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MAY 2011

Sanathana Sarathi





Loved and adored by millions the world over, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba attained Maha Samadhi on 24th April 2011.

Vol.: 54 Issue No. 5 Date of Publication: 14th May

MAY

2011

© 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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THE SPIRIT OF THE MESSAGE

“*T*HATRA KO MOHAH KASSHOKAH EKATVAM ANUPASYATAH”
What is delusion, what grief for one who is aware of the oneness of all!

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba was ever an exponent of the oneness of all things. For an incarnate unity the concept of variety is paradoxical. But Bhagavan resolved this metaphysical problem in his unique practical way. *Acharana* (practice) took precedence over precept all through His physical sojourn amongst us. But all those who are overawed by His projects on the ground fail to see the spirit permeating them.

Take, for example, His water projects. For the so-called realists – practical people, the very concept of a network of piped treated water supply to sprawling rural areas is a project not worth a single thought. Nothing but Divine Will and love can conceive and carry out a rural water supply scheme of this magnitude. The same can be said of every other project of Bhagavan Baba's *Sankalpa*. No feasibility study precedes any of the projects. Nor are there any budgets, rates of return on investments, no bottom lines, red or black. Need is the only basis, *Sankalpa*, the driving force.

A radical reversal of economic methodology characterised precept and practice of Baba. Instead of disguised greed named practical realism, pure selflessness supplemented by His divine grace, characterised all the projects in the diverse areas – education, healthcare, social service, character building. In all these His Will blossoms and enthrals us.

Meanwhile we keep forgetting what His main purpose was and is. His spiritual message is evident in His copious Discourses and private conversation and freely gifted to us throughout His lifetime is readily available in the Sanathana Sarathi and the numerous books that are printed in black and white and multicolour to pick and choose by one and all.

But then all these exhortations to shed grief and be of good cheer seems mere theory – who can stop that sharp pain in the chest, the void in the heart, the aching head and streaming eyes? That sweet form with smiling face, those Divine Feet, when shall we see them again? Well, we have to console ourselves with His very word, “Pleasure is but an interval between two pains”. This distress too shall pass and He shall fill that void again – sooner or later.

Sai Ram

BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

LIFE, TEACHINGS AND LEGACY

BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA, THE BELOVED LORD OF millions of His devotees in all parts of the world, willed to leave His body at 7.40 a.m. on 24th April 2011. A shock wave ran through the entire world when this stunning news was heard by His devotees who were virtually drowned in an ocean of sorrow.

Bhagavan was hospitalised for a long period of 27 days in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prasanthigram, Puttaparthi. This was a period of intense agony for all devotees who engaged themselves in prayers, Mantra chanting, Bhajan singing and other spiritual practices. Performed individually and in congregations, these prayers were not only wholehearted and sincere, but were different in nature from their earlier prayers. Earlier, the devotees were praying to Bhagavan for the solution of their worldly problems or for material gains. They petitioned Him, for example, to cure their illness, to perform their daughter's marriage, to save them from a problem in office, business or family. For decades, Bhagavan was receiving such prayers daily and collecting sacks of letters. Earlier, the devotees wanted something or the other from Bhagavan. But in their prayers in these 27 agonising days, they prayed only for Bhagavan; they wanted their Beloved Bhagavan and nothing else. Sincere and intense prayer only for God does divinise and transform an individual. But earnest prayers of millions of people will no doubt bring about a quantum leap in the consciousness of all mankind to usher in a new era of love, peace, unity and harmony in the world, which, as declared by Bhagavan Himself, was the very purpose of the incarnation of this Avatar.

The devotees of Bhagavan have to accept this painful reality that Bhagavan who bestowed upon them the bliss of Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan (vision, touch and conversation) is no longer with them. But, did Bhagavan ever limit Himself to His physical form only? Have we not witnessed how He manifested in His numerous forms simultaneously at all places in the world whenever He willed or wherever devotees sang His glory or prayed to Him? He cautioned us times without number not to have body attachment. But due to our narrow vision, we sometimes limited Him to His body and did not see His Cosmic Form which is present in all beings and pervades every atom of the universe.

We have to realise this truth that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is not the body, which is temporary, mutable and bound to perish one day or the other. Real Bhagavan Baba is His teachings. He is Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa. He is compassion, selflessness and goodness. If we have His teachings, which He not only taught but also exemplified in His life, we will have

Him always with us, in us, above us, below us and all around us, as He used to say. He said, "God is Love. Live in Love". "Truth is God; God is Truth". Hence, real form of Bhagavan is Love, Truth and all His teachings.

In fact, teachings of Bhagavan are His greatest legacy. And He taught by example, not merely by precept. If He said, "Love All, Serve All", He did love and serve all in His entire life without any difference of caste, creed, race, religion or nationality. He is the unique Avatar in the history of mankind who set up various service institutions such as schools, colleges, hospitals, water projects and numerous other service establishments as marks of manifestation of His selfless and unconditional love for all. He did not only set up service institutions, He also exemplified the ideal way of running them with love. Both, His life and His institutions, are a beacon of light which show the ideal path for mankind to follow.

He gave the concept of Narayana Seva for man's redemption. Narayana is Supreme Godhead. When we serve God, we do not have pride, ego or sense of superiority; we do not expect gratitude for the service done. Rather, we are grateful to God that He accepted our service and offering. Bhagavan taught us that we should see God in all those we serve. That is the service which elevates and transforms. Seva Dal, Bal Vikas (Sai Spiritual Education), educational institutions with value-based system of education and Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations set up by Him in all parts of the world form part of the rich legacy that Bhagavan has bequeathed to mankind.

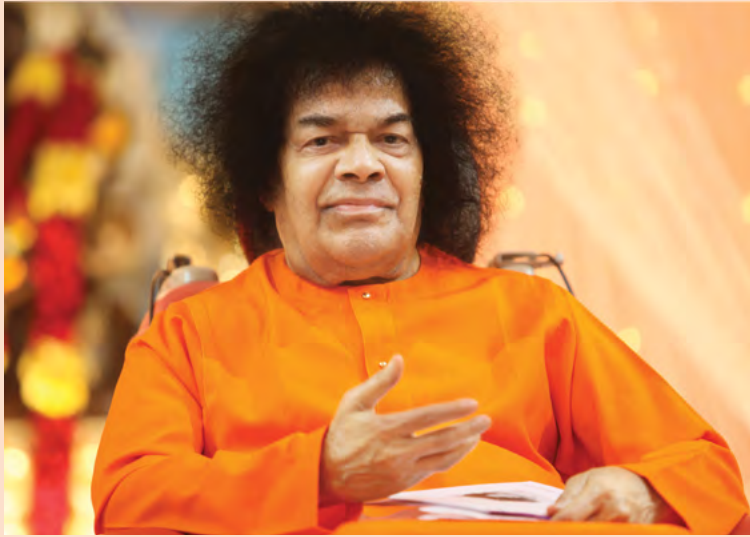
Another important legacy of Bhagavan is Bhajans. He not only sang and taught Bhajans to others, He also set their style and tune, so that all devotees can sing these Bhajans irrespective of the language they speak or the country they belong to. God, He said, manifests wherever His glory is sung. But He did not merely say it, He did manifest in all parts of the world in the form of Vibhuti, honey, vermillion, etc., that came out of the photos of gods and goddesses placed in the altar when the Bhajans progressed. The easiest way to attain God in this Age of Kali, He said, is Namasmara (chanting of Divine Name). Bhajans, devotional songs, Vedic chants are the ways to attain Him. If we have His Name on our tongue while our hands are engaged in selfless and loving service to mankind, we can no doubt attain Him and redeem our life.

It was Bhagavan who started "Sanathana Sarathi" which enlightened millions of its readers in all parts of the world through His Divine Message that it has been carrying to their homes month after month over a period of 50 years. "Sanathana Sarathi" has suffered a great loss by losing its founder. It is a personal loss to those whom He entrusted this work, and they will ever remain indebted to Him for the blessings, love and personal care He provided to them. In the same way, all those engaged in His Divine Mission everywhere have experienced His bountiful grace which is rare even for men of great penance.

It is therefore time for all of us to reflect on how much Bhagavan has enriched and illumined our lives, and to repay at least a fraction of that debt by rededicating our lives to His Divine Mission.

– Editor

85 Years of Divine Glory



THE AVATAR OF LOVE

A DEEP SENSE OF ANXIETY GRIPPED Sai devotees all over the world when they heard the shocking news that Bhagavan was admitted in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prasanthigram, Puttaparthi at 3.30 p.m. on 28th March 2011. Bhagavan was hospitalised for 27 days and the best treatment was provided to Him under a panel of medical experts. But Bhagavan decided to end His earthly sojourn at 7.40 a.m. on 24th April 2011.

People in general and Sai devotees in particular were drowned in an ocean of grief to hear this sad news. Bhagavan's mortal body was brought from the hospital to Yajur Mandir, His abode, on the same afternoon. From Yajur Mandir, the body was brought to Sai Kulwant Hall in a glass casket at 6.30 p.m. It was led by Veda chanting and Bhajan singing groups of students and was placed in front of the dais where decorations had been done with flowers and a lighted lamp was placed. With eyes filled with tears, grim-faced devotees, both ladies and gents, then filed past the casket in separate queues and paid their last respects to their Beloved Bhagavan while Bhajans led by groups of students, both boys and girls, continued in the hall imparting sobriety and solemnity to the occasion. As huge crowds descended on the small township of Puttaparthi, arrangements were made to continue Darshan by devotees throughout the night of 24th April 2011. Bhajans also continued during the whole night.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh declared four-day State mourning. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, who flew into Puttaparthi along with Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan, said that the last rites of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba would be performed with full State honours and there would be a holiday in Anantapur district on 27th April 2011 when Bhagavan's mortal body would be laid to rest. A large number of dignitaries came to Puttaparthi and paid their last respects to Bhagavan. They included Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa, BJP President Nitin Gadkari, Punjab Governor Shivraj





Famous cricketer Sachin Tendulkar with his wife sitting in silent reflection after paying respects to Bhagavan.

Patil, Andhra Pradesh Ministers J. Geeta Reddy, Sabitha Indra Reddy, N. Raghu Veera Reddy, J.C. Diwakar Reddy, former Maharashtra Chief Minister Ashok Chavan, Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, Telugu Desam Party President, N. Chandrababu Naidu and Praja Rajyam President K. Chiranjeevi.

Bhajans, Veda chanting and devotional songs continued on 25th April all the 24 hours while lakhs of devotees of all faiths and nationalities and from all walks of life and all strata of society, men, women and children filed past Bhagavan's body and paid their final respects to Him. Old and infirm devotees, as also some visually and physically challenged in wheelchairs came to offer their last respects to Bhagavan. In rush hours, the queue was as long as three to four kilometres, but the devotees bore all this ordeal with great patience and maintained discipline and decorum all throughout the day and night. Prominent cricketers who came to pay their last respects to Bhagavan on Monday, 25th April included Sachin Tendulkar, Sunil Gavaskar, V.V.S. Laxman and S. Sreesanth. A host of

other dignitaries including yoga Guru Baba Ramdev and playback singer P. Susheela paid their final respects to Bhagavan. Bhajans continued throughout the night of 25th April as a steady stream of devotees filed past Bhagavan's body, offering their tearful homage.

Devotees continued to have Darshan of Bhagavan's body throughout the day on 26th April also. Meanwhile, giant LED screens were set up at vantage points and loud speakers were installed for the convenience of those devotees who could not find entry into Sai Kulwant Hall. On the afternoon of Tuesday, 26th April, Prime



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi came to Prasanthi Nilayam on 26th April and paid their last respects to Bhagavan.

Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi accompanied by External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ambika Soni paid their homage to Bhagavan. They drove straight from Sri Sathya Sai Airport to Sai Kulwant Hall where they sat in silence for some time near the body of Bhagavan with folded hands while Bhajans continued in the hall. Other dignitaries who offered homage to Bhagavan included Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, VHP International President Ashok Singhal, Sri Lankan Cricketer Arjuna Ranatunga, santoor maestro Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, playback singer Suresh Wadkar, actresses Anjali Devi and Jamuna and Sri Lankan Minister of Economic Development Basil Rajapaksa. Surging crowds of devotees continued to have Darshan in queues up to midnight on Tuesday when the glass casket containing the body of Bhagavan was taken inside the Bhajan Mandir to enable Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust to make arrangement for the last rites to be performed on next day.

On the morning of 27th April 2011, the casket containing Bhagavan's body was brought out again in Sai Kulwant Hall. Chanting of Vedic Mantras started at 8.00 a.m., which was followed by Bhajans. After this, the students of Bhagavan sang devotional songs which were dear to Him. Not only the students who sang these songs but also all the devotees present in Sai Kulwant Hall became emotional when these songs were

sung. Thereafter, priests of different faiths, viz., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism recited verses from their sacred texts, offering a befitting tribute to Bhagavan who taught and practised unity of faiths all His life. Senior BJP leaders, L.K. Advani, B.S. Yeddyurappa and M. Venkaiah Naidu joined a host of other dignitaries who came to participate in the last rites of Bhagavan.

State honours were offered to Bhagavan before the performance of last rites. A contingent of policemen came in slow march and draped the glass casket containing Bhagavan's body with national tricolour. After a while, the tricolour was removed and the bugles sounded the Last Post. Thereafter, half a platoon of policemen fired three shots in the air in a gun salute. A general salute was also offered by policemen.

When Bhagavan's students lifted the casket containing Bhagavan's body for taking to the site of the Samadhi at the



Senior BJP leaders, L.K. Advani, B.S. Yeddyurappa and M. Venkaiah Naidu participated in the last rites of Bhagavan on 27th April 2011.



Last rites of Bhagavan were performed with full State honours.



Bhagavan's nephew R.J. Ratnakar performed the last rites amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by priests.



Samadhi of Bhagavan in Sai Kulwant Hall.

dais, the sobs of devotees in the hall became very loud and there was no dry eye in the hall. As the casket was being taken to the Samadhi site, all the devotees present in the hall jointly kept chanting Sai Gayatri.

After the body of Bhagavan was placed on the dais, the priests started chanting Vedic Mantras. The last rites were performed according to Vedic injunctions by Bhagavan's nephew R.J. Ratnakar. After the performance of the rituals, the body with its head in the south was lowered into an already prepared vault at the place on the dais from where Bhagavan used to give Discourses to His devotees. Soil collected from sacred places, water of sacred rivers and Vibhuti were put on the body. After the completion of the rituals, all the dignitaries that were present and some senior devotees offered Vibhuti at Bhagavan's Samadhi. This most solemn and sad function came to a close with Arati at 10.50 a.m.

85 Years of Divine Glory

A SAGA OF LOVE AND SERVICE TO MANKIND

THE ENTIRE LIFE of Bhagavan since His very childhood was a saga of selfless and unconditional love and service to mankind. It is difficult to find another Avatar or prophet or a noble soul who could give love and do selfless service to so many millions in His lifetime. There are millions of people who would vouchsafe the truth of this statement as they have actually experienced His love, blessings, grace and bounty. He meticulously practised the maxim, "Love All, Serve All" all His life. The entire worldwide Sai Organisation set up by Him is guided by this most simple and most profound principle. All His life, He exhorted one and all to follow this principle and make their life sublime. This is the basic principle which can divinise man. Therefore, He exemplified this in His own life.

All the service institutions set up by Bhagavan are based on this divine principle. Two General Hospitals at Prasanthi Nilayam and



Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital which was started by Bhagavan as a two-bed hospital in 1956 has now become a full-fledged 100-bed hospital.

Whitefield (Bengaluru) and two Super Speciality Hospitals set up by Him at Puttaparthi and Bengaluru, where best treatment is provided totally free to the poorest of poor, stand testimony to His abiding love for



Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences (Super Speciality Hospital), Whitefield, Bengaluru was inaugurated in 2001.



Administrative Building of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Prasanthi Nilayam.

mankind. Added to it is a mobile hospital which provides loving medical services to a large number of villagers at their doorstep. Such medical services on the model set by Him are being made available to a large population of needy masses in India and overseas countries by respective Sai Organisations through medical camps and hospitals. This in itself is a stupendous task

when we consider how many millions benefited from it.

All Bhagavan's educational institutions also provide free education from K.G. to Ph.D. Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning which He set up in 1981 was adjudged by a U.G.C. team as the crest jewel of education system and a model for value-based education. A Peer Team of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) established by the University Grants Commission of India accredited the Institute at the highest (A++) level among Indian universities.



Anantapur Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning inaugurated in 1968.



The Peer Team felt, "This Institute stands out as a crest jewel among the university education system in the country and this model is worthy of emulation by the institutes of higher learning in the country and elsewhere". Elaborating on the purpose of setting up the Institute, Bhagavan said to the students, "This Institute has not been established just to prepare you for earning degrees. The main purpose is to help you cultivate self-knowledge and self-confidence so that each of you can learn self-sacrifice and earn Self-realisation". He gave the concept of Educare to enable the students to manifest their inner virtues and moulded them into His own image so that like Him, they became the epitomes of selflessness, service, sacrifice and spirituality and put these values into practice in their house, community and workplace. "My entire property consists of My students. I have offered Myself to them," He said. He invested His time and effort in His students and made them men and women of sterling character. "Of what value is the acquisition of

Rayalaseema region in which Puttaparthi is located is a drought-prone area. Scarcity of water was not the only problem; there was excess of fluoride in water which caused diseases and deformations in those who drank it. Looking at the magnitude of the problem, successive governments could not devise any scheme to solve it even after five decades of Independence. God is the refuge of those who have no other refuge. Seeing the sad plight of refugeless millions, Bhagavan took up Anantapur Water Project in March 1995 and completed it in a record period of 18 months, bringing relief to a population of 9.5 million. The then Prime Minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao inaugurated the first phase of the project in a grand function at Prasanthi Nilayam on 18th November 1995. Citing the example of this project in their Ninth Five Year Plan document, the Government of India stated: "... Sri Sathya Sai Trust has set an unparalleled example of private initiative in implementing a project



Brindavan Campus of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning inaugurated in 1969.

all knowledge in the world if there is no character?" He remarked. The campuses of the Institute at Prasanthi Nilayam, Brindavan, Anantapur and Muddenahalli and numerous other Sri Sathya Sai schools, colleges and institutes in all parts of the world follow the high ideals set by Him and turn out men and women of high character from their portals. Thousands of students who received free quality education from His institutions would no doubt cherish the ideals set by Him and will bring about a silent transformation in society.





Water Treatment Plant at PABR for Anantapur Water Project.

on their own, without any State's budgetary support, a massive water supply project, with an expenditure of Rs. 3,000 million to benefit 731 scarcity and fluoride / salinity-affected villages and a few towns in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh in a time frame of about 18 months". On 23rd November 1999, the Government of India released a postage stamp and a postal cover in recognition of the pioneering service rendered by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba by providing safe drinking water to the rural masses.

◉ Bhagavan's subsequent water projects provided water to 320 villages of Medak and Mahaboobnagar districts, and 220

villages of East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. These water projects benefited a total population of 18 million people of nearly 1,500 villages. Chennai Water Supply Project which provided water to the residents of this metropolitan city and fulfilled their long-felt need was another great social service venture of Bhagavan to relieve the suffering of the people, especially poor people.

Truly, the work done by Bhagavan is unparalleled in the history of mankind, and He will always live in the hearts of millions who received His love, benediction and grace in some form or the other.



Sai Ganga Canal which solved the water problems of the people of Chennai.

AMRITA DHARA

BHAGAVAN'S DISCOURSE:

7TH JULY 1996

MAKE FAITH THE BASIS OF YOUR LIFE

People have become blind in this world as they have lost their eyes of faith. They deny the existence of God because they cannot see Him. God may not exist for them but He does exist for us.

(Telugu Poem)

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY BEGINS WITH FAITH AND ENDS IN BLISS

Embodiments of Love!



SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, people have been wasting their valuable time in debating about the existence and non-existence of God. Even if the sun is shining, a blind person cannot see it. Similarly, one cannot see the world if one closes one's eyes. Does it mean that the sun does not exist or the world does not exist? No. The sun does exist but one without eyes cannot see it. Likewise, the world also exists but one who closes his eyes cannot see it. The defect lies in your vision and not in the creation.

Faith is Essential for all Human Endeavours

Faith is the very life of man. One cannot perform even a small task without faith. How can man achieve success in any of his endeavours if he does not make any effort with faith? In fact, he cannot take even ten steps forward if he lacks faith. In this vast world, faith is very essential even for performing small tasks. Not only in matters relating to

God, faith is very important in all fields of human endeavour. Faith is most essential for man's success in all fields – worldly, ethical, moral, spiritual or scientific. Faith is the basis of your love for your mother, father, husband,

When it is sure that the body has to return by a certain date, then why should you worry about it? Why should you feel sad? You are worried because you have made a habit of worrying. Mistaken thinking is the cause of this worry. You don't have faith in the truth of your reality. Faith is truth, truth is faith. Faith leads to truth; truth leads to peace; peace leads to happiness. Happiness is heaven, sorrow is hell. Therefore, never give room to sorrow. Face all situations with faith. With faith, you can achieve anything. Without faith, you can achieve nothing. Therefore, develop faith.



wife, etc. Man will not have love even for his mother if he does not have the faith that she is his mother. Similarly, the husband will not love his wife if he does not believe that she is his wife. A mother cannot love her own children if she does not have faith that they are her children. Man can experience the all-pervading principle of love and derive bliss therefrom only when he has faith. Without faith, man cannot experience love and derive bliss. It is not possible for man to live in this world without faith.

Today there are many people in this world who have no faith in God. There are many others who pretend that they have no faith even if they have it. There are others who have faith in God but do not publicly express it for the sake of political gain or public acclaim. They question, "If God does exist, why can't we see Him"? Do you believe all that you see and deny everything that you cannot see? This morning, an M.B.A. student asked a question, "Swami tells us that we should love all. Why should we do that"? I put a counter question to him, "You are asking Me why should you love all. I am asking you, why should you hate anyone". Whatever is your reason for hating others, the same is the



God is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. Though He is not visible to the physical eye, you can experience Him. This is a rose which you can see. But its fragrance cannot be seen; it can only be experienced. Fragrance has no form but the flower that gives the fragrance has a form. Similarly, love has no form, but the mother who gives you love has a form. Love, bliss, fragrance, all these have no form but the objects that give them have a form. It is the form that is the source of the formless attribute. Therefore, it is foolish to ask for direct evidence of God's existence. There are many things which are beyond the realm of direct evidence.

reason for loving them. Love and hatred are like an object and its image. Where there is hatred, there is love. Where there is the feeling of absence, the truth of presence is also there. Here is a small example. Is Sai Baba present on the stage or not? If you say He is present, what is the basis of your saying



that? You see His form and say that He is present. Suppose, I go inside after giving this Discourse. If somebody then asks you, "Is Sai Baba there on the stage"?, you say, "He is not there". What does this mean? This means that Sai Baba is there but He is not present on the stage. If Sai Baba does not exist, then the question of His being present or absent does not arise at all. In the same way, people deny or accept the existence of God because He is there (*loud applause*). It is only because God does exist, people deny His existence. If really there is no God, how can the word 'God' exist? Just now Anil Kumar has said, 'there is God'. The first part of the sentence is 'there is' which denotes the truth about God's existence. When we say 'there is', then the next question is who is there? It is God. Some people say, 'there is no God'. The first part of this sentence is also 'there is' which denotes the truth about the existence of God; 'no God' is only the next part of the sentence. Even this negative sentence, 'there is no God' begins with the positive assertion 'there is'.

Atheists say, "God is nowhere". This sentence consists of three words, the first part of which is 'God is'. If you break the word 'nowhere', nowhere becomes now here (*loud applause*). Merely by joining 'w' with 'no', the negative sentence changes into positive. Those who believe in God say, "God is now here" and those who don't believe in God say, "God is nowhere". Faith or the lack of it is the basis of both the statements. Faith is like the two eyes of man. Similarly, Sastras (scriptures) are the Netras (eyes) of man. Srishti (creation) exists because man has Drishti (vision). As is the Drishti, so is the Srishti. Man has to view this Srishti from the

Drishti of the Sastras. There is an intimate relationship between the Netra and Sastra. Sastra describes what the Netra sees and Netra sees what the Sastra describes.

Three Steps to God-realisation

As the scriptures say, there are three steps to God-realisation which a Sadhaka should undertake – Jnatum, Drashtum and Praveshtum (to know, to see and to experience). First, you hear from someone that a particular item is available in the market. That is Jnatum. Listening is the first step. Then you go to the market and see the particular item. That is Drashtum. Merely by hearing about it or by seeing it, your hunger will not be satiated. Your hunger will be satisfied only when you partake of it. That is Praveshtum. These three steps correspond to *Sravanam*, *Mananam* and *Nididhyasanam* (listening, contemplation and practice). The first step is listening to the spiritual truth. Thereafter, one should contemplate upon that. And then ultimately put it into practice. These are the three very important steps on the spiritual path.

In every field, *Sravanam* (listening) is the most important first step. Even in the nine paths of devotion, *Sravanam* is the first step: *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Archanam* (worship), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (self-surrender). You begin with *Sravanam* and gradually reach the stage of *Atma Nivedanam* (total surrender) which marks the completion of the journey. *Poornamada Poornamidam, Poornat Poornamudachyate, P o o r n a s y a P o o r n a m a d a y a ,*



Poornamevavashishyate (That is full, this is full. When the full is taken out of the full, what remains is again the full). The completion of the journey marks full circle. If you leave the journey in the middle, then it is incomplete like a semi-circle. When you complete the full circle, you reach the point from which you have begun. But if the journey is incomplete, it is like the letter C of English alphabet; it begins at one point and ends at another point. There is a wide gap between the point of beginning and the end-point. This wide gap denotes doubt. Doubt is like a deep valley which is impossible to cross. Therefore, get rid of doubt and endeavour to complete the journey. Your learning of the alphabet is complete only when you start from A and reach Z. But if you start from A and reach up to only S or any other letter in the middle, then your learning is incomplete. Once you start the journey, you should continue till you reach the goal. Likewise, spiritual journey begins with faith and ends in bliss.

On the nine-fold path of devotion, you begin with Sravanam and end with Atmanivedanam. Many people who come to Prasanthi Nilayam go back to their villages and tell others, "We have seen Sathya Sai Baba in Prasanthi Nilayam", and describe what they see in Prasanthi Nilayam. Only after hearing all this, others are motivated to come here. Unless and until they hear something about Prasanthi Nilayam, people do not book their tickets to come here. Hence, Sravanam is the first step for all human endeavours.

Divinity can only be Experienced

For all spiritual endeavours, faith is the first step. Without faith, life has no meaning. Every man should make faith as the basis

of his life. But some people lack faith. Why should you worry about them? It is their fate. Do not enter into argumentation with them. Leave them to their fate.

*For those who say yes, He will say yes,
For those who say no, He will say no,
It is only your tongue that says yes and no,
For Sai, everything is yes, yes, yes.*

(Telugu Poem)

Yes or no that your tongue utters are related to you. God has nothing to do with them. The same tongue that says 'no' also utters 'yes'. The same tongue utters both. Which would you believe? Would you believe 'yes'? or would you believe 'no'? As Jayadeva said, one should make sacred use of the tongue.

Oh tongue, the knower of taste! You are very sacred. Speak the truth in the most pleasing manner. Chant the Divine Names, Govinda, Madhava, Damodara incessantly. This is your foremost duty.

(Sanskrit Verse)

It is the tongue which enables us to chant the Divine Names, Govinda, Damodara, Madhava. These sacred names of God dance on the tongue. The tongue is like a stage on which all types of characters in the form of dolls come and perform their dance. The king comes, the queen comes, the Jawan (soldier) comes and also comes the peon. Similarly, there comes Rama and also Ravana. Therefore, the tongue is the stage for all the good and bad one speaks, and all types of characters perform their dances on it. It is only a witness and has nothing to do with the dance. A dumb person cannot speak. When he eats a sweet dish, he can only experience its sweetness but



cannot express it in words. Likewise, divinity can only be experienced and cannot be described. If somebody asks you to describe it, the only answer is silence. You should not waste your time and energy in unnecessary argumentation. *Vaade Vaade Varjathe Vairam* (argumentation leads to enmity). It does not develop love.

Therefore, you should develop faith in God. It is utter foolishness to proffer arguments about the non-existence of God. Why do you say that He does not exist? You say, God does not exist because He cannot be seen. Suppose, there is a person who is two metres tall, fair-complexioned, bald-headed and weighs sixty kg. These are all only his physical attributes which you can see. Do the physical features alone convey the truth about that person? The real truth about the person is what you are not able to see with your physical eyes.

These are his good or bad qualities like compassion, love, sympathy, hatred, forbearance, etc. Since you are not able to see these qualities, can you say that they are not there? It is an act of foolishness to say what you do not see does not exist. These qualities which you are not able to see determine his humanness or the lack of it.



There are three steps to God-realisation which a Sadhaka should undertake – Jnatum, Drashtum and Praveshtum (to know, to see and to experience). First, you hear from someone that a particular item is available in the market. That is Jnatum. Listening is the first step. Then you go to the market and see the particular item. That is Drashtum. Merely by hearing about it or by seeing it, your hunger will not be satiated. Your hunger will be satisfied only when you partake of it. That is Praveshtum. These three steps correspond to Sravanam, Mananam and Nididhyasanam (listening, contemplation and practice). The first step is listening to the spiritual truth. Thereafter, one should contemplate upon that. And then ultimately put it into practice.

God Permeates the Entire Universe

Oh Jiva! Understand the mystery of this puppet show. It is your unseen qualities that make you experience the results of your actions. (Telugu Song)

The physical body that you see is not responsible for your happiness or sorrow.



Your unseen qualities are the cause of your happiness or sorrow. Therefore, it is foolishness to put your faith in all that you see. There is air all around you but you cannot see it. Can you say air does not exist? Can anybody live without air? Air does exist but it cannot be seen.

The same truth was taught by Sage Uddalaka to his son Swetaketu. Swetaketu asked, "Oh father! Where is God? The Vedas and the scriptures say that He is all-pervasive". Uddalaka said to his son, "My dear! This truth cannot be explained in words. You can know it only by undertaking Sadhana and by the grace of Guru and God. Let me illustrate this with an example". Uddalaka asked his son to bring a tumbler of water and a little salt. He then told him to mix salt in the water and stir it. When Swetaketu did as instructed by his father, the salt got completely dissolved in water. The salt which he had brought in hand was now nowhere to be seen. The eyes which had seen the salt earlier were not able to see it now. Does it mean the salt has disappeared altogether? No. The salt is there but it has got dissolved and totally mixed with water. Similarly, God exists. He permeates everything in this universe in such a way that He cannot be seen by the physical eyes. However, He can be seen by the eye of wisdom. When you bring the salt, you can see it with your physical eyes. But when it gets dissolved in water, you have to experience its presence with the eye of wisdom. Therefore, it is foolishness to ask for direct evidence of God's presence. You have to take into consideration the indirect evidence. In this way, Uddalaka explained the principle of all-pervasiveness of God.

Fire is bound to exist where there is smoke. Without fire, there can be no smoke.

Similarly, without God, there can be no world. How can there be life without God? It is impossible, totally impossible. Everything happens as per God's Will. Here is a small example. When a cow gives birth to a calf, it licks the calf's body with its tongue and makes it clean. As soon as the cow cleans the calf's body, the calf stands up on its legs and goes to the cow's udder to drink milk. Who has shown the udder to the calf and made it understand that milk is available at the udder? It is all predetermined by God. Without understanding such subtle truths, people foolishly argue that there is no God. When you do not know what is the next thought that will arise in your mind, how can you understand God? Since people do not listen to good teachings, foolishness is on the rise.

*Oh man! Listen to words of good advice,
But you do not pay heed to good advice
and indulge in foolish acts.*

*Not knowing how to get rid of your
desires, you have become their slave.*

*Get rid of your desires and give up hatred.
Take refuge in Sai and pray to Him.*

(Telugu Song)

Do not Doubt the Existence of God

Man is unable to get rid of his Vasanas (cravings). What are these Vasanas? These are the impressions of the actions of his past lives. When I tell you something about your past life, you will not believe it. How am I concerned whether you believe it or not? Whether you believe it or not, your past life does cast an influence on your present life. Everybody has a past, present and future. Without past, how can there be any present? The seed of present has come from the tree

of past. It is from this seed of present that the tree of future will grow. Therefore, past and future are like trees whereas present is like a seed. A gigantic tree is hidden in a tiny seed. The Vedas declare, *Anoraneeyan Mahato Maheeyan* (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest). God is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. Though He is not visible to the physical eye, you can experience Him. This is a rose which you can see. But its fragrance cannot be seen; it can only be experienced. Fragrance has no form but the flower that gives the fragrance has a form. Similarly, love has no form, but the mother who gives you love has a form. Love, bliss, fragrance, all these have no form but the objects that give them have a form. It is the form that is the source of the formless attribute. Therefore, it is foolish to ask for direct evidence of God's existence. There are many things which are beyond the realm of direct evidence.

Here is a small example. Can you see your own eyes? How can you say that you have eyes when you cannot see them? It is only when you have a mirror in front of you, you can see your eyes. You say, "my mind". What is the form of the mind? Can you see your mind? If you cannot see, how can you believe that you have a mind? In the same way, you cannot see God but it is foolishness to doubt His existence. Though He is not visible, He is the basis of the entire universe. You see a gigantic tree. But it was not visible when it was in the form of a tiny seed. Though air is all-pervasive, you cannot see it. Similarly, God is everywhere but is not visible to the physical eye. God is all-pervasive. He is present in the form of air and all the five elements. God is described as *Sabda Brahmanayi, Characharamayi, Jyotirmayi,*

Vangmayi, Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi and Sreemayi (embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion and wealth). Sound cannot be seen, it can only be heard. Form can only be seen; it cannot be heard. The tongue can only speak but cannot see. In this manner, every element is endowed with a particular power.

Speaking Truth is Easier than Telling Lies

Blood is present in all parts of the body. When doctors perform blood test, they take a sample of blood from one part of the body and find out if there is any malady in it. There is no need for them to take blood from every part of the body for this purpose. Though blood is the same in all the limbs of the body, each limb has a specific function to perform. Can you know the taste of Laddu by merely holding it in your hand? No. You can know its taste only when you place it on your tongue. When the same blood is present in the hands and also in the tongue, then why can't hands know the taste of the Laddu? Only the tongue is endowed with the power of taste. Similarly, though God is all-pervasive, man can experience the power of divinity depending upon his capability. God does exist, there is no doubt about it. Without God, there can be no world. If you deny the existence of God, it means you deny your own existence. Your Atma is your God. You should have faith in your Self and faith in God. If you lack faith in God, it means you lack faith in yourself. If you don't have faith in yourself, then how can you have faith in God? First of all, have faith in yourself. That is self-confidence. Faith is very important for man. It is his very life-breath. If you lack the life-breath of faith, then you are no better than a corpse. So long



as there is life-breath in the body, it is Sivam (auspicious). Once the life-breath goes out, the body becomes Savam (corpse). Therefore, one's life-breath is Sivam and the body devoid of it is Savam. You see the idol of Siva made by a sculptor and imagine Siva is one with Ganga flowing from his matted locks. No. Your life-breath is Siva. Every being is endowed with life-breath. *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). Easwara is present in all beings in the form of life-breath. God is all-pervasive. It is possible to experience Him.

The boy who spoke earlier talked about the Vedic teaching, *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak truth, practise righteousness). He said, it was not easy to put it into practice. It is a great mistake. There is nothing easier than that. It is very easy to report events as they happen. For example, when you say that Swami today came at 4 o'clock and started His Discourse early, it is true. How easy it is to report any matter as it is! It does not require any planning. But if you have to speak untruth, you have to do a lot of scheming so that people may believe it. In order to speak untruth, you have to resort to nasty tricks. How difficult it is to tell a lie, whereas speaking truth is so very easy! It is a mistake to think otherwise. You think, speaking truth is difficult because you are habituated to speaking untruth. Since you have developed this bad habit of telling lies, you are unable to recognise the importance of truth. This weakness is prevalent everywhere and afflicts everyone in this world.

Here is a small example. Suppose, somebody dies in a house in your neighbourhood, and you go there to offer your condolences to the family. In such a situation if you tell them the truth, "What is this? Birth

and death are natural for everyone; one who is born is sure to die", then the people in the house will be very angry with you, thinking, what a stone-hearted person you are! But instead if you say, "How did he die? Which doctor treated him? What medicine he was using? How long was he in hospital"?, then they will be satisfied that you have sympathised with them and shared their grief. But this satisfaction is only temporary. The truth is, where there is birth, there has to be death; whosoever is born is bound to die. You would have seen that return date is always mentioned on railway compartments. After reaching the destination, the compartment has to return by the due date. This body is also like a railway compartment. Although return date is not seen on it, it has surely to return by the stipulated date. When it is sure that the body has to return by a certain date, then why should you worry about it? Why should you feel sad? You are worried because you have made a habit of worrying. Mistaken thinking is the cause of this worry. You don't have faith in the truth of your reality. Faith is truth, truth is faith. Faith leads to truth; truth leads to peace; peace leads to happiness. Happiness is heaven, sorrow is hell. Therefore, never give room to sorrow. Face all situations with faith. With faith, you can achieve anything. Without faith, you can achieve nothing. Therefore, develop faith. You can develop faith only by contemplating on God.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Govinda Hare Gopala Hare Hey Gopi Gopa Bala ...*")

– From Bhagavan's Divine Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 7th July 1996.



News from Sai Centres

PRAYERS OF DEVOTEES



FOLLOWING THE 28TH MARCH 2011 news about the health of Bhagavan's physical body, devotees across the globe joined together in prayers, devotional singing and special Sadhana. Millions of devotees jointly took part in Global Akhanda Bhajan which was held in all parts of the world from 16th to 18th April 2011. Devotees intensified their Sadhana through ardent prayers, special chanting of Gayatri Mantra, Sai Gayatri, peace prayer Samasta Loka Sukhino Bhavantu (May all the beings of all the worlds be happy!), devotional singing and practising Bhagavan's teachings.

MAURITIUS

Devotees in Mauritius immersed themselves in prayers with recitation of Gayatri Mantra, Rudram and Bhajans. The first nationwide prayer session which included Rudram chanting and devotional singing on 3rd April at the Wootun Sathya Sai Centre, Curepipe was attended by about



Devotees participating in a prayer and devotional session in Mauritius.

500 devotees. On 10th April, about 150 devotees attended the second nationwide prayer session, which took place at Anandum, Vacoas. This session included Rudram chanting, Gayatri Mantra chanting and devotional singing.

EUROPE

In Southern Europe, a special Sadhana programme to practise Bhagavan's teachings was started. Sathya Sai Centres in several Southern European countries organised special prayer and chanting sessions. In



Devotees of Italy taking part in a special prayer and devotional session in Rome.

Italy, about 300 devotees gathered at the Mother Sai building for a special chanting session during the weekend of 9th April 2011. In Rome, Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra and Gayatri Mantra were chanted 108 times each followed by devotional singing on 16th April 2011.

CANADA

In Canada, devotees intensified their personal prayers and family prayers. Sathya Sai devotees from Toronto York Centre

organised daily devotional singing for one hour. On 30th March 2011, a special prayer session by the Sathya Sai Centre in Saskatoon included Sai Gayatri chanting. Sathya Sai Centres in Abbotsford and Winnipeg organised a special prayer session on 31st March which included Sai Gayatri chanting. Many Sathya Sai Centres across Canada recited Rudram and Gayatri Mantra in addition to the regular devotional singing sessions. Devotees in Edmonton did 24 hours of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra chanting from 2nd April to 3rd April. On 9th April, Toronto South Centre devotees organised nine hours of Gayatri Mantra chanting.

U. S. A.

Since 28th March 2011, every week night, Sathya Sai youth across the country came together for three hours of Gayatri Mantra chanting. They also intensified their efforts to practise Bhagavan's teachings.

On 2nd April 2011, about 500 devotees from Southern California took part in a special 12-hour devotional offering to Bhagavan at the Sanatan Dharma Temple in Norwalk. The offering included one hour of Veda chanting and Sai Gayatri chanting followed by devotional singing by the Sathya Sai Centres across the region. The offering concluded with one hour of Sai Gayatri chanting followed by the chanting of the peace prayer 21 times. Sathya Sai Centres added the chanting of Gayatri Mantra 108 times and repetition of the peace prayer 21 times to their weekly programmes. Individual devotees and their families chanted Sai Gayatri 108 times and the peace prayer 21 times on daily basis.

Sathya Sai University alumni in Southern California joined together for prayer and

Sadhana. On the morning of 4th April, Lord Siva and Dhanvantri were propitiated with the Maha Mrityunjaya Homa and the Dhanvantri Homa at the Hindu Malibu Temple, Malibu. In the evening, the alumni offered Ganapati Homa, Sudarshana Homa, Rudra Homa, Dhanvantri Homa and Maha Mrityunjaya Homa at the Sanatan Dharma Temple, Norwalk. Over 100 devotees participated in the Homa and Bhajans that followed while Rudra Abhishekam was being performed. On 9th April, the alumni organised a special prayer offering in Glendale. The offering included Veda chanting, Sai Gayatri and Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra chanting, Sai Ashtottara chanting (108 Names of Bhagavan) 15 times and Bhajans. Over 80 people participated in this offering. On 10th April, the alumni distributed food items and care kits to about 150 people at two shelters in Santa Monica. 150 people received food items and care kits.

Devotees in the Northeast Region of U.S.A. undertook a prayer Sadhana called L.E.A.P. (Leave Everything And Pray). Every day at a scheduled 30-minute time slot in the morning and in the evening, devotees offered prayers to Bhagavan. Devotees got together to chant Gayatri Mantra 108 times, Sai Gayatri 108 times and the peace prayer 108 times. During the local Sathya Sai Centre meetings, devotees were engaged in prayers, which included hour-long chanting of "Om Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaya Namaha" (salutations to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba). On 17th April, devotees from the Boston Sathya Sai Centre and the local Sathya Sai Centres took part in a special devotional singing session. Devotees from the Sathya Sai Centres in Buffalo,



Rochester, Syracuse and Ithaca collectively offered daily devotional singing and Gayatri Mantra chanting. A six-hour long regional devotional singing session took place on 10th April. On 15th and 17th April, devotees from the Buffalo Sathya Sai Centre took part in special devotional singing and Gayatri Mantra chanting for 11 hours. Collectively, the Northeastern region devotees also took part in Akhanda Gayatri Mantra chanting.

On 9th April, devotees from the Sathya Sai Centre in East Brunswick took part in a six-hour long regional prayer session held in Morganville, New Jersey. Sathya Sai devotees from the Mid-Atlantic Region that includes the States of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York (New York City and Long Island), Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia attended this offering of prayers. East Brunswick Sathya Sai Centre devotees also took part in daily collective prayer sessions that included the chanting of Gayatri Mantra, Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra and special Slokas. Devotees who were unable to attend these prayer sessions in person participated using teleconference. On 16th April, devotees took part in a health faith fair organised in Trenton, New Jersey for the needy.

Devotees in the Seattle area organised 24-hour devotional singing programme from 8th to 9th April at the Good Samaritan Episcopal Church in Sammamish. The programme included chanting of Gayatri Mantra 108 times, Suprabhatam and melodious songs in multiple languages with active participation by children and adults. Seattle devotees also took part in the 36 hours of Global Akhanda Bhajan from 16th to 18th April 2011.



Devotees of Seattle area took part in Global Akhanda Bhajan from 16th to 18th April 2011 and organised prayers and Mantra chanting programmes.

Devotees from the Atlanta Sathya Sai Centre chanted Gayatri Mantra round the clock. Rudram was chanted every morning via conference call. SSE children offered their prayers through group chanting during the weekly SSE classes as well as individual



Devotees of Atlanta, U.S.A. engaged in prayer and devotional singing.

practice at home. A group of lady devotees organised a daily conference call to meditate on the voice of Bhagavan chanting the Gayatri Mantra, followed by their chanting of Sai Gayatri.

Three Sathya Sai Centres in the St. Louis area organised special Bhajans and prayer sessions every Saturday afternoon, and the Sathya Sai Centres opened all day for any devotee to come in for special prayers for

Bhagavan. On 16th and 17th April, Bhajans were conducted for five hours and three hours, respectively. These sessions began with the chanting of Gayatri Mantra 21 times and Sathya Sai Ashtottara Namavali (108 Names of Bhagavan).

Sathya Sai Centres in Phoenix, Arizona held two all-night Bhajan sessions. All Sai Centres in Colorado came together and organised six prayer sessions in Denver. Each prayer lasting about 3 to 4 hours included chanting 108 Names of Bhagavan, Rudram chanting and devotional singing. Northern Colorado Sathya Sai Centre devotees perpetually chanted "Om Sai Ram, I Love You". The Albuquerque, New Mexico Centre had special Bhajans for Bhagavan following which devotees kept a candle lit in their homes for 12 hours. The Santa Fe, New Mexico Sathya Sai Centre chanted Gayatri Mantra every Thursday, as well as during preparation of food for the homeless.

CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

On 9th and 10th April, devotees from the Sathya Sai Centres in Cuba, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador Sathya Sai Organisations took part in a 24-hour devotional singing session. On 17th, 18th and 19th April, devotees from these countries joined the 48-hour Global Akhanda Bhajan at different times. The programme included chanting of the Gayatri Mantra and Bhajans, expressing their love for Bhagavan.

SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka, devotees chanted Vedic Mantras including Gayatri Mantra and Sai



Devotees in large numbers participated in Bhajans and special prayers held in various parts of Sri Lanka.

Gayatri daily. At the Colombo Main Centre, ladies wing, Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) children, Sai Youth and Seva Dal volunteers conducted special devotional programmes. On 10th April, about 300 people took part in a 12-hour Akhanda Bhajan session organised by the Northern Region Jaffna Centre. Sathya Sai Centres in the Eastern Region, the Sathya Sai Centre of Vavuniya and the Sathya Sai Centre of Trincomalee organised special prayer sessions.

SINGAPORE

Devotees commenced daily congregational prayers on 3rd April with chanting of Rudram, Purusha Suktam, Lalitha Sahasranama (1,000 names of goddess Lalitha), Gayatri Mantra and Sai Gayatri at Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre on Moulmein Road. The daily prayers included three days of Tibetan Buddhist chanting focusing on the Medicine Buddha prayer – a prayer of healing. The devotees also participated in Likhita Japa (prayer through writing) of 'Om Sri Sai Ram'. All Sathya Sai Centres have added Gayatri Mantra chanting to the weekly Bhajan sessions as a special prayer offering to Bhagavan. Several individual devotees



Besides daily congregational prayers and Mantra chanting, Singapore devotees participated in 34 hours of Akhanda Bhajan from 16th to 18th April 2011.

and small groups also conducted special prayers. Eighteen Sathya Sai Centres grouped together for 34 hours of prayers and Bhajans during the Global Akhanda Bhajan from 16th to 18th April 2011.

INDONESIA

Devotees from Sathya Sai Centres across Indonesia took part in a variety of prayer sessions. About 100 devotees from the Sathya Sai Centres in Medan took part in the Global Akhanda Bhajan during the weekend



Devotees from various parts of Indonesia participated in special prayers, Mantra chanting and Akhanda Bhajan held in Medan and Denpasar.

of 16th April. In addition to the Bhajans, Gayatri Mantra, Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra and 108 Names of Bhagavan were chanted. About 150 devotees from the Sathya Sai Centre in Denpasar took part in the Global Akhanda Bhajan held in Jakarta for 12 hours each on 16th and 17th April and for 10 hours on 18th April.

THAILAND

On 16th, 17th and 18th April, collective prayers and Bhajans were organised in various parts of Thailand. In Bangkok, devotees from three Sathya Sai Centres joined together at the Sai Prashanti Centre



Collective prayers and Akhanda Bhajan from 16th to 18th April 2011 were held in Thailand, wherein devotees from various Sathya Sai Centres took part.

for the Global Akhanda Bhajan. Devotees from the Sathya Sai Centres in Rayong, Nonthaburi, Maesai and Chiangmai also took part in the Global Akhanda Bhajan. At the Maesai Sathya Sai Centre, Hanuman Chalisa (prayerful offering to Lord Hanuman) and Sai Gayatri were chanted.

SOUTH AFRICA

Devotees from 124 Sathya Sai Centres and Bhajan groups in South Africa chanted



Besides Mantra chanting and Bhajan singing, special prayers were offered in temples and churches throughout South Africa.

Vedic Mantras and sang Bhajans daily. On 9th April, Yajnas were performed in which about 2,000 devotees participated at different venues. The prayers were further intensified with great dedication during the Global Akhanda Bhajan on 16th and 17th April. In celebrating Hanuman Jayanti on 17th April, devotees continued their prayers to Bhagavan with the rendition of Hanuman Chalisa. Some newspapers in South Africa covered the news about Bhagavan's health on front pages.

Mass prayers, Bhajans and Mantra chanting programmes were conducted in



Russian devotees participating in a special prayer session.

many other countries of the world which include Malaysia, Kenya, Botswana, Greece,



Mantra chanting and Bhajan singing were organised in Kuwait on 8th, 14th, 15th and 16th April 2011.

Azerbaijan, Cuba, Laos, Russia, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Ruwais,



Devotees from Sathya Sai Centres across Greece took part in the Global Akhanda Bhajan on 16th, 17th and 18th April 2011.



In Laos, devotees took part in the Global Akhanda Bhajan on 16th to 18th April 2011.

Sharjah, Iran, Qatar, Turkey, Republic of Belarus and Nigeria.

– Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation

BHARAT

Andhra Pradesh: All the Sathya Sai Seva Centres in 23 districts of Andhra Pradesh including the rural and tribal villages unitedly and wholeheartedly started chanting of prayers, Bhajans, Sai Gayatri, Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra and Rudram right from 28th March 2011. Devotees acted spontaneously with firm faith and steadfast devotion. Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation of Guntur needs a special mention for their



Besides Bhajan and Mantra chanting, Maha Mrityunjaya Homas were conducted in Andhra Pradesh.

instant response and continuous programmes of prayers and spiritual activities, viz., Akhanda Bhajan, Maha Mrityunjaya Homas, Ekadasa Rudrabhisheka and Hanuman Chalisa recitation.

Relay Bhajans for 24 hours in Bhajan Mandalis and Samithis across the State were conducted continuously, chanting of Sai Gayatri was performed more than one crore times, Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra four lakh times, Rudram three lakh times and Hanuman Chalisa 2,500 times. About 70 Maha Mrityunjaya Homas and 75 Ekadasa Rudrabhishekas were conducted in the State.

Delhi: Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, Delhi-NCR organised prayers across the National Capital Region since 28th March 2011. Maha Mrityunjaya Japa (recitation) and Bhajans were held in East Delhi on 3rd and 6th April 2011.

A special period of remembrance, special prayers and service activities were organised from 9th to 18th April. This period coincided with Swami's visit to Delhi-NCR in April 2010. Two 10-hour long Akhanda Bhajans



Akhanda Bhajans were held on 9th and 10th April 2011 as part of spiritual activities conducted in Delhi-NCR.

and Maha Mrityunjaya recitations were held on 9th and 10th April and again on 16th and 17th April 2011 at Sri Sathya Sai International Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. Delhi-NCR commemorated the Divine Visit 2010 with a series of district level programmes titled 'Memories of Pure Love'. Every district organised special prayers in respective areas comprising Nagar Sankirtan, Bhajans, Japa and Narayana Seva. Last year, Swami had arrived in Delhi on 9th April and this day holds a great significance for all the devotees in Delhi-NCR. East District of Delhi organised a programme of Yajna, Japa and Narayana Seva on this day. On the same day, Bal

Vikas children from Faridabad district offered their loving prayers at the Lotus Feet of our Beloved Bhagavan. Children chanted Gayatri Mantra followed by Maha Mrityunjaya Japa. All districts of Delhi-NCR held special prayer, Bhajan and Mantra chanting sessions in various parts of the State.

Gujarat: As soon as the devotees heard that Swami was admitted in the hospital on 28th March 2011, all the Samithis and Bhajan Mandalis started chanting Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra, Gayatri Mantra and Sai Gayatri Mantra. Bhajans ranging from a period of two hours to twelve hours daily were also



Besides mass prayers, Bhajans and Mantra chanting, Rudra Yajnas and Gayatri Yajnas were conducted by Sai devotees of Gujarat.

organised by Samithis and Bhajan Mandalis. On each Sunday, Rudra Yajna and Gayatri Yajna were performed. During this period, Swami's teaching on negative and positive vibrations and the role of devotees during such situations were read out from Swami's Discourses. Japa of 'Aum Sri Sai Ram' was conducted simultaneously for 12 hours. A large number of devotees took part in the mass prayers.

Haryana and Chandigarh: Daily prayers were performed regularly at each and

every devotee's house in the State at 8 p.m. by doing Japa of nine Malas (rosary) of Aum Namaha Sivaya, one Mala of Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra and recitation of Sundar Kanda. Beside this, 12 hour Akhanda Bhajan, prayer and recitation of Sundar



Besides Bhajans and Mantra chanting, devotees of Haryana and Chandigarh performed collective recitation of Sundar Kanda of the Ramayana.

Kanda were organised on 16th, 17th and 18th April collectively by all the Samithis of the State where the attendance of the devotees was in hundreds. Intensive prayers were started from 22nd April 2011 for reciting Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra 1.25 lakh times by devotees in each district of Haryana and Chandigarh.

Karnataka: Prayers and spiritual activities were conducted by devotees in all parts of Karnataka. A special Akhanda Bhajan programme was conducted at Brindavan from 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. on 10th April 2011. Bal Vikas children, Super Speciality Hospital staff and students, Bhajan singers from Samithis in Bengaluru participated in this Bhajan. The programme was telecast live by "Sri Sankara Bhakti Channel". Akhanda Bhajans of different durations ranging from



Devotees participating in Akhanda Bhajan at Brindavan, Whitefield, Bengaluru on 10th April 2011.

3 hours to 12 hours were conducted in all Samithis in the State of Karnataka. Akhanda Bhajan for 3 days on 16th, 17th and 18th April 2011 from 4.00 p.m. to 4.00 a.m., 5.00 p.m. to 5.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. to 5.00 a.m. was conducted at Brindavan in Bengaluru and all district headquarters of the Sai Organisation of the State. Maha Mrityunjaya Japa and Homa, Ayushya Homa, Dhanvantri Homa, Rudram chanting were conducted in most of the Samithis across the State. Durga Saptashati Parayanam with Chandi Homa was performed in more than 20 Sai Centres.

Kerala: Special spiritual programmes were organised in Kerala since 5th April 2011. These included Akhanda Bhajans, Gayatri Japa and Sahasranama Archana in all the Sai Samithis of Kerala. Akhanda Bhajans were also conducted in villages adopted by the Sai Organisation under Sri Sathya Sai Village Integrated Programme. A number of Sai Samithis organised Maha Mrityunjaya Homa in selected Siva temples in the State. Besides, several Samithis organised recitation of Tapovanam for one week. At the individual level, Sai devotees in the State conducted the recitation of Sai Gayatri and Ashtottara Archana in their houses daily at 6.00 a.m.

Maharashtra and Goa: Maha Mrityunjaya Yajna was held at Dharmakshetra on 1st April 2011, wherein more than 500 devotees gathered for mass prayers. The prayer meeting started with the chief priest explaining the importance of devotees' prayer for the Lord. Soon, the atmosphere reverberated with chanting of Vishnu Sahasranama (1,000 Names of Lord Vishnu), after which various offerings were made into the holy fire while the devotees chanted Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra. The Yajna ended with Poornahuti and traditional Arati with the rhythmic beating of drums.



Devotees participating in Maha Mrityunjaya Yajna held at Dharmakshetra, Mumbai on 1st April 2011.

Hundreds of devotees across Mumbai gathered at Dharmakshetra on 10th April 2011 where three powerful Pujas were performed – Rudra Abhisheka, Maha Mrityunjaya Yajna and Dhanvantri Yajna. Rudra Abhisheka (a ceremonial bathing of Siva Linga) was performed on a Linga which was created by Bhagavan Himself many years ago. The Abhisheka was done with water, milk, honey and a holy concoction called Panchamrita as prescribed in the Vedas to the invigorating vibrations of the sacred Rudram which was chanted 11 times.



Poomahuti (final oblations) being offered in the Yajna performed at Dharmakshetra on 10th April 2011.

All present were blessed with the opportunity to do the Abhisheka and also to join in the continuous chanting. Thereafter, Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra was recited 1,008 times while the Mrityunjaya Yajna was performed. Later, the god of medicines, Lord Dhanvantri was also invoked through the Dhanvantri Yajna. The prayer session ended at 8.00 p.m.

Punjab: Akhanda Path (recitation of Guru Granth Sahib), Veda chanting, Bhajans and Nagar Sankirtan were conducted all over Punjab on a daily basis. Langars (free kitchens) in various districts of Punjab were arranged. These programmes commenced



Besides Bhajan and Veda chanting, recitation of Guru Granth Sahib was conducted in all parts of Punjab.

with effect from 7th April 2011. A documentary entitled "The Miracle of Pure Love" was aired on Punjab TV channels to make people aware of the life and mission of Bhagavan.

Tamil Nadu: Millions of Sai devotees all over Tamil Nadu spontaneously organised Bhajan singing, Veda chanting, Rudra Parayanam and spiritual Homas in all the 27 Sai districts and 351 Sai Samithis of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Tamil Nadu.

An Akhanda Bhajan was held at Sundaram, the Divine Abode of Bhagavan at Chennai on 7th April 2011 from 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. All members, devotees and general public in large numbers participated



Bhajans, Veda chanting and Yajnas formed part of the spiritual activities conducted by the devotees in all parts of Tamil Nadu.

in the Bhajan with great devotion. Bal Vikas Gurus and alumni of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, both ladies and gents, also participated in the Akhanda Bhajan in different slots.

Three more Akhanda Bhajans were conducted at Sundaram on 10th April 2011, 17th April 2011 and 23rd April 2011 with large participation of devotees, Bal Vikas children, alumni of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and general public.

From our Archives

REALISATION OF GOD IS THE GOAL OF LIFE

UNCONTROLLED LIFE REDUCES MAN TO ANIMAL LEVEL



WE HEAR in common parlance the terms mother, father, preceptor and God being used in that order. This has a significance of its own. It is the mother that a child sees as soon as it is born. The mother shows the father to the child. The father leads him to the preceptor and the preceptor leads him to God. Everyone should understand the inner significance of these four terms.

The Way to Liberation

We hear from spiritual aspirants the four terms – Bhakti (devotion), Jnana (wisdom), Vairagya (renunciation) and Tattwa (Reality) in the same order. There is a significance in the order in which these terms are mentioned. Devotion awakens wisdom, wisdom promotes renunciation and renunciation confers the knowledge of Reality. We



Realisation of God is the goal and destiny of human life. From the moment of birth, suffering pursues man throughout his life in one form or the other. If he wants to maintain equanimity and peace in the face of all these ordeals, he has to lead a righteous life with firm faith in God. There is no need to give up the normal duties of a student or a householder. But everything that is done should be done as an offering to God. Thereby every ordinary act becomes sacred. Love for God should express itself in the form of consecration of every action. This is My Message to you on this sacred day.



can reach the mansion of Mukti (liberation) if we walk on the stepping stones of devotion, wisdom, renunciation and the knowledge of Reality. The main message of the Bhagavata is devotion. The mother is the symbol of Bhakti (devotion), the father, of Jnana (wisdom) and the preceptor, of Vairagya (renunciation). God is the very embodiment of Atmic knowledge.

The Bhagavata in its very title testifies to this truth. The term 'Bhagavatamu' in Telugu is made up of five letters: Bha, ga, va, ta, mu. Bha signifies Bhakti (devotion), ga stands for Jnana (wisdom), va signifies Vairagya (renunciation), ta symbolises Tattwa (the knowledge of Reality) and mu signifies Mukti (liberation). The Bhagavata bestows on us liberation by leading us through devotion, wisdom, renunciation and the knowledge of Reality. Prahlada has given us a *Dwadashakshara Mantra*, a twelve-lettered holy formula: *Throva Vedhuku Konuta Dodda Buddhi*. This consists of twelve letters in Telugu. It means that the highest intelligence lies in finding the way. What is the way to be sought? It is the way to Divinity. How is it to be found? It is to be found by knowing the source from which you have come. You have come from the Divine and you have to go back to the Divine.

Journey from God to God

The seventh stanza in the 15th Chapter of the Bhagavadgita reveals that we have come from God. The Lord's declaration is: *Mamaivamsho Jivaloke Jivabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). This means, you are an aspect of Me. You are not an aspect of Nature and its five elements. Since you are an aspect of Mine, there is no peace and joy for you till you

The parents should show no indulgence towards children who go astray. It is parents' misplaced affection which lets erring children go uncorrected. What use is there in having children who do not follow righteousness? What did Dhritarashtra gain from his hundred wicked sons? He would not restrain them despite the warning of Krishna and Vidura. Ultimately, the entire family was wiped out. There is no meaning in rejoicing when a child is born. The time for rejoicing will come when the child grows up, earns name and fame and brings credit to his parents.

reach and merge in Me". Just as a child has no existence without the mother, a river must seek the ocean from which it has come, the branch of a tree cannot survive separately from the tree, and a fish cannot live outside its sustaining element water, so also man, who has come from God, cannot have real happiness until he unites with God.

One devotee sang in Kannada language thus: "Having forgotten You, I have come to this world. Leaving the Eternal that You are, I have plunged into this transient, temporary world. What joy can I reap in this clod of earth as all joys are in You alone"? We are born in this world because we forget God. We have to find our way back to God, our destination, retracing the steps by which we have come. "All living beings have to go back to the source from which they came into existence," says the Bhagavata. It is our misfortune that we have forgotten this vital message today.

To remember the source from which we have come is the essential spiritual endeavour that every man should make.

Always Remember the Goal of your Life

Instead of making efforts to realise the Atma, man is wasting his time in the frivolous pursuit of Anna (food). Animals are always busy seeking food. Man, who is endowed with intelligence, should not be content to remain like animals. He should strive to reach the Reality. Food, sleep, fear and mating are common to men as well as birds and beasts. Man's life today is largely confined to these four things. Human birth should be used to realise the divinity within and not in frittering it away in sensual pursuits. Chaitanya declared: "We have installed today vicious thoughts and feelings on the throne of our heart instead of making it the seat of the Lord".

It is obvious that most of us have to lead a normal worldly life, but it is not the life in which you should be wholly immersed. It is not Samsara (phenomenal world) that follows you all through. It is the Samskara, the purity that you have achieved, that stands by you in afterlife. Some elders come to Swami and pray to Him to show them the way to God. What is the way? The way is to journey back to the place from which you have come. Suppose, you go to a town and stay there in a hotel for a few days. You have to come back after finishing your work in the town; you cannot live in the hotel forever, mistaking it to be your home. The phenomenal world is like a hotel to which you have come to experience the consequences of your actions in the past. The body is a room in the hotel in which you have to undergo the Karmic consequences. Time and body should be

used for carrying out the mission on which you have come. On the contrary, you are engaged in accumulating wealth, gold and other material possessions. It is true that you need money to lead your life in this world. But there should be a limit to the acquisition of worldly objects. True welfare and happiness cannot be achieved without observing limits in life. An uncontrolled life reduces man to the level of an animal.

Forgetting the primary goal of life, people waste their time. Time is precious. Death is dangling its sword over every head. Our life span is fast diminishing like water leaking through a broken pot, or a melting block of ice. Death overtakes many even before they realise their mission in life.

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later, but the indweller has neither birth nor death. The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness. (Telugu Poem)

This is the truth that all have to realise. Fulfilment in life cannot be found by indulging in eating and drinking.

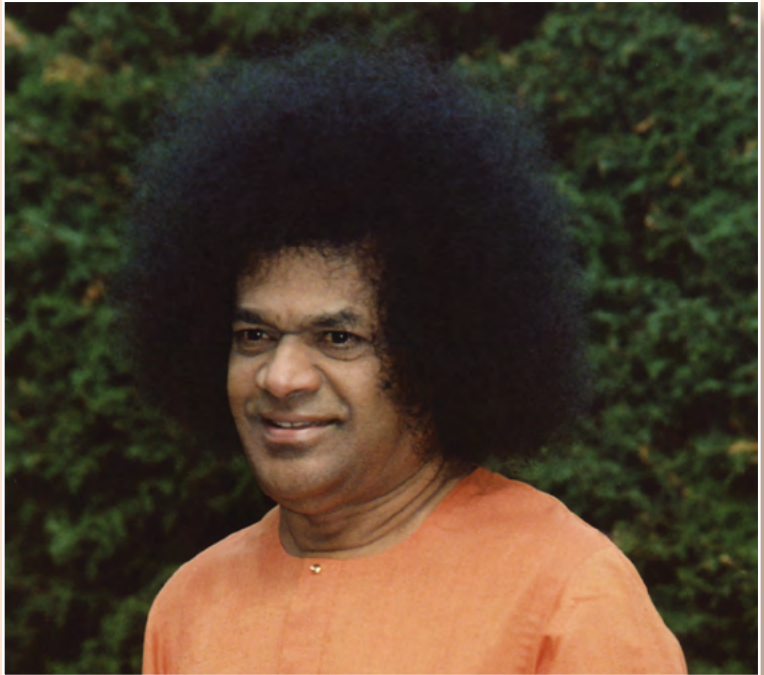
Mother is your First God

Love for mother has to be fostered by everyone. Today this love is prompted by desire for wealth and greed than by spontaneous affection for mother. Barely one in a million realises that he owes food, blood and life itself to the mother. Wherever she may be, mother is verily divine. It is said: *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava* (revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God). The mother stands foremost among these four. She is indeed the first teacher for everyone. It is only the mother



who strives most for securing the well-being of the child by showering on him boundless affection and love and showing him the father. Children today do not care to heed their mother's commands, but they hanker after their mother's wealth. What is the use of having children of this kind? They are a curse on the womb that bore them.

"Of what use is a son who does not lift both his hands in prayer to the Lord, who does not recite the Lord's Name with his mouth till it aches and who does not cherish the Lord in his heart? He is a disgrace to the mother who bore him." So says the Bhagavata. This single verse says all that is essential regarding devotion, action, spiritual wisdom and renunciation. What are the duties of the hand and the tongue for a true devotee? God has given each man one stomach but two hands to work with. If he works hard enough with both hands, he need not starve. There is no dearth of food. One who does not use his hands properly has no right to subsist on others. The Vedas have enjoined the supremacy of Karma (sacred action).



Whatever worldly possessions you may accumulate, whatever amenities you may enjoy, only faith in God will give you real peace of mind. An air conditioner may cool your body, but only grace of God can cool your heated brain and troubled heart. That grace will come to those who are grateful to their parents and render loving service to them. Starting with your mother, you should have gratitude for your father and preceptor. If you show gratitude to these three, you will realise the presence of the Triune Lord in them and you will reap the fruit of worshipping the Divine Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

Make Sacred Use of the Tongue

The tongue should be employed for performing sacred functions. One should speak sweet and sacred words and should not cause pain or hurt to others by one's

speech. It is a sin to abuse others. The Lord resides in everyone. The person who abuses others is, in fact, abusing the Lord Himself.

Jayadeva exhorted one and all to make sacred use of the tongue and chant the Divine Names, Govinda, Madhava and Damodara incessantly. The tongue experiences sorrow or suffering in its own home without straying into the homes of others. It discreetly decides beforehand whether an edible should be eaten or not. If it is sweet, it shows its consent by sending it down for digestion. But if it is bitter, it spits it out. If the tongue is properly used, it can be the means by which we can attain Godhood itself. Let the Name of the Lord always dance on your tongue, since remembrance of the Name is the easiest path to liberation in the Kali Age. We should use the tongue for uttering sweet and truthful words. This sacred instrument is often misused. The sins that the tongue commits are four: lying, backbiting, invecting and loquacity. The tongue becomes sanctified if it refrains from indulging in these four sins.

Pundarika's Exemplary Service to his Parents

Everyone should treasure in his heart love for his mother who bears him, rears him with love and fosters him with care. The person who forfeits his mother's love cannot earn the love of anyone.

Pundarika was devoted to the service of his aged parents. In doing so, he was adhering to a self-imposed rule. He would not take any food until his parents had gone to sleep. Once Lord Panduranga wanted to test Pundarika's love for his parents. He came to Pundarika's residence and stood before him when he was massaging the feet of his parents. Pundarika went on with

his service to his parents who had not yet gone to sleep. The Lord asked Pundarika to look at Him. Pundarika said that he was busy serving his parents. Panduranga said: "Pundarika, won't you like to experience a vision of Me even once"? Pundarika replied: "Until my parents go to sleep I cannot seek Your vision. If You are keen that I should see You, please wait for a while. I shall come to You after my parents have gone to sleep". So saying, he pushed a brick towards the Lord requesting Him to stand and wait till he had finished serving his parents. The Lord admired Pundarika's love and devotion towards his parents and blessed him. It was exemplary devotion of Pundarika towards his parents that made Lord Panduranga shower His grace on him.

From Koham to Soham

From the moment of birth, man is concerned about his future. The child's first cry is "Kwa, Kwa", "Wherefrom have I come"? If you examine what is happening to you everyday, you will understand why a child cries at the time of birth. Seeing the endless troubles in store, the child cries: "Where am I"? Forgetting the place from which they have come, men lose themselves in worldly desires. There are a few like Prahlada who realise their inherent divinity from the moment of their birth. They utter "Soham! Soham" (That I am) from the time of birth. But ordinary mortals ask "Koham? Koham? (Who am I? Who am I?)" They do not get the answer till the end of their lives. They do not realise that the answer is: I am God. A few earnest seekers start with Koham and end with the discovery, Soham.

Man is prone to commit mistakes either wittingly or unwittingly. But one



mistake he should never commit under any circumstances, that is, to forget what he owes to his mother. Love of a mother can redeem a man's life, whatever his other lapses may be. The greatest gift of the parents is the body with all its powers. Although the Lord rules over all lives, it is the parents who endow the body to the child. Clay and water are the gifts of Nature; but it is the potter who makes the pots out of them. Hence, gratitude to his parents is the primary obligation of man.

Youth, Wealth and Strength are Transient

Students these days ask, "Why should we be grateful to our parents"? They should remember that if they cause distress to their parents now by their behaviour, they should not be surprised if in the later years their own children cause similar distress to them. This is the law of action and reaction that is always at work. Do not get conceited because of your youth, wealth or strength. All these are transient. Adi Sankaracharya gave stern warning to man, "Do not be proud of your wealth, progeny and youth; the tide of time may destroy them in a moment". Placing their trust in these transitory possessions, men are forgetting the eternal verities and the source of real bliss. Whatever worldly possessions you may accumulate, whatever amenities you may enjoy, only faith in God will give you real peace of mind. An air conditioner may cool your body, but only grace of God can cool your heated brain and troubled heart. That grace will come to those who are grateful to their parents and render loving service to them. Starting with your mother, you should have gratitude for your father and preceptor. If you show gratitude to these three, you will realise the presence of the Triune Lord in them and you

We hear from spiritual aspirants the four terms – Bhakti (devotion), Jnana (wisdom), Vairagya (renunciation) and Tattwa (Reality) in the same order. There is a significance in the order in which these terms are mentioned. Devotion awakens wisdom, wisdom promotes renunciation and renunciation confers the knowledge of Reality. We can reach the mansion of Mukti (liberation) if we walk on the stepping stones of devotion, wisdom, renunciation and the knowledge of Reality.

will reap the fruit of worshipping the Divine Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

It is the Duty of Parents to Correct their Children

It is unfortunate that ninety per cent of the children today are spoilt by parents themselves. The parents do not exercise timely control over the children. If the wrong actions of the children are corrected then and there, they will grow up in the proper way. The parents should show no indulgence towards children who go astray. It is parents' misplaced affection which lets erring children go uncorrected. What use is there in having children who do not follow righteousness? What did Dhritarashtra gain from his hundred wicked sons? He would not restrain them despite the warning of Krishna and Vidura. Ultimately, the entire family was wiped out. There is no meaning in rejoicing when a child is born. The time for rejoicing will come when the child grows up,



earns name and fame and brings credit to his parents.

Every son should see that he makes his mother happy. He should seek from the mother nothing but her love and blessings. Mothers should strive to keep their children on the right path. Only such mothers and children are worthy of earning good name. When mothers and children act properly, the nation will develop along right lines. Righteousness will spread from the family to the whole world.

There are parents who question their children when they go to Swami: "What madness has seized you? Why are you going to Sai"? What form of madness do these parents desire for their progeny? Do they want them to become rowdies and goondas? Do they want them to be crazy about money? What will money give them which can equal the grace of God? What everyone should seek is the grace of God, which is a greater treasure than all the wealth of the world.

God is the Goal of Human Life

Nothing should come in the way of your seeking God. You must be prepared for any sacrifice or face any opposition for the sake of God. Prahlada faced the wrath and hatred of his father Hiranyakasipu in adhering to his faith in Narayana. Vibhishana renounced

his brother Ravana when the latter stood in the way of his devotion to Rama. If your mother stands in the way of your devotion to God, you must be prepared to give her up, as Bharata did when Kaikeyi sought to separate him from Rama. Mira was prepared to renounce her husband rather than give up her devotion to Krishna. Emperor Bali rejected the advice of his Guru Sukracharya when the latter advised him to retract his promise to Vamana (Vishnu). These are the examples of the devotees who did not flinch in vindicating their devotion to God.

Realisation of God is the goal and destiny of human life. From the moment of birth, suffering pursues man throughout his life in one form or the other. If he wants to maintain equanimity and peace in the face of all these ordeals, he has to lead a righteous life with firm faith in God. There is no need to give up the normal duties of a student or a householder. But everything that is done should be done as an offering to God. Thereby every ordinary act becomes sacred. Love for God should express itself in the form of consecration of every action. This is My Message to you on this sacred day.

– From **Bhagavan's Discourse at Brindavan, Whitefield (Bengaluru) on 6th May 1987 on the occasion of Easwaramma Day.**

There is no stepping down in your Godward march. It is a continuous journey through day and night, through hill and dale. Where the road ends, God is attained and the pilgrim finds, that he has travelled from himself to himself.

– *Baba*

DEVOTIONAL FERVOUR AT PRASANTHI NILAYAM



AN AKHANDA BHAJAN WAS organised in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam on 4th April 2011 on the sacred day of Ugadi.

A large number of devotees took part in this soul-stirring Bhajan and prayed for the welfare of mankind. Besides Mandir Bhajan singers, many groups of Ashram staff and devotees took turns to lead Bhajans which began at 9.00 a.m. The devotees in the hall followed the Bhajans in chorus with deep devotional fervour. Sacred vibrations generated by soulful singing of Bhajans and heartfelt prayers of devotees filled the entire milieu with devotional fervour. The Akhanda Bhajan came to a close with Arati at 6.00 p.m.

Another Akhanda Bhajan was organised in Sai Kulwant Hall on the auspicious day of Sri Rama Navami on 12th April 2011. The Bhajan started at 9.00 a.m. after one hour of usual Veda Parayanam (chanting of Vedic hymns). In the beginning, Mandir Bhajan singers led the Bhajans which were followed

in chorus by devotees in the hall with great devotion and dedication. Thereafter, various groups of Ashram staff and devotees led the Bhajans which continued throughout the day. This being the sacred day of Sri Rama Navami, most of the Bhajans were dedicated to Lord Rama. With their hearts suffused with sacred feelings, the devotees sang the Bhajans with great devotion. This soul-elevating Akhanda Bhajan came to a close with Arati at 6.15 p.m.

The devotees and Swami's students working in Swami's hospitals and Ashram departments held special Bhajan daily in the evening since Bhagavan was admitted in Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Prasanthigram, Puttaparthi. The residents of Puttaparthi and adjoining villages organised special prayers, Bhajan and Mantra chanting programmes. Besides, people from all walks of life and all faiths took out processions in the village of Puttaparthi, carrying photographs of Bhagavan while singing devotional songs.



People of Puttaparthi and nearby villages belonging to all faiths took out processions and sang Bhajans carrying Bhagavan's photographs.

Effulgence of Divine Glory

OMNIPRESENT PROTECTOR



SWAMI HAS, OF COURSE, infinite power. We hear people say that again and again, and we are sure it is true, but we seldom have any direct experience of this extraordinary power. We have to take it on faith usually as indirect knowledge about Swami. I will tell you about one incident, my direct experience. At that time, there were many hippies wandering around India. Often parents would write to Swami and ask, "Swami, would You help

me find my daughter or my son and help me get them back home again"? Occasionally, Swami would be able to do that.

On this occasion, the missing daughter had been found and the parents had come from New York to get their daughter. They had taken a taxi from Bengaluru out to Whitefield in the morning, but not understanding the local taxi situation, they had let the taxi go back to Bengaluru. So, at six o'clock, after Swami had gone upstairs to His room for the evening, they wanted to get back to Bengaluru and they did not have a taxi. They asked my wife and me, "Could we ride with you"? We said, "Of course". So, in the taxi were my wife, myself, the two parents, the girl, and, of course, the taxi driver.

We were going back to Bengaluru, and the taxi driver was in a hurry. He took the old road which was shorter but also narrower. He turned onto this narrow road hoping to make faster time and he came up behind a bus. Naturally, the taxi driver wanted to pass the bus. He pulled over a little bit, looked along the side of the bus and saw what he thought was a stationary light some distance ahead. He decided that he would



have enough time to pass the bus. So, he pulled out ahead of the bus and accelerated. Then he realised, as did we, that he had made a terrible, terrible mistake. That single, presumably stationary light was a light on a fast moving car which was coming towards us at a high rate of speed.

Normally, when you are faced with a head-on collision, one of the two cars takes to the ditch, because there is a chance you will live, whereas if you are going to hit head-on, there is no chance. But here neither of us could take to the ditch because they were repairing the road; and along the side of the road was a long row of road building materials blocking the ditch. Here was the bus on one side and the road building materials on the other side. Nothing could be done. As the light from the car flashed in our windows, we closed our eyes waiting for death. Nothing happened. When we opened our eyes, we found we were proceeding ahead. We turned around to look through the rear window and there were the taillights of that car, disappearing

behind us. Impossible. No way that could have happened.

The next morning, we went out to Brindavan quite early. Swami was on the verandah and I threw myself at Swami's feet and said, "Swami, we thank You for saving our lives". He said, "Yes, yes. That was quite an incident, wasn't it"? He added, "You were so shocked, you didn't even call on Swami. But Swami saved you anyway".

Along the wall of the verandah, a number of Telugu doctors, Swami's devotees, were sitting. Turning to these Telugu doctors, Swami described the entire incident to them. I said to Swami, "Swami, how did You make that happen? For that to have happened, You must have altered both space and time". Swami just laughed and did not say a word. For that to happen, Swami had to have been some place other than His house. He may have been in His house, but He was at some place else, too. That is Omnipresence.

— Excerpted from "Seeking Divinity" by Dr. John S. Hislop

These days, there are many who profess to be devotees but do not conduct themselves as true devotees. What is called for is adherence in action to what one says in speech. Only then are people fit to earn the grace of the Lord. There is no use merely offering worship to God as God. One should understand the ideals set for humanity by God in His human incarnation and live up to them. Human values have to be fostered. Without human qualities, the mere human form is worthless. Only by practising human values does man become truly human.

— Baba

Empathy

Chinna Katha



MANIKKAVACHAKAR WAS a great philosopher and devotee of Tamil Nadu. He was constantly engaged in chanting the Name of God. One day when he was passing through a street, it started raining suddenly. As he looked for some place for shelter, he found the verandah of a house nearby. There he lay down, stretching his legs. Soon it became dark, and the inmates of the house went to sleep after shutting the door of the house.

After some time, another person fully drenched in rain stepped into the verandah. Hearing the noise, Manikkavachakar immediately sat up and said, "Come, come! So far there was place for one person to lie down in this verandah. Now it will be enough



"So far there was place in the verandah for two persons to sit; now this place is enough for three persons to stand," said Manikkavachakar and welcomed the third person.

for two persons to sit". Both of them decided to spend the night, chanting the Name of God while sitting there in this manner. Some time after that, another person came there. He was also fully drenched in rain. On seeing him, Manikkavachakar said to him, "Come, come! So far this place was enough for two persons to sit. It will now be sufficient for three persons to stand". All three of them kept standing in this manner till it stopped raining.

What is the lesson that we learn from this story of Manikkavachakar? The lesson is that a true devotee of God should try to share with others whatever he possesses. Considering the difficulty of others as your own difficulty, you should help others.



Seeing a person fully drenched in rain, Manikkavachakar sat up and welcomed him to share the space with him in the verandah.



A large number of dignitaries came to Pravanthi Nilayam to offer their final respects to Bhagavan.



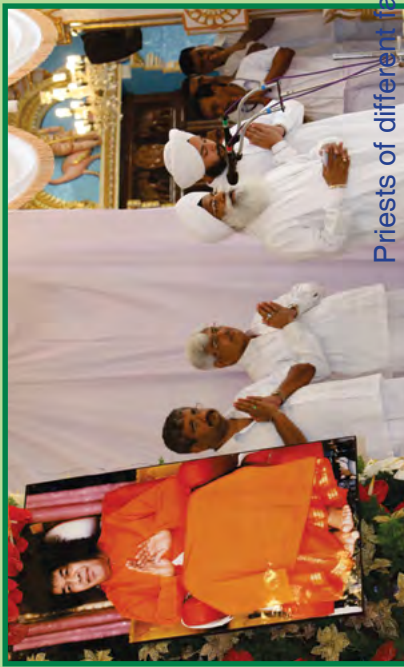
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Lakhs of devotees filed past Bhagavan's body and offered their last respects.



Priests of different faiths reciting verses from sacred texts.



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REGD. WITH REGISTRAR OF NEWSPAPERS R.NO.10774/1958

REGN.NO. HDP/002/2009-2011

Licenced to post without prepayment No. HDP/002/2009-11



Swami is with you

Remember three things always:
Continue Seva, wherever you are.
Seek chances of helping others. Never
lose an opportunity of using your skills
and enthusiasm for the alleviation of
sorrow, pain or distress. Secondly, do
not omit, neglect or postpone your
own particular Sadhana – study, Japa,
Dhyana, Bhajan, Nama Sankirtan and
other such spiritual practices. Above
all, have faith that Swami is with you at
all times and at all places.

– 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 - 560 044, Karnataka And published at Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Publications Division, Prasanthi Nilayam 515134, Anantapur Dist., Andhra Pradesh.

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