



Sanathana Sarathi

JUNE 2012



Sanathana Sarathi

Devoted to the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Humanity through

SATHYA • DHARMA • SANTHI • PREMA • AHIMSA

Vol.: 55 Issue No. 6 Date of Publication: 1st June

JUNE 2012

© 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.)

And Printed at M/s Rajhans Enterprises,
136, 4th Main Road, Industrial Town,
Rajaji Nagar, Bengaluru 560044,
Karnataka

And Published at Sri Sathya Sai
Sadhana Trust, Publications Division,
Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur
Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

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Annual Subscription

acceptable for 1, 2 or 3 years.

English India: (12 issues) ₹ 75
Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka ₹ 600

Other Countries: ₹ 850

or US \$19 or UK £13 or €13 or

CAN \$22, AUS \$26

Telugu India: ₹ 60 (12 issues)

Other Countries: ₹ 550 or £9

or US \$13 or €9, CAN \$15 or

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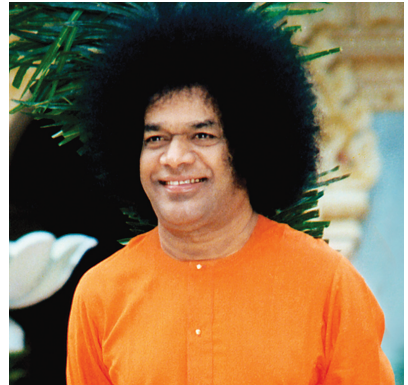
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Cover Page Photograph: Trayee Brindavan

*"Love and faith are present in you.
What you have to do is to turn them
towards God. Then work will be
transformed into worship. Whatever
you do, consider it as God's work.
Consider every form that you see as the
form of God. God has infinite forms.
This is also one of those forms. But
you should install only one form of God
in your heart. Then you will realise
that all forms belong to God."*



CONTENTS

190 Develop your Faith with Love for God
Bhagavan's Discourse: 20th July 1996

198 Celebrations at Prasanthi Nilayam
A Report

203 Practise Yoga and Thyaga
From our Archives

205 Miracle of Vibhuti
Effulgence of Divine Glory

207 Jesus and Baba Propound the same Truths
Interview

214 News from Sai Centres

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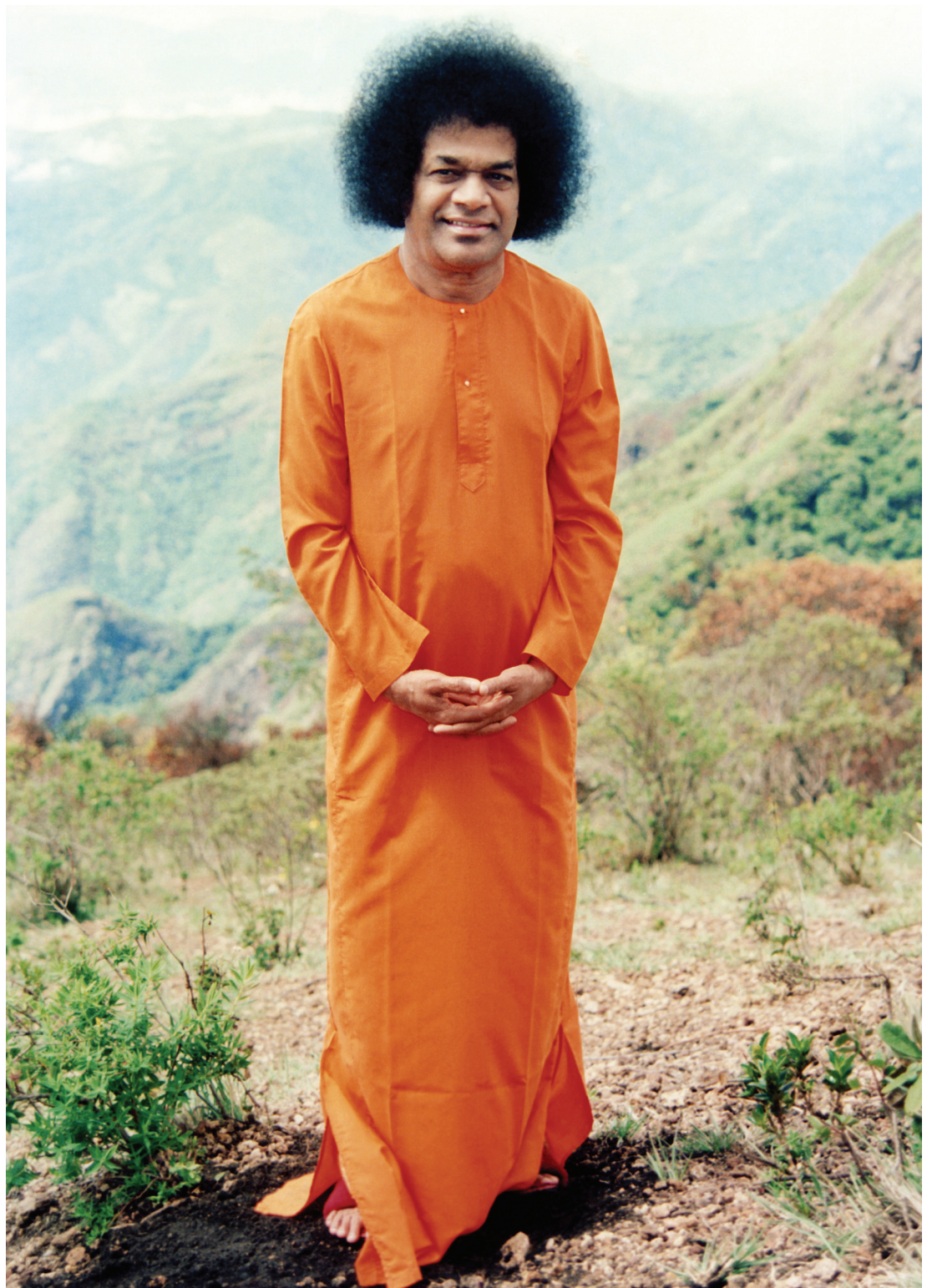
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DEVELOP YOUR FAITH WITH LOVE FOR GOD

One may be a highly accomplished scholar having mastered the Vedas, the Sastras and the Puranas,

One may be a great emperor ruling over a vast kingdom,

But none can equal a devotee who has sacrificed everything for the Lord.

What is more to be conveyed to this assembly of noble people?

(Telugu Poem)

ONE WHO DENIES GOD, DENIES HIMSELF

Students!



SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, MANY people have been making efforts to attain God by practising four types of Aradhana (worship) as prescribed by the culture of Bharat: Satyavati Aradhana, Angavati Aradhana, Anyavati Aradhana and Nidanavati Aradhana.

Various Ways of God's Worship

The first is Satyavati Aradhana. In this type of Aradhana, the devotee worships God with the faith that He is immanent in every particle of the universe just as butter is present in every drop of milk. Like oil in Til (sesame) seeds and fire in wood, God pervades the entire manifest creation. The devotee worships God with the awareness *Viswam Vishnumayam Jagat* (Lord Vishnu pervades the entire world) and believes that the world is the effect and God is the cause.

There is another subtle path by name Angavati Aradhana. Those who follow this path consider each of the five elements, namely, ether, air, fire, water and earth as the manifestation of God and worship them. These five elements are represented in human body as Sabda,

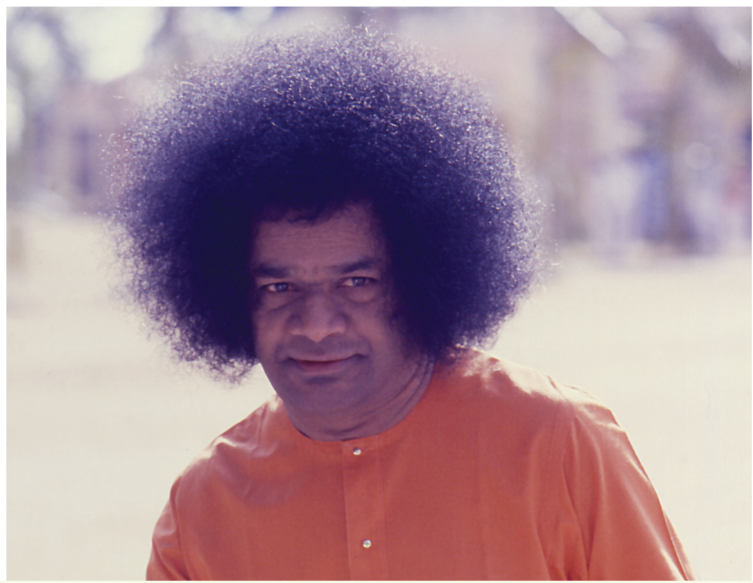
Sometimes, you may think that God is subjecting you to hardships.

In fact, God does not give you suffering or happiness; He is only a witness. Your own deeds are responsible for your suffering.

When you face difficulties, you should remain unperturbed and move forward. Whatever happens, think it is good for you. You can achieve anything when you have such unflinching faith.



Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa, Gandha (hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell) respectively. Even today people worship water as Ganga Matha (Mother Ganga), air as Vayu Deva and rain as Varuna Deva. In this manner, the Bharatiyas have been worshipping the five elements in accordance with their ancient culture. This is Angavati Aradhana.



The third path is the Anyavati Aradhana. People who follow this path ascribe to God various names and forms with specific attributes just as Kodandapani (one who wields the Kodanda bow) symbolises Rama and Gangadhari (one who sports Ganga in his matted locks) denotes Easwara. Similarly, Vishnu is the one who holds conch, disc, mace and lotus in His four hands. Krishna is the one who sports a peacock feather on His head and plays on His divine flute. In the same way, Saraswati is considered Veena Pani (one who holds Veena in her hand). In this manner, our ancients

You have to develop your faith with love for God. Love is not something that can be given to you as a gift. When you step on the path of love, your love for God will automatically develop. When you sow a sapling and nourish it with water and manure regularly, it will grow into a tree. Similarly, when you regularly give water of love to the sapling of faith, it will grow into a giant tree. On the other hand, if you keep on pulling the sapling every now and then to see how much it has grown, it will break. The growth of the sapling of your faith depends entirely on you, not anybody else.



worshipped God by attributing various symbols to them. One is the form and the other is the name. They worshipped God by attributing a specific name and form. It is only when you realise the unity of the name and form can you experience divinity.



This is a matchbox (Swami materialised a matchbox). The same power is present in the matchbox and also in the matchstick. One symbolises the form and the other the name. Just as fire is produced when a matchstick is struck on a matchbox, likewise Jnanagni (fire of wisdom) is manifested when name and form combine. The same power is present in the name as well as in the form. The name points to the form and the form reminds of the name. The same principle of unity and divinity is present in both. When the name and form combine, divine principle manifests there. Since Vedic times, the Bharatiyas have been following this principle and experiencing divinity. They had total faith in the unity of name and form. They believed that there was no object or name which was not divine in this world. Is there any name which is not associated with a form?

Take, for example, the name God. Where has this name God come from? If there is no God, how can the name God come into existence? However, some people may dispute this. They quote the name, Gagana Pushpam and ask, "Is there a flower in the sky? When Gagana Pushpam has no existence, how can there be a word like this?" But they are totally mistaken. Gagana Pushpam is not a single word, it is a combination of two words – Gagana and Pushpam (sky and flower). But God is single word. Without the existence of God, this word would not have originated. Therefore, since ancient times, people believed there was an inseparable relationship between name and form. None can deny this truth.

The fourth type of worship is Nidanavati. People who perform this Sadhana follow nine paths of devotion: *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender). By following these nine paths of devotion, people contemplated on God and attained the goal of life.

One can attain the goal of life by the power of Upasana (worship). One should never forget the goal of life or deviate from the chosen path; one should attain it by one-pointed devotion. The Sadhakas (aspirants) in those days attained divinity by following the path as prescribed by the Vedas. Due to the influence of time, space and circumstances, modern youth are neglecting such sacred practices. They argue, "How can stones, trees, anthills and animals be considered divine?" This reflects their narrow-mindedness. What is the meaning of the Vedic declaration, *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings)? Just as the Vedas expound the truth that God is immanent in the entire creation, science declares that the entire creation is made up of atoms. There is nothing which is not made of atoms. The power of atom is present in anthills, stones, soil, trees, etc. When the scientists argue that the power of atom is present in everything, it means that divinity is present in the entire creation. That is why our ancients propagated the



truth, *Anta Ramamayam, Ee Jagamanta Ramamayam* (everything is pervaded by Rama, the whole world is suffused with Rama). Today modern scientists boast of having made great progress in the fields of science and technology. They say that everything in this world is based on science. But one should not forget that along with Vijnana (science), Ajnana (ignorance) is also on the rise. One follows the other just as shadow follows the reality. What is this science? The ignorance associated with science is not present in anything else. One cannot develop faith in God unless one understands this contradiction.

Have Firm Faith in God

The boy who spoke earlier prayed, “Swami, bless us with strong faith and develop it.” Such a prayer is born out of innocence. Faith is not something that can be developed in you by others. Faith is there in you right from the time of your birth. When you realise this truth, faith will automatically develop. When you say, she is my mother, it is based on faith only. Without faith, you cannot call her as your mother. Likewise, when you have firm conviction in the presence of God, your faith naturally develops. *Faith in yourself, faith in God. This is the secret of greatness.* First of all, have faith in yourself. If you do not have faith in yourself, you cannot have faith in God. Therefore, one who denies God, denies himself. One who has faith in himself will have faith in God.

Man is essentially divine. That is why the Vedas declare:

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.)

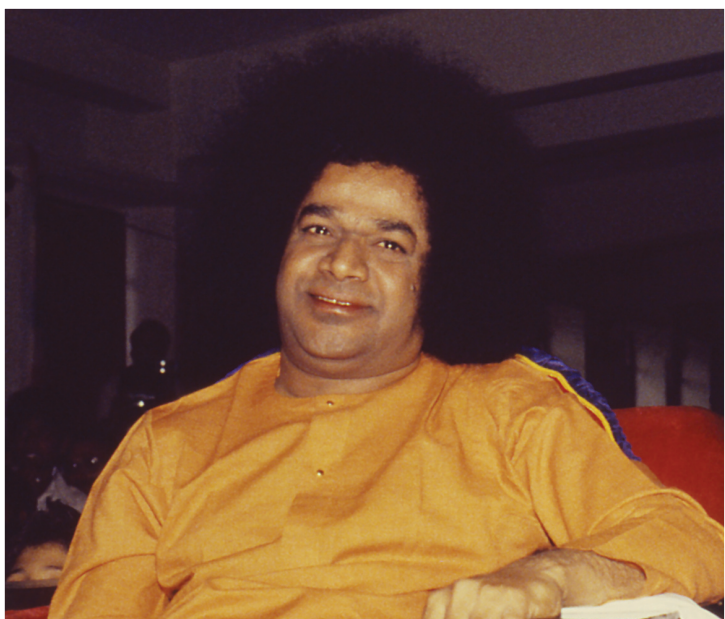
The same divine principle is present in God and man. You may see various names and forms in this manifest world. *Ek Prabhu Ke Anek Naam* (one God has many names). *Ekoham Bahusyam* (the One willed to become many). God willed to assume many names and forms. That is why unity appears to be multiplicity. Our ancients prescribed the paths of work, worship and wisdom to teach this principle of unity in diversity. People followed these three paths to realise unity in diversity. Only One exists. *Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). All other names and forms originate from this One. Take, for example, the two numbers, one and nine. Even if you ask a child, he will tell you, nine is greater than one. But this is not true. One is the greatest. $1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1 = 9$. How can you get the number nine without one? Hence, One is hero, this world is zero. Hero becomes zero if he forgets God. Unity is divinity. If you forget this One, nothing else matters in this world. This is what the culture of Bharat has been propagating since ancient times. Therefore, you should develop faith in this principle of oneness.

In whatever form you see, only One exists, and that is God. You have to undertake certain practices to realise God. Anything can be accomplished by practice. One becomes a singer by continuous



practice. Similarly, by continuous contemplation of God, you will surely experience divinity. You should have total focus on God with single-minded concentration. In ancient days, everyone was engaged in the contemplation of God in Bharat. But due to the influence of modern age, many people do not have belief in God and they consider idol worship as a foolish practice. The Indian belief that God is present even in birds and animals denotes social security. Such type of social security cannot be found anywhere else except Bharat. According to the Bharatiyas, a tree is God, a stone is God and even an anthill is God.

A sculptor makes the idol of Rama out of an ordinary rock on the hill. Has the sculptor carved Rama out of the rock or was Rama already present in the rock? Rama was already present in that rock. The sculptor only cleaned and chiselled the rock to bring out Rama from it. In the same way, divinity is present in everything. You install the idol of Rama in the temple and offer worship to it considering it as Lord Rama Himself.



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There will be so many small stones lying scattered on the hill. But do you worship them? No. What is the reason? Because they have not taken the shape of the idol. Nevertheless, those pieces of stone lying on the hill proclaim, “*Tattwamasi* (That Thou Art). The idol in the temple and we are one and the same. But the sculptor has separated us.” The same truth is reflected



in the Mahavakya, *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). Due to your own worldly feelings and delusion, you think you are different from God. Mistake lies in the individual, not in the divine power. Wherever you see, God is present. You should have firm faith in the all-pervasiveness of Divinity.

Experiencing Oneness with God

Once the elder brother of Thyagaraja threw away the idol of Rama worshipped by Thyagaraja in the river Cauvery. The reason for his anger on Thyagaraja was that Thyagaraja refused to accept the jewels and other gifts sent by the king of Thanjavur, saying, *Nidhi Chala Sukhama, Easwara Sannidhi Chala Sukhama, Nijamuga Telupumu Manasa* (Oh mind! Tell me, whether happiness lies in wealth or in the proximity of God). When he noticed that the idol of Rama was missing from his altar, Thyagaraja went in search of it. He sang, "Oh Rama, where am I to search for You? How can I limit You to a particular place?" After searching for the idol of Rama for a long time, he was tired and went to the river Cauvery for a bath. As he took the river water in his cupped hands to offer oblations, saying, *Keshavaya Namah, Madhavaya Namah, Govindaya Namah*, the idol of Rama fell in his hands. When you have such firm faith in the Lord, you will always experience oneness with Him. You will never think that He is separate from you.

When an old friend visits our house, we address him in an informal way, "Hey, come." But when a new friend comes to our house, we offer him a seat with all courtesy

and respect, requesting him, "Please be seated." You address an old friend in intimate terms, saying, "Hey, what are you doing? What brings you here?" Similarly, when you have firm faith in the Lord and feel oneness with Him, you will not address Him in a formal way. Thyagaraja considered Rama as his old friend and addressed Him in informal terms. *Ra Ra Ma Intidaka* (come to our house). He addressed Rama in such intimate terms because He considered Him very close to his heart. He sang, "Where am I to search for You, oh Rama. I have no refuge other than You, oh Rama." He used the term, "Ra Ra" which in Telugu is used to address intimate friends. He enjoyed such freedom with Rama because he considered Him his old friend.

It is not Possible to Know God

You should realise that this is not your first birth; you had many previous births. The very term Manava signifies that you are not new. 'Ma' means not. 'Nava' means new. Similarly, God is not new to you, He is your old friend. You should never treat God as your new friend. Anadi, Ananta and Aprameya (beginningless, infinite and incomparable), these are some of the names of God. We acquire knowledge usually from four types of Pramanas, namely, Pratyaksha Pramana, Anumana Pramana, Upamana Pramana and Sabda Pramana (knowledge gained by means of the senses, inference, analogy and verbal testimony). God is beyond these four. Hence, He is called Aprameya. Howsoever you may try to know about God, so much



will still be left to know about Him. So far there is none who can say that he has understood God completely.

Once a sage sat in meditation closing his eyes in order to realise God. God Himself came to him in the form of a small boy and asked him, "Oh grandfather, what are you doing?" The sage replied, "My dear, I am trying to know God." "Have you come to know Him?" asked the boy. The sage replied, "Not yet." The boy left the place. The sage did not realise that the boy was none other than God because he was contemplating on the formless aspect of God. Similarly, many people ignore the direct evidence of God's presence and look for indirect evidences. When the child came again after one month, the eyes of the sage were half open. The child asked him, "Oh grandfather, have you known God?" The sage replied, "Yes, I have known as much of Him as my eyes are open." The child said, "Okay, you have known half of what you are trying to know. Make efforts to know Him completely." Saying this, he left the place. The child came back after another month. By then the eyes of the sage were fully open. The child asked again, "Have you succeeded in your endeavour to know God?" He said, "Yes, I have come to know the truth." The child asked him, "What is it that you have come to know?" The sage replied, "I have come to know that it is not possible to know God."

How can anyone know Him? When God Himself came in the form of the boy, the sage failed to recognise Him. Then, how

can anybody attribute a particular form to God? That is what Saint Thyagaraja sang, "Oh Lord! How am I to know who You really are, whether You are Siva or Madhava?" In fact, all forms are His. *Sarva Jiva Namaskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (whomsoever you salute, it reaches God) and *Sarva Jiva Tiraskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati* (whomsoever you criticise, it reaches God). God is the indweller of all beings. All the forms are the forms of God. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God is in the form of a human being). First and foremost, you have to realise this truth.

God is described as Viswa Virat Swarupa (one with cosmic form). *Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad* (the Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes and feet). What does it signify? All heads, all eyes are His. What is there that does not belong to Him? One must have such strong faith in God. This is not something one can give or take. Some people pray, "Swami, give me deep faith." But this is not a give and take business. You yourself have to develop faith. If you are hungry, you have to eat food to satiate your hunger. It is you who has to take medicine to cure your illness. Similarly, you have to develop your faith with love for God. Love is not something that can be given to you as a gift. When you step on the path of love, your love for God will automatically develop. When you sow a sapling and nourish it with water and manure regularly, it will grow into a tree. Similarly, when you regularly give water of love to the sapling of faith, it will grow



into a giant tree. On the other hand, if you keep on pulling the sapling every now and then to see how much it has grown, it will break. The growth of the sapling of your faith depends entirely on you, not anybody else. You have to develop it yourself. Love and faith are present in you. What you have to do is to turn them towards God. Then work will be transformed into worship. Whatever you do, consider it as God's work. Consider every form that you see as the form of God. God has infinite forms. This is also one of those forms. But you should install only one form of God in your heart. Then you will realise that all forms belong to God. In this way, ancient sages and seers followed these four paths – Satyavati Aradhana, Angavati Aradhana, Anyavati Aradhana and Nidanavati Aradhana to worship God and attained liberation. They were not foolish. In fact, they did a lot of research and deep study, experienced happiness and shared it with others. Only the educated fools of today question the wisdom of our ancient sages.

Do Bhajan with Love

None can say, God is like this or that. If someone comes to you and says, "Why do you talk about God? God is nowhere," you should say, "God is now here." If you have strong faith in God, what should be your reply to him? "Oh madcap, you may say that your God does not exist. But who are you to deny the existence of my God? I have my God." When you have such strong faith, you can achieve anything in life. If your faith is shaken when any Tom, Dick and Harry says something,

then you will not achieve anything. You should have firm resolve. Earlier also I have told the importance of three Ps – Purity, Patience and Perseverance. You can achieve success only when you have these three. First of all, you should have firm determination. Determination for what? Determination to do good, not anything bad. If your determination is for doing something bad, then it is only foolishness, not determination. Even at the cost of your life, you should be determined to do good. Child Prahlada continued to chant the name of Narayana in the face of all trials and tribulations. He had no fear at all. His own father subjected him to all sorts of ordeals. Ultimately, it was his firm faith which protected him and punished his father. Therefore, you should develop firm determination to attain the grace of God. It is not proper to get carried away by what any Ellaiah and Mallaiah tell you in the bazaar. You can yourself see, people today do not believe in God, but they believe in the weekly magazines, meaningless novels and are prepared to believe an ordinary astrologer.

Today there are some people who wear a robe like Me, have bushy hair on their head and claim that Sai Baba has given them special powers. They are really foolish fellows. The powers of Sai Baba cannot be given or received. But some people believe in such impostors and get deceived. Never go near them. Divine power is not something that can

continued on page 202...



CELEBRATIONS AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM

EASWARAMMA DAY FUNCTION



ASWARAMMA DAY WAS celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam on 6th May 2012 with great devotion and dedication.

Programmes were held at the Samadhi of the Divine Parents, Mother Easwaramma and Sri Pedda Venkama Raju, as well as in Sai Kulwant Hall to celebrate this important event.

The programme at the Samadhi Mandir started at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting followed by Bhajan singing. Meanwhile, many senior devotees and relatives of the Divine Parents paid respects to them and offered flowers at their Samadhi. The programme at the Samadhi Mandir



Devotees in the Samadhi Mandir receiving Prasadam.

concluded at 8.30 a.m. with Arati and distribution of Prasadam to the huge gathering of devotees who participated in this function.

The programme in Sai Kulwant Hall also started at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting.



Cows being given to deserving beneficiaries on Easwaramma Day.

This was followed by the function to give away cows to selected beneficiaries as part of Easwaramma Day celebrations. The programme started at 8.45 a.m. when nine richly caparisoned cows were ushered into the hall led by Nadaswaram musicians. As the cows were lined up near the northern gate of the hall, the names of beneficiaries were announced who came one by one, offered their salutations at the Samadhi of Bhagavan and received the cows from the Trustees of Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. Though symbolically nine cows were given away in Sai Kulwant Hall, the Central Trust gave away in all 54 cows to deserving beneficiaries on this sacred day. This was followed by Bhajans. The programme in the morning came to a close with Arati at 9.30 a.m.

The programme in the afternoon started at 5.00 p.m. with Veda chanting. This was followed by an enthralling Carnatic music concert by the noted musician Dr. Dwaram

Lakshmi. Starting her presentation with the composition, “Jagatajanani Easwaramma” (Easwaramma, the Universal Mother), the versatile musician paid rich musical tributes to the Divine Mother Easwaramma and sang the glory of Bhagavan. The concert appropriately included the evergreen song, “Vaishnav Jana To Tene Kahiye” as Mother Easwaramma embodied self-sacrifice which is the spirit of this song. Rendered with deep feelings of devotion, the songs touched the hearts of the devotees and earned their profuse appreciation. At the conclusion of the concert, the musician was honoured and clothes and gifts were presented to her as well as to the alumni of Sathya Sai Mirpuri College of Music, who provided instrumental support to her.

A recording of Bhagavan’s Divine Discourse was played after this. In His Discourse, Bhagavan exhorted the youth to revere their mother as first God and give respect to their parents. Bhagavan reminisced the spirit of sacrifice and selfless love of Mother Easwaramma and observed that ideals set by her in this regard should be followed by one and all. Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the Bhajan, “Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin” which the entire gathering in the hall followed in chorus with great devotion. After a brief Bhajan session and distribution of Prasadam, the programme came to a close with Arati at 7.10 p.m.

BUDDHA PURNIMA FESTIVAL

More than 300 devotees from 12 Buddhist countries, viz., China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Brunei,

Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Sri Lanka came to participate in the celebration of the holy festival of Buddha Purnima at Prasanthi Nilayam. The festivities held on 7th and 8th May 2012 in richly decorated Sai Kulwant Hall included illuminating talks by distinguished speakers, Veda chanting, devotional songs, Bhajans and cultural programmes by overseas devotees. The theme of this year’s Buddha Purnima celebrations was “Love and Compassion.”

The programme on 7th May 2012 began at 8.00 a.m. with Veda chanting by the youth of the participating countries. It was heartening to note how overseas devotees had mastered Veda chanting with meticulous perfection of pronunciation and intonation. Veda chanting was followed by the welcome address by Sri Ashok Sakhrani, national coordinator, Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Hong Kong who extended welcome to all on this auspicious occasion, and referred to the four sublime qualities of the mind as taught by Lord Buddha, namely, loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, and the need to practise these in daily life. The welcome address was followed by talks by two distinguished speakers. The first speaker was Sri Nari Chugani, Chairman, Zone 5 of Sri Sathya Sai International Organisations. Observing similarity between the teachings of Bhagavan and the message Lord Buddha gave to mankind about 2,500 years ago, the distinguished speaker observed that Nirvana could be attained by practising



selfless love and self-sacrifice. Dwelling on the significance of celebrating Buddha Purnima at Prasanthi Nilayam, Sri Chugani asked what better occasion could devotees have than the celebrations of Buddha Purnima in the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam to put the teachings of Buddha and Bhagavan into practice in their life? The next speaker was Dr. Sunanda, Professor of Management from Sri Lanka and Consultant, World Bank Projects. Dr. Sunanda explained how Bhagavan's divine love helped him to overcome his initial mental resistance and realise the identity of Bhagavan's teachings with those of Buddha. The erudite speaker quoted from the teachings of Bhagavan and Buddha and said that both taught to control, reduce and eliminate the mind to attain enlightenment. These talks were followed by Bhajans. The morning programme came to a close with Arati at 9.30 a.m.

The afternoon programme started at 5.00 p.m. with chanting of Vedic hymns by the youth of participating countries. This was followed by the talk of Sri Ashok Sakhrani who presented an overview of service activities being conducted by the



Overseas devotees chanting Vedic hymns in Sai Kulwant Hall.

Sai Organisations of these countries in the fields of healthcare, human values, water projects, old age homes, orphanages, etc. Thereafter, a group of children from



A delightful dance by Thai children.

Thailand presented a beautiful dance in their Chinese and Indian costumes. The theme of this presentation was "Know Thyself: Life is Bliss when Truth is Realised." The next item of the programme was a choir on the theme of "Bhajans and their Use in Daily Life" which was presented by the devotees of Japan. The choir which consisted of various Bhajan medleys in English and Japanese began with a prayer dedicated to Lord Ganesh and concluded with the evergreen song dedicated to Bhagavan, "Humko Tumse Pyar Kitna Sai Tum Hi Jante" (You know, Lord Sai, how much we love You). Thereafter, there was a session of international Bhajans which suffused the entire milieu with devotion and piety. Meanwhile clothes and gifts were presented to the children who presented the Thai dance and the singers who participated in the choir. The Bhajans concluded with Arati at 6.40 p.m. The last item of the programme was Abhishekam of the idol of Lord Buddha in which all the overseas devotees participated.

The final session of the Buddha Purnima celebrations was held on the afternoon of 8th May 2012. The programme began at 5.00 p.m. with Veda chanting by the youth of Zone 5 countries which showed their talent and skill in rendering Vedic hymns with perfection. This was followed by a scholarly talk by Dr. Krithisri Periera, an aircraft engineer from Sri Lanka. Dwelling on the similarities of the teachings of Buddha and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the erudite speaker spoke about the loving kindness of both the Avatars who transformed with their love and compassion even those who opposed them. Both of them, he added, exhorted the devotees and followers to perform meritorious deeds, serve parents and elders, associate with good people and avoid bad company.

The last item of the programme was a drama on the theme of earthquake and tsunami which devastated eastern Japan in March 2011 and caused widespread suffering to people. While the scenes of tsunami were depicted on the giant screen that was put up in the hall, the actors performed the scenes of the drama in front



A scene from the drama enacted by overseas devotees as part of Buddha Purnima celebrations.

of it, depicting various incidents of selfless love, mutual help and loving kindness as taught by Lord Buddha and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The drama appropriately closed with video scenes of Bhagavan's love followed by the audio of the Bhajan, "Rama Rama Rama Sita" sung by Bhagavan. The drama was followed by international Bhajans. Meanwhile, clothes were presented to the participants in the drama and Prasadam was distributed to all.

In his closing remarks at the conclusion of Buddha Purnima celebrations, Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, appreciated the work of Japanese volunteers who rendered dedicated service to the victims of tsunami. Quoting Bhagavan's teachings, "Love All, Serve All," "Help Ever, Hurt Never," the distinguished speaker observed that Bhagavan is present wherever His work is done. The programme came to a close with Arati at 6.30 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam to the entire assembly of devotees in the hall.

PILGRIMAGE OF DEVOTEES FROM RANGA REDDY DISTRICT

More than one thousand devotees came to Prasanthi Nilayam from Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh on a pilgrimage for two days, on 19th and 20th May 2012. On both the days, they presented music and cultural programmes in Sai Kulwant Hall.

On 19th May 2012, they presented a programme of devotional songs "Sangeeta

Vibhavari” (splendour of music) offering their hearty tributes to Bhagavan. The programme which started at 5.15 p.m. with a devotional song, “Jagadeeshwara Sathya Sayeeswara” (Sai, the Lord of the universe) enthralled the devotees for nearly one hour. All the songs were rendered with great devotion and touched the hearts of the devotees. This was followed by Bhajans. Meanwhile, clothes were presented to the singers, both ladies and gents. The programme came to a close with Arati at 6.30 p.m. after distribution of Prasadam to all.

A musical dance drama entitled “Sarvadevatateeta Sri Sathya Sayeeswara” (Sai, the Lord of all gods) comprised the programme presented by the devotees of Ranga Reddy district on 20th May 2012. The drama which began at 5.15 p.m. showcased the divine glory of Bhagavan

Sri Sathya Sai Baba through beautiful narration of His Leelas, along with good rendition of devotional songs, Bhajans



Children from Ranga Reddy district presenting a dance in Sai Kulwant Hall.

and Bhagavan’s poems. Charming dances of the children, colourful costumes and perfect make-up made the drama an impressive presentation. At the conclusion of the drama, clothes were presented to the cast. This was followed by Bhajans and distribution of Prasadam. The programme came to a close with Arati at 6.40 p.m.

... continued from page 197

be given or taken. You can attain it with your faith. If your faith remains unwavering right from the beginning till the end, that is called true devotion and surrender. That is Sthira Bhakti and Ananya Bhakti (steady and single-minded devotion). When you have such firm devotion, you will attain unwavering mind and deep faith which are very essential on the spiritual path. Sometimes, you may think that God is subjecting you to hardships. In fact, God does not give you suffering or happiness; He is only a witness. Your own deeds are responsible for your suffering. When you face difficulties, you should remain unperturbed and move forward. Whatever

happens, think it is good for you. You can achieve anything when you have such unflinching faith. Do not waste your time, money and energy running after fake Gurus. Attain God with unwavering mind and one-pointed faith. Sai always emphasises one thing – Bhajan, Bhajan, Bhajan. When you do Bhajan with love, you can attain God wherever you are.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, “Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...”)

– From Bhagavan’s Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 20th July 1996.

PRACTISE YOGA AND THYAGA

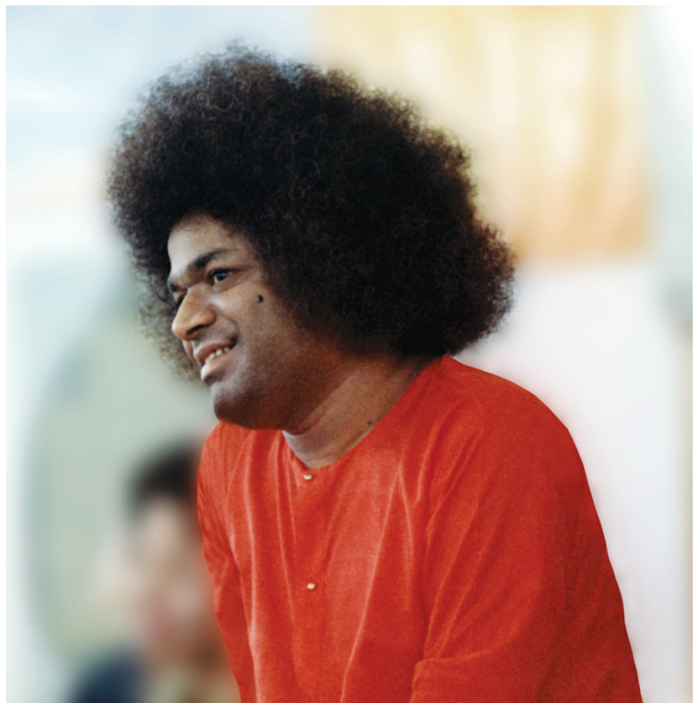
REDUCE WANTS, LEAD A SIMPLE LIFE

THERE ARE IN this huge gathering people speaking many languages. Each one can understand only his language, and wants that he should be spoken to in that language. But there is a language of the heart, which all can understand and all would like to hear. That is the language which I speak, the language that goes from My heart to yours. When heart speaks to heart, it is love that is transmitted, without any reservation.

The trials and turmoils, the throes and thrills, the search and sorrow – these are the same in quality for all mankind. The responsive heart listens to these with sympathy and answers with love.

Be like a Lotus on Water

Everyone is eager to be happy; everyone wants to



Be like lotus on water; on it, not in it. Water is necessary for the lotus to grow, but it will not allow even a drop to wet it. The objective world is the arena of virtue and the gymnasium for the spirit. But use it only for that purpose; do not raise it to a higher status and adore it as all-important.



work less and gain more, give little and get amply, but no one experiments with the other method, that is wanting less and giving more. Every want is a shackle that hinders movement, that is a drag on the foot. A young college student can roam free on his two legs. When he marries, he becomes four-footed! A child makes him six-footed; the range of his movements is restricted. The more the feet, the less the speed, the tighter his grip on the ground; the centipede has to crawl. More things, more hurdles, more handicaps. Accumulation of sofas and chairs, cots and tables, shelves and curios clutter the hall and render movements slow and risky.

Reduce wants, live simply, that is the way to happiness. Attachment brings sorrow in its wake. At last, when death demands that everything be left behind and everybody be deserted, you are overpowered by grief! Be like lotus on water; on it, not in it. Water is necessary for the lotus to grow, but it will not allow even a drop to wet it. The objective world is the arena of virtue and the gymnasium for the spirit. But use it only for that purpose; do not raise it to a higher status and adore it as all-important.

God is Visible when Concretised by Sadhana

There are people who go about declaring that there is no God, because they are not able to see Him. They say that they have searched in space, on the way to the moon, and even on the moon but there was no sign of the Almighty. But they themselves are, all the time, the mansions

in which He resides! Like the blind bamboozling the blind into a fall, others too repeat like parrots this fashionable slogan. No one sees the roots, but they are there, deep in the soil, away from all eyes. Can you assert that there are no roots for trees, that nothing feeds them or upholds them from below? God feeds, sustains, holds firm – unseen. He can be seen by those who make effort along the lines laid down for the purpose by those who have succeeded in experiencing Him. God is, as butter in milk, visible when concretised by Sadhana (spiritual striving).

You do not see the foundation of a multi-storeyed skyscraper. Can you, therefore, argue that it simply sits on the ground? The foundation of this life is laid deep in the past, in lives already lived by you. This structure has been shaped by the ground plan of those lives. The unseen decides the bends and the ends; the number of floors, the height and weight.

Concentrate your Desires on God

God is the great Unseen, the vast Unknowable. Though you do not see the roots of a tree or know how far or how wide or deep they are clutching the earth, you pour water round the trunk, so that it may reach them; is it not? You expect that when the roots contact the water, the tree will yield fruits. Recognise, similarly, that there is God, as the very basis of creation; pray to Him, and He will shower fruits.

The chief means by which you can detach yourself from distractions and

continued on page 206...



MIRACLE OF VIBHUTI



URING OUR STAY IN Puttaparthi in August 1962, one day my son, Sathish, told me that his left leg was aching so much that he was not able to stand any more. After Swami's Darshan, we left for old Mandir. Some people thought that Sathish's leg must have sprained and massaged the leg with mustard oil. But this augmented the pain. He also had fever. The whole night he suffered with severe pain and could not sleep. We felt very sad to see him suffer. We prayed to Swami and applied the Vibhuti given by Him to the leg.

Sathish's suffering was increasing. He even became delirious. We decided to go back to Mysore as Swami was leaving Puttaparthi on tour. We approached Him for permission. Sathish had to be carried to the new Mandir. Swami called us to the interview room. Even though we talked about Sathish's health, Swami avoided the topic and talked about other issues. Finally, Swami materialised Vibhuti and applied it on him. We took Swami's permission and came out. Yet another hard task was taking him to Mysore. It was impossible to take him up to Bukkapatnam by bullock cart. As the leg had swollen and become rigid, we could not take him by bus either from Bukkapatnam. On hearing that Swami was leaving the same afternoon, my other

children ran to have Darshan. Seeing them Swami said, "Study well. My blessings are with you." When the boys told about the condition of Sathish, Swami told angrily, "After I leave, none of you should stay back." I felt sad because Swami had never been angry with us before. A devotee from Kodagu, Sri Ravindra Punja, who was standing nearby, said that he would bring the boy in his car up to Penukonda railway station. He added that if he had not got an important work, he would have taken the boy to Mysore itself. What kindness! We thought that this was Swami's grace.

As soon as we reached Mysore, we admitted Sathish to Sri Krishnarajendra Hospital. He was semi-conscious and grew increasingly restless. He became delirious and started talking day and night. His leg had swollen very much. Doctors at the hospital took excellent care of him. The doctors removed some liquid from his swollen leg thrice. But the liquid was filling up faster and faster. After a few days, the doctors said that in order to save his life the only alternative was to amputate the leg. We had to agree. Just on the eve of the operation, to our good fortune, Swami came to Mysore. He was staying in Sri Setty's house. Our Swami had come at the right time. I rushed there. As soon as He saw me in that house, He enquired,



“Ammayi, how is the child?” I replied, “Swami, the doctors are going to amputate his leg tomorrow.”

Swami jocularly said, “What else will these doctors do? Cut legs, cut hands, cut throats! I will give you a pinch of Vibhuti. Put it in his mouth. Everything will be all right.” I said that Sathish was adamant about coming to Setty’s house to have Swami’s Darshan. Swami said, “No. In this condition he should not be brought here. Tell him that he can have My Darshan after he gets well.” As instructed, I put the pinch of Vibhuti in Sathish’s mouth. The liquid soon stopped collecting in his leg. The doctors were surprised. They asked us, “What have you done?” We told that the Prasadam of our Sathya Sainatha had cured it. The operation scheduled for the

next day was cancelled. We had Darshan of Swami the next day in Setty’s house. Swami asked us to go upstairs. All of us went and did Padanamaskar.

Swami said, “Ammayi, you must have felt bad because I talked rudely in Puttaparthi. Had you stayed back there, one of you would have died. If I had spoken softly, you would not have listened. Ammayi, do you know how strong your faith should be? Even if you throw a stone chanting My Name, it should turn into a diamond. Now everything will be all right. He will come home cured. You will come to Puttaparthi for Dasara. Do not worry.” So saying, Swami blessed me and gave a handful of Vibhuti packets. We did Padanamaskar and came out. As predicted by Swami, Sathish came home completely cured. I went to Puttaparthi for Dasara.

— *Excerpted from “Sri Sathya Sai Anandadayi” by Karunamba Ramamurthy.*

... continued from page 204

attach yourself to God are Yoga (communion with God) and Thyaga (renunciation). Kama (desire) has to be got rid of by Thyaga and Rama (God) has to be secured by Yoga. Desire discolours the intelligence; it perverts judgement; it sharpens the appetite of the senses. It lends a false lure to the objective world. When desire disappears or is concentrated on God, intelligence is self-luminous; it shines in its pristine splendour, and that splendour reveals the God within and without. That is the real Atma Sakshatkara (realisation of the Self).

I bless you that you succeed in the Sadhana in which you are engaged; if you are not practising any now, I advise you to take up the simple one of Namasmarana (chanting of the Divine Name), along with reverence towards parents, elders and teachers and service to the poor and the sick. See everyone of them as your Ishta Devata (chosen deity). That will fill your heart with love and give you stability of mind and peace.

— **From Bhagavan’s Discourse in Ahmedabad on 15th May 1969.**

JESUS AND BABA PROPOUND THE SAME TRUTHS

"When you start reading the Bible in the light of Swami's teachings, then a lot of meaning will come out, a lot of things that you never expected," said Father Charles Ogada of Nigeria in an interview with Dr. G. Venkataraman for Radio Sai Global Harmony.



AI RAM. WELCOME TO THE studio of Radio Sai Global Harmony. I suppose, your parishioners call you Father Charles, but here in the Sai family we will call you Brother Charles. Father becomes a brother. How do you like the change?

Oh, it is good. We are all one.

Yes. We are all children of God and that makes us brothers. When were you here last? And how long did you stay here at that time?

Last year, I came in September and stayed here for a month and some days.

That time, Swami gave you interview many times. Was that your first visit? How did you like the interviews?

Yes, that was my very first visit. The experience was good, beyond expression.

How and when did you happen to hear about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba?

It was about five years ago. I heard about Him from another priest. His name is Father Arazu, and he is a devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba. He was my teacher in the seminary. During one of his lectures, he spoke about Baba. Later, he gave me a

book "Sai Baba – the Man of Miracles" by Howard Murphet.

How did the book strike you?

What struck me most was not really the miracles but the Reality behind the miracles.

There is so much unrest in spite of the proliferation of churches. Jesus once said to a Samaritan woman, "Ask and I will give you living water which when you drink it, you will never be thirsty again" (John 4:14). True spirituality bequeaths self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction is the product of self-confidence and both lead to Self-realisation. Self-realisation is that water of living spring which when you drink it, you will never be thirsty again. It is the solution to every human problem. Until man realises his inherent divinity, his problems will ever persist.



What is that Reality according to you?

That Reality is the one that pervades all things – God Himself, the ‘unseen’ that is behind the ‘seen’. The miracles were the ‘seen’ which hide and at the same time reveal the ‘unseen’. The book pushed me into an inner enquiry about Reality.

But then, you are a Roman Catholic priest. In the Bible, you must have read undoubtedly about Jesus performing so many miracles, and at the same time he represented deeper reality. Didn't your studies in the Bible evoke this question in your mind?

Well, it did quite all right. But this was an ‘I-opening’ experience. There was a sort of big bang in my life! Actually, when the fruit is ripe, then only will it fall. At such moments, one is naturally drawn to deeper reality. At the age of 17, I had a mystical experience which changed the course of my life. A voice said to me, “What would you want to do with this life?” I said, “What else but to give this life to you?” That voice was a living energy. I was one with it, yet I was looking for it! That made me to join the seminary. After nine years of searching in vain for this ‘inner’ voice, I was enveloped in a sort of complete spiritual darkness. That was the time Baba came to me. And I knew He was that Voice. I knew He was the one I had been looking for.

Before I go into more depth regarding that issue, I want to ask you a sort of routine and practical question. The priest who introduced you to Swami via the book, you said he was a devotee of Shirdi Baba. Doesn't that get him into problems?

Actually, he has been through many problems. But he said he is above problems. He has a big statue of Shirdi Baba in front of his residence. He told me once, “Look Charles, I have won my freedom.” That means a lot, you know. The authorities know he cannot be confined within the limits of any religion.

Just for my own education, does the Bible, which is the holy book, prohibit this sort of freedom? Does the institution prohibit? There are organisations which promote religion. They write down a set of rules. Are these rules tighter than what is given in the Bible or how is it?

The answer is a simple No! I will give you examples right from the Bible and how Baba's teachings bring out the juice and gems of the Bible. Let me just take you to the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 12, verse 29. One young scribe, a teacher of the law, came to Jesus and asked him, “What is the greatest commandment?” That is to say, what is the essence of the Bible? Jesus looked at him and replied, “Listen, O Israel, the Lord our God is One. And thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength... and thy neighbour as thy Self. There is no commandment greater than this.” When I read Baba's teachings, I discovered that the teachings of Baba and Jesus are totally one! For example, this commandment is the summary not only of the Bible but of all the scriptures. It begins with a call to silence: “Listen O Israel.” This is the “sound of silence,” Om. It is in silence that we experience Reality. We



have to learn the art of listening. To listen means to calm the agitations of the mind. It means mental stillness. In another verse the Bible says: “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

The next phrase says, “The Lord, our God is One!” There is no other. This is the kernel of Advaita, the Hindu philosophy of non-dualism: God is One, there is no second. When you think that you are different from God, you create the illusion that seeks to separate that which is inseparable. God alone exists. And to love this One inseparable Reality “with all thy heart,” that is Bhakti Yoga, “with all thy mind,” that is Jnana Yoga, “with all your strength” that is Karma Yoga. This is the three-fold path to Self-realisation as expounded by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita.

The last part of the commandment says, “And thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself.” The “Self” is the same Atma resident in all hearts. The Self is Pure Consciousness. To realise this same Self in one and all is the sum and substance of the Bible, and of all the scriptures.

You know, it sounds so simple and you make it sound very simple, too. But if it is so simple, then why are there so many problems in this world?

Really, it is a misunderstanding. People fail to understand. That is why Avatars come – to make us understand that we are not separate from God. We are the God we are looking for. Baba said somewhere, in one of His Telugu poems, “I am telling you

Love is unity. Love is the realisation of oneness. Unity is Divinity. I cannot love my mother without this sense of oneness. I cannot love my father without this sense of affinity. Because he is “my father,” I love him. We have to feel this same kinship with all. Feel your Self in all. Only then can you love all as your Self. Jesus once said, “Whatever you do to any of these, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:45). This is Divine Love. It is universal. It knows no caste or creed or colour.

once and for all in only one sentence, the quintessential teaching of all the scriptures: you should firmly feel your identity with One. I am the same Atma or Self that is present in all beings.” All scriptures say this. This is the same summary that Jesus gave to the young man who came to ask him the summary of all the scriptures. So, it is all one. We are one. When you start reading the Bible in the light of Swami’s teachings, then a lot of meaning will come out, a lot of things that you never expected.

I am happy to hear that. You are a priest, you are a Father and so you look after a flock. You must be having many parishioners with all kinds of problems. Everywhere in the world there are problems. If the world is all one and there



is only God, then why is there so much of problem? What is going wrong where?

It is ignorance. It is the imposition of the unreal on the real.

What prevents us from understanding that? We are not stupid really because man is able to fly to the moon and that is so big. That means, there is something that is very powerful which is preventing us from understanding it. According to you, what is that?

It is lack of enquiry, spiritual enquiry. We are enquiring about the objective world but not about the Self. We travel to the moon but not an inch to the Self. Ask yourself, "Who is the one who is travelling?" Then you will know what I mean.

Do you feel that ego might have blinded us? Is it this sense of self importance, I know everything there is no need to know more? Is it the triumph of matter over the spirit?

Yes. The ego also arose due to lack of discrimination. People ask, "Who are you" which gives rise to the ego. They never ask, "Who am I" which leads to Self-realisation.

That is okay. Now, I am changing the subject a little bit. I want to ask you one question rather bluntly, shall I say! It has been said, people hail Baba as God. Now, we in India have no problem accepting that for a number of reasons. We regard Him as an incarnation. Incarnation is accepted in our culture and in our scriptures. So, we have absolutely no problem. But for a person coming from a different culture,

you are a mixture of two cultures, so to say. The religion you follow is not native to Africa; it has come from somewhere else. But your culture and your tradition belong to the continent where you were born. So, given the fact that you have come with very different mixed background, are you able to accept the observation that Baba is God?

Actually, I have never really had any doubts about the Divinity of Baba. May be, because I feel I knew Him before I came to know Him. It might not just be in this birth that I have come across Baba. Once He came to me in a vivid vision and hugged me. My being dissolved in that embrace. My "I" disappeared. It was all Him. This was the same experience I had with the "Voice". I was one with Baba and in that union I knew He was the "Voice" that said to me when I was 17, "What would you want to do with this life?" However, if you ask, "How do you know Baba is God?" I cannot answer that question. We have got to feel it in our heart.

Tell me, what does your heart say about it? I hope it is not a very rude question.

My heart is Love. He is all my life, you know. Baba is pure Love. God is Love.

The word Love is used often by everybody. How do you understand this love in the context of divinity, in the context of teachings of Christ, the Bible, in the context of your own life?

Love is unity. Love is the realisation of oneness. Unity is Divinity. I cannot love my mother without this sense of oneness.



I cannot love my father without this sense of affinity. Because he is “my father,” I love him. We have to feel this same kinship with all. Feel your Self in all. Only then can you love all as your Self. Jesus once said, “Whatever you do to any of these, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:45). This is Divine Love. It is universal. It knows no caste or creed or colour.

Do you see parallels in the teachings of Swami and what you read in the Bible?

Yes, of course. Like in the example I mentioned just now about the Gospel of Mark -12, “Listen O Israel.”

Yes. Apart from that?

Apart from that there are many others, there are many. The core of Baba’s teachings is this constant reminder of our inherent divinity. Baba says, “I am God. You too are God. The only difference is that I know it whereas you are ignorant of your own reality.” This is the core message of Jesus. Once someone asked Jesus “Are you the Christ?” Jesus replied, “The Father and I are one” (John 10:30). Hearing this, some of the people picked up stones to throw at him. Jesus said to them, “I have shown many good works from my Father. For which of these are you stoning me?” “We are stoning you not for doing a good work”, they replied, “but for blasphemy: though you are only a man, you claim to be God.” Jesus answered, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said you are Gods?’ And scripture cannot be contradicted. Why then do you say, “You are blaspheming” because I said, “I am God.” So, Jesus was in fact

saying what Baba is saying today: “I am God and you too are God!” For the church authorities then it was “blasphemy”. And it was this “blasphemy” which was the major reason for Jesus’s crucifixion on the Cross. Today, it is still “blasphemy” for anyone to say, “I am God.” The consequence can be as severe as being burnt at the stake.

So, if I were to put it very briefly, you would say that there is no real contradiction in the teachings of Jesus Christ and those of Baba; it is just that Baba is saying it now and Jesus said it earlier.

There is absolutely no difference. But you know, one thing has to be cleared here. That is, when we take into cognisance how the Bible, especially the New Testament came to be written down, we will understand the seeming contradictions in the Bible. During the time of Christ, when he was preaching, going about doing good and proclaiming the good news, there was nobody writing or recording what he said or did. Unlike now, all Baba’s Discourses are electronically recorded as He is delivering them. This was not possible during the time of Jesus. After his death, it took about 60-70 years before the Gospels were written down. As a result, what we have now are mostly interpretations of what Jesus said. And you know, two people can interpret the same thing differently. So, you have the Gospel of Jesus according to Matthew, according to Mark and so on.

So, what you are trying to say, if I understand you correctly, is that the teachings of Christ were recorded rather late and there could have been some



distortions and omissions and things like that, and Baba's teachings have been recorded in real time, not only by people who heard it but also by electronic means. So, there are authentic records of exactly what He said. I want to ask you a very difficult question. You are having so many problems. There are problems of illiteracy, disease, poverty. Added to that, there are civil wars, all kinds of things that are going on. Of course, there are similar problems in Asia and in India, too. Because you are from Africa, so I am talking about Africa. Do you feel that problems of this kind can be solved by following the teachings of Baba and Christ?

The problem of Africa is not really poverty or wars. The real need of Africa is true spirituality. Although the African man is deeply religious, he is like a hungry child fed with food which does not satiate. He keeps on eating yet he is hungrier than he was before. There is so much unrest in spite of the proliferation of churches. Jesus once said to a Samaritan woman, "Ask and I will give you living water which when you drink it, you will never be thirsty again" (John 4:14). True spirituality bequeaths self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction is the product of self-confidence and both lead to Self-realisation. Self-realisation is that water of living spring which when you drink it, you will never be thirsty again. It is the solution to every human problem. Until man realises his inherent divinity, his problems will ever persist.

Now let me turn to something more like information. You are coming from Lagos,

which is in Nigeria. Do you have a Sai Centre there?

Yes, we have.

How big is Lagos?

Lagos is quite big. Actually, it was the capital of Nigeria before it was shifted to Abuja.

Apart from Lagos, are there Sai Centres in any other city of Nigeria?

Yes, they are. There are Sai Centres in Enugu, Port Harcourt and Ibadan. We have Bhajans every Sunday in Lagos Centre.

Did you have any interesting Sai experiences? People love to talk about them. Did you have any?

Ah! There have been lots of them. The experiences are really bombarding.

Tell us one.

On the second day of my visit last year, I was sitting among other devotees in the second row waiting for Swami's Darshan. Then, He came and stopped in front of me. He was looking into my eyes with an everlasting love. The silence in His eyes drowned my being. Suddenly, He said to me, "Where do you come from?" I replied, "From Nigeria." (Truly, the Self neither comes nor goes since there is no place where it is not.) "How many are you", He asked again. I said "one" – not because I knew there is only One, but because I came alone. With a gentle wave of His head and the most fascinating smile, He said, "Go". ('Go' means to "let go" of this idea that we are separate from the One.)

After Darshan, Baba came and ushered all those He had called into the interview room. I was sitting at the far end of the



room. Truly, I was completely lost in the bliss of His Divine Presence. He was busy talking to other devotees and materialising different objects for them. Then, suddenly, like a thunder from the blues, He turned to me and asked: "How are your wives?"

This question woke me up from the sleep of my bliss. One could imagine the confusion that Baba threw me into. He knew I had no wives. Catholic priests are not supposed to marry, not to talk about having many wives. Yet I was aware His words must have deeper meaning and the power to actualise this meaning in one's life. My mind was dump. I opened my mouth several times and simply closed it unable to say a word. All attention was drawn towards me. The rest of the devotees in the interview room were wondering why this African was not answering Baba's question. They must be thinking that I was a Muslim, thanks to the dress I was wearing. Baba ignored me in my ignorance and my mind wandered away in many directions.

Later on, Baba told me in a private interview, "Sometimes you want to marry and sometimes you do not want to marry. Don't worry. You are Mine." Even after that, I could not understand why He asked me about my "wives" when I had none.

Then one day, I heard the story of some Muslim devotees whom Baba had granted an interview. During this interview, one lady asked Baba this question: "Baba, why did Mohammed marry eleven wives?" Baba looked up with an air of surprise in His face and said: "Mohammed...? Eleven wives!... No, No. Mohammed had only one wife!... Allah."

Actually, I have never really had any doubts about the Divinity of Baba. May be, because I feel I knew Him before I came to know Him. It might not just be in this birth that I have come across Baba. Once He came to me in a vivid vision and hugged me. My being dissolved in that embrace. My "I" disappeared. It was all Him. This was the same experience I had with the "Voice". I was one with Baba and in that union I knew He was the "Voice" that said to me when I was 17, "What would you want to do with this life?"

I was stunned when I heard this story. I understood in an instant what Baba meant by asking me, "How are your wives?" Although the Prophet had many wives, truly he had none because his one thought was Allah. Whereas I was unmarried yet I had many wives since many thoughts occupied my mind. True celibacy is that state where one's mind has been completely unified with God. When the mind is filled with thoughts, it is full of worries. Hence, Baba said to me, "Don't worry. You are Mine." That is, empty the mind of all thoughts and I will fill it. When the mind is filled with God,

continued on page 220...



NEWS FROM SAI CENTRES

NEPAL



ASHUPATINATH TEMPLE is one of the most sacred Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Siva in the world, located on the banks of the Bagmati River in the eastern part of Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. Every year, more than half a million devotees, both from India and different parts of Nepal, visit this temple on Maha Sivarathri day to pay homage to Lord Siva. For many years, volunteers from various Sai Centres of Kathmandu have been providing free medical and drinking water service to the pilgrims. On 20th February 2012, Maha Sivarathri day, the service activities began with the chanting of Omkar and Gayatri Mantra. Sixteen doctors offered free medical services to over 480 people. Patients who fainted while standing



Medical services to pilgrims in Kathmandu, Nepal.

long hours in the Darshan line were very appreciative of the emergency care they received from the Sathya Sai Medical team. About 150 volunteers from Sathya Sai Centres and devotional groups of the Kathmandu Valley, dressed in sparkling white, lovingly distributed drinking water to thousands of pilgrims. The service activities were brought to a close by offering Arati to Bhagavan.

U. S. A.

The City of Corona is located approximately 45 miles southeast of Los Angeles, California. On 10th March 2012, an annual Corona-Norco Free Health Screening Day was organised, serving about 885 people. At the event, 96 medical professionals representing over 28 medical specialties, 265 volunteers, 140 student healthcare professionals and 100 high school student volunteers rendered



Free Health Screening Day in Corona, California, U.S.A.



loving service. Over 1,000 blood tests were performed. Other screening services included electrocardiograms, urinalyses, bone mineral density tests, tuberculosis skin tests, mammograms and Pap smear services. Patients with abnormal cholesterol or blood sugar levels were seen by dietitians, primary care physicians and specialists and were also guided to low-cost referral clinics for follow-up treatment. As a part of the vision screening services offered in collaboration with the California Lions Club Friends in Sight, more than 450 recycled prescription pairs of glasses were distributed. As a follow-up service, one patient underwent cataract surgery at a local hospital. Dental screenings along with fluoride treatments were provided to about 400 people.

MALAYSIA

In many societies across the world, modern living and changes in traditional family structure have resulted in elderly people being left alone without adequate shelter, healthcare and security. Many elders miss the love and care of family. On



Serving the elderly in Malaysia.

10th March 2012, a healthcare programme for the elderly was organised in Kuala Lumpur by a medical team of the Sathya Sai Baba Central Council of Malaysia. A total of 106 elderly people living alone were identified and medical screening services, including blood tests, hearing tests and vision tests were provided by the Sathya Sai Medical team. A counselling session on healthy diet and healthy living was also conducted. Follow-up services were provided for the patients needing hearing aids, eyeglasses and cataract surgeries. Patients with anaemia were given iron supplements and advised on proper dietary management. Manicures, pedicures and head massages were also given to the participants. After the medical screening, the elderly were entertained by an outing to the Lake Gardens, followed by distribution of gifts. Vegetarian food was served throughout the day. At the end of the day, the elderly were happy and smiling.

KAZAKHSTAN

15th Annual Sri Sathya Sai Medical Camp was organised in Novodolinka village, Karaganda Region in April 2012, in which 46 volunteers from nine cities in Kazakhstan and nine doctors covering various specialities provided medical services to 171 patients. Concurrently, Sathya Sai volunteers lovingly offered lessons in human values to 700 children at a local school. Children from 5th to 10th Grades were taught human values, including lessons on “Self-knowledge,”



Sai volunteers provided lessons in human values to the children in a village school in Kazakhstan.

and the children in the primary classes were lovingly offered creative lessons in Puppet Theatre and other arts. The Director and teachers of the school were highly appreciative of the lessons given to the children. Several rooms at the school were freshly painted by Sathya Sai volunteers, and many building repairs were made to a shelter for abandoned children. The caretaker of the shelter commended the Sathya Sai volunteers and stated that in her 77 years, she had never met such people, who came with caring smiles while rendering loving service. The children at the shelter presented a cultural programme for the Sathya Sai volunteers, which included the playing of musical instruments, dancing and singing. Packages of needed supplies including clothes were also distributed to 30 needy families.

Sathya Sai volunteers along with Sathya Sai youth presented a cultural programme for the villagers, in which children from the local school joined them in presenting a play called “Three Sisters, Three Gunas,” followed by a musical programme. The school Director thanked the Sathya Sai volunteers for their selfless service.

SULTANATE OF OMAN

As part of spreading excellence in human values to the community, the “Serve and Inspire” (SAI) Group, Sultanate of Oman, organised two seminars on “Values Parenting.” On 27th January 2012, about 250 parents attended the seminar in Muscat, the capital city of Oman, followed by a second programme held on 10th February 2012 in Sohar, a leading industrial town, with about 100 parents participating. These seminars, intended to improve parenting skills, were based on the philosophy of Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) and conducted by trained Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) teachers, assisted by Sathya Sai volunteers. The modules covered in the seminar included “Dynamic Values Parenting,” “Harmony at Home,” “Good Company,” “Reading Habits” and “Media and Its Effect on Children.” These modules were interspersed with situation analyses, games, examples from the lives of great leaders, real life incidents and interactive discussions, which made the presentations more interesting.

Colourful posters depicting the responsibilities and role of parents were displayed. The SSE teachers highlighted the importance of “3HV” (harmony of head, heart and hand) for the decision-making process by the parents, and the need for their children to realise that real happiness could only be achieved by practising the five human values (truth, right conduct, peace, love, and non-violence). During a

panel discussion, questions on the effects of media on children were addressed. An “Open House” session included sharing of experiences on parenting as well as answering questions raised by the participants. A summary of the various service activities undertaken by the SAI Group, Oman was distributed to the participants. Sri J. K. Arora, Principal of the Indian School, complimented the efforts of the SAI Group in organising the parenting seminars. Parents carried with them valuable parenting skills and were very thankful to the Sathya Sai volunteers.

– **Sri Sathya Sai International Organisations**

B H A R A T

Karnataka: A Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality was conducted for five days from 16th to 20th April 2012 at Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. The Summer Course attracted nearly 1,000 youth from across Karnataka and a large number of devotees. It was inaugurated on 16th April 2012 at 10 a.m., resonating with Vedic chants and soul-stirring Bhajans.

Referring to culture as a way of life, Sri V. Srinivasan, All India President, Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, observed in his inaugural address that the Bharatiya way of life comprised respect for elders, love, faith and tolerance. He said that the Sai Organisation would attempt to collaborate with colleges and universities across the country to create awareness and share these core human values across the nation.

Delivering the keynote address, Justice Shivaraj V. Patil, former judge of Supreme Court of India, emphasised the importance of ceiling on desires and stated, “Luxury is an artificial poverty and contentment is a natural wealth.” He also advocated that youth with proper competence, character, commitment and compassion could help counter societal ills such as crime and corruption. The distinguished speaker highlighted the importance of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings such as “Love All, Serve All” and “Help Ever, Hurt Never” as the panacea for addressing all modern-day ills affecting the world at large.

Presiding over the event, Prof. Shashidhara Prasad, Vice Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning said that darkness represented ignorance and light presented knowledge. He added that energy could be created from matter but only Divinity could create matter from energy. Before the inaugural function concluded, Bhagavan Baba’s message to the students was played that kept the entire gathering spellbound. Other distinguished speakers who addressed the gathering after this were: Sri S. Ranganath, Director, R.V. Institute of Sanskrit Studies, Prof. Prema Panduranga and Sri Ruchir Desai, a faculty member of Brindavan Campus of the Institute

A galaxy of learned speakers gave illuminating talks on the subsequent three days on the various facets of Bharatiya culture and explained its salient features for the benefit of the participants. They included Sri Nimish Pandya, a senior



legal practitioner, Dr. Sivakumar, a faculty member of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Sri Shikaripur Krishnamurthy, a Sanskrit scholar, Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy, Secretary, Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust, Dr. B.G. Pitre, Director, Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Mumbai, Sri Vijay Sai, Director of Call Ready, Sri Sai Giridhar Sairam, a research scholar in Chemistry, Group Captain Yasas (Retd.), Dr. Dwarakarani Rao, Director, Anantapur Campus of the Institute, Sri Venkatesh, a Sanskrit teacher of Brindavan Campus and Sri Jayendra Puri Swamiji.

The valedictory session of the Summer Course was held on 20th April 2012. The first talk on this day was given by Sri Swami Chidrupananda who explained the profound concepts of the Gita in very simple terms, and said that spiritual maturity was the ultimate requirement of man. Extolling the practical aspects of the Gita, the learned speaker observed that man himself was the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda (existence, knowledge and bliss); there was no need for him to search for happiness elsewhere. The next speaker of this session, Sri K. Jairaj, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka, skilfully educated the participants on the practical challenges of following ethics and morality in working life. Terming anxiety as a disease, he said it took away man's peace. He insisted that the youth should not adopt the 'policy of least resistance' and urged them to take difficult decisions wherever required to uphold morality. The third speaker of this

session was Sri Vijay Menon, who made a powerful speech on the topic, 'Service to Man is Service to God.' He firmly urged the youth to see spirituality and daily work as the same. Sri Amey Deshpande, a research scholar of the Institute, spoke on the significance of Namasmara. He stressed that consistency and intensity were the keys to achieve any spiritual progress. The day ended with a question and answer session, wherein the speakers answered the questions of the participants.

The participants attended their daily schedule of Vedic chants, yoga, Pranayama, meditation and Bhajans during the course of the Summer Course. There were soul-stirring music programmes in the evening presented by renowned musicians who included Ustad Faiyaz Khan, a disciple of the great Sarangi exponent, Pandit Ram Narayan, Sri Sriram Parthasarathy, a renowned playback singer, Sri Akash, a child prodigy, Sri Tippu and Smt. Harini, noted musicians.

National Retreat of Office Bearers: The First National Retreat for office bearers of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations took place in Brindavan Ashram on 31st March and 1st April 2012. The event had more than 150 National and State level participants which included National Coordinators including the All India President, State Presidents, State Trust Members, State Coordinators from all wings of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation and State Youth Coordinators. The theme of the National Retreat was "The Way Forward." The event witnessed an



inter-generational interaction within the various wings of the Organisation, the youth presenting their inputs on various topics concerning the Organisation and the elders having an open and interactive discussion. The presentations were divided into the following topics: Bhajans, Veda and Meditation, Retreats and Sadhana Camps, Study Circles, Sai Literature, Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas, Sri Sathya Sai Schools, Seva Dal , Youth Wing, Improvement in Existing Activities, New Activities, Response to Social Problems, Organisational Structure, Technology in Service, Radio Sai, and Finance, Resource Planning and Management.

Maharashtra and Goa: On 24th April 2012, the first anniversary of Bhagavan's Maha Samadhi, Narayana Seva on mass scale was conducted lovingly by thousands of Seva Dal volunteers all across Maharashtra and Goa. Approximately, 5,00,000 Narayanas were served Prasadam along with Vibhuti and Swami's photo. All major public places like bus stations, railway stations, construction



Narayana Seva on 24th April 2012.

sites, slum areas, temples and other devotional places all over the two States buzzed with Narayana Seva activity throughout the day.

A Tribute to the Legend of Pure Love: Over 10,000 people occupied every inch of available space of the extensive lawns of the Royal Western India Turf Club,



Devotional music concert "A Tribute to the Legend of Pure Love" in Mumbai.

Mahalakshmi, Mumbai to pay their tributes to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and participate in a concert of devotional music entitled "A Tribute to the Legend of Pure Love" organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Maharashtra and Goa on 1st May 2012. A large number of dignitaries including artistes, thespians, corporate leaders, administrators and members of the government came to participate in it. Renowned musicians and singers made their devout presentations in the concert.

Pandit Shivkumar Sharma set the trend with his faultless rendering. He was followed by Smt. Devaki Pandit, Sri Geet Sagar, Sri Udit Narayan and Smt. Anuradha Podwal. There was also a group of remarkable singers from Sathya



Sai Mirpuri College of Music, Prasanthi Nilayam who had come for participating in this grand function. They enthralled the audience with devotional songs sung with great devotion. The last singer Sri Hariharan's soul-stirring performance was the climax of the great evening. Offer of Arati and singing of National Anthem marked the end of the programme.

There was a large presence of representatives from print and electronic media with live webcast on Indiatimes and Sanskar television channels in India and 90 other countries.

Tamil Nadu: Easwaramma Day was celebrated on a grand scale with utmost devotion and love at Sai Sruti, Kodaikanal on 6th May 2012. About 3,000 villagers assembled on the lawns of Sai Sruti to pay their homage to Beloved Bhagavan and to take part in the solemn celebration dedicated to Mother Easwaramma. The celebrations commenced with Nagar Sankirtan followed by soulful Bhajans. Bal

Vikas children from Kodaikanal presented an interesting cultural programme to the delight of all the villagers. This was



Narayana Seva was organised on Easwaramma Day at Kodaikanal.

followed by a speech on Divine Mother Easwaramma and the importance of mother worship. As per the practice of Beloved Bhagavan, a grand Narayana Seva was organised and clothes and blankets were distributed to every individual who took part in the celebration. On this auspicious occasion, a permanent pictorial exhibition on the life and message of Bhagavan was inaugurated by local MLA, Sri K.S.N. Venugopalu.

... continued from page 213

it is turned, like the heart of the Prophet, into a house of wisdom.

This encounter with Baba has helped me understand and live the vow of celibacy more intimately and joyfully. As a priest, I belong to a religious congregation called the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers and we take the vow of celibacy. For example, there is a lot of talk about Catholic celibacy now, like what is happening in America. The problem is not with being married or

not. The problem is with the mind. Celibacy is the state where one is aware of God at all times and in all circumstances.

Well, it has been nice talking to you and I thank you very much for sparing some time for us and sharing your views, thoughts and experiences with our listeners. Thank you again. Wish you all the best. Sai Ram.

Sai Ram.

– Courtesy: **Radio Sai Global Harmony**



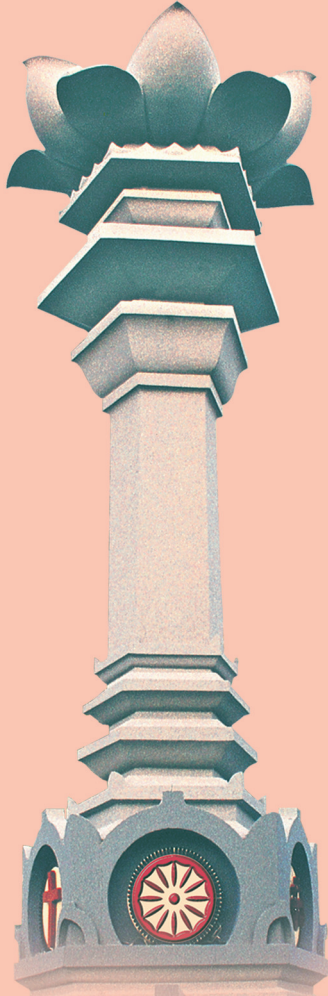
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– Baba

Annual Subscription English (12 issues)
India ₹ 75. Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka
₹ 600. Other Countries ₹ 850 or US \$19
or UK £13 or €13, CAN \$22, 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, Bengaluru - 560044, Karnataka And published at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

Editor: G.L. ANAND