorites, monks, sages, saints and even personalities embodying facet of Divine glory.

– *Baba*

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER

Dr. G. Venkataraman, an eminent scientist and former Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, who interviewed a large number of eminent persons for Radio Sai Global Harmony, is interviewed by Sri Ted Henry.



DR. VENKATARAMAN, *IT IS A pleasure to be sitting across the table and speaking to you tonight.*

But I have to ask you if you feel a little strange, because normally you are the one asking all the questions. This is much easier on my side than it is on your side, isn't it?

It is like an examiner sitting for an examination. I sit here not knowing what questions you are going to ask!

You are a man of science and I was always led to believe that science and spirituality simply do not mix. Are you an aberration there? What caused you to get into the world of both of these disciplines?

I am glad you asked that question. I have to clarify some misconceptions here. I will leave out the philosophical aspect and stay with the pure human aspect. It is only a recent fashion that scientists scoff at spirituality. If you go back in history, not too far, up to Newton and Galileo, you will find that science and spirituality made a perfect mix. I am not sure if you are aware that Newton wanted to be a priest. He was a great believer in God. He was always amazed by the power of God. For example, he believed in absolute space, a concept in physics. But of course, now we know that there is no absolute space, there is only absolute space time, and that came with Albert Einstein; however, that is a different story. But Newton said you

must have absolute space; otherwise it won't be consistent with divinity. Similarly, he looked at the thumb and said, this thumb alone is enough to prove the existence of God. Newton was not an isolated singularity as we say in mathematics. He was not an exception at all. That was the kind of feeling that prevailed. As late as the 1920s, Werner Heisenberg, who discovered the laws of Quantum Physics for the first time, later wrote a letter to his sister in which he said, "I felt as if I was looking over the



Love is far more powerful than we recognise it to be, and I would say that all His humanitarian projects are demonstrations of the power of love. It is not just the hospital or the water project or any specific project. There are so many of them. He wants to show that the way to solve problems is through love and not in any other method. Conflict will certainly not solve problems. It may shelve the problem, it may sweep it under the rug, it may keep it supposedly under control but the problem will erupt again, and when it does erupt, it will be much more violent.



shoulder of the Lord as He was composing the symphony of the universe". And Heisenberg was a Nobel Prize winner. I will not give a long list but just jump to Charles Townes, a professor from Columbia who got the Nobel Prize for discovering the principle of the Maser and Laser. He said, "Science explains the 'how' of the universe and spiritual philosophy and the religion explain the 'why' of the universe".

When did you become so interested in the 'why'?

My case is somewhat different, for the simple reason that I led a double life, so to say! Born in India in a traditional family, one automatically gets exposed to religion. As a small boy, I was given a lot of books that related to our epics which I read and liked. The God that I liked really was Lord Rama who stood for truth and righteousness. He was an ideal person and He naturally inspired a lot of admiration. Gandhi was very much around when I was a small boy, and he used to adore Lord Rama. In fact, he died with the name of Rama on his lips. So, Lord Rama became very acceptable to me, particularly because of Gandhi. But when I started my scientific career, I would think of God at certain times and science at other times. As I grew up and became older and wiser, I realised that science was only one half of the story and the spirituality the missing half, as Bhagavan Baba says. Unless you have all of it together, you will not have the whole picture.

Now, let me ask you this question about Baba. What significance does Sathya Sai Baba have in your life?

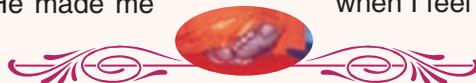
Let me tell you briefly, otherwise I will need a lot of time to explain this. I think, Sathya Sai Baba not only has transformed me, but made my life meaningful. He made me

Baba always says, "I want to sustain the people in their own faith and make them deepen their faith. There is a particular pathway to God that you have chosen, then why do you have to search for other tracks? There is no such need". That is what makes Him acceptable to people from different religions. Particularly from Iran, I have seen big groups come. They come here, and Baba gives them interviews. They say, "Baba, we want to sing Bhajans". And He arranges for them to sing Bhajans, and all their Bhajans are on Allah. We all listen; of course, we do not know those Bhajans and so cannot follow. He has no divisive feelings.

realise the real purpose of human life. The real purpose of human life as I now see it is to recognise the divinity in man. This has been recognised by many religions. They all say, God made man in His own image. Well, if God is divine, then man has to be divine too if he is an image of God!

You know as well as I do that there are people all over the planet who are perhaps hearing Sai Baba's name for the first time. Who is Sai Baba? Have you personally been able to penetrate the veil of who Sai Baba is?

I do not know if I can answer that question in its entirety because I know in my head that He is an incarnation of God. That I know by logical reasoning as well. But as a human being, I believe that is not enough. I must feel that in my Heart. Then only can I say I have penetrated through the veil. There are times when I feel that way and there are times



when I can't say that I feel that way. Just may be my mind is wandering and Heart is not tuned up. But in my Heart of hearts, I do know that He is an incarnation of God and that He is pure love and compassion. That, I have no doubt of.

It is because of His pure love that He has touched innumerable Hearts in innumerable countries. There are countries from where people have not come like Cuba, but He is known there. I have heard Leonardo Gutter telling me that there are something like 20,000 followers of Sai Baba in Cuba including the brother of Fidel Castro!

How do they become aware?

He has got his own methods. I do not remember the details. Somebody sent a letter or a picture there, and then the word spread, something like that. This has happened time and again and I shall give you a classic example. In my opinion, if you have a feeling in your Heart for God, and it does not have to be Sai Baba, He reaches out to you. It has happened to a number of people. Take the case of James Sinclair. He has recorded it in first person. He did not know anything about Sai Baba. He always used to ask himself, "How come I am living 2,000 years late? Why was I not around when Christ was there"? There was a deep yearning in him and Swami brought James to Him. This happened to many people. Let me get back to the point that I wanted to tell you. Look at Russia. Ten years ago, there was hardly any Russian here. Today there are so many. In fact, at times there seem to be more Russians than people from any other region!

There are more Russians than Americans today, right now at this period.

That is right. I understand there is a deep hunger for God in them. I believe, Baba

told somebody, just at the time Perestroika was coming into the picture, "A big black cloud over Russia is lifting". When it lifted, there was a vacuum, and those who were yearning for God came here. And for everyone who comes here, there are at least a hundred more there who are unable to come and we have heard stories of that. If you have yearning for God, He will reveal Himself to you in some way or the other at the right time.

There seems to be a threshold of awareness in the west, particularly in America. Not so long ago, there was a Sunday article in the New York Times. I have to imagine that there are thousands of people if not millions who are seeing His name and picture in print in the paper for the first time. Are you ready to have the gates made bigger to accommodate the throngs of people pouring in to see Sai Baba?

We do not have to make them bigger. The gates will collapse if they come. Already in India, whenever Baba goes to any place, huge crowds come. I have seen this personally in the year 1999. I had the pleasure and the privilege of going with Him first to Delhi and then to Mumbai. It was a seven-day trip. He had to give Darshan in the biggest stadium in India, the Nehru Stadium. It was built for the Asian Games. About 1,00,000 people could sit and the track and field events would be conducted there. There were people sitting in the playing area and the galleries, reflecting the tremendous hunger for Him. It has been like that for many years. I think people from all over the world too will be drawn to Him in due course when the time comes.

We have talked about people coming from atheism who have had no religion being drawn by Baba now, like from Cuba, from Russia.

And, of course, there are millions of



people from India too. I am also aware, the then Prime Minister of India who was a Hindu was a devotee, an admirer and affirmer of Sai Baba, and even the then President who was a Muslim felt the same way. Talk to me a little bit about His ability to unite people from various religious backgrounds which makes Him unique.

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Sometime ago, there was a mass marriage ceremony conducted for those who could not afford the expenditure of marriage. I was present at that. It was during Baba's 70th Birthday. There were Christians, Muslims and Hindus. A Muslim head priest conducted the Muslim marriages according to their rituals, the Christian priests conducted the marriages according to their system and the Hindus, of course, who were the majority conducted marriages according to their custom.



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Swami just does not care about the procedural details. He says, "My language is the language of the Heart; My religion is the religion of Love". So, He does not have any problem; we are the ones who have the problems.

The people that I have met here are fairly attached to the form of Sai Baba and I would imagine you are no exception to that, and I understand you are doing His work at His command. What, if He suddenly told you, "Go into the world and work again; go back from where you came, go to Delhi or go to Mumbai"? Would you be able to do that easily if He wanted you to be yourself apart from here?

Let me answer that question in two parts. First, I hope He won't ask me to do that. But if He asks me to do that, I would obey His command unflinchingly because my duty is to do what He says and hope that He will be pleased with what I do. So, as far as I am concerned, I have no hang-ups on that. But different people are made differently. Baba says often, "You must obey divine command implicitly". If that



is given to me as an order, I will definitely do that. I have no doubts about that. May be, I will cry a little bit but that is a different thing.

You would probably shed a few tears because you are surely in the wonderful position of being around Him so much. How do you describe Him as a man, the human feature of Sai Baba that you see so often?

Baba Himself has answered this question earlier. You can be very close and totally miss Him, and you can be very far but you can be very close to Him. It is all a question of how you look at Him. As He says, if you look at God with a human eye, you see a human. If you see Him with a divine eye, you will see Him divine.

I want to ask you one question. The good works of Sathya Sai Baba – the wonderful hospitals that are almost beyond description for the person that has not seen them, the schools, the educational system, the water purification projects – I am guessing there is no way on earth even Baba can meet these needs universally. Is the purpose of these projects to serve as models for others to carry on? And, is it His purpose to show to the people of India that they can do this with very little money and do it so successfully? Is that the purpose of why He is giving so much attention to it?

There are a number of reasons. But I can say, there are some obvious lessons to be learnt. The first is that you must be selfless in anything that you do whether it is small or big. If there is a tinge of selfishness, then there are chances of failure. But if you are totally selfless, then there is a very great chance that you will succeed. A selfless person is full of love. Love is far more powerful than we recognise it to be, and I would say that all His humanitarian projects are demonstrations of the power of love. It is not just the hospital or the

water project or any specific project. There are so many of them. He wants to show that the way to solve problems is through love and not in any other method. Conflict will certainly not solve problems. It may shelve the problem, it may sweep it under the rug, it may keep it supposedly under control but the problem will erupt again, and when it does erupt, it will be much more violent.

He says, His religion is the Religion of Love. I hear this over and over again but I find that it is the most difficult four letter word for most humans to understand including myself what love means. You are talking about acting selflessly. I do not know too many people who can do that.

You see we have lost practice and so we think it is impossible. But in a small measure, we are all alive because of selfless love! We do not realise that. Let me put this way. I thought about this for a long time. You see a newborn baby. That newborn baby cannot survive unless the mother is prepared to get up in the middle of the night to feed it, clean it, take care of it and so on. That is selfless love in action. That is really God's love for man. You and I would not be alive if our mothers hadn't done it, and every mother on earth is doing it all the time from the beginning of the human race. But we do not pay attention to it. Somehow, other factors come and eclipse this. Life goes on because of love. It is not confined to humans. Look at a tigress or a cat, how they protect their little ones. God has built this into all the living beings – kindness, compassion and love. Of course, it appears in distorted forms but now what we are trying to do is to edge it out. That is our problem.

How much longer do you continue to serve in your capacity before you decide to simply retire and enjoy the fruits of your achievements over so many years?



With Baba, you do not take a vacation; He does not take a vacation. He says, change of work is rest. I now have no encumbrances, I am all by myself, I have no particular agenda of my own. My only complaint is that He has given me only twenty four hours a day. Of course, as Einstein says, if I can travel with the speed of light I can make these 24 hours last longer, but I can't do that. I have to be involved in Swami's work. I feel enormous strength and pleasure and happiness in doing His work. By no means and no way am I going to trade it in.

I would say, these are the best days of my life. I would unhesitatingly say, these are the most useful years of my life. I know who I am finally; I know what I am doing and why I am doing it. I know for whom I am doing it. I am grateful to God for giving this opportunity to me.

Finally, let me give you one last test question as we are running out of time. If these truly are the best days of your life and if you would not trade places with anyone else on the face of the earth, then for the person hearing about this place called Puttaparthi or Prasanthi Nilayam and Sathya Sai Baba, what is the most important thing that you say right now that would help people understand why this transformation occurred in you at this most important time in your life?

I would say, I was made to realise who I really am. I am a human being and I have got to live like a human being. Baba says, the definition of a human being is one with a



I know in my head that He is an incarnation of God. That I know by logical reasoning as well. But as a human being, I believe that is not enough. I must feel that in my Heart. Then only can I say I have penetrated through the veil. There are times when I feel that way and there are times when I can't say that I feel that way. Just may be my mind is wandering and Heart is not tuned up. But in my Heart of hearts, I do know that He is an incarnation of God and that He is pure love and compassion. That, I have no doubt of.



Heart. For Heart, He uses the Sanskrit word – Hridaya. It is Hri + Daya. Daya in Sanskrit means compassion. Unless your Heart is overflowing with compassion, you are not a human being. I would say Puttaparthi is telling the world now to discover your Heart, discover the compassion in it, let it flood all over your body and let it flow out of your body in acts of selfless love.

Dr. Venkataraman, you do very well on that side of the microphone and I think you should stay there for a few more years. Thank you very much for your time. Sai Ram.

Thank you. Sai Ram.

Courtesy: Radio Sai Global Harmony

Of what avail is it if you simply worship My Name and Form without attempting to cultivate the Samatwa (equal love for all) that I have, My Santhi (unruffled peace), My Prema (love), My Sahana (patience and fortitude), My Ananda (bliss)?

– Baba



ON 21ST JANUARY 1969, I telephoned Sri D.V. Rama Rao, District President of East Godavari, that I along with Sri Sathya Murthy wanted to come to his house at Rajahmundry for Bhagavan's Darshan as He was staying there. After receiving his consent, we went by car to Rajahmundry, and were at the doorstep of the residence of Sri Rama Rao on 22nd January 1969 at 6.30 a.m. We went into the hall where six devotees, known to me, were already waiting. At about 7 o'clock, Bhagavan came out of His room and looking at us with a

Visit to Villages on 22nd January

After everything was set, Bhagavan's caravan of four cars left for village Thamarada, about 15 km from Rajahmundry at 8.15 a.m. On reaching the village, Bhagavan got down from His car, laid the foundation of a Sai Mandir and stood on the dais, receiving garlands and Arati. Before getting into the car, He stood on its footboard, waved His hand of benediction to all sides and blessed the crowd of over ten thousand people.

Our next halt was village Medapadu where Bhagavan inaugurated a newly-constructed

B.V. Ramana Rao

BHAGAVAN'S VISIT TO RAJAHMUNDRY 22ND TO 26TH JANUARY 1969

Bhagavan travelled for long hours, sometimes from early morning till late at night, and went to remote villages to give His Divine Message of love to villagers undeterred by all physical discomforts. His visit to Rajahmundry in 1969 highlights how relentlessly He pursued His Mission of showering compassion and love on the masses to redeem their life.

smile on His face, asked us His usual question, "When did you come"? After all of us had Padanamaskar, Bhagavan graciously asked us to have breakfast.

Bhajan was in full swing in the spacious Pandal outside the compound when Bhagavan alighted from the stage, stood on the steps for a few minutes and started slowly walking along the carpeted aisle, with Rama Rao behind Him, collecting letters. Meanwhile, happy tidings were conveyed to us that Swami had graciously permitted us to be a part of His retinue and that our car should be behind Swami's car which was driven by Rama Rao.

Mandir. After consecrating Prasadam for distribution and accepting Arati, He got into the car. From there, we proceeded to village Vadlamuru, which is famous for oranges. Here, Bhagavan laid the foundation stone of Sathya Sai Mandir. There was a huge crowd at this place. Bhagavan was given a traditional welcome befitting the sacred ceremony. After laying the foundation of the Mandir, Swami sat on a chair placed on an elevated platform for a few minutes to enable the crowd to feast their eyes on His Divine Form. Bhagavan was shown the plan of the proposed Mandir which He blessed. Before getting down from





Sri Ramakrishna and his family members with Bhagavan after Bhagavan laid the foundation of his new house in Vadlamuru village on 22nd January 1969.

the platform, He raised both His hands and blessed the crowd, turning to all sides.

The cars moved on to the residence of Sri Thummalepalli Ramakrishna, where lunch was arranged. Besides blessing the members of his family, Bhagavan laid the foundation of his proposed new house on an adjacent site. After lunch, to which there were over 100 invitees, we went to Peddapuram.

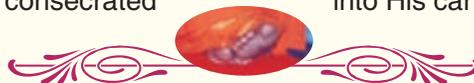
At Peddapuram, Swami visited the residence of Sri Challa Apparao. He was once a terrorist and also a political prisoner for a decade during British rule. He was bedridden and immobile due to a serious illness. Sitting by his side on the bed, Swami wiped his tears of ecstasy at His Darshan. Swami held his head with His left hand and slowly raised him to sitting posture. Then He rubbed his hands with His right hand. After this, Apparao was able to fold his hands and offer Namaskar to Swami. Swami materialised a Linga and gave it to him with instructions to bathe it with water every morning and drink the consecrated

water. Swami made him drink a little milk. Thereafter, he audibly expressed his gratitude to Bhagavan for His kindness. While leaving the house, Swami assured him that he would be able to come to Puttaparthi in about a month, and he did. The last item of the agenda for the day was a public meeting in the local high school ground. It was a historic meeting as a huge gathering of people thronged the venue. Not only the vast ground but both the streets leading to the ground were filled with people. Bhagavan's Discourse extended from 5 to 7

p.m. We returned to Rajahmundry by 8 p.m.

On Way to Ambajipet and Amalapuram

On 23rd morning, we left at 8 a.m. in the direction of Kothapeta where a public meeting was scheduled to be held at 10 a.m. in honour of Bhagavan's visit. On the way, there were a number of villages where Pandals were erected in which Bhagavan's photo was placed on a chair covered with a silk Sari in a similar pattern at all places. There were about 100 to 200 people at each of these places. At the sight of Swami's caravan, one man with a garland and a woman with Arati plate would rush towards Swami's car. Swami would slow down the car to collect the garland, receive Arati and bless them. While all Pandals were almost alike, for no reason understandable to us, Swami would ask the car to be stopped at certain places and would get down from the car. He would then ask the people to sit down. He would materialise Vibhuti and give to some old or disabled people, bless all and get back into His car.



About 3 km on the way from Kothapeta, Swami directed the cars to go to a village Palevela where He blessed the family of Sri Turaga Purushottam, a very old devotee of Bhagavan. He spent about 10 minutes in that house before He got into the car. We were just in time when we reached Kothapeta. The meeting was organised in the vast ground of a college which was thronged by a mammoth gathering of devotees. Swami was received with Poornakumbham amidst Veda chanting and was escorted to a specially erected and tastefully decorated platform. Before ascending the dais, Swami spent about 10 minutes walking along the long pathway straight in front of the dais and also beyond the carpeted pathway to enable the devotees to have closer Darshan. Bhagavan's Discourse followed by Bhajans lasted till 12 noon. After the programme was over, He spent almost 15 minutes talking to some dignitaries and Vedic scholars, blessing some of them with Padanamaskar and Vibhuti Prasadam. This seemed to be quite unusual; it appeared as if He was delaying His departure from this place for some reason known only to Him.

We left the venue of the meeting at about 12.20 p.m. and were on our way to Ambajipet where lunch was arranged. When we were nearing Ambajipet, Swami's car stopped. We all got down to find out what the matter was. Swami came out of His car and pointing to a group of two ladies and two children almost running across the fields, told us, "Call them here". Two of us ran, stopped them and asked them to follow us. They seemed to be so hard pressed for time that they did not care to stop. When we blocked their way, they had to obey us reluctantly. The elder of the two ladies was around sixty years old. The other lady must be around thirty-five with the children aged

Bhagavan heaped up sand, and just in front of us from one of the heaps of sand materialised first an opal Linga. Bhagavan said that this was the sacred Linga which He had installed at Somnath Temple when He last visited the temple with devotees. He brought it out to show it to those who were fortunate to be there. Later on, He produced a silver idol of crawling Baby Krishna. Both these articles were placed in a silver plate and taken round for the devotees to see and sanctify their lives.

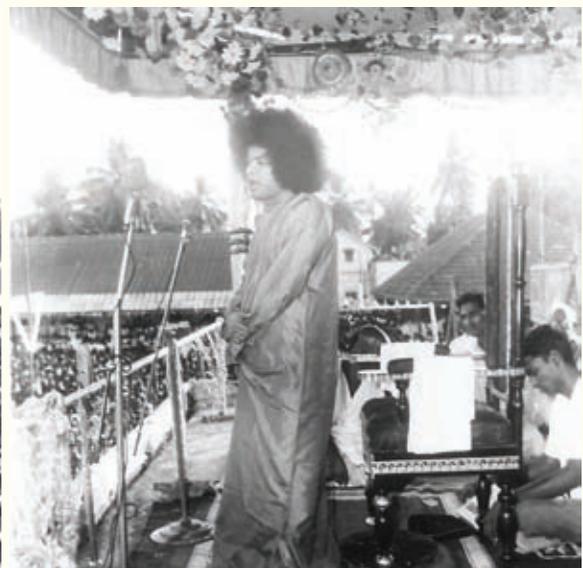
twelve and nine. They were evidently poverty-stricken. Baba asked the elder lady, "Where are you going"? "We are going to Ambajipet to see Sai Baba" was her reply, visibly annoyed at the interruption. "There will be enormous crowd and you will be terribly inconvenienced with these kids", Baba was saying when they turned to resume their cross country trek. We barricaded their way and told them that it was Sai Baba Himself who was talking to them. The old lady looked at us askance. "I am Sai Baba – I stopped here just for you" Baba said smilingly. "Yes Attha! He looks exactly like Sai Baba in photos", said the younger lady, presumably her widowed daughter-in-law with two children. The old lady was perplexed and looked at Baba incredulously.

"I know everything, your son was killed for the sake of property. Don't worry, the High Court verdict will be in your favour. I stopped here only to tell you this. Come, take this". So saying, Baba picked up a wad of currency notes in an envelope from the car and



gave it to her along with an apple each to all four of them. They grabbed the envelope and stood stunned when we left. None of them said a word of thanks to Baba or made any formal obeisance to Him. When we saw the crowds at Ambajipet, we realised the infinite kindness of Baba towards them and how fortunate they were. The reason why Bhagavan had stayed for 15 minutes after the public meeting at Kothapeta, which was very unusual, was clear to us now; it was just to time His halt at that

two-storeyed house of Dr. Saraswathi. After tea, we went to the high school ground at 5.30 p.m. where a public meeting was arranged. There was an unprecedented rush and Swami climbed the steps of a well-illuminated podium with fine floral decorations, specially erected at a height of 2.5 m. After He reached the podium, there was a continuous loud applause till He was garlanded and seated. Bhagavan spoke for an hour and a half, untiringly keeping the audience spellbound.

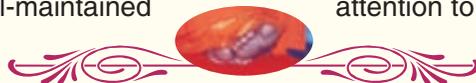


Bhagavan gave an enlightening Discourse to a huge congregation of people at Amalapuram on 23rd January 1969.

particular spot where He could meet the two ladies.

A delicious lunch with delta specialities was waiting for us at Ambajipet. After lunch we moved on to Amalapuram, the heart of Godavari delta. The delta, which is otherwise known as “Konaseema” with its fertile soil, is a sight to be seen beyond description with its greenery abounding in beautiful coconut groves, jack-fruit, mango and plantain orchards. At Amalapuram, we alighted in front of the spacious and well-maintained

We stopped for the night at the well-furnished residence of Dr. Saraswathi. To be in the company of Bhagavan during His tour is as much a pleasure as a penance. Every word, every gesture, every moment and every action of Bhagavan is an enlightenment. It is a penance because all our attention is focused on Bhagavan with our minds stilled and silenced against any other attraction or distraction. Whether it was at dinner or a public meeting, while the organisers were bound to pay special attention to us, His entourage, we found



ourselves always well within the confines of His affectionate attention.

Mystery of Bhagavan's Visit to a House in Kathimanda Village

On 24th morning, our caravan left Amalapuram at 8 a.m. in the direction of Razole. On the way, we could see those typical Pandals along the road, where devotees assembled. Such Pandals were set up at Manepalli and Thatipaka besides many other villages. Baba did not get down but asked the car to be stopped for a few moments when He waved His hand of blessings while receiving garlands and Arati.

We were to have a brief stopover at Lakkavaram. At a distance of 3 km before we reached that village, Swami asked the car to take a turn to the right where there was a rugged road fit only for bullock carts. We knew that Swami never came anywhere near the village Kathimanda, to which He led us, on that once God-forsaken road, now God-blessed road. Swami asked the car to be stopped at the corner of a bylane of the village. He got down from the car and trekked barefooted a distance of 30 m before He took another turn and disappeared. We were all left waiting aghast and could not conjecture where Swami might have gone. Meanwhile, we manoeuvred to turn the cars back.

Baba reappeared at the turn of the lane and came near the cars in ten minutes, smiling. Before getting into the car, He stood there and disclosed to us the mystery of His visit. Three years ago, a couple came to Prasanthi Nilayam from this village. The wife lost three children in the past soon after delivery. She came when she was carrying. The couple were anxious to have the blessings of Bhagavan. Bhagavan asked the husband to admit her in

Puttaparthi hospital. By Swami's grace, she delivered a male child in her seventh month. They stayed at Puttaparthi till the child was two months old and returned to their home in this village. "I went to the house and blessed the mother and her son who is now a three years old chubby boy," explained Bhagavan.

While we were proceeding towards Lakkavaram after our return to the main road, Swami spotted two old ladies standing with garlands in their hands under a festoon of mango leaves, tied on each side to a coconut tree, in village Pothumatla. He asked the car to be stopped and summoned the two ladies to come forward. Swami opened the door of the car, bent His head for the ladies to garland Him and after they had Padanamaskar, we resumed our journey.

A Miracle at Lakkavaram

At Lakkavaram, Swami visited the residence of Sri M. Balaji, a good active worker in the district. There we had the good fortune to witness a miracle. That morning, Balaji's pet dog died, four hours before we arrived. In anticipation of Swami's visit any moment and in view of the street in front of his house being jam-packed with devotees, Balaji could not find time and convenience to give the dead dog a fitting burial. So, they placed the corpse in a bamboo basket and covered it with layers of straw and leaves of holy basil (Tulasi) to prevent decay and foul smell. The basket was kept under a mango tree in the backyard. Swami blessed all the inmates of the house. While looking at the backyard, Swami noticed the basket and wanted to know what it was. Balaji explained that despite best efforts of the veterinary doctor, the dog could not be cured of its illness due to which it was suffering agonising pain for over a month. Finally,



it died that morning and they were waiting to give it a decent burial. Swami asked the basket to be brought to the front of the backyard, from where we could see what was happening. He told Balaji to remove the leaves and straw. Swami materialised Vibhuti, sprinkled over its body and patted it. The dog opened its eyes, slowly struggled to stand on its legs and started wagging its tail. Swami asked Balaji to feed the dog with warm milk. Later when I met Balaji at Puttaparthi during Sivarathri, he told me that the dog was hale and hearty.

A Visit to Village Kadali

Resuming our journey, Swami asked our cars to be parked on the canal bank at a place where there was a road leading to Kadali, the native place of Sri Kamavadhani, who also accompanied us on the trip. Swami's car proceeded in the direction of Sakhinetipalli, a village 1.5 km away from Razole. This was the native place of Sri Ramalinga Raju who was then the Minister of Religious Endowments, Government of Andhra Pradesh. He prayed to Swami to inaugurate the newly-constructed Gita Mandir in his village. So, Swami went there with Sri Rama Rao.

Some passersby who recognised Sri Kamavadhani must have informed his sons at home that Sri Kamavadhani was in our car. They came along with some village elders and requested all of us to come to their house to take rest until Swami returned from Sakhinetipalli. We declined the offer politely. Then they requested Sri Kamavadhani to come to their house. He neither looked at them nor talked to them. He was stoical for reasons known to him. In the meantime, some more people from the village gathered there and started singing the same song of inviting us. This silent drama lasted for one hour. Swami returned at 10 p.m.

To be in the company of Bhagavan during His tour is as much a pleasure as a penance. Every word, every gesture, every moment and every action of Bhagavan is an enlightenment. It is a penance because all our attention is focused on Bhagavan with our minds stilled and silenced against any other attraction or distraction. Whether it was at dinner or a public meeting, while the organisers were bound to pay special attention to us, His entourage, we found ourselves always well within the confines of His affectionate attention.

The family members of Sri Kamavadhani made their obeisance to Swami, who recognised them. He got down from the car and asked them, "Why did you not take Kamavadhani to your house"? All of them in one voice said that he was unmoved despite their importunate persuasion for the last one hour. Swami smilingly told them, "I shall bring him and we shall all have our food at your house". On hearing this reply of Swami, they literally ran to their village in ecstasy. Swami sent word that Sri Kamavadhani should sit along with Him in the car. Our cars moved in a procession with the villagers surrounding Swami's car.

It was a small tiled house of Sri Kamavadhani in Kadali. We sat in the open verandah outside. Baba went into the house and sat in a chair for five minutes talking to the members of the family of Sri Kamavadhani. Meanwhile,



people started pouring in and the whole street got packed up. Somebody managed to get two petromax lamps, a table and a chair which were placed in front of the house. When Swami came out and looked at the crowd, the whole place reverberated with slogans in praise of Swami. Evidently, Swami was moved by the enthusiasm and devotion of the crowd. He sat in the chair and directed one more chair to be brought and placed by His side for Sri Kamavadhani to sit.

Though there was no public address system, Swami gave a Discourse, followed by Bhajans for an hour which made the crowd ecstatic. Swami was all praise for the Vedic scholarship and spirit of dedication of Sri Kamavadhani. Added to that, Swami materialised by the wave of His hand a gold chain studded with precious stones and put around the neck of Sri Kamavadhani, who was choked with so much emotion that he could not open his mouth to say a few words. It was a moving sight.

We do not know from where all the material was procured, but a most delicious dinner was served after Swami's Discourse. When we came out of the house, Sri Rama Rao told us that Swami declined to stay at the minister's house for dinner. He also did not give a Discourse though the arrangements and decorations were gorgeous.

We are sure of one thing that Swami would not have stepped out of His car if Sri Kamavadhani had visited his house before His arrival. That was a practical lesson and a message.

At the Sand Bed of Godavari

25th January was a glorious day which would linger in our memory lifelong. On three motor boats bound together with coir ropes, we crossed Godavari to reach the wide

sand bed at a distance of 6 km from the bank of Rajahmundry. That was a bright cool moonlit night. We all alighted on the sand bed at 9 p.m. Bhagavan asked the devotees to find an extended dry flat sand bed for squatting. Nearly all the 150 devotees ran hither and thither to find a suitable place. Not being familiar with the place, Sathya Murthy and I were walking on the sands along with Swami and Rama Rao when He suddenly announced, "Here the place is fine, let us sit down and call them". After Swami sat, we squatted just in front of Him. Then the rest of the party came running and squatted behind us.

There was Bhajan for 30 minutes, followed by Bhagavan's answering questions of devotees for another twenty minutes covering the significance of Linga as a symbol of Lord Siva and about Rasa Leelas of Krishna. Bhagavan heaped up sand, and just in front of us from one of the heaps of sand materialised first an opal Linga. Bhagavan said that this was the sacred Linga which He had installed at Somnath Temple when He last visited the temple with devotees. He brought it out to show it to those who were fortunate to be there. Later on, He produced a silver idol of crawling Baby Krishna. Both these articles were placed in a silver plate and taken round for the devotees to see and sanctify their lives.

Swami gave the holy Linga wrapped in a handkerchief and the silver idol to the safe custody of Sri N. Sathyam, secretary of the local Samithi, with stern instructions to return them to Him after dinner. At 10.30 p.m., we all squatted for dinner in the presence of Swami, for whom a folding table and chair were laid. After dinner, Swami asked Sathyam to return the two articles. In the bag he placed them,

Continued on page 356...



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

YOUTH CAMP OF ODISHA



RI SATHYA SAI SEVA Organisation of Odisha organised a youth camp at Prasanthi Nilayam from 25th to 27th August 2010, in which more than 700 youth from Odisha came to take part. During the course of the camp, the youth participated in the daily Darshan and Bhajan sessions and presented a cultural programme on 26th August 2010 in Sai Kulwant Hall.

Dasavatar: Odissi Dance

The first item of the cultural programme was an Odissi dance which began at 7.00 p.m. after Bhagavan's Darshan and a brief Bhajan session. Based on "Gita Govinda", the immortal work of saint poet Jayadev, the dance depicted ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. While the singers and musicians provided the songs and the tune, five youth performed the dance with



Sai Youth of Odisha performed an excellent Odissi dance "Dasavatar" on 26th August 2010.

aplomb, earning spontaneous applause of the audience.

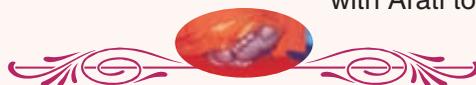
A Flood of Love: A Drama

The second item of the programme was a drama "A Flood of Love". Based on Sri Sathya Sai Housing Project in Odisha, the drama depicted how Bhagavan's love and compassion



A scene from the drama "A Flood of Love" performed by Sai Youth of Odisha on 26th August 2010.

brought new hope in the life of 699 families of three districts of Odisha for whom new houses were built by Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust since they lost their houses and belongings in a devastating flood in 2008. Simple story, excellent dialogues, good acting of the cast and good choreography made the drama very impressive and enrapturing. At the conclusion of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast of the drama and the dancers who performed Odissi dance, posed for group photos with them and distributed clothes to them. After distribution of Prasadam, the programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan.



YOUTH CAMP OF UTTAR PRADESH AND UTTARAKHAND

A youth camp was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand at Prasanthi Nilayam, during which the youth of these two States presented a dance drama in Sai Kulwant Hall on 25th September 2010.

Syan Sya Aradhana: A Dance Drama

The drama entitled “Syan Sya Aradhana” (worship of Supreme Lord Siva) began at 5.35 p.m. with a folk song and dance dedicated to Siva. The drama showcased the holy traditions of the simple pure-hearted people of Kumaon region of Uttarakhand who inhabit the beautiful valleys of the Himalayas with Om mountain



The drama “Syan Sya Aradhana” presented on 25th September 2010 depicted the holy traditions of the people of Kumaon region of Uttarakhand.

as their backdrop on the Kailash Mansarovar route. Portraying Prasanthi Nilayam as the holy Mount Kailash, the abode of Lord Siva, the drama depicted a couple of episodes from the life of Bhagavan who is none other than the incarnation of Lord Siva Himself. Embellished with two traditional dances of Uttarakhand, the drama gave the message of purity and divinity and showcased the teaching of Bhagavan, “Manava Seva is Madhava Seva” (service

to man is service to God). At the conclusion of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast, posed for group photos with them and distributed clothes to them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 7.15 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam to the entire assembly of devotees in Sai Kulwant Hall.

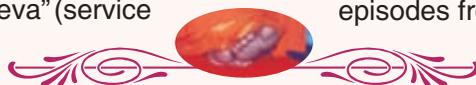
YOUTH CAMP OF MAHARASHTRA AND GOA

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa organised a youth camp at Prasanthi Nilayam from 30th September to 2nd October 2010 and presented a drama entitled “Anjaneya Veera” (valorous Hanuman) on 30th September 2010. The programme began after its ceremonial inauguration by

Bhagavan by lighting the sacred lamp on the dais at 6.45 p.m. At the outset, the Sai Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa organised a youth rally in Sai Kulwant Hall, wherein groups of youth representing various districts of the two States came before the dais and offered their salutations to Bhagavan. Meanwhile, singers of the two States sang melodious songs dedicated to Lord Ganesh and Bhagavan.

Anjaneya Veera: A Drama

The drama “Anjaneya Veera” began at 7.20 p.m. with a lovely dance by Bal Vikas children, all in the make-up of little Hanumans. The drama then portrayed the childhood of Hanuman who received Brahma Jnana (knowledge of Brahman) from Brahma, blessings from sun god and Mantra of Rama Nama (Name of Rama) from Lord Siva. This was followed by various episodes from the life story of Hanuman





The drama "Anjaneya Veera" presented on 30th September 2010 depicted the life story of Hanuman and highlighted his unmatched devotion to Lord Rama.

which demonstrated his glory, bravery and unmatched devotion to Lord Rama. Excellent sets, good make-up and costumes, perfect choreography, thrilling music and melodious songs made the drama very impressive and absorbing. At the conclusion of the drama, Bhagavan blessed the cast and posed for group photos with them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 8.35 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam to all.

YOUTH CAMP OF BIHAR AND JHARKHAND

About 2,500 devotees including youth and Bal Vikas children came from Bihar and Jharkhand and took part in Seva activities at Prasanthi Nilayam from 1st to 15th October 2010.

Maa: A Drama

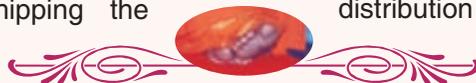
On 5th October 2010, Bal Vikas children of these two States staged a drama entitled "Maa" (mother). The drama commenced at 6.05 p.m. with a song and dance by children, depicting the glory of womanhood and describing sacred Indian tradition of worshipping the

Divine Mother and her five forms – Veda Mata, Bhu Mata, Go Mata, Desha Mata and Deha Mata (mother in the forms – the Vedas, earth, cow, motherland and physical mother). In the subsequent scenes, the play showcased the highest ideals upheld by exemplary mothers like Madalasa, Sita, Draupadi and Putlibai in different periods of time. In the next scene, the play depicted an ideal modern mother who followed the holy Indian traditions of motherhood and the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, thereby correcting her



A scene from the drama "Maa" (mother) presented by the Bal Vikas children of Bihar and Jharkhand on 5th October 2010.

two friends who were deluded to follow a wrong path due to the temptation of money and western lifestyle. The concluding scene portrayed the highest qualities of womanhood, like self-sacrifice, forbearance and kindness exemplified by Mother Easwaramma for modern women to follow. Good story, excellent acting of the children, melodious songs and appropriate sets made it an impressive play. At the conclusion of the drama, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the children, posed for group photos with them and distributed clothes to them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 6.55 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam to all.



YOUTH CAMP OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Himachal Pradesh organised a youth camp at Prasanthi Nilayam from 3rd to 11th October 2010, in which about 150 youth and Bal Vikas children of Himachal Pradesh and also the students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Anand Vilas, Shimla came to participate.

Folk Dance and Drama Entitled “Dasavatar”

On 10th October 2010, they jointly presented a cultural programme comprising two items, a folk dance and a drama. The programme began at 7.15 p.m. after Bhagavan’s Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall. At the outset, 25 youth of Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh performed a folk dance of Himachal Pradesh which depicted how the unethical practices prevalent in modern society could be got rid of by following the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. To the delight of one and all, the youth demonstrated their talent in balancing candles on their heads, rotating plates full of flowers on their fingers and dancing with traditional bows and arrows during this dance of 20



Sai Youth of Himachal Pradesh performed a thrilling folk dance on 10th October 2010.

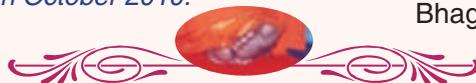
minutes duration. By far, it was a wonderful performance which earned loud applause of the spectators.

This was followed by the drama “Dasavatar” which was enacted by the Bal Vikas children of Himachal Pradesh and students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Shimla. The drama portrayed the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu beginning with a collective introduction of ten incarnations and concluding with the incarnation of Bhagavan



A scene from the drama “Dasavatar” performed by Bal Vikas children of Himachal Pradesh and students of Sri Sathya Sai School, Shimla on 10th October 2010.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba who has incarnated on earth to establish Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa on a firm footing and usher in an era of peace and harmony in the world. Excellent direction, beautiful dances of children, scintillating music and perfect choreography made the drama very enrapturing and absorbing. At the conclusion of the drama, Bhagavan showered His blessings on the participants of the two items of the programme, gave them the coveted opportunity of a prolonged photo session with Him and distributed clothes to them. The programme came to a close with Arati to Bhagavan at 9.10 p.m.



SRI SATHYA SAI GRAMA SEVA 2010

For the last one decade, Grama Seva has become an essential annual feature of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, through which experiential teaching is imparted to the students of the Institute how to selflessly serve society, particularly the rural masses. Many persons from other departments of Prasanthi Nilayam Ashram also join the students and assist them in the performance of Grama Seva by going to the villages with them.

This year, Grama Seva began on the first day of Navaratri (nine days of worship of the Divine Mother), i.e., on 8th October 2010. Nearly 2,000 students under the supervision of the staff of the Institute embarked on this noble venture in the morning after circumambulating the Bhajan Mandir of Sai Kulwant Hall while singing Bhajans. They then proceeded to earmarked villages in about 45 vehicles loaded with food packets and clothes for distribution to villagers. On reaching their respective villages, they performed Nagar Sankirtan in the village, in which the villagers also joined them. After

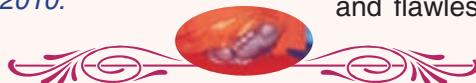


The students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning went to nearly 150 villages and handed over Bhagavan's Prasadam to about three lakh villagers at their doorstep during Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva 2010.

this, they went to the doorstep of each house and handed over Bhagavan's Prasadam to the inmates of the house with love and humility. The Grama Seva continued in this manner for nine sacred days of Navaratri, and on each day groups of students, staff and other devotees went to their allocated villages and handed over Bhagavan's Prasadam to the villagers at their doorstep. The villagers received the Prasadam with great reverence and adored Bhagavan's students like messengers of God coming to their house with His love and benedictions.

In all, Prasadam was served to about 3,00,000 villagers in 60,000 households of about 150 villages and hamlets under Puttaparthi, Kothacheruvu and Bukkapatnam Mandals. While the boys students of Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam campuses along with students of 11th and 12th Classes of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School went to villages for Prasadam distribution, the students of Anantapur Campus and Primary School performed the task of packing the Prasadam with the help of Seva Dal members. This year, the students, both boys and girls, from Sri Sathya Sai Nursing College, Whitefield, Bengaluru also participated in Grama Seva. As in the previous years, youth from U.K. also participated in Grama Seva. This year, 19 youth specially came from London to take part in Grama Seva and went to villages on all the nine days of Grama Seva to serve the villagers. On the concluding day, the auspicious day of Vijaya Dasami, i.e., 17th October 2010, the students of Anantapur Campus performed the task of Prasadam distribution to the residents of Prasanthi Nilayam.

Meticulous planning of this stupendous task by the supervisory staff of the Institute and flawless execution by the students



were shining examples of how service should be performed to society with total dedication, humility and selfless love.

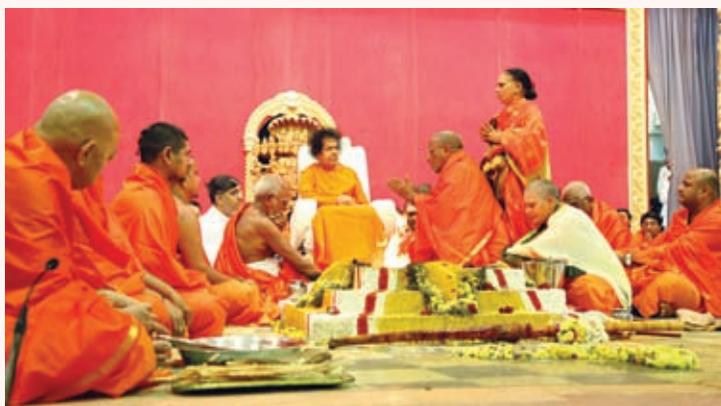
VEDA PURUSHA SAPTAHA JNANA YAJNA

The sacred festival of Navaratri began at Prasanthi Nilayam with the commencement of Kalasha Puja (worship of sacred vessel) in the Bhajan Mandir of Sai Kulwant Hall on 8th October 2010, the first day of Navaratri. The Puja continued for another two days in the Bhajan Mandir with total dedication and sacredness. On 11th October 2010, this sacred Kalasha was taken to Poornachandra Auditorium in a grand procession of Veda chanting Ritwiks (Vedic priests) followed by Veda group of students and Bhajan singing group of students. Sitting in the verandah of the Mandir, Bhagavan watched the procession and showered His blessings on Veda chanting Ritwiks and students. Led by Nadaswaram musicians, the procession reached Poornachandra Auditorium where beautifully decorated Yajna Shala had been made ready for the commencement of Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna.

With the arrival of Veda Purusha Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the Yajna Shala at 11.00 a.m., the auditorium started reverberating with chanting of Vedic Mantras by the priests and students. Sacred fire for starting the Yajna was then produced in the traditional way by churning one piece of wood on the other by the priests. They brought it in a plate to Bhagavan who blessed the fire and permitted the Yajna to be started. The sacred fire blessed by

Bhagavan was then placed in Yajna Kunda with chanting of Veda Mantras by the priests and students. Four priests seated around the Yajna Kunda then started the Yajna by offering oblations of ghee (clarified butter) in the sacred Yajna fire along with chanting of Vedic Mantras. Meanwhile, another group of priests started chanting the Mantras of Krishna Yajur Veda as per the Vedic injunctions of Yajna performance. Simultaneously, three senior devotees started the Parayana (ceremonial study) of sacred texts, one priest started performing Surya Namaskar (worship of the sun), another priest started the recitation of Durga Saptashati (a sacred text devoted to goddess Durga), and yet another priest began Sahasra Lingarchana (worship of 1,000 Lingas). The chief priest along with his wife started the worship of the Divine Mother with chanting of Vedic Mantras. The students also started Vedic chants and Parayana of sacred texts.

The chanting of sacred Vedic Mantras, the study of sacred texts, performance of the Yajna in the Divine Presence of Veda Purusha



With offering of Poornahuti in the Yajna Kunda by Bhagavan on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dasami, 17th October 2010, Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna came to a happy conclusion.

Continued on page 366...



Indulal Shah
Sarla Shah



DIVINE LOVE IN EAST AFRICA

AFRICA IS PERHAPS THE MOST beautiful continent on this planet. It is blessed with rich minerals, gold, diamonds, manganese, copper, etc. Besides there is vast virgin land abundant of rivers, lakes and waterfalls. It has also healthy and strong human population. Thus, it has all the natural resources required for a loving and peaceful life.

Bhagavan Answers the Prayers of East Africans

But the irony is that the loving and peaceful life is conspicuous by its absence there. When all the human beings on this planet have the same seeds of God, how can there be differences based on caste, creed, colour, religion, sex and status? Millions on the land were craving for recognition of human dignity, human rights and equal opportunities for ages together. They were helpless slaves severely affected by poverty and afflicted by suffering due to inequality and neglect. Out of His immense compassion, Bhagavan responded to the yearning of the millions of Africans and showered His love and grace on them by visiting East Africa in 1968.

On 17th May 1968, Bhagavan Baba made the following announcement to a gathering of 1,200 delegates from all over the world at the First World Conference of Sai devotees held at the Mumbai Campus of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan:

“This is a human form in which every Divine entity, every Divine Principle, that is to say, all the Names and Forms ascribed by man

I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added lustre. I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular Dharma (religion) like Hinduism. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause; nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this universal unitary faith, this Atmic principle (principle of the spirit), this path of love.



to God, are manifest - *Sarvadaivatwa Sarvarupaalanu Dharinchina Manavakaram Ee Akaram*. Do not allow doubt to distract you; if you only install in the altar of your heart steady faith in My Divinity, you can win a vision of My Reality. Instead, if you swing like the pendulum of a clock, one moment, devotion, another moment, disbelief, you can never succeed in comprehending the truth and win that bliss. You are very fortunate that you have a chance to experience the bliss of the vision of the Sarvadaivatwa Swarupam (the embodiment of all forms of God) now, in this life itself.”

Several delegates from overseas countries prayed to Bhagavan to visit their countries. They included Howard Murphet from Australia, Tideman Johannessan from Norway, Dr. Nallai Nathan from Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Indra Devi from Mexico, Charles Penn from Los Angeles (U.S.A.) and Dr. C.G. Patel from Kampala, East Africa. Baba responded to the yearning of Africans and declared to visit East Africa next month. The people of East Africa made all arrangements for the Divine visit.

Journey to Nairobi and Kampala

On 30th June 1968, Bhagavan and His party emplaned a Boeing 707 at Santa Cruz Airport, Mumbai for Nairobi, East Africa. Dr. C.G. Patel, Smt. Madhubahen Patel, Dr. Atul C. Patel and other members in his family were the hosts for this visit. Bhagavan’s party consisted of Sri N. Kasturi, Sri Indulal Shah, Smt. Sarla Shah, Sri Raja Reddy, all from India and Smt. and Sri Bob Raymer from U.S.A. Swami has declared that the whole world is His mansion and that each continent is but a hall in that mansion. His visit to Africa was but a peep into one



Members of Bhagavan’s entourage with Him on His visit to East Africa.

of the rooms of that mansion. Flying at 900 km an hour at an altitude of 10,000 m above the Arabian Sea, Baba was approached by the pilots and the crew, high officers of Air India and passengers – all of whom received His Divine grace in the form of Vibhuti, autographs, photographs, spontaneously materialised.

During the flight, Baba exhibiting a charming sense of humour pulled out a card from the pocket in front of His seat and wrote an affectionate admonition, giving His own address as ‘Boeing 707’ and got it delivered to Sri Bob Raymer of Los Angeles, a member of the party, sitting in the row just before His. Back came the response in the same spirit of neighbourliness through another picture card, with the lines:

“The sky is blue, the ocean, too;
Our wish has come true.
We are flying with You!”

After some time, Mount Kenya was announced. We saw only its jagged crown of blue, over the sea of milk. Soon we reached Embaksi Airport, Nairobi. The local time was 4 minutes to 12 while our watches showed 2.24 p.m. Dr. C.G. Patel drove Baba to





On arrival at Embaksi Airport, Nairobi, Bhagavan gave Darshan to devotees assembled in an open space behind the airport.

an open space behind the airport, where Baba walked amidst the assembled devotees and showered His blessings on them.

Many programmes were organised at Nairobi where Bhagavan gave Darshan and blessings to devotees. From Nairobi, Bhagavan proceeded to Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. The road was 650 km long. On the way, we had a glimpse of the Rift Valley 600 m below. We saw the Soda Lake,



Residents of Kampala were overjoyed to receive Bhagavan's love and blessings.

Nakuru where several Africans and Indians got Baba's Divine Darshan. The State of Uganda had provided Baba with a pilot car from Malaba, on the frontier of Uganda as a sign and symbol of His honoured status. Thereafter, the cars drove along to Jinja, where the Nile River flows out of the Lake Victoria. Reaching Kampala at 1.30 a.m., Bhagavan blessed about 2,000 people who were waiting for Him and were singing Bhajans since hours in a specially erected Pandal near the bungalow of Dr. Patel.

On the morning of 1st July, Baba came out and stood facing the unprecedentedly massive gathering, moved among them slowly showering upon everyone His supreme compassion, giving His Divine cure to the needy. Gen. Idi Amin, the Chief of Staff of the Uganda Army and Sri Oryema, the Inspector General of Police, Uganda were among the dignitaries who paid their respects to Baba that morning.

On 2nd July, Bhagavan granted special interviews to a large number of sick and disabled people. Two of them went in wheelchairs and walked out briskly to the joy and wonder of all. All came out with beaming faces after receiving Bhagavan's loving care and miraculous cure.

Bhagavan's Message of Love to East Africans

On 3rd July, Bhagavan flew over Ngorongoru Crater in Tanzania and Victoria Lake



in a small plane for two hours from 7.15 a.m. to 9.15 a.m. We followed Bhagavan in another small plane. In the evening, Bhagavan addressed His first public meeting in Nairobi National Park where about 20,000 people received His Divine Message of love and unity of all mankind. He declared: "I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added lustre. I have not come to speak on behalf of any particular Dharma (religion) like Hinduism. I have not come on any mission of publicity for any sect or creed or cause; nor have I come to collect followers for any doctrine. I have no plan to attract disciples or devotees into My fold or any fold. I have come to tell you of this universal unitary faith, this Atmic principle (principle of the spirit), this path of love".

On 5th July, Dr. Patel took Baba and the party in cars to Nanyuki – located right on the Equator, about 200 km from Nairobi, where we spent the night. It was Thursday and Bhagavan while talking to us materialised a pot full to the brim with Amrita (nectar), sweet beyond words and fragrant beyond imagination, and distributed it to all with a golden spoon.

On the morning of 6th July, Bhagavan went to Kampala by a chartered plane and gave Darshan to about 1,000 devotees engaged in Bhajan. In the evening, Bhagavan met a large number of dignitaries, doctors and businessmen and answered their questions on spiritual topics. When someone asked the question, "Why is there so much evil in the world"?, Baba said, "There is no evil



Bhagavan with a group of devotees in Kampala, Uganda.

in the world; it is the mind that sees the evil; the darkness has no independent existence; it is only the absence of light". In reply to another question, He said, "Trishna (desire) is the prime cause for misery and that if a person examines his desires, he can easily find that he can live much more comfortably with much less". He advised, "Feed the mind as you do the body; have a regular breakfast of Dhyana (meditation), a lunch of Bhajan, a tea of scriptural reading and a dinner of Nama Sankirtan (singing the glory of God)".

Shower of Benedictions on Guru Purnima

On the morning of 7th July, Bhagavan gave Darshan during Bhajans and gave interviews to a large number of people. In the evening, Baba gave His first public Discourse at Kampala. Underlining the unity of all faiths, cultures and nationalities, He said, "Just as the same blood stream circulates in all the limbs of the body, the one Divine principle activates the entire universe... Ignore the beads, contemplate upon unifying eternal ever present thread".



This heartening message was received with enthusiastic approval by Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and Parsis alike. Bhagavan gave another Discourse at the same venue on 8th July and spoke about the nectarine sweetness of the Divine Name.

After morning Bhajan on 9th July, Bhagavan met members of the delegations from Nairobi, Jinja, Mbale, Tororo, Eldoret and a few other towns in Uganda and Kenya. He explained to them the ideal of service as Sadhana and asked them to constitute Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithis in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania with headquarters in Kampala.

On 10th July, more than 25,000 persons gathered to offer their tributes to Bhagavan on the auspicious day of Guru Purnima. Bhagavan gave Darshan for nearly two hours and went to every nook and corner, giving everyone a handful of sweets and a packet of Vibhuti. Most of the recipients discovered inside the packets enamel or metal portraits of Christ, Cross, Krishna or Sai Baba Himself. It was a very moving sight to see both Indian and African devotees expressing their love and devotion for Bhagavan.

Bhagavan along with His party set off to see Murchison Falls National Park at 6.30 a.m. on 12th July 1968 in three cars. The second car met with an accident on the way but all the occupants were saved by Bhagavan's grace. Prof. Kasturi was worst hit. The occupants of this car took a taxi and reached Para Safari Lodge where Bhagavan applied curative Vibhuti to all, created ointments and tablets, pressed the spots of pain gently and within minutes all were

Dr. Munshi could not suppress his tears of joy and gratitude when he said, "I was pained to see around me the quick decline of faith in God and earnestness in religion, and I was on the brink of despair when I contemplated the future of this ancient land. But, as I look upon Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and witness the transformation He is effecting in the hearts of millions, I am heartened and happy. He will certainly make India live again as India, and through this process, He will spread faith and religion in the world. I offer my obeisance and respects to Him".

all right. The party with Bhagavan then went for a motor-boat ride up the Nile for over 24 km towards the Murchison Falls passing through thousands of crocodiles and hippopotamuses spending about three hours in this joy ride which was an unforgettable experience. Bhagavan reached Kampala at 1 a.m. only to find a gathering of thousands engaged in



Thousands thronged for Bhagavan's Darshan at Kampala.



Bhajans. Bhagavan moved among them and then stood on the decorated dais long enough to quench their thirst of Darshan.

Return to Mumbai

Thousands gathered outside Dr. Patel's bungalow for Bhagavan's Darshan on 13th July. From 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., Bhagavan moved among them, showering His Divine Grace on all. He accepted lovely rose bouquets, posed for group photos and answered their questions. In the evening Bhajans, Baba gave the people longer hours for Darshan. Many of the sick got the rare gift of curative Vibhuti.

Hours before dawn on 14th July, almost half of Kampala was at Dr. Patel's door to bid farewell to Bhagavan. Bhagavan's plane left Entebbe at 1 p.m. and reached Nairobi at 2.30 p.m. Thousands were perched on the terrace since 1 p.m. at Nairobi. Baba waved to the vast gathering and entered Mumbai bound plane which landed at Santa Cruz Airport at 12.45 a.m. where 10,000 devotees offered Him warm and affectionate welcome.

On 15th July, Baba addressed a mammoth gathering at Dharmakshetra, Andheri East, Mumbai which was presided over by Dr. K.M.

...Continued from page 344

Sathyam could find only the idol of Krishna but not the Linga. After teasing him for a while, Swami said that He had sent it back to the holy precincts from which He had brought it. We returned to the Godavari bank at around 11.30 p.m. Swami's face was blossoming like a fresh flower despite His hectic activity from 8 a.m. to midnight on that day.

On 26th morning, Swami addressed Lions Club members and their invitees at Rajahmundry. At 2.30 p.m., we left Rajahmundry for Vijayawada and en route we had tea at Eluru at 4 p.m. At Vijayawada, Swami

Munshi (Founder, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan). Dr. Munshi could not suppress his tears of joy and gratitude when he said, "I was pained to see around me the quick decline of faith in God and earnestness in religion, and I was on the brink of despair when I contemplated the future of this ancient land. But, as I look upon Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and witness the transformation He is effecting in the hearts of millions, I am heartened and happy. He will certainly make India live again as India, and through this process, He will spread faith and religion in the world. I offer my obeisance and respects to Him". Bhagavan, in His Divine Discourse, spoke of His visit to East Africa as moving from one room to another in the spacious Divine Mansion, the universe. He said, "I am not alien in any country; I am native to all parts of the earth". Baba declared that racial conflicts and animosities sprang from sheer ignorance of the basic brotherhood of man. "It was this truth, this unity, often misunderstood as diversity when seen through ego glasses, that was propagated by Me in East Africa", declared Baba.

addressed a public meeting from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m. followed by a cultural programme by Bal Vikas students. We had dinner and rested for the night at the spacious residence of Sri Siva Rama Krishnaiah, District President, Krishna District.

On 27th morning, we motored down to Akiripalli, about 20 km from Vijayawada, for Swami to attend the anniversary of the Sanskrit and Vedic College. At 10 a.m., Bhagavan left for Madras (Chennai) by road. We took leave of Him and returned to Hyderabad with His blessings.





EXPERIENCING THE BLISS OF TRAVELLING WITH BHAGAVAN

IN HIS IMMENSE COMPASSION AND deep love, Bhagavan Baba took me with Him in many journeys by road in His car and by air during my 15 years' tenure as State President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Tamil Nadu. Let me narrate some of the journeys I was fortunate to perform with Sai.

Tamil Nadu is Daiva Nadu

In 1982, Bhagavan took me with Him to Tiruchirapalli in an Indian Airlines flight. At Tiruchirapalli, Swami gave a Divine Discourse to a mammoth gathering of nearly 10,000 devotees. From Tiruchirapalli, I went with Him to Madurai in His car. At Madurai, He gave Darshan to thousands of people who had gathered in the open ground opposite to the District Collector's house. Then He took me along with Col. Joga Rao and the students who had come with Him to Major (Dr.) Chari's house where we all had lunch. But Swami did not eat anything there.

On reaching Kodaikanal, we found Sri Ramakrishna Hegde, the then Chief Minister of Karnataka, waiting to have Swami's Darshan. Swami asked me to look after him by giving him light refreshments till He comes. Sri Hegde refused to have tea or coffee or biscuits I

offered him. He also refused to sit on the sofa chair as he was keen to sit near the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan. When Swami arrived, He waved His Divine Hand and materialised Vibhuti which was given to Sri Hegde asking him to eat it. Then Swami applied it on his throat. Thus, Swami cured Sri Ramakrishna Hegde's throat cancer then and there.

When the Chief Engineer, PWD of Tamil Nadu came to Nandanavanam for Swami's Darshan, Swami told him that there was drinking water problem in the village He visited and asked him to sort it out. The Chief Engineer went to Kuppa Naicken Palayam and arranged to dig a deep borewell about 3 m from Sri Sathya Kali Temple and within 20 m sweet water was struck. He had a overhead tank built which supplies drinking water to Kuppa Naicken Palayam and to nearby villages. This is a great Mahima (glory) of the compassionate Lord Sai.



From Kodaikanal, I went with Bhagavan to Salem where thousands of men and women had gathered to have Swami's Darshan. Swami called me to the first floor of the premises of Sai Samithi at Salem and said, "See how many thousands are there on the roads, on trees, on house-tops. You said, Salem was the home of atheist Ramasamy Naicker"!

From Salem, I went with Swami to Mettur Dam where we stayed at night. Next day, after giving Darshan, Swami took me with Him to Kaveri Poompattinam where He blessed the patients and doctors of the free eye operation camp organised by the local Sai Samithi. After coming to Brindavan, Bhagavan told the students that He was happy to see so much good work being done with devotion and discipline and so "Tamil Nadu" (land of Tamils) could be called "Daiva Nadu" (land of God).

Visit to Village Manipakkam

During His annual visit to Chennai in January 1983, Bhagavan made a historic announcement in the Music Academy Hall during His Discourse, in the presence of the then Tamil Nadu Governor, Sri Khurana and the then Vice Chancellor of Madras University, Dr. Sundaresan, "From today onwards, I will give free education in all Sai colleges, Sai schools and other Sai institutions. For office bearers in students union, there will be no elections; there will be only selection based on the marks scored". Next day, Swami agreed at my request to visit one of the adopted villages, Manipakkam about 40 km from Chennai. He travelled patiently on the mud-packed road through the paddy fields. On the way, Swami asked me for the details of various tasks being performed by Sai workers in Manipakkam village. At the entrance of that village, Swami's car had to pass by a toddy (country

As we reached the southern limit of Mettupalayam, the Almighty God Sai stopped the rain, received the garland from the elephant, blessed thousands of devotees assembled there, distributed clothes to the doctors and nurses, gave a Divine Discourse and then left. As we crossed the river Bhavani, the northern limit of Mettupalayam, it started raining heavily. On the way to Coonoor, Swami got down from the car in heavy rain and walked without umbrella towards the Bhajan singers and blessed them. I asked Swami why He walked in the rain without umbrella. Swami replied, "When so many are sitting in the rain and singing Bhajans, why can't I go in the rain to bless them"?



liquor) shop owned by a Muslim and also the temple in the village which was in a dilapidated condition. Swami asked me to get the temple repaired, particularly its Rajagopuram (tower) and collect the money from Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust for the repairs. One of the results of Swami's visit to that village was that the Muslim shopkeeper converted his toddy shop into a tea shop. In the village, Swami gave His Divine Discourse to a gathering of about 5,000 people and provided me an opportunity to translate it into Tamil. Before leaving the village, Swami performed Bhumi Puja (consecration of land) for a local dispensary to be built there by Sai Trust.

At Dharmakshetra, Mumbai with Bhagavan

In January 1984, Bhagavan took me with Him to Mumbai by an Indian Airlines flight along with Col. Joga Rao and some students.



In Mumbai, Swami took us all to Rajmata of Navanagar's house for dinner. Next day, when the Chairman of Shirdi Sai Sansthan came to Dharmakshetra for His Darshan, Swami asked him to take me along with Col. Joga Rao and four students to Shirdi for Darshan and bring us back. Accordingly, the following day we were taken to Nashik by air and then by car to Shirdi, where we all were treated as guests of Shirdi Sai Trust. I made our students sing Bhajans there. We gave the cheque given by Bhagavan to Shirdi Sai Sansthan. They gave to each of us a Kashmiri shawl. When we returned to Mumbai, Swami questioned us what we all saw in Shirdi. When we missed out something, Swami supplemented our list about small statues, etc., as if He had been living in Shirdi for a long time. In Mumbai, Swami blessed me to stay at Dharmakshetra itself with Him by giving me a room there. At midnight one day, I felt my bed was shaking. When I opened my eyes, I saw Bhagavan sitting on my bed. I tried to get up but Swami forbade me and said, "Keep lying down. You and Joga Rao are playing the 'military band' so loud by snoring! How can I sleep in the next room"? Saying so, He left.

A Temple is Blessed

On 8th May 1989, I travelled with Bhagavan in the front seat of His car. Bhagavan left Kodaikanal at 6.00 a.m. Passing through Palani, Udumalpet, Pollachi, Podanur and Coimbatore, we reached an adopted village Kuppa Naicken Palayam in Coimbatore district at 3.00 p.m. by travelling over dusty untarred village roads for 32 kilometres. In the village, Swami was received by thousands of villagers. He was offered traditional welcome with Poornakumbham and white umbrella with Veda chanting while Bal Vikas children did Pushpanjali (offering of flowers) at

Swami enquired from the villagers whether they had been getting rain.

"There is a shortage of water and drought condition has been prevailing here", said the villagers. Swami then told them, "Go quickly to safe places as it is going to rain heavily now".

Thus, He blessed them. Within five minutes of Swami's departure, it rained cats and dogs, immersing all villagers in great joy.



His Lotus Feet. Inside the village, a temple dedicated to Mother Kali was constructed by Sai devotees, and was ready for Kumbha Abhisheka (ceremonial bathing) and Prana Pratishtha (energising with life principle). When Swami was about to leave towards a giant Shamiana (marquee) to give Darshan to thousands of villagers assembled there, the chief priest told Swami that the idol of goddess Kali had not been installed and Yantrasthapanam (installation of the mystic diagram) also had not been done. Immediately, Bhagavan said from where He was standing nearly 8 metres away, "Go and see. I have done the installation of the idol and Yantrasthapanam already". He pointed His right hand towards the temple, with His finger prints in turmeric and vermilion printed on my white safari suit as I was standing on His right. Swami gave the name to the goddess as "Sri Sathya Kali". The chief priest and other priests ran to the temple to find to their surprise that the idol of goddess Sri Sathya Kali had already been installed with green neem leaves, turmeric and sandalwood paste on the idol. The entire congregation became ecstatic about it when they announced this Sai miracle to them.



Omnipotence and Omniscience of Swami

After this, Swami went to the Shamiana where He blessed the large gathering, witnessed a cultural show by Bal Vikas children, distributed clothes to poor village men and women and blessed the food to be distributed in Narayana Seva. Swami enquired from the villagers whether they had been getting rain. "There is a shortage of water and drought condition has been prevailing here", said the villagers. Swami then told them, "Go quickly to safe places as it is going to rain heavily now". Thus, He blessed them. Within five minutes of Swami's departure, it rained cats and dogs, immersing all villagers in great joy.

On the way to Mettupalayam from there, it continued to rain very heavily. So, I requested Bhagavan to stop the rain as I had arranged to keep an elephant at Mettupalayam Sai Samithi to garland Him, and thousands of devotees were waiting there, both inside and outside the Samithi building, for His Darshan. Swami smilingly replied, "Wait and see". As we reached the southern limit of Mettupalayam, the Almighty God Sai stopped the rain, received the garland from the elephant, blessed thousands of devotees assembled there, distributed clothes to the doctors and nurses, gave a Divine Discourse and then left. As we crossed the river Bhavani, the northern limit of Mettupalayam, it started raining heavily. On the way to Coonoor, Swami got down from the car in heavy rain and walked without umbrella towards the Bhajan singers and blessed them. I asked Swami why He walked in the rain without umbrella. Swami replied, "When so many are sitting in the rain and singing Bhajans, why can't I go in the rain to bless them"?

On that night, Swami reached Ooty and gave me a room to stay with Him in

Nandanavanam itself. The next day, when the Chief Engineer, PWD of Tamil Nadu came to Nandanavanam for Swami's Darshan, Swami told him that there was drinking water problem in the village He visited and asked him to sort it out. The Chief Engineer went to Kuppa Naicken Palayam and arranged to dig a deep borewell about 3 m from Sri Sathya Kali Temple and within 20 m sweet water was struck. He had an overhead tank built which supplies drinking water to Kuppa Naicken Palayam and to nearby villages. This is a great Mahima (glory) of the compassionate Lord Sai.

In January 1990, Swami agreed to my request to visit a free eye operation camp in Chrompet about 25 km south of Chennai. At Chrompet, Bhagavan blessed the doctors and patients, distributed free spectacles to the patients, gave away Saris and Dhotis to many and blessed the food kept for Narayana Seva. On our way back to Chennai about 20 km short of the city, Swami asked me to take Him to my house to bless my wife. I said, "Swami! My wife is in Sundaram Sai Mandir. She does not drive in Madras (Chennai). I have to go to Sundaram and bring her home". Swami said, "She has already come home. Take Me to your house". When we reached my house, Swami told my wife, "Your husband, a military man, tried his best to stop Me from coming here to bless you". I asked her how she came home. She said, "One lady devotee with a driver took pity on me sitting alone in Sundaram and she arranged to drop me at home". It was another proof of the omniscience of Lord Sai who knew the movements of His devotee 20 km away.

I had many other opportunities and was fortunate to travel with Sai in His car but due to lack of space in Sanathana Sarathi, I better stop my narration here now.



REALISE THE DIVINE AND BECOME DIVINE

YOUR HEART IS MY HOME

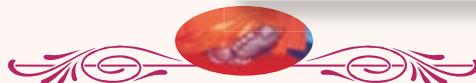
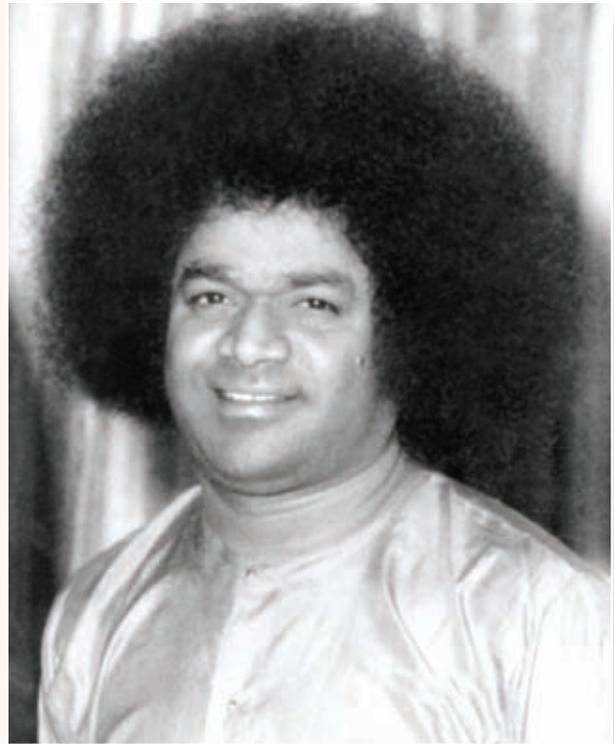
THIS IS A POT; THIS A THATCH; this a house; this a wall; this a jungle; this a hill; this the ground; this the lake; this the fire; this the wind; this the sky; this the maker of the day; this the light of night; these the stars; these the planets; these the inert, these the vital; this is he, that is a person. These are all distinct from Me; this material world is different from Me. Thus, as a witness, I cognise all this and fill each with the principle of existence without the

help of any disciplinary process, for I am above and beyond all this.

Use the Elements with Reverential Care

This is an auspicious moment in the history of India when you have a great chance to understand the truths embodied in the scriptures of this land and the ideals that are embedded in the ways of living that are prescribed by the codes propounded therein. In order that you may attain the only goal of human life,

I have no wish to draw people towards Me, away from the worship of My other names and forms. You may infer from what you call My miracles that I am causing them to attract and to attach you to Me, and Me alone. They are not intended to demonstrate or publicise; they are merely spontaneous and concomitant proofs of Divine Majesty. I am yours, you are mine for ever and ever. What need is there for attracting and impressing, for demonstrating your love or My compassion? I am in you, you are in Me. There is no distance or distinction.



namely, realising the Divine and becoming Divine, the Eternal has limited itself and come in this human form. He will reveal the ideals again, and re-establish them among all men. Of course, it is difficult for those who are unacquainted with the scriptures to grasp the mystery of this Advent.

I may tell you, nevertheless, that all the five elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) have been created by the Will of the Supreme. They have each to be used by you with reverential care and vigilant discrimination. Reckless use of any of them will only rebound on you with tremendous harm. External nature has to be handled with caution and awe.

Control your Taste, Control your Talk

So too your inner nature, your internal instruments! Of these, two are capable of vast harm; the tongue and sex. Since sex is aroused and inflamed by the food and drink, you should be careful about what you eat and drink. While the eye, the ear and the nose serve as instruments of knowledge about one particular characteristic of Nature, the tongue makes itself available for two purposes: to judge taste and to utter word-symbols of communication. You must control the tongue with double care since it can harm you in two ways.

Without the control of the senses, Sadhana is ineffective. Doing Sadhana in this way is like keeping water in a leaky pot. Patanjali (the celebrated sage author of the Yoga Sutras) has said that when the tongue is conquered, victory is yours. When the tongue craves for some delicacy, assert that you will not cater to its whims. But it is not so easy. Even monks and monastic personages fall prey to the tongue and are unable to curb its vagaries. They wear the robes of renunciation but clamour for tasty delicacies and thus bring the institution

There are three lines along which endeavour has to be directed: (i) spiritual exercise and discipline, (ii) cultivation of detachment, and (iii) development of confidence in one's Self. Without these three, life is wearisome and wasteful journey through the sands. Give up, renounce. That is the virtue you need for spiritual progress. It is not the value of the thing given up that counts; it is the loftiness of the impulse behind the act.

of monkhood into disrepute. If you persist in giving yourself simple food that is not savoury or hot, but amply sustaining, the tongue may squirm for a few days, but it will soon welcome it. That is the way to subdue it and overcome the evil consequences of its becoming your master.

Since the tongue is equally insistent on scandal and lascivious talk, you have to curb that tendency also. Talk little; talk sweetly; talk only when there is pressing need; talk only to those to whom you must; do not shout or raise your voice in anger or excitement. Such control will improve your health and mental peace. It will lead to better public relations and less involvement in contacts and conflicts with others. You may be laughed at as a killjoy but there are compensations enough for you. It will conserve your time and energy; you can put your inner energy to better use. You may take this as My special Birthday Message for you: Control your taste. Control your talk.

This is but a part of the larger programme of controlling the senses. Your devotion to God is best expressed by achieving the control



of the senses. For, the senses rush towards the temporary and the tawdry; thus, they foul the heart. I require from each of you no other gift, no more valuable offering than the heart I have endowed you with. Give Me that heart, as pure as when I gave it to you, full of the nectar of love I filled it with.

Do not be jubilant because this is the day when this body became manifest through birth, forty-three years ago. Birth and death are inevitable incidents in the careers of physical sheaths. Worth is judged by what happens in the interval. That is what one has to be jubilant over. Utilise that period for the progress of the spirit. There are three lines along which endeavour has to be directed: (i) spiritual exercise and discipline, (ii) cultivation of detachment, and (iii) development of confidence in one's Self. Without these three, life is wearisome and wasteful journey through the sands. Give up, renounce. That is the virtue you need for spiritual progress. It is not the value of the thing given up that counts; it is the loftiness of the impulse behind the act.

Consider each Moment a Step towards God

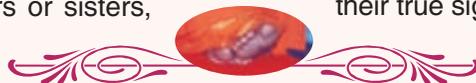
So long as man is dominated by sense pleasure, it cannot be said that his spiritual life has begun. Now, many clamour for the experience of spiritual bliss, but few earn it because they find themselves too weak to reject the clamour of the senses! A little enquiry will reveal that the senses are bad masters and very inefficient sources of knowledge; the joy they bring is transitory and fraught with grief. Mere knowledge will not endow you with the well-spring of joy in the heart; only the contemplation of the might and majesty of God, as seen in the universe, can be a never-failing source of joy. No two persons can agree on any matter, be they brothers or sisters,

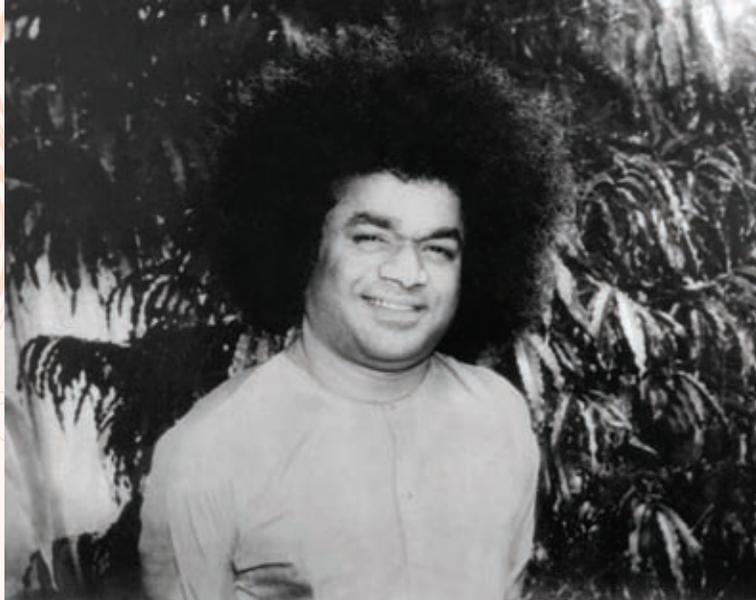
I may tell you, nevertheless, that all the five elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) have been created by the Will of the Supreme. They have each to be used by you with reverential care and vigilant discrimination. Reckless use of any of them will only rebound on you with tremendous harm. External nature has to be handled with caution and awe.

life mates or father and son. It is only as pilgrims on the Godward path that they can heartily agree and lovingly co-operate.

You can be a pilgrim on the path of spirituality even while attending to your daily duties. Only, you have to feel that each moment is a step towards Him. Do everything as dedicated to Him, as directed by Him, as work for His adoration or for serving His children. Test all your actions, words, thoughts on this touchstone: "Will this be approved by God? Will this affect His renown"?

In the epic Ramayana, you find Emperor Dasaratha is infatuated with his dear wife and he sends his son Rama to the forest in exile for fourteen years; the son, however, is such a true follower of righteousness that He exiles His dear wife to the forest in obedience to the whisperings of a section of His people. The father was the slave of his senses; the son was the master. God will approve the latter and disapprove the former. So also, those who have no conception of the Lord, who is above and beyond all human conventions, may cavil at some of the actions of Krishna, but those who are aware of His Divinity will understand their true significance.





Talk little; talk sweetly; talk only when there is pressing need; talk only to those to whom you must; do not shout or raise your voice in anger or excitement. Such control will improve your health and mental peace. It will lead to better public relations and less involvement in contacts and conflicts with others. You may be laughed at as a killjoy but there are compensations enough for you. It will conserve your time and energy; you can put your inner energy to better use. You may take this as My special Birthday Message for you: Control your taste. Control your talk.

The Flute of Krishna is the Call of the Lord to Man

When you dedicate yourselves to the glorification of the Lord, you will revere the body, the senses, the intelligence, and all the instruments of knowledge, action and feeling as essential for His work. While others get intoxicated with pride, the Bhakta (devotee) will be intoxicated with Prema (selfless love).

You have heard that when the Divine Cowherd played on the flute, men, women and children and even the cattle of Brindavan hurried to Him, as if drawn by the irresistible magic of His music, Divine Melody, that stills all the turbid waves which we name as joy and grief. They left off the work they were engaged in; they had no other thought than the attainment of the Divine presence; the cattle stopped grazing, the calves stopped guzzling milk. The story of Krishna and the Gopikas has a deep inner meaning. Brindavan is not a specific place on the map; it is the universe itself.

All men are cowherds; all animals are cows. Every heart is filled with the longing for the Lord; the flute is the call of the Lord; the sport called Rasakreeda (the sportive dance; the dance of Krishna in His boyhood with Gopikas), where Lord Krishna is described as dancing with Gopikas in moonlight – every maid has a boy-Krishna holding her hand in the dance – is the

symbol of the yearning and the travail borne by those who aim at reaching His Presence. The Lord manifests such grace that each one of you has the Lord all for yourself; you need not be sad that you won't have Him, when others get Him; nor need you be proud that you have Him and no one else can have Him at the same time! The Lord is installed in the altar of every heart.



Be Pure and Humble as Pilgrims Ought to be

Offer your entire self, your entire life, to Him; then your adoration will transform and transmute you so fast and completely that you and He can be merged into one. He thinks, feels and acts as you do; you think, feel and act as He does. You will be transformed as a rock is transformed by the sculptor, into an idol, deserving the worship of generations of sincere men. In the process, you will have to bear many a hammer stroke, many a chisel-wound, for He is the sculptor. He is but releasing you from petrification! Offer your heart to the Lord, let the rest of you undergo transformation at His hands. Do not defile time or the physical sheath or this life's chance by using them for paltry ends.

Your pilgrimage to this place on this occasion is but a part of the long pilgrimage upon which you entered when you were born, which may not end even when you die. Do not forget that fact. Be pure, alert and humble as pilgrims ought to be. Treasure the good things you see and the basic truths you hear. Use them as props and promptings for further stages of the journey.

It serves no purpose if you merely acknowledge that the Lord has come but do not yearn to benefit by the Advent. In the previous Yugas (eras), in what are called Krita, Treta and Dwapar Yugas, the incarnations of the Lord were not accepted as such by many. Even their parents, kinsmen and comrades hesitated to adore them. Only a few sages, who had cultivated the inner vision through study and Sadhana, knew their reality.

Keep Relationship with this Incarnation Unbroken

But today in this Kali Yuga, while the currents of contradiction and controversy

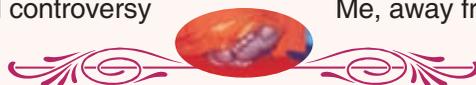
are undermining faith and adoration, the good fortune that has brought you face to face with Me is the result of merits earned by you through many lives. This is no ordinary good fortune. This incarnation is moving with you in your joy and grief in order to console, encourage and cure. This relationship is something unique; it has to be kept unbroken until the goal is reached.

Devotees who are attached to Me have a special responsibility. Vice Chancellor Dr. Gokak referred in his speech to My direction that no one shall collect funds for any endeavour connected with My name. I want that you must replace desire for Dhana (wealth) with desire for Dharma (righteousness). Yearn for Dharma, not Dhana. Do not extend your hand before man, but ask of the Lord, and He will fill it with priceless treasure. Have that faith and carry on your pilgrimage.

I may make mention now of a letter written to Me by Dr. K.M. Munshi (founder of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan). He has written that he came, he saw and he was conquered. Of course, what really happened was that his love merged in Mine; his Ananda (bliss) merged in Mine, and he is happy beyond expression. He has suggested in that letter that just as there are some days which are celebrated all over the world as holy days, My Birthday must be an all-world holy day. He has asked Me to bless this plan of making this day, a day of Sathyanarayana Puja the world over. I appreciate his veneration and devotion, but I do not encourage this adoration of just one name and one form, and that too, My present name and My present form.

Practise Silence, Cleanliness and Forbearance

I have no wish to draw people towards Me, away from the worship of My other



names and forms. You may infer from what you call My miracles that I am causing them to attract and to attach you to Me, and Me alone. They are not intended to demonstrate or publicise; they are merely spontaneous and concomitant proofs of Divine Majesty. I am yours, you are Mine for ever and ever. What need is there for attracting and impressing, for demonstrating your love or My compassion? I am in you, you are in Me. There is no distance or distinction.

I am now hoisting the Prasanthi Flag on this Prasanthi Nilayam. The flag is a sign that is significant for each one of you. It is a reminder of your duty to yourself, and so, when I hoist it on this building, you must unfurl it on your own hearts. It reminds you to overcome the urge of low desires, of anger and hate when your desires are thwarted; it exhorts you to expand your heart so that you embrace all humanity and all life and all creation in its compass; it directs you to quieten your

...Continued from page 350

Bhagavan Himself created an aura of divinity in the entire milieu and radiated spiritual vibrations to all directions. At 11.25 a.m. Bhagavan went to the western corner of the Yajna Shala and sanctified a garland for offering on the sacred Kalasha, after which Arati was offered to Bhagavan. Thereafter, Bhagavan came down the stage and took a full round of the auditorium, filling the hearts of devotees with bliss by His Darshan and blessings. The Yajna continued in this manner from 11th to 17th October 2010, sanctifying the entire atmosphere. It was a very sublimating and ennobling experience for multitudes of devotees who were fortunate to be present in Poornachandra Auditorium.

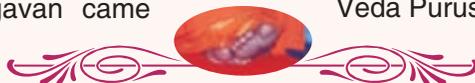
On the sacred day of Vijaya Dasami, 17th October 2010, Bhagavan came

impulses and calmly meditate on your own inner reality. It assures you that, when you do so, the lotus of your heart will bloom, and from its centre will arise the flame of divine vision, which guarantees Prasanthi (supreme peace).

I must also tell you of certain preliminary disciplines. Practise when you are here the three disciplines of silence, cleanliness and forbearance. In silence can be heard the voice of God, not in the revelry of noise. Through cleanliness you earn purity. By forbearance, you cultivate love. You have come today to your own home. This is your home, not Mine. My home is your heart. So, do not try to have your lunch elsewhere but in your home, where you get this day food consecrated by Me, the Prasadam.

– From Bhagavan's Discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam on the occasion of His 43rd Birthday, 23rd November 1968.

to Poornachandra Auditorium at 6.05 p.m. and seated Himself near the Yajna Kunda to perform Poornahuti of the Yajna. First, He sanctified the precious material for offering in the Yajna fire and then offered Akshatas into the Yajna Kunda amidst sacred Vedic chants and auspicious notes of Nadaswaram music, bringing the Yajna to a happy conclusion by offering final oblations into the sacred Yajna fire by His Divine Hands. After the conclusion of the Yajna, Bhagavan blessed the priests and sprinkled sacred water and Akshatas on them. All the priests then sat down before Bhagavan and chanted Vedic Mantras for quite some time. At 6.15 p.m., Arati was offered to Bhagavan which marked the completion of Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yajna.



MY JOURNEYS WITH BHAGAVAN TO KODAIKANAL

T.G. Krishnamurthy

AN OPPORTUNITY TO accompany the Lord on His visit to the Kodai hills is a fond dream that any devotee would cherish.

Bhagavan in His infinite mercy has bestowed upon me on many occasions this great fortune. I wish to use the next few pages to relive some of the many wonderful moments that He blessed me with at Kodai and during the journeys to and fro.

Perform your Duty Meticulously

On one such journey to Kodai, I was seated in the front seat in Swami's car while another devotee drove the car. Bhagavan was sitting in the rear seat along with another devotee. The students whom Bhagavan had chosen to accompany

Him to Kodai were travelling in a bus which was trailing Bhagavan's car. Now and then, Swami would ask us to check whether the bus in which the students were travelling was following the car. In case the bus was not visible, He would ask us to stop the car and we would wait till the bus joined us. The journey took us through a Ghat section between Hosur and Dharmapuri. While we were passing through the Ghat section, Swami wanted the car to go slow so that the bus would be visible throughout. This is how Swami protects His children.

Since Bhagavan was not using the carpet, I too was forced to walk barefoot on the ground alongside the carpet. I had a tough time walking barefoot on the hot ground and was seeking relief from the heat by occasionally putting my feet on the carpet! When I got into the car along with Swami after Darshan, I was in pain and found that I had blisters under my feet. Swami noticed my discomfiture and asked me what the matter was. I told Him and expressed my wonder at how Bhagavan seemed totally unaffected by the heat. Swami then revealed to me the secret behind this. "You were selfish and worried about your body and hence you were affected by the heat. I, on the other hand, love everybody and did not show any concern for this body. Hence, I was unaffected by the heat", He said.

We had lunch at Salem where we stopped for an hour, and then proceeded to Kodai via Dindigul.

The students whom Swami had agreed to halt at Dindigul in answer to the prayers of the devotees there.

About a fortnight before Swami's journey to Kodai, the District President of Coimbatore had gone to Brindavan and requested Swami to give him an opportunity to serve Swami and His students at Dindigul during Swami's journey to Kodai. Swami gave His consent and asked him to make arrangements for snacks for the children while they halted at Dindigul. The District President was happy with Swami's kind gesture. He later informed me that Swami had agreed to visit Dindigul and had permitted him to arrange for snacks to be served to His students at Dindigul. I was happy and asked him to proceed with the arrangements.

A little while before we reached Dindigul, the air conditioner in the car stopped functioning. It was summer time and the temperature outside was soaring. The devotee who was driving the car and I were sweating profusely in the sweltering heat. I was concerned about the discomfort that might be caused to Bhagavan on account of the heat. But when I looked at Him through the car mirror, I found to my utter amazement that Bhagavan looked as fresh as a rose. He was glancing at the scenery through the car window with a beautiful smile playing on His face.

We reached Dindigul where Bhagavan and the students accompanying Him were given a rousing welcome by the eager group of devotees gathered there to have His Darshan. After a while, Swami called me near Him and asked me whether snacks had been arranged for the students who had accompanied Him. I assumed that the District President of Coimbatore would have arranged for the same. I told Bhagavan, "Swami, I am sure that the District President would have arranged for the snacks. I shall check with him, Swami". I then approached the District President to see what arrangements he had made. To

my shock, he told me that no snacks had been arranged. They had only arranged for some tender coconut water!

With my heart going pit a pat, I approached Swami and apprised Him of the situation. Bhagavan was upset by this lapse on my part in serving the boys whom He had brought along. *Atithi Devo Bhava* – the Atithi or the guest has to be served as one would serve the Deva – the Lord Himself. However we, the members of the organisation, had been found wanting in our service to the Atithis (guests) of the Deva (Lord) Himself!

Swami reminded me of this lapse many times while He was walking amongst the devotees granting Darshan. I was following Bhagavan, holding the letters He was taking from the devotees. Each time He turned towards me to handover the letters, He would whisper, "My children are hungry". Each time I heard this, I felt as though Lord Siva was piercing my chest with His trident. I was praying to Bhagavan in atonement of my lapse. Swami however was smiling all throughout and thus nobody else sensed the chiselling that I was going through.

I chided myself for not having supervised the arrangements closely enough. In an attempt to make amends for the lapse, I immediately mobilised a few organisation members and asked them to rush to the town, procure whatever refreshments they could find and place them in the bus, in which the students were travelling. Once this was done, I approached Bhagavan once again and submitted to Him that refreshments had been placed in the bus and would be served to the students during the rest of the journey. I hoped that this would please Bhagavan to some extent. But Swami was unrelenting. He just gave a half nod and that was not enough



to convince me that I had won back His favour.

After blessing the gathered devotees, Bhagavan got into His car and the journey continued. After a short while, to our pleasant surprise, the air conditioner in the car, which had earlier stopped working, started functioning again. When this happened, the devotee driving Swami's car and I exchanged glances and Bhagavan noticed this. He asked us what the matter was. In response, I expressed to Him my delight at how the air conditioner which had for no apparent reason stopped working earlier had started functioning again on its own. He said, "Don't you know that not even a blade of grass will move without My consent? Even before we reached Dindigul, I knew that you had not arranged any snacks for the children". He continued, "You had entrusted the duty of making all arrangements to the District President...but was it not your duty as State President to have checked whether everything was in its place"?

The meaning behind everything that had happened in the past few hours became evident to me in a flash. Swami in His omniscience knew in advance that I was going to err and probably willed that the air conditioner stop working. And now that I had made amends by ensuring that His children were fed, the air conditioner had started working again! It



A little while before we reached Dindigul, the air conditioner in the car stopped functioning. It was summer time and the temperature outside was soaring. The devotee who was driving the car and I were sweating profusely in the sweltering heat. I was concerned about the discomfort that might be caused to Bhagavan on account of the heat. But when I looked at Him through the car mirror, I found to my utter amazement that Bhagavan looked as fresh as a rose. He was glancing at the scenery through the car window with a beautiful smile playing on His face.



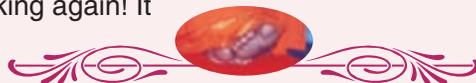
is said that when we take one step towards Swami, He takes a hundred steps towards us. But in this case, the merciful Lord had known the wrong step I was going to take and had redressed the same even before I had become aware of it!

Body Attachment Causes Pain

Once on His way back from Kodai, Swami decided to halt at Salem and grant Darshan to the devotees there. It was peak summer and a carpet had been laid along the path on which Swami would walk while He gave Darshan. The afternoon sun was at its peak when Bhagavan arrived. Instead of walking on the carpeted path, Swami surprised us by walking barefoot on the ground as He granted Darshan. He seemed to be totally unaffected by the heat. I was just behind Bhagavan, following Him while He gave Darshan. Since Bhagavan was not using the carpet, I too was forced to walk barefoot on the ground alongside the carpet. I had a tough time walking barefoot on the hot ground and was seeking relief from the heat by occasionally putting my feet on the carpet!

When I got into the car along with Swami after Darshan, I was in pain and found that I had blisters under my feet. Swami noticed my discomfiture and asked me what the matter

Continued on page 375...





My Journeys with Sai

Dr. K. Bhaskar Rao

THE ALMIGHTY LORD OF THE universe has incarnated as man among men to uplift them. It is our great good fortune that He moves in our midst, showering love and compassion on all of us.

This is an illustration of God's love for mankind. Living as the contemporaries of Paripoorna Avatar (incarnation of God in full glory) Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to intertwine our lives with His Divine Mission is the greatest Tapas (penance) we can perform in this birth. Indeed, it is by the merit of many previous births that we, in this life, are chosen to be a part of the divine

Bhagavan who was conversing with us seated in the car suddenly instructed the driver to slow down and stop near the motorbike of one of the motorbike riders, a young man named Sagar, who had by then pulled out to roadside and collapsed by the side of a tree. He was too exhausted by the heat to notice that Swami was coming to Him. Swami asked for a tender coconut kept in the car and made him drink its water. The youth regained consciousness and reported that he actually fell unconscious while riding at a high speed and was not at all aware of pulling out of the road, applying brakes and stopping under the tree. It was Swami who remote controlled all these actions even as He was talking to us in the car.

movement that He charioteers. In this sojourn, He takes care of everything, assuming the roles of our mother, father, teacher and God. In this divine march, each footstep of His leaves behind a spring, from which love gushes forth forever. With gratitude to Him, I will share with the readers my blissful experiences of

travelling with Sai, in the literal sense, during one of His visits to West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. These experiences will echo the song that every devotee's heart sings, "The Nandabala (son of Nanda) has returned as Anandabala (embodiment of bliss) to meet His own folks again!"

Visit to Eluru and Akiripalli

It was in
February
1965
that

Bhagavan embarked upon a tour of Andhra Pradesh, particularly Rajahmundry and later Akiripalli, a village near Vijayawada, to inaugurate a Sanskrit school built by Dr. Suri Bhagavantam, an eminent scientist. En route, He travelled across West Godavari district and stopped at Eluru, my home town, to bless the devotees there. As per the tour programme, the visit to Eluru was to be on the 27th of February. Accordingly, I was present at Rajahmundry to invite and bring Swami to Eluru. There, as He walked in to grant Darshan of His ever beautiful form to the waiting crowds, He noticed me and asked, "When is Eluru visit scheduled for"? I replied that it was on 27th February. "No, no. Let us go there on 25th itself," He said commandingly. Immediately, I contacted the devotees at Eluru and conveyed the Divine command, so that they could make all arrangements to welcome Him on the day of His visit, now advanced by two days.

Swami left for Eluru on the morning of 25th February 1965 by road. Seated in His car were Sri Cherukumilli Kamavadhani, a Vedic scholar, Dr. Suri Bhagavantam, a scientist and myself. Throughout the journey, Swami kept us engaged in Namasmarana, singing Bhajans in His own melodious voice and we followed in chorus. He would frequently ask the car to be stopped for the sake of crowds waiting on the roadside to have His Darshan. To their great joy, He would alight to bless them all, accept garlands and grant Padanamaskar. Once, driving through the countryside, we had to stop at a railway crossing. Soon, several villagers, men, women and children, who were working in the fields came running and surrounded His car. Touched by their curiosity, Swami lowered the glass of the car window and blessed them. Those innocent folk were thrilled to see Baba in person and began whispering to each

As we were nearing the Mandir, we witnessed a Divine Leela of Swami. He stopped the car near a small house and enquired from an old lady and a small boy sitting at the doorstep about the location of the Mandir. When they pointed in that direction, He smiled to Himself and let the car move on. We were all puzzled. But later when we discovered the reason of this act, all of us were wonderstruck at His omniscience. The members of that household went to Mandir to see Bhagavan, leaving behind the old lady with poor eyesight and also the small boy to keep her company. But, how could the merciful Lord go without blessing her!

other in excitement, "Ah! He looks just like His photograph"! Swami was quite amused at this comment and as we drove on, He repeated it several times, mimicking the tone and accent of the villagers. We, of course, were laughing uncontrollably, but He was rather carried away by the innocence of those pure hearts. It is His unique nature to feel one with those that come face to face with Him, whoever it may be. Is He not the indweller of all beings?

After reaching Eluru, He rested a while at my house. I also had the blessing of serving lunch to Him and all the devotees who assembled there. In fact, Swami took upon Himself to serve food to devotees, encouraging them to have another helping, explaining the speciality of various delicacies, thus filling the devotees' hearts with joy. It was the love of a thousand mothers that we experienced on that occasion. Happily lost in extending hospitality to the Lord and His devotees, I forgot about my



own hunger. But it did not escape the loving attention of Mother Sai. Saying, “you fed all, but not yourself”, Swami shared His own meal with me. It was nothing short of Amritam (ambrosia) for me and I relished every bit of it.

It was our first time to manage Swami’s tour. Those were the early days of the Sai Organisation and Seva Dal volunteers were in small number. So, we had met the district’s Superintendent of Police a week earlier and requested for security cover. He readily agreed but put forth a personal request in turn. His daughter was afflicted with polio and he wanted us to ask Swami to give Vibhuti to her. We tried to convince him that such recommendations were not heeded to by Swami and prayers alone could elicit response from Him. But he was not convinced and kept insisting.

On the day of Swami’s visit, as I was walking behind Swami while He was giving His Divine Darshan to public at an auditorium, I found the S.P. seated in a front row, nodding to me expectantly. I looked away, praying silently, “Oh Swami, You know everything. I have nothing to say”. Having gone round the rows of devotees, Swami was walking up the dais to be seated. He turned around all of a sudden, walked straight to the S.P.’s daughter, materialised a handful of Vibhuti and gave it to her. We were all astonished at this Leela, and the S.P.’s happiness knew no bounds. How true it is that Bhagavan has come to make each and everyone happy. “Your joy is My food,” says He. Later, He delivered a Discourse to the gathering about the principle of the Atma and said, “These days, man is travelling to the moon at great expense, but not making any effort to delve even an inch into his own heart. The purpose of life is to know thyself. All must strive to attain this ultimate goal of life.”

After Eluru, I accompanied Swami to Vijayawada. Addressing a public meeting

“The eye camp was located in an undulated farmland and the merciful Lord did not hesitate to walk across the fields to reach there. He went to each patient and comforted all of them with His tender touch and kind words. His love washed away their pain. He then called me near and chided me, “You have got the surgeries done in these open fields. What if there is a septic problem”? I replied in all humility, “We have Your protection for everything. Isn’t it, Swami”? He smiled and patted me. Believe it or not, there were absolutely no complications and all the patients got their vision improved nicely.”

there, He explained lucidly, “Unity brings about purity and leads the way to divinity”. The next stop was Akiripalli where He inaugurated the school for Sanskrit learning. Thereafter, He returned to Prasanthi Nilayam, leaving us to ruminate and assimilate the nectarine experiences of His boundless love.

As I was returning to Eluru after seeing Him off at the last stop, I saw hoards of agitators blocking the traffic and disrupting all activities. It was then that I realised the omniscience of the Lord who looked into the future and foresaw the impending trouble. Though He did not reveal it to us, He guided us to prepone His visit by two days so that we could manage it without any obstacle or embarrassment.

Visit to West Godavari District, 1983

In May 1983, Bhagavan blessed West Godavari district with His visit. On 14th May, He arrived at the Gannavaram Airport



by a special flight. It landed at 12 noon. We found that His robe was all soaked in sweat as there was a malfunction in the air conditioning system of the aircraft. But He looked as fresh as a flower, untouched by the bodily discomfort. It was the peak of summer season. Moreover, it was noon time. The devotees rushed to Him with footwear and an umbrella. He gently turned them down, and made light of the hot weather, saying, "When devotees have been waiting in hot sun for My arrival, how can I use these? I am enjoying the coolness of their devotion and love. By the way, this body is born and brought up in hot Rayalaseema region"! This eased all our tension, and joy spread all around. He walked in the scorching sun, showering blessings on thousands who had lined up to receive Him.

He accepted my prayer to visit my house at Eluru and we started by road. The car was escorted by six pilot riders who cleared the way. Swami was impressed with them and blessed them with a photo opportunity. Two senior devotees, Colonel Joga Rao and Sri Ramana Rao, were part of Swami's entourage. We reached Eluru at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. A huge crowd gathered there in the hot sun to welcome Him and He satisfied their thirst to see Him. Spotting two physically challenged brothers in that crowd, He asked them to be brought near Him, created Vibhuti and applied it Himself on their foreheads and backs. By 4 o'clock, He was out again to visit an eye camp organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation in Kovvali village, 8 km away from Eluru, where 98 patients had been treated. The eye camp was located in an undulated farmland but the merciful Lord did not hesitate to walk across the fields to reach there. He went to each patient and comforted all of them with His tender touch and kind words. His love washed

away their pain. He then called me near and chided me, "You have got the surgeries done in these open fields. What if there is a septic problem"? I replied in all humility, "We have Your protection for everything. Isn't it, Swami"? He smiled and patted me. Believe it or not, there were absolutely no complications and all the patients got their vision improved nicely. It is but another illustration of the power of His blessings which gives complete protection to the devotees who fully surrender to Him and place their unshakeable faith in Him.

From Kovvali eye camp, we proceeded to S. Muppavaram village, which was the first village to have been adopted by the Sai Organisation as part of their nationwide programme of rural development. On the way, we came across many ponds and reservoirs, some spreading over several acres, which were all full of water even in that mid summer. Pleased at the sight, Swami remarked, "Wonderful! There is water everywhere. You people are born lucky". I said reverentially, "Oh Lord! It is You who gave us this birth, and it is You who made us lucky". He patted my shoulder with love. With so much love around, there were no signs of tiredness and fatigue in any of us, in spite of the long drive in hot weather. We reached the village at 8.30 p.m. Though it was dark, Swami went round for an hour to inspect the tasks undertaken by Seva Dal volunteers which included a bus shelter, a Rama temple, a huge water tank with ramps, roads, drains and so on. He appreciated the work. At 9.30 at night, He addressed a public meeting chaired by Sri Alluri Bapineedu, a local leader. "Honesty, cooperation and unity exist naturally in villages. There could be some personal or political differences among you. But when it comes to the welfare and development of the village, all must stand united", He exhorted the villagers. We left that village at



10 o'clock that night and proceeded towards Kovvuru town for the inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Mandir built there. As we were nearing the Mandir, we witnessed a Divine Leela of Swami. He stopped the car near a small house and enquired from an old lady and a small boy sitting at the doorstep about the location of the Mandir. When they pointed in that direction, He smiled to Himself and let the car move on. We were all puzzled. But later when we discovered the reason of this act, all of us were wonderstruck at His omniscience. The members of that household went to the Mandir to see Bhagavan, leaving behind the old lady with poor eyesight and also the small boy to keep her company. But, how could the merciful Lord go without blessing her! Just as Krishna responded to the longings of blind Surdas, our Sai Krishna listened to the prayers of this old lady, and granted her the opportunity of exclusive Darshan and Sambhashan. In the last days of her life, the only thing that the blind old lady could see clearly was the effulgent Divine Form of Lord Sai. What a blessed soul was she!

The Mandir was inaugurated by Swami. Though it was past ten at night, Swami spoke to the large gathering waiting for Him. "You build Mandirs in brick and mortar. But the real Mandir is your heart, where God resides permanently. The concrete Mandirs are meant to develop your concentration on God," He enlightened the audience. It was quite late in the night and the organisers persuaded Swami to take dinner at the Mandir. It was a Mandir built for Him which He inaugurated and then accepted the Naivedyam (food offering) personally. What a blessed coincidence! We congratulated each other happily. Thereafter, Bhagavan left for Rajahmundry in East Godavari district, which was a short

It was the peak of summer season. Moreover, it was noon time. The devotees rushed to Him with footwear and an umbrella. He gently turned them down, and made light of the hot weather, saying, "When devotees have been waiting in hot sun for My arrival, how can I use these? I am enjoying the coolness of their devotion and love. By the way, this body is born and brought up in hot Rayalaseema region"! This eased all our tension, and joy spread all around. He walked in the scorching sun, showering blessings on thousands who had lined up to receive Him.

drive on the bridge across Godavari river. Since His arrival at the Gannavaram Airport at noon, it had been a hectic day for Him. Yet, He constantly radiated love and bliss so that those around Him could cherish each and every moment spent with Him. One cannot forget that experience in many lives to come.

Visit to West Godavari District, 1984

Again in May 1984, Bhagavan's convoy passed through West Godavari district. After inaugurating Sri Sathya Sai Mandir at Vijayawada and another palatial Mandir called Santhi Sudha at Guntur, He travelled straight to Rajahmundry on 18th May 1984 to establish Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam there. Eluru again fell en route. Travelling with Swami were Sri H.J. Dora, I.P.S., Sri Sathya Murthy and myself. Four motorbike riders were piloting Swami's car. It was the period of peak summer season by Indian calendar. Besides the scorching sun, hot winds were blowing. Bhagavan





Santhi Sudha Mandir inaugurated by Bhagavan at Guntur, 1984.

who was conversing with us seated in the car suddenly instructed the driver to slow down and stop near the motorbike of one of the motorbike riders, a young man named Sagar, who had by then pulled out to roadside and collapsed by the side of a tree. He was too exhausted by the heat to notice that Swami was coming to Him. Swami asked for a tender coconut kept in the car and made him drink its water. The youth regained consciousness and reported that he actually fell unconscious while riding at a high speed and was not at all aware of pulling out of the road, applying brakes and stopping under the tree. It was Swami who remote controlled

...Continued from page 369

was. I told Him the cause of my trouble and expressed my wonder at how Bhagavan seemed totally unaffected by the heat. Swami then revealed to me the secret behind this. "You were selfish and worried about your body

all these actions even as He was talking to us in the car. Of course, for the One who controls the whole cosmos, such acts of grace are sportingly casual.

At Rajahmundry, He was welcomed by a mammoth gathering. Sri Thanneeru Bullayya who had been running the Navabharath Gurukulam handed it over to Swami. It was thereafter transformed into a beautiful residential school, now known as Sri Sathya Sai Gurukulam. On that occasion, Swami's feet were washed ceremoniously with the holy waters from twelve sacred rivers of India. Later, Swami personally blessed all the devotees by sprinkling that water on them. While returning from Rajahmundry, He graciously accepted our hospitality at Eluru and then proceeded to Gannavaram Airport to leave for Prasanthi Nilayam. Even at that time, He did not ignore to bless the riders of pilot vehicles with the opportunity of a photo with Him. He created Vibhuti for the driver of His car, spoke to him for a while and granted him Padanamaskar. His tour left in our hearts the feeling that it is possible for Him alone to be one with all, yet remain One among all!

and hence you were affected by the heat. I, on the other hand, love everybody and did not show any concern for this body. Hence, I was unaffected by the heat", He said.

Do not limit Me to the boundaries of any one Name and Form. Your aim should be to see the self-same God in all the Forms that are worshipped, to picture Him in all the Names, nay, to be conscious of His Presence as the inner motivator of every living being, in every particle of matter.

– Baba

A RESURRECTION

IN MADRAS (CHENNAI), SWAMI stayed at the house of an old devotee, Sushilamma, while we were accommodated in the guest house of a recent devotee, Sri Sethuraman. The guest house was enchanting. Tame deer and peacocks roamed freely in the lush, tropical garden. A full staff of servants were at our disposal and responded to our every need. An excellent cook made for us delicious vegetarian meals. I was happy to leave Christina and the ayah in this lovely surrounding while we went with Swami to visit various homes of His devotees and attend the conference.

Our host, Sri Sethuraman, was a great devotee of Lord Ganesh (the Indian god with the elephant head and known as the remover of obstacles).

He presented each of us staying at his guest house with the gift of a statue of Ganesh. In later years, he donated a life-size statue of Ganesh to the Ashram and it is installed at the front gate. To this day, the statue has been an inspiration for thousands of visitors and residents and is worshipped daily, according to tradition, by the Pandits.

Swami invited us to dine with Him at the home of the Indian actress, Anjali Devi. Near here was a vacant piece of land, on which in later years was erected "Sundaram", Swami's

residence when He visits Chennai. After dinner, we all enjoyed a preview of her latest film but did not see the end as Swami was concerned with giving Darshan to the hundreds of people gathered outside the house. Thus, the film was



Elsie and Robert Cowan with Bhagavan after Cowan's resurrection.

cut short as He responded to the longing in the hearts of His devotees.

On 25th December 1971, while giving a Discourse, Swami suddenly stopped speaking, walked over to Dr. John Hislop at the side of the stage and whispered something to him. John left immediately and Swami resumed the Discourse. When we returned to the guest house, Dr. Hislop told us a fascinating story. Swami had told him that Walter Cowan had just died and that Elsie, his wife, was at that moment fervently praying and calling Swami.

He told John to go to Elsie and assure her that He had heard her prayer and would soon be coming to the hospital to see Walter.

Elsie and Walter Cowan, founders of the Sathya Sai Book Centre of America, had arrived a few days earlier from the United States and were staying in a hotel in Chennai. That morning, Cowan had died in his wife's arms. An ambulance was called, and his body was taken to a hospital and placed in a storage room after being pronounced dead. Swami visited the hospital later and restored life to the body of Walter Cowan.

A month later, in Brindavan, Walter Cowan told me of his experience with death. He said that shortly after he died, he remained near his physical body in the ambulance. Then

the scene suddenly changed. Swami came and took him to a large room, somewhere in the heavens, where a panel of judges were gathered. He was shown scenes from many of his past lives where he recognised himself as having been, very often, a person of great historic importance. He saw that, throughout these lives, he had always worked for the welfare of humanity. After the lives appeared before Walter, Swami told the panel of judges that He was taking him back to earth because there was still work to be done by Cowan. Walter told me he was not happy to come back, as being without a body gave him an enormous sensation of expansive freedom.

– Excerpted from the book "Divine Memories of Sathya Sai Baba" by Diana Baskin.

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UE TO SAI BHAGAVAN'S CALL in a dream to my mother, Smt. Radhamma, our whole family of four brothers and three sisters along with my father Sri Radhakrishnaiah reached Puttaparthi during the second half of 1945. All troubles of our torturous journey – through Penukonda, Karnatanagepalli, Kothacheruvu, etc., by rail, horse cart, rural bus and bullock cart – were wiped away with just one glance of Bhagavan Sai. His young face was effulgent with divinity. His compassionate looks filled with unconditional love made us totally surrender to Him. Though my 14 year-old brother Murthy had some doubts, he also surrendered at the Divine Feet of the incarnation of perfect love within no time. In the very first visit, Bhagavan named us as 'Kuppam Family'. Though Swami was 19 years old, He looked younger – like a



Bhagavan during Dasara festival at Old Mandir, Puttaparthi, 1946.

Smt. Vijayamma

BHAGAVAN'S VISIT TO KARUR, 1947

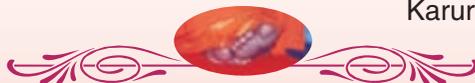


Krishna Kumar, Amarendra and other playmates with Swami at Chitravathi, Puttaparthi.

lad of our age, of about 13 years. At that time, Swami always wore white robes, but He kindly granted my mother's request to wear coloured robes on certain occasions. Originally, our father had firmly decided to stay at Puttaparthi only for three days, but by Swami's grace, we stayed for three months and had the wonderful opportunity to witness the first Dasara festival at the Old Mandir.

A Sea of Humanity at Karur

In October 1947, Swami decided to go on a tour of South India, and we were fortunate not to miss this golden opportunity. Swami reached Karur on 25th October 1947.



Accommodation for Swami was arranged in my cousin Smt. Adhilaxmi's house. Her husband, Sri Govinda Swami, and children Parvatham, Sunila and Ramalingam were present, with good arrangements for Swami on the first floor. My mother, Smt. Radhamma, brother Amba and I stayed there till Swami left Karur. We never expected to see people in such large numbers coming to see Swami. People came from places like Madurai, Tiruchirapalli, Udumalpet, and so on. The entire town looked auspicious due to the greenery of mango-leaf buntings all over. Each and every house looked festive as if a marriage were being celebrated in it. The crowd standing before my sister's house was so large that there was no place for even a grain of sand to fall on the ground. When Swami stepped onto the balcony, loud salutations echoed all around. With folded palms, people in thousands offered their obeisance with utmost devotion. We could not come down at all because of the huge crowd. Our eyes were filled with tears, watching the profound devotion of all those people. The midday sun was blazing hot but people just stood there, unmindful of the heat.

Swami was very much moved by the devotees' yearning and their eagerness to have His Darshan. So, He decided to go down into the crowd. Hastily, a throne-like chair, decorated with flowers, was placed on an improvised dais. When He stood on the dais, people started clapping so loudly that reverberations verily shook the earth and sky. With a raised hand, He blessed everyone. Thousands of devotees, with folded hands above their heads, gazed at Him in absolute silence. Intoxicated and exhilarated by the sacred nectarine gleam of His lotus face, they seemed to eagerly devour that beauty in total reverence. Every action of His, every

move, every word, every deed, though looking simple, always had the essence of spirituality rooted in it. He treated everyone alike and displayed oneness with motherly love, which was very delightful and touching to witness. As soon as Swami sat in the chair, thousands of voices unanimously requested Him to speak. Swami yielded to their ardent request and stood up.

Swami's First Public Speech

He said, "Dear Children! You have all gathered here willingly, putting up with so many difficulties, to have My Darshan. When you are all standing crammed together, with no place for even an ant to crawl, how can I comfortably sit on this spacious dais with good breeze, above you all? I cannot bear to see my children suffer. With your consent, I too will sit on the ground with you". "No, Swami! No! We can all get a good glimpse of You, only if You sit on the dais," they all prayed. Radiating love, Swami said, "You are all entreating Me to tell you the story of My life. I may not be able to narrate it well. But still, I shall try". While Swami recounted His childhood incidents, His daring acts at school and His miracles, people listened to Him in utmost silence, as if in a trance. With hearts filled with surprise, wonder and bliss, they intently gazed at Swami's sacred and auspicious figure to their hearts' content, utterly disregarding the tears trickling down their cheeks.

It is hard to believe, but even infants did not whimper. Swami said in conclusion, "My Children! God has come in human form only for the sake of His devotees. Because you are all born in this world, you should carry out your earthly duties, while staying in this world. You should dedicate your body to the service of humanity and surrender your heart



to God. By chanting God's name and singing His glory, make good use of this great chance of being born as a human being. That way, you will be making your life blessed. Instead of doing this, everyday you allow yourself to be sunk lower to the nether world, so to say, contemplating harm to others, remaining bound to desires and keeping away from the path of righteousness. You are thus making wrong use of your time. At least, from now on, start meditating on God, and ensure that the objective of your human birth is fully achieved". When Swami concluded His speech, the sound of joyous ovation verily shook the earth and sky.

Swami stood up, and looking at the people standing at the back, He said, "If you have any doubts, please ask Me". No one wished to ask anything. We guessed that Swami must have had a strong reason for saying it. Later, we came to know that some people had come with a long list of doubts. They were atheists, who wanted to challenge Him in arguments about the existence of God and disrupt His meeting by asking unnecessary questions. With Swami's open invitation, they kept silent, like goats at the sight of a lion, humbly beating a retreat. Of what avail is the candlelight before the splendid rays of the sun? This was the first time that Swami gave a public speech and enthralled everyone by His powerful oratory. The topic on everyone's lips was this very speech.

Shower of Gifts from Divine Hands

Many devotees begged Swami to visit their homes, but there was no way to move out and around. When the jostling for His Darshan began to intensify, Swami went to the balcony, held a mike and began singing. Like calves hearing the divine music of the



The entire town looked auspicious due to the greenery of mango-leaf buntings all over. Each and every house looked festive as if a marriage were being celebrated in it. The crowd standing before my sister's house was so large that there was no place for even a grain of sand to fall on the ground. When Swami stepped onto the balcony, loud salutations echoed all around. With folded palms, people in thousands offered their obeisance with utmost devotion. We could not come down at all because of the huge crowd. Our eyes were filled with tears, watching the profound devotion of all those people.



flute of Krishna, people soon seemed to forget themselves in rapture and began shaking their heads in joy. Amba and I sang Bhajans along with Him, sitting near His feet. For one hour, the crowd stood as if transfixed. With every passing day, the crowd became bigger and bigger. There were Bhajans, both in the morning and in the evening. Unmindful of the heat, without once lowering their upturned faces, people stood there patiently. It was an unending ocean of humanity, as far as our vision could extend.

Looking at a man struggling to take His snapshot, Swami said, "There is no film in your camera". "I have film," the man asserted confidently; but the film was in Swami's hand! Swami laughed and threw back the roll of film to him. This seemed to create a strange new excitement in the onlookers, and they all began clamouring, "Swami, please give us



something, also". Swami waved His hand in the air, and showered peppermints, pendants and talismans in large numbers. With wild shouts, people madly ran about to catch these gifts. Those who could not catch anything continued to struggle, running hither and thither. Swami's grace will always be proportionate to the love of His devotees. Till then, we had never seen or heard of such a happening as this. One more special feature about this incident was that people got a gift that they really craved for. People with cameras got rolls of films. Sick people got a curative talisman. Like this, our bountiful God showered gifts according to their requirements. Overcome with joy, people began dancing as if they had gone mad. This, in turn, attracted more people to come near, and the number of devotees became larger and larger.

Swami decided to bless the houses of some devotees by His visits. He visited Sri Laxman's house, the brother of Sri Govinda Swami, and also Smt. Adhilaxmi's in-laws' house. He could not travel by road because every inch was occupied by people. Short walls divided houses in this old town. He just stepped across these walls, and going from one house to the other, He blessed the inmates, granted them their wishes and returned. People were stunned by His sudden appearance from the rooftop, here to there. Ecstatic devotees prostrated before Him and jumped with joy when He materialised some gift for them. By simply waving His hand, Swami materialised a foot-long marble statue of Lord Vighneswara and presented it to a devotee. The craftsmanship and the colour combination of that statue were highly laudable. Swami's name, and news of His miraculous powers, spread like a mighty gust of wind. Just to have a glimpse of Swami, people began to stay all night in the



When He stood on the dais, people started clapping so loudly that reverberations verily shook the earth and sky. With a raised hand, He blessed everyone. Thousands of devotees, with folded hands above their heads, gazed at Him in absolute silence. Intoxicated and exhilarated by the sacred nectarine gleam of His lotus face, they seemed to eagerly devour that beauty in total reverence. Every action of His, every move, every word, every deed, though looking simple, always had the essence of spirituality rooted in it. He treated everyone alike and displayed oneness with motherly love, which was very delightful and touching to witness.



open courtyard before the house. Not wishing to risk losing their place, some were foregoing even food and sleep. They ate whatever was available, and waited. Our hearts melted at the sight of such firm love and unflinching faith. The focus of their minds was only "Swami." They had no other concern. Swami showered His infinite love in such a way that they were glued to their places.

Visit to Tiruchi and Udumalpet

Devotees took Sai Bhagavan to Tiruchi and Udumalpet. The moment Swami reached the boundary of the town, a mass of devotees heartily welcomed Him with Poornakumbham and auspicious band music. Vessels filled with the sacred water of the river Kaveri, were carried. An Ambari (seat with a canopy to cover the head) was arranged on an



elephant, in order to bring Swami into the town in a grand manner. The citizens garlanded Him, reverentially welcomed Him, washed His Lotus Feet with sacred river water, and making Swami mount the big decorated elephant, they took Him into the town in a huge procession. Resplendent like Lord Mahavishnu Himself, sending lovely smiles with a gentle face, Swami immersed them in the ocean of bliss. After touring the region for two days, quenching the spiritual thirst of thousands of people, Swami came back to Karur.

Devotion Unbounded

The next day, Darshan was arranged in the open courtyard of the local High School, and it was jam-packed with thousands of devotees. Moreover, different groups of devotees would stand before the house every ten minutes, imploring Swami for His Darshan. Listening to those pleas, “Bhaktavatsala Sai” (Sai, the lover of devotees) suddenly would give everyone a slip, and run to grant them Darshan. Oh! What a sacred love and intimate relationship is this! Such a splendid sight was a feast for the eyes. Swami was proving true the sayings, “God is servant of His devotees”. and, “God is stealer of the hearts of devotees”. His large lotus heart is like a soothing cool breeze, comforting devotees.

One night, at twelve o'clock, we heard the sound of melodious Bhajans coming from downstairs. Our brother-in-law approached the devotees and said with folded hands, “Swami has just retired to His room to rest. He is tired. Please come in the morning”. To this, they earnestly replied, “We have come from a long distance after going through a lot of hardships just to have Swami’s Darshan. We cannot live without seeing Him. Please have mercy on us”. Unable to decide what to answer, he was perplexed. At that juncture, Swami’s voice was heard from the balcony, a very



Dedicate your body to the service of humanity and surrender your heart to God. By chanting God’s name and singing His glory, make good use of this great chance of being born as a human being. That way, you will be making your life blessed. Instead of doing this, everyday you allow yourself to be sunk lower to the nether world, so to say, contemplating harm to others, remaining bound to desires and keeping away from the path of righteousness. You are thus making wrong use of your time. At least, from now on, start meditating on God, and ensure that the objective of your human birth is fully achieved.



sweet voice, vibrant like the music from a flute. It took everyone by surprise. Lifting up their heads, the devotees saw Swami, filled with love, the embodiment of pure love, the fulfiller of the wishes of devotees, standing with His face wreathed in smiles. As soon as they saw Him, in a frenzy of devotion, they prostrated before Him, hailing Him as “Harahara Maha Deva! Sambho Sankara”!

When they resumed singing Bhajans, with tears trickling down their cheeks in the ecstasy of devotion, our hearts seemed to melt. The cool breeze, the silent night and the moonlight made everyone get immersed in an oblivion wrought by joy. From downstairs, they appealed to Him, “Swami! How long will You stand? Please be seated.” This seemed to make Swami even more affectionate, for He lovingly replied, “Oh! My Dear Children!



What is My discomfort before what you had to suffer? You are all in a very tired state. The joy of dear children is the primary consideration for a mother. When you yourself are standing, why should it matter if I stand? Continue your Bhajan". This uninterrupted flow of love between Swami and devotees continued for an hour and a half. Our hearts were immersed in devotion and danced in the sea of joy, looking down at the jam-packed crowd below. Do not they require any rest at all? Are these human beings or angels? Is this a dream or an act of illusion created by Lord Vishnu? Overcome with joy, Swami heartily blessed them. Truly, this incident left an indelible imprint on the hearts of everyone. It was affection overflowing all boundaries; Swami gave a gift of clothes to all of them. With joy swelling up in His heart, Swami came inside, though it was very difficult for Him to leave them. Coming in, Swami said, "How nicely they sang"! True, their devotional singing was still ringing in our ears.

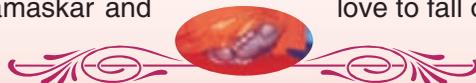
Moving Scene of Swami's Departure from Karur

It was just beginning to be dawn. Like the river water surging forward at the opening of the flood gates, the people in the big crowd were advancing, pushing one another. Oblivious of their surroundings, irrespective of all barriers of age or sex, all were shedding tears of joy at their great good fortune of having Swami's Darshan. Swami was to leave for Parthi that afternoon. At one o'clock, the car arrived and was parked before the house. The jostling intensified. They were pining for the last Darshan before He left. People were panting, sobbing and crying out "Baba!" and "Swami!" from the depths of their hearts. Just before leaving, Swami called each one of us by name and gave us Padanamaskar and

Vibhuti. We felt as if our hearts would break but He consoled us like a mother.

We offered Arati to Swami. As soon as Swami went downstairs and got into the car, devotees touched the car and then pressed their hands to their eyes, reverentially. Some of them began running after the car as if they were mad. Sai Gopala, the Ocean of Love, asked the driver to stop; lo and behold, He stood on top of the car! How am I to describe the joy devotees felt at that moment? As if a lost treasure was retrieved, people made a big hustle and bustle. Shouts of salutation spread wide like a big hurricane. Lifting up both His hands in a gesture of blessing, Swami said, "What you heard and saw these last ten days, put into practice and derive happiness therefrom. What is important is implementation, not pompous display. Do not stand in the way of the car. Be disciplined, and stand at the side of the road". Hardly had He spoken than hundreds of people moved back of their own accord like children obeying their mother. After carrying out the Divine Command, they stood still. Really, that was an unforgettable sight. Swami's love for His devotees was unique and unmatched. Swami's car started. It moved away, a-w-a-y... But the people did not leave. Looking at them, we too felt very pained. As Swami left, everybody started discussing his experiences, Swami's miraculous powers and His soothing words. We accompanied Swami for a short distance and then returned home. The streets which till then were shining with a strange brilliance looked lifeless and dull now like heaps of faded flowers. The house which till then looked glorious now looked dreary.

We absolutely fail to understand how to show our deep gratitude to such a compassionate Lord Sai and ardently pray for showers of His love to fall on us all for ever and ever!



A DELIGHTFUL HALF CENTURY OF DIVINE GRACE

OUR FIRST DARSHAN OF Bhagavan in close proximity was at Kollengode Palace, Palakkad, Kerala in March 1960. Swami came out of His room to give Darshan to the devotees sitting in the portico.

Opportunity of Singing Bhajans before Swami

We started singing the Bhajan *Chittachora Yashoda Ke Bal* for the first time in His Divine Presence. To everyone's surprise, Swami stood in front of us till our Bhajan ended. He asked us to come to Kochi (Cochin), the place where He was heading next. We followed Swami's vehicle and reached Kochi. In Kochi, Swami graciously visited the house of our brother, Justice Balakrishna Eradi where He spent a few hours with all of us.

Our next golden opportunity of singing Bhajans before Swami was at Sri Kesava Rao's house when He visited Kozhikode



Bhagavan at the house of Sri Kesava Rao during His visit to Kochi in May 1964.

(Calicut), Kerala State on 30th May 1964. Sri Rao was the principal of Regional Engineering College, Calicut.

In 1967, during Dasara, Swami informed Sri Kasturi, "Three brothers will be coming from Kerala and they will have to sing Bhajans in the Mandir". It has been over 40 long years and Swami in His unbounded kindness to us has been giving us this privilege of singing before Him at Puttapparthi.

Experiencing Bhagavan's Divinity

In December 1967, Swami visited Kochi again and stayed at our brother's house for three days. Our brother was a judge in the High Court of Kerala. We had the golden chance to be with Swami for three days, the memories of which will be cherished by us all our life. In fact,



During His visit to Kochi in December 1967, Bhagavan gave Darshan at Durbar Hall Ground during Bhajans.

we had a lot of personal experiences during this period. During those three days, there were many public functions that Swami attended at Town Hall, Durbar Hall Ground, etc. One particular incident is still fresh in our memory. Swami was about to leave Kochi after His stay for three days. Swami called Sri V.N. Rajan, the then Inspector General of Police (who was personally supervising Seva Dal activities during Bhagavan's visit to Kerala) and



asked him to call one constable who was on guard duty at the gate. Sri Rajan himself ran to call that constable. He was shocked to find that the constable was in shabby uniform and had not even shaved for the last couple of days. Sri Rajan was extremely annoyed with the constable, but as Swami was waiting, he asked the constable to report to Him immediately. Swami, with His ever merciful smile, asked Sri Rajan as to why this constable was not looking smart. Rajan was perplexed!

Then Swami Himself gave the answer, “See Rajan, this person was on guard duty for the past 72 hours without change of dress, shave, bath, food and sleep. His deep devotion made him forget his worldly needs and he has been guarding Me for the past three days. I consider him as a great yogi!” So saying, Swami materialised a gold necklace and presented it to the constable who was standing nearby. This is one of the episodes we distinctly remember because Swami showed to all of us that He watches with all His mercy anything and everything in this universe everywhere at all times.

Ecstasy of Divine Proximity

The final programme of Swami’s Kochi visit was His Discourse at Town Hall. Immediately after that function, Swami was to leave Kochi. Sri Muralidharan, the then Director of All India Radio, Calicut was recording the entire Discourse of Swami. After the Divine Discourse and Bhajan, Swami was to leave the venue and Kochi. We started singing Arati at the end of the Bhajan. The experience of being with Swami for three days and the reality that it was all coming to an end suddenly was an emotional blow for us. We were all in tears. We forgot that the programme was being recorded by All

In 1967, during Dasara, Swami informed Sri Kasturi, “Three brothers will be coming from Kerala and they will have to sing Bhajans in the Mandir”. It has been over 40 long years and Swami in His unbounded kindness to us has been giving us this privilege of singing before Him at Puttparthi.



India Radio and there was a gap in singing. Swami just stood in front of us and said, “Do not cry; Muralidharan is recording this and this will be broadcast tomorrow. I shall wait at your brother’s place, finish the Arati and come”. To our great surprise, when Muralidharan played the recorded programme, these two items (Swami’s words and our crying) were erased by the Divine Will of Swami, with no gap left in both the cases.

On 23rd May 1976, Swami came to Kozhikode (Calicut) from Ooty to lay the foundation stone of Sri Sathya Sai Vidyapeeth, Srisailam. After the function, Swami came straight to our Tharavad (ancestral house) in Kozhikode along with 30 to 40 Brindavan students and spent a few hours there.

During Swami’s visit to Delhi in 1999, we were very fortunate that Swami visited our brother Justice Balakrishna Eradi’s house on the first day itself. Swami came along with Dr. Venkataraman, Sri Kulwant Rai and Sri Anil Kumar and spent nearly two hours with us. We were in a state of ecstasy by His immediate proximity.

Each and every member of our family is well aware of our debt to Swami. We pray at His Lotus Feet to help us lead exemplary lives and live up to His expectations.



God Loves His Devotees

THERE LIVED A DEVOTEE OF the Lord named Madhav Das in West Bengal. After the death of his wife, he developed detachment towards worldly life. He, therefore, sold his property, settled his household affairs, put on ochre dress and went to stay at Jagannath Puri. Dedicating himself to the service of Lord Jagannath, he contemplated on his name day and night. Spending the entire day in the temple of Lord Jagannath, he went to seashore at night and slept happily on the bed of sand there. His face shone with great lustre and he was endowed with unique powers due to constant contemplation on the Lord.

One day, Lord Jagannath along with his sister Subhadra came to the seashore, placed a gold plate before Madhav Das and disappeared. Lost as he was in the contemplation on the name of the Lord, Madhav Das was unaware of this. When he opened his eyes, he saw before him a gold plate full of delicious food items. As he had attained the state of thoughtlessness, he did not pay any attention to the gold plate and the food placed in it. Without enquiring as to how such delicious food came for him in a gold plate, he ate the food and got absorbed in meditation again.

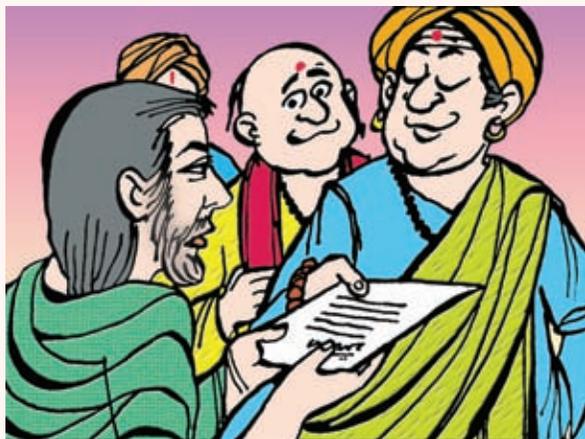
The priest in the temple did not find the gold plate when he was to make food offering to the idol of Lord Jagannath at night. The temple authorities thereupon sent out soldiers to find out the thief who had stolen the gold plate. Some soldiers came to the seashore and found the gold plate, before which Madhav Das was sitting in meditation. They arrested Madhav Das and put him in jail. During that night,

Lord Jagannath appeared in the dream of the temple priest and said to him, "All of you offered food to me with great devotion, but when I ate it, you people persecuted me". So saying, the Lord disappeared. The priest was fear-stricken and got up from the bed. Unable to decide whether it was a truth or a mere dream, he was confounded after what he saw in the dream. Remembering the happenings of the day, he pondered over the entire matter and came to understand that Madhav Das was a great devotee and Lord Jagannath himself had offered him food in the gold plate. God is indeed the guardian of the destitute. Isn't it so? After coming to this conclusion, the priest made the temple authorities aware of this fact and got Madhav Das released from jail. However, Madhav Das did not exult over his release. By the grace of God, the name, fame and prestige of Madhav Das as a great devotee of the Lord spread far and wide.



When the temple priest came to understand that Madhav Das was a great devotee of the Lord, he got him released from jail.

There were many well-known learned men and devotees of the Lord in Puri. Seeing that someone coming from West Bengal had attained higher prestige and respect than them, they became jealous of Madhav Das. They therefore decided to prove that Madhav Das was not more highly learned than them. For this, they selected one of them as their leader. Challenging Madhav Das for a debate, their leader went to him and said, "Sir, your name and fame has spread everywhere that you are a highly learned man and a great devotee of the Lord. I want to have a debate with you". Hearing this, Madhav Das said, "Revered sir, I am not at all a learned man. All the education and knowledge of scriptures that I have acquired is only meant to earn my livelihood and to fill my belly. You are a much more scholarly person than me". Then the leader of the learned men asked Madhav Das, "Sir, if you believe that you are not really a great scholar, then you give it to me in writing. Can you do that"? At once, Madhav Das wrote blissfully on a letter "I am not a learned man", put his signature below it and gave that letter to the group of the learned men.



In all humility, Madhav Das accepted that he was not a learned man and gave it in writing also to the group of so-called learned men.

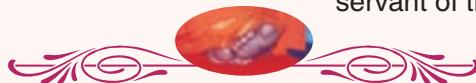
This was exactly what they wanted. You know, what happened after that? The learned men took that letter to Kasi (Varanasi). Showing that letter of Madhav Das in an assembly of scholars at Kasi, the leader said to them, "Respected learned men! From this moment onward, I am the greatest learned man of the land. Madhav Das has accepted that he is not at all a scholar. Look here, I read before you the sentence written by Madhav Das himself".



The leader of the learned men was surprised and shocked when he saw that the writing in the letter had mysteriously changed.

Everyone was surprised when this sentence was read out to them. Poor leader of the learned men was at his wits' end. "What is this magic!" he thought. In the letter, it was written that Madhav Das was the greatest and noblest among all scholars. Below the letter was the signature of the leader of the learned men. The leader who boasted of his own scholarship understood everything. He became aware that it was Lord Jagannath himself who had made this change in the letter and none else.

God is always in you, with you, below you, above you, around you. He gladly takes the responsibility of protecting His devotees. He cannot bear to see the defeat of His devotee. True to his name, Madhav Das became the servant of the Lord.



Two Memorable Trips to Mumbai with Bhagavan

Dr. T. Ravikumar

THE IMMORTAL Sanskrit poem “Bhaja Govindam” of Adi Sankara was adapted to the stage for a college-day programme in the erstwhile Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan in 1974. Swami Himself took up the task of directing this drama. We had rehearsal everyday for two months in His Divine Presence. The result was a superb drama “Bhaja Govindam” which gave the eternal message

of Adi Sankara in a setting relevant to present times. It had a message for all – erudite scholars, householders, renunciants, wealthy people, youth and indeed every section of society.

Drama Troupe’s Journey to Mumbai, 1975

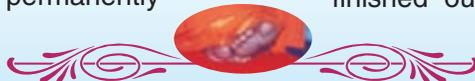
Responding to the prayers of the devotees of Mumbai, Bhagavan permitted this drama to be performed during His visit to Mumbai on the anniversary celebrations of Dharmakshetra in 1975. The drama was staged in the famous Shanmukhananda Hall on 13th May 1975 and received rave reviews.

On that trip, we had many close interactions with Swami which remain permanently



Bhagavan with the drama team which enacted the drama “Adi Sankara” in Shanmukhananda Hall, Mumbai in May 1975.

etched in our memory. I shall just mention a couple of these. During the make-up session, we had to remove our watches and gold chains so that it would not look anachronistic, considering the roles we were to depict. We kept these at a safe place. After the drama when we looked for our watches and gold chains, they were missing. We were upset as Swami had materialised these and so we spent 2-3 hours searching every nook and corner. We had to return disappointed to Dharmakshetra. It was 3.30 p.m. when we returned and Swami was waiting for us. He asked us why we were late and after hearing us, consoled us, saying, “Its okay, does not matter. Have a wash and eat your lunch”. It was only after we had almost finished our lunch that Swami started



to have His. We felt bad that we had made Swami wait for us. After His lunch, Swami just created all the watches and chains we had lost and gave them to us much to our delight.

It was during this trip of Mumbai that we had the golden opportunity to go for sightseeing with Swami. One evening, after Bhajan, we got into an air-conditioned minibus with audio facilities for the guide to describe the sights. We were thrilled to see Swami getting into the car and leading the minibus. Imagine our delight when somewhere near Juhu, Swami got down from His car and got into our bus. None of us had imagined that Swami would travel with us in the bus itself! We went round Mumbai for four long hours, four hours of pure delight and bliss! It was 11 p.m. when we returned from this trip. Swami Himself described to us various sights all around Mumbai.

Second Journey to Mumbai with Bhagavan, 1988

Swami decided to take this drama troupe with Him to Mumbai again in March 1988. Having been part of the earlier trip in 1975, I was overjoyed and looked forward to avail of this opportunity with great excitement.

In the second week of the month of March 1988, we embarked on this wonderful trip. Swami was then at Brindavan and so the first leg of our journey was from Puttaparthi to Brindavan. We arrived there on the night of 13th March 1988. Next morning, Swami called us and asked about the preparations for the drama. He went into minute details as He always does. In the evening, Swami saw the rehearsal in the college auditorium. After the drama, as we sat around Him, He suggested some changes. He asked the singers to sing and corrected their pronunciation.

We boarded the train at Bengaluru on 16th March and after a comfortable journey

He then asked us to start and stood there waving His handkerchief till we were visible.

Watching Swami do this, the entire gathering of 20,000 people assembled there started waving to us. All of us were touched by Swami's compassion and our eyes were filled with tears. None of us spoke a single word for the rest of the journey. Our hearts were too filled with bliss to say anything. Thus, ended another memorable trip with the Divine.

reached Dadar on 17th March at 7.15 a.m. Around 9 a.m., we reached Dharmakshetra where accommodation had been arranged for us. Swami came by plane and was received with Veda chanting by Bal Vikas children and Arati by elderly devotees. After Arati, Swami called us in Satyadeep and enquired about the train journey. "Was it comfortable? What did you eat during the journey? Did you eat properly?" He asked. As we were describing the happenings in the train, Swami intervened and told us all that happened. He also described to us the fun we had during the journey in travelling by train. We were awestruck and realised that there was no need to 'inform' the all-knowing!

On the morning of the 18th May, "Bhaja Govindam" drama was to be presented in the Shanmukhananda Hall. Swami arrived quite early, came into the green room and personally checked our costumes to see that everything was in order. Swami encouraged us by telling that everything would come out well and gave us Padanamaskar. The 3,000 capacity hall was already full and overflowing.



As Swami said in the beginning, everything fell in place and the drama ended smoothly. Immediately after the programme, Swami came onto the stage and His first words were: 'Chala Baaga Undi (very very nice)'. He also blessed us with group photos. In the evening, Swami came to the Satyadeep and told us again that the drama had come out well. Swami said, "The questions posed by the disciples and the answers given by Sankara in the third scene were both clear. The last scene touched everyone assembled there. You all did very well", said Swami with motherly pride.

That evening, there was a public meeting in Dharmakshetra, in which Swami gave a Discourse. In His Discourse, Swami traced the ills plaguing modern society to the fact that people who had the responsibility of managing the affairs of the country had all strayed from the disciplines enjoined on them.

On the morning of 19th March, there was a scintillating Bal Vikas programme. The venue was the lawns surrounding Satyadeep. The whole place was filled with children from the various suburbs of Mumbai. It was about the five D's Swami had spoken about recently at Prasanthi Nilayam. The practice of the five D's – Duty, Devotion, Discipline, Discrimination and Determination and the issues thrown up were beautifully presented by the children.

In the afternoon, Swami called us to His room upstairs in Dharmakshetra. We all were very excited and Swami was also happy to see our happiness. As we sat around Him, tea and snacks were served to us. Swami asked us about our visit to Elephanta caves and discussed a number of other things. He insisted that we should eat properly and filled our plates (and our hearts) to the full. It moved us to tears to receive so much love from the Supreme Mother. As our train was to

After the drama when we looked for our watches and gold chains, they were missing. We were upset as Swami had materialised these and so we spent 2-3 hours searching every nook and corner. We had to return disappointed to Dharmakshetra. It was 3.30 p.m. when we returned and Swami was waiting for us. He asked us why we were late and after hearing us, consoled us, saying, "Its okay, does not matter. Have a wash and eat your lunch". It was only after we had almost finished our lunch that Swami started to have His. We felt bad that we had made Swami wait for us. After His lunch, Swami just created all the watches and chains we had lost and gave them to us much to our delight.

leave shortly, Swami gave us Padanamaskar and asked us to leave for the railway station. "I shall see you all in Brindavan. Take lots of rest in the train," Swami told us.

Even as we went down and boarded the buses, Swami came down the hill to give Darshan to devotees. Indicating to us that we should not get down from the buses we had boarded, as it was getting late, Swami Himself went round the buses in which we were sitting, bade goodbye to all of us. He then asked us to start and stood there waving His handkerchief till we were visible. Watching Swami do this, the entire gathering of 20,000 people assembled there started waving to us. All of us were touched by Swami's compassion and our eyes were filled with tears. None of us spoke a single word for the rest of the journey. Our hearts were too filled with bliss to say anything. Thus, ended another memorable trip with the Divine.



A WONDERFUL JOURNEY WITH BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

Prema Kanakaraja Gupta

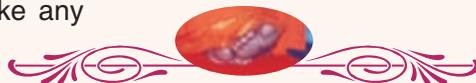
WHEN I WAS JUST A SMALL girl, little did I know what was in store for us when our family bowed to Swami during 1945 at the Old Mandir in Puttaparthi. Though my family members complained about the treacherous journey from Kuppam to Puttaparthi, I had no complaints, as I had a nice journey in the cozy laps of my mother, brothers and sisters. During our very first visit, Swami took us close to Him, calling us by short names. For instance, He called my brothers Murthy, Amba, Babu and Murali, and my sisters, Kumaramma, Prema and Sarala. When He lovingly addressed my parents as Radhakrishnaiah and Radhamma, we felt that we had known Him for years. When the elder members of the family reverently prostrated before Swami, accepting Him as God without any questions, I totally accepted Him as God without any hesitation, without any doubts, only by His divine grace, thus saving many years of appraisal and assessment. For this, I shall ever remain thankful to my parents.

Childhood Games of Swami

During the long Bhajan singing sessions, I used to obediently sit behind my mother. The best part of the day for me would be after lunch. As Puttaparthi was very hot, Swami would tell the elders to take rest, and then He would pretend to have rest in His room. But, really, Swami would silently come out and call all us kids, with the index finger in front of His lips, warning us not to make any

noise. We would follow Swami like monkeys, and He would organise games for us. Though Swami was much older than us, due to His tender face and body, He looked like my brother Murthy, who was then fourteen years old. Swami would involve everyone, equally, in all games, like hide and seek, building crow's nests on the sands, hopping and jumping, blindfolding, climbing trees, and so many other games. Time would just fly by, and we never used to feel tired or thirsty. Sometimes, Swami

All of us went to the same school, just in front of our house. In those days, it was not common for students to speak to the teachers, and we used to maintain safe distance from the senior faculty and the headmaster. When many of them were speaking to my brothers and sisters in a humble manner, I was shocked. I asked my mother about this strange happening, and she proudly declared, "All these years, they were criticising Swami and our frequent visits to Puttaparthi, but now they adore Him".



would make us sit down and recite short humorous stories that would make us laugh till our stomachs ached. Suddenly, He would stop the show and disappear into His room. When the elders woke up, they would presume that Swami also had some rest in His room, and they would never believe that He had been playing with us, even if we insisted on it.

The next best time for me was running behind Swami on the way to the Chitravathi river. Swami never walked slowly, and the young and the old would run behind Him like calves behind the cow. With that speed, we should have reached the river-bed within ten minutes, but it would never happen, for on the way, so many diverse and interesting things would happen, bringing joy and excitement to all. Often, Swami would suddenly disappear, and we would all anxiously search for Him behind bushes, trees, hillocks, etc. Completely exhausted, we would sit on the ground, unable to accomplish our task. To our utter surprise, suddenly, from the same bush where we had searched, Swami would emerge.

Whenever we had to return from Puttaparthi to our village, Kuppam, we used to be immersed in sorrow for days, before and after the journey. Swami used to pacify us like a divine mother. Before leaving Puttaparthi, a long interview, given only to our family members, was a must for many years. The best part of the interview for me was 'Pada Puja' (worship of Swami's feet), as every one of us got an opportunity to wash His feet. Swami would place His feet in a big plate, and we would start washing them with water and rose water, dry His feet, smear turmeric paste till His feet became bright yellow, and then we would make huge red dots of Kumkum on His yellow feet. All the while, Swami would patiently watch us do this with smiles. When the elders would be

Swami came with Smt. Sakamma and Sri Subba Raju and stayed in our house for five days. He drenched all of us in joy with His Darshan and Bhajan which were arranged in our huge compound. Though Swami arrived late in the night, we gave Him a royal welcome with Arati and garlands. Swami loved wearing garlands of different types. During the next two days, Swami spoke to many groups of people and visited several places in the village. Huge crowds came in batches to have His Darshan, and Swami would frequently grant Darshan from the open terrace of our house.

busy talking to Him about many issues, we kids would be busy storing all the rose water in bottles to be used as Prasadam later. For months, we would consume small quantities of this holy water as Prasadam.

Swami's Kuppam Visits

One fine day, during July 1947, at Puttaparthi, we had really good news. Swami granted our family's prayer and announced that He would visit our village, Kuppam. Our joy knew no bounds! This was the first time we went back to our village without being drenched in sorrow. We went happily to make arrangements for Swami's visit. We cursed the cart that moved like a snail; we cursed the bus that moved like a cart; we cursed the passenger train that stopped at



every remote station. At last, we reached our house. Everyone jumped into various tasks, and I just had the pleasure of watching them and sharing in their bubbling, boundless zeal. Within two days, with a lot of helpers, our huge house started sparkling, and the huge open space around it was spick and span. The next two days were allotted for interior decor and making of garlands of various types. Swami came with Smt. Sakamma and Sri Subba Raju and stayed in our house for five days. He drenched all of us in joy with His Darshan and Bhajan which were arranged in our huge compound. Though Swami arrived late in the night, we gave Him a royal welcome with Arati and garlands. Swami loved wearing garlands of different types. During the next two days, Swami spoke to many groups of people and visited several places in the village. Huge crowds came in batches to have His Darshan, and Swami would frequently grant Darshan from the open terrace of our house.

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I very well remember the hour-long journey, through a narrow road, to our ancestral house at Vasanadu, giving way for bullock carts,

herds of sheep and cattle. Our family of nine members occupied one portion of the house, and the family members of my father's three brothers, may be about sixty people, occupied the other portions. Though there was a huge group of cooks and helpers to cater to all our needs, the ladies fully participated to coordinate everything. We wanted to make something special for Swami, and so we kept it a secret. We arranged a huge bed – in the form of Adishesha with seven hoods – after much sweat and hard work. This was not known to anyone except our family members but, of course, Swami knew what was happening. Suddenly, He came into the room and occupied the bed with much appreciation. Many hours of toil were sanctified by Swami when He happily lay on the serpent bed. We spoke to Swami for a long time. Swami's stay for seven days passed like seven minutes.

The next year, during 1948, my sister Vijaya got married, and Swami came all the way to Kuppam for two days. In this marriage, there is only one event that I can never forget. A grand reception was arranged for Swami, and a beautiful throne was readied for Him. Swami surprised everyone by forcing the newly-married couple to occupy the throne, and He preferred to sit cross-legged on the carpet. Swami enthralled the crowd by singing Kirtans and classical pieces for over two hours. People, forgetting themselves, just swayed in delight, hearing the divine voice, oblivious of time. Even after sixty-two years, I can never forget those precious moments in my life.

More than listening to a hundred lectures or delivering them to others, offering one act of genuine service to God attracts the grace of God.

– *Baba*

NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

PRE-WORLD CONFERENCES IN MIDDLE EAST, U.K., MALAYSIA AND AUSTRALIA

THE INTERNATIONAL SRI SATHYA Sai Organisation convened Pre-World Conferences in countries all around the world as a prelude to the November 2010 Ninth World Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam. Eight of these conferences that took place in Japan, Argentina, Mexico, U.S.A., Italy, Russia, Germany and Canada were reported in the July 2010 issue of Sanathana Sarathi. Pre-World Conferences that took place in the Middle East / Gulf countries, United Kingdom, Malaysia and Australia are described below.

The Pre-World Conference for the Middle East and Gulf countries was held on 14th May 2010 at Dhow Palace Hotel in Dubai, U.A.E. Delegates from the countries of U.A.E., Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey attended the conference. Sri G.B. Choithram Jethwani, Regional Central

Coordinator for the Middle East and Gulf inaugurated the conference by lighting the sacred lamp. Speaking on the occasion, Sri Jethwani highlighted the importance of turning one's mind inward and realising the divinity within oneself. The delegates, who were divided into study circle groups, discussed how to practise Bhagavan's teachings in daily life. In his closing remarks, Sri Suresh Menon highlighted the importance of ruminating on the conference proceedings and putting them into practice.

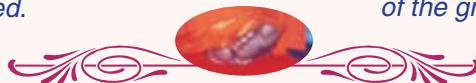
The United Kingdom Pre-World Conference was held on 17th-18th July 2010 in one of the most charming and beautiful schools nestled in London, with peacocks strolling around the school grounds. Over 650 delegates attended the conference. Dr. Michael Goldstein and Dr. Narendranath Reddy were the chief speakers



The Pre-World Conference for Middle East and Gulf countries was held on 14th May 2010 in Dubai, wherein delegates from U.A.E., Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey participated.



Over 650 delegates who attended the United Kingdom Pre-World Conference in London were divided into 25 workshop groups to discuss the theme of the conference. The photo shows one of the groups in discussion.



along with Air Chief Marshal Nirmal Suri. A special surprise came in the form of Phyllis Krystal who flew in specially for the event from Switzerland. Delegates were divided into 25 workshop groups to discuss the themes of the conference and their practical significance. The evening cultural programme included enthralling singing performances by the National Youth Choir and a superb musical concert by Dana Gillespie.

About 450 delegates from Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia and Nepal attended the Zonal Sri Sathya Sai Pre-World Conference in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia from 31st July-1st August 2010. The conference proceedings began with Veda chanting, lighting of the lamp and prayers. Delegates were then welcomed by Sri Billy Fong, President of the Sathya Sai Baba Central Council of Malaysia, and Dr. V.K. Ravindran, Zonal Chairman. Thereafter, Dr. William Harvey, a member of the Prasanthi Council, addressed the gathering. In his talk, he emphasised that unity, harmony, tolerance and love were the cornerstones of the Sathya Sai Organisation.



The Pre-World Conference held in Malaysia on 31st July-1st August 2010 was attended by about 450 delegates from Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia and Nepal.

The chief guest Dr. Narendranath Reddy spoke on the importance of absolute faith, individual transformation, purification of the heart and the goal of self-realisation. There were 20 study circle groups which discussed in depth the teachings of Bhagavan.

Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Fiji and the Philippines conducted a Pre-World Conference during the weekend of 11th-12th September 2010. Over 530



Over 530 devotees from Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Fiji and the Philippines attended the Pre-World Conference held in Australia on 11th-12th September 2010.

devotees participated in this event held in a beautiful auditorium located in the serene precincts of Kings School, North Parramatta, New South Wales, Australia. The conference opened with lighting of the lamp by Dr. Michael Goldstein and Dr. Narendranath Reddy. The programme commenced with the welcome address of the Central Coordinator, Sri Neville Fredericks, followed by the talk of Dr. Pal Dhall, the Zone Chairman. Both Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Reddy shared their personal experiences with Swami, emphasising the theme of the conference: "God Is"; "I am I"; "Love All, Serve All". This was followed by workshops, wherein 25 study circle groups engaged in uplifting and spiritually rewarding discussions



of Swami's teachings. The conference also featured a thought-provoking exhibition by Sai Young Adults titled "Energy Unlimited" and an enthralling musical presentation of Swami's teachings.

HAITI

Following the massive earthquake in Haiti on 12th January 2010, relief work has been continuing with dedication, enthusiasm and love by the Sathya Sai Organisation, which is serving the people of Haiti with medical care, Narayana Seva (feeding the needy),



Lunch being served to the residents of the tent city in Haiti which inhabits a large population of homeless people.

help for the orphanage, shelter and social service. During the months of June and July, Dr. Michael Goldstein and Dr. Narendranath Reddy visited Haiti to assess the ongoing needs and plan future delivery of relief. Three alumni from Sathya Sai University were among the volunteers during that time. Up to the end of August, about 44,000 patients had been seen by teams of Sathya Sai volunteer doctors, about 1,60,000 meals had been prepared and distributed, four houses had been built for people who lost homes during the earthquake and streets had been cleaned with the help of local Haitians. Children in the

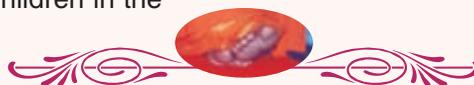
orphanage are being provided with food, toys and books. Relief work of this magnitude has only been possible due to the divine blessings of Bhagavan as volunteers from the Sathya Sai Organisation continue their work undeterred by scorching summer heat and torrential rains of the hurricane season.

U. S. A.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Free Medical and Dental (SSSBFM&D) Clinic opened to the public on 1st May 2010, serving low-income families in Mar Vista Gardens (southwest Los Angeles), California. The clinic works in partnership with the Venice Family Clinic, the largest free medical-dental facility in the U.S.A. It provides free medical services under the auspices of Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation every Saturday from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. If hospitalisation is needed for further care, patients are referred to the University of California, Los Angeles (U.C.L.A.) Medical Centre. Paramedical personnel and nonmedical volunteers provide support for the medical and dental services. Fifteen physicians and three dentists serve at the clinic, supported by 60 volunteers including registered nurses, pharmacists,



Sri Sathya Sai Baba Free Medical and Dental Clinic in Los Angeles, California provides free medical services on every Saturday.



medical assistants, medical students and other nonmedical volunteers. Thirty-five to forty patients are seen in the clinic during a typical day.

– Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

BHARAT

Andhra Pradesh: Hyderabad district constructed a community drinking water storage tank of 10,000 litres capacity at Huts Colony near A.P. Foods Factory, Nacharam, Hyderabad which was inaugurated on 14th August 2010 in the presence of the local M.L.A. and corporators. It would provide pure drinking water to 160 poor families residing in the colony.

Vizianagaram district conducted a free eye check-up camp at Azzadu and selected 70 patients for cataract operation, which were successfully conducted. The district gave Amruta Kalasams to 360 families and served cooked food to 45 people under Sri Sathya Sai National Narayana Seva Programme.

As part of 85th Birthday celebrations of, Guntur district arranged a Prema Ratham (chariot of love) with Swami's cut-outs, service projects and sayings displayed in a decorative way. The chariot has been moving through hundreds of villages from 12th August 2010, giving Swami's Message in an impressive way. The district gave 138 Amruta Kalasams (food provisions) to needy families and served cooked food to 35 people under Sri Sathya Sai National Narayana Seva Project.

Assam: As a curtain raiser to Bhagavan's 85th Birthday, the Guwahati Samithi organised an inspiring rally of Bal Vikas children on 12th September 2010, the Bal Vikas Day. Moving in a disciplined way on the broad streets around the picturesque Dighalipukhuri in the



Guwahati Samithi of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, Assam conducted a Bal Vikas rally in Guwahati on 12th September 2010 as part of 85th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan.

heart of the city, the children displayed placards with various messages of Bhagavan Baba and all faiths symbols which impressed the onlookers. Finally, the children were taken to the Assam State Museum and guided through an informative and enlightening round through the various historic exhibits. Children and their guardians then assembled at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Nilayam for a spiritual session, where State Coordinator (spiritual) explained to them the significance of the day and the need for expanding the Bal Vikas movement. After recitations and Bhajans, the meet concluded with distribution of Prasadam.

Gujarat: As a part of 85th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat organised a symposium on the topic, "The Role of Educationists in Building India through Values and Service" on 26th September 2010 in Surat at Rang Bhavan auditorium. The State President of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat in his preamble note for the symposium stressed the need of values in today's education scenario, and also briefed the delegates about Swami's spiritual, educational and social service activities. Thereafter, many learned speakers explained in their presentations how Swami's





Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Gujarat organised a symposium on “The Role of Educationists in Building India through Values and Service” in Surat on 26th September 2010.

educare, a priceless gift for today’s education, helped in imbibing values in students from the very childhood, through various techniques.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Vadodara, in association with Baroda Medical College, conducted a free medical check-up camp for the families of rickshaw drivers as part of Bhagavan’s 85th Birthday celebrations. The camp was held on Sunday, 26th September 2010 at Sri Sathya Sai Seva Sankul, Channi, Vadodara. A team of general physicians, gynaecologists, skin specialists,

ophthalmologists, ENT specialists, dentists and paediatricians offered their services. In all, 202 patients were examined and free medicines were distributed. About 130 packets of Sai Protein were also distributed to the children of rickshaw drivers. Posters of Swami with His teachings were put on the rickshaws.

Haryana and Chandigarh: As part of 85th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Haryana and Chandigarh is undertaking various spiritual / Seva activities. In this series of celebrations, the organisation organised “Sai Sandesh – Journey with Sai” exhibition at Sri Sathya Sai Old Age Home cum Seva Centre, Sector 30-B, Chandigarh. The exhibition was inaugurated by Sri Pawan Kumar Bansal, Union Minister for Water Resources and Parliamentary Affairs on 8th October 2010 amidst chanting of Vedic Mantras by Chandigarh youth followed by coconut breaking, ribbon cutting and lighting of lamp.

The exhibition was open for public for four days, from 8th to 11th October 2010. Thousands of people including a large number of dignitaries visited the exhibition and took



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Haryana and Chandigarh organised “Sai Sandesh – Journey with Sai” exhibition at Chandigarh from 8th to 11th October 2010 as part of 85th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan.



home the messages of Bhagavan, viz., Love All, Serve All; Help Ever, Hurt Never; There is only one Religion, the Religion of Love, etc. A number of school children and Bal Vikas children also came to see the exhibition. Besides the tours of Bhagavan to various places, the exhibits highlighted Bhagavan's three major projects, viz., healthcare, education and drinking water projects and the Seva activities being undertaken by the Sai Organisation of Haryana and Chandigarh.

On all the four days of the exhibition, a daily Bhajan session in the evening for one hour was held at the venue. All the visitors were presented calendars and photos of Bhagavan Baba and Prasadam of Vibhuti and sweets/fruits. The exhibition concluded on 11th October 2010 with Bhajans, Arati and distribution of Prasadam. The exhibition was widely covered by various newspapers like Dainik Bhaskar, Aaj Samaj, Amar Ujala, Punjab Kesri, Dainik Tribune and TV channels.

As part of 85th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan, a need-based blood donation camp was organised on 19th September 2010 in Sri



More than 200 devotees donated blood in a camp organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Haryana and Chandigarh on 19th September 2010.

Sathya Sai Old Age Home cum Seva Centre, Chandigarh in collaboration with Blood Bank of P.G.I., Chandigarh. The camp was attended by more than 200 devotees who donated 205 units of blood for needy patients. Besides, 35 devotees gave an undertaking to donate their eyes.

Jammu and Kashmir: Samithis of Satwari, Digiana, Nanak Nagar and Gandhi Nagar are organising National Narayana Seva by way of arranging a common Langar (free kitchen) on every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month, wherein food is served to about 230-250 people. Besides, 300-350 people are provided cooked food in Udampur and surrounding villages by the Udampur Samithi on every Sunday of the month.

Amruta Kalasams (food provisions) comprising dry ration are being provided to about 35 families during each month in different villages of Jammu and Kathua districts. Villages are identified and surveyed beforehand and accordingly the service is being performed in these villages to overcome the difficulties faced by poor people in respect of food and other materials such as clothes, blanket, utensils, etc.

Karnataka: As part of 85th Birthday celebrations of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a symposium on the theme "Well-being through Integration of Values – The Sai Way" was organised on Friday, 8th October 2010 in Bengaluru. The invitees numbering 450 were distinguished persons from various walks of life. Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Organisations was the Chief Guest. Sri Anil Gokak, former Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning presided over the function. Dr. Devi Shetty, Chairman, Narayana Hrudayalaya and Prof. N. Jayasankaran, Professor



Emeritus, MIMS University were the guest speakers. Sri V. Srinivasan in his keynote address highlighted the concept as the theme of the very message of Swami to usher in the well-being of the world. He said that Swami's benediction "Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu" was a call in this direction.

Punjab: As part of 85th Birthday celebrations of our Beloved Bhagavan, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Punjab organised an Akhanda Bhajan for 85 hours which started on 22nd September 2010 and concluded on 26th September 2010 with Arati. Over 15,000 devotees participated in this Bhajan. A Langar (free kitchen) was organised throughout the duration of the Bhajan. In addition to this, a blood donation camp was held on 26th September 2010 and 85 bottles of blood were collected for needy patients.

Rajasthan: To mark 85th year of Bhagavan's Advent on earth, devotees of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, Rajasthan conducted 85 Akhanda Bhajan sessions at Kota, Bikaner and Udaipur in the month of September 2010. 85 saplings were distributed to villagers in Hardia village by Ajmer Samithi, whereas 85 tree plantations were done by Udaipur Samithi. Kota Samithi distributed bed sheets to 85 people suffering from leprosy and other needy people along with fruits and Bhagavan's photos. Deedwana Samithi ladies celebrated Haddalika Teej (ladies keep fast on this day in Rajasthan), wherein they distributed Saris and gifts to 85 women. Barmer Samithi adopted one orphan house in Chotan (a place near Indo-Pak border) where Bhajans take place everyday. Sai devotees take care of 18 destitute children by way of regular visits there. 85 school-going children of village Nohra were provided with stationery items for their day-to-day use.

Tamil Nadu: As part of our Beloved Bhagavan's 85th Birthday celebrations, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, Tamil Nadu organised a symposium on "Challenges in Education – Sri Sai Educare – A Holistic Approach" on 3rd October 2010 at D.G. Vaishnava College, Chennai. The symposium commenced with Veda chanting followed by Bhajans. Many eminent educationists attended the symposium. Prof. Dr. S.V. Chittibabu, former Vice Chancellor of Annamalai University, delivered the keynote address, while Prof. Dr. S.P. Thyagarajan



Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, Tamil Nadu organised a symposium on "Challenges in Education – Sri Sathya Sai Educare – A Holistic Approach" on 3rd October 2010, wherein a large number of eminent educationists participated.

former Vice Chancellor of University of Madras gave the opening address. Sri Nimish Pandya, resource person for Educare from Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare, Mumbai in his inaugural address made presentation on Sri Sathya Sai System of Education and how it brought about transformation in a person and developed his character. There was intensive and active participation from the delegates. The delegates included two Chancellors, 16 Principals and 433 Professors/Lecturers from 122 educational institutions in and around Chennai. The symposium concluded with the singing of National Anthem.



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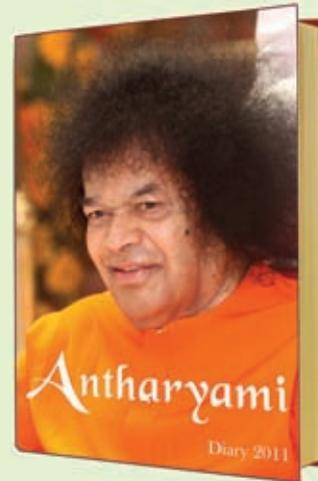
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India ₹ 75. Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka
₹ 600. Other Countries ₹ 850 or US \$19
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AUS \$26. Acceptable for 1, 2 or 3 years.



Printed by K.S. RAJAN Published by K.S. RAJAN On behalf of the owner Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur District (A.P.) And Printed at M/s Rajhans Enterprises, 136, 4th Main Road, Industrial Town, Rajaji Nagar, Bangalore - 560 044, Karnataka And published at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

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