



SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING
(Deemed to be University)



 **PRASANTHI** 
Vidwan Mahasabha
 **2016** 





Dedicated with Love to our Beloved
Revered Founder Chancellor

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



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Vidyagiri, Prasanthi Nilayam – 515134, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh, India

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First Edition: **April 2018**

Content, Editing & Desktop Publishing by:
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning
www.sssihl.edu.in

Printed at:
Vagartha, NR Colony, Bangalore – 560019
+91 80 22427677 | vagartha@yahoo.com



PRASANTHI VIDWAN MAHASABHA

5-11 October 2016 | Prasanthi Nilayam

Preface

Dasara or Navaratri is a ten day festival, usually falling in the month of October, and is celebrated all over India in the worship of the Divine as the Mother principle. Bhagawan Baba has explained that the festival of Dasara is a celebration of the triumph of good over evil, signifying the vanquishing of the ‘six demons’ of lust, anger, attachment, greed, pride and jealousy within us.

Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yagna

Since the early sixties, the festival of Dasara in Prasanthi Nilayam has been closely associated with the ‘Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yagna’. This yagnam is a week-long worship conducted in the Divine Presence at the Poornachandra Auditorium each year for the welfare of the whole world. The Yagnam commences on the fourth day of Dasara and concludes with the ‘Poornahuti’ – the final oblation that is offered on Vijayadashami, the tenth day.

The most important component of the Yagnam is the Rudra Yagam

where the oblations are made in the Yagna Kunda to Lord Shiva while chanting hymns from the Sri Rudram. In addition to this, other rituals like Surya Namaskara, Sahasralinga Archana, Srimad Bhagavatha Parayana, Ramayana Parayana and the Devi Mahatmyam are simultaneously performed.

The students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning take active part in the Yagnam by chanting the vedas, reading the scriptures and performing other parts of the worship along with the learned pundits.

Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha

The evening programmes during the seven days of the Yagnam are held at Sai Kulwant Hall, under the auspices of the ‘Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha’, where many speakers — primarily students and functionaries of Bhagawan’s institutions — address the gathering on topics concerning spirituality and philosophy, Bhagawan’s teachings and experiences of devotees.

This book is a compilation of all the talks delivered during the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha in 2016, that took place from 5 to 11 October 2016. Relevant transcripts of excerpts from Bhagawan Baba's Divine Discourses on each day are also included.





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Bhagawan Baba on Dasara

On several other occasions of the Dasara festival celebrated in Prasanthi Nilayam, Bhagawan Baba has given Discourses, clarifying the purpose and importance of the festival, and highlighting the inner meaning of the celebration and of the worship of the Divine Mother. The following are excerpts from some of those Discourses.

Purpose of Dasara

Festivals like Dasara are designed to make man aware of his divinity, to endow him with purity, to become aware of its holiness, and to imprint on his heart the wisdom won by sages after years of yearning. The sages who decided on these festivals have a high purpose. They want us to imbibe the inner meaning and use each day as a step in *sadhana*, as a reminder of the journey, which each person has to undertake alone to the Feet of the Lord. Dasara is the festival that celebrates the victory of the forces of the good over the foes that resist the progress of man towards light. The forces of good (Devas) are combating with the forces of evil (Asuras) in every living being and if only they rely on Mahashakti, the great Divine Force that fosters and fends the Universe, they can easily win and reach goal. Festivals like Dasara at Prasanthi Nilayam bring together *sadhakas* from all the continents, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, and colour. They are motivated by the same urge, to involve themselves more and more in attempts to realise their innate divinity. They have met here to enjoy the supreme delight in the holy presence of the Lord and to recognise the unity of all in the Divine atmic splendour. It is to give *ananda* (bliss) to the *bhaktas* (devotees) that I arrange this festival. I have no other wish. Do not muddy the pellucid waters of your faith by the slightest trace of doubt.

Importance of Dasara

During the Dasara festival, the three Goddesses—Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati—are worshipped according to certain traditional practices. The

tenth day of the festival is celebrated as the victory. The celebration has its roots deep in the ancient history of Bharat. In the Dwapara Yuga, when the Pandavas had to spend one year incognito, they hid their weapons (on the advice of Krishna) in a Jammi tree which is thick in foliage and whose branches are filled with latent fire. Vijayadasami was the day on which they retrieved their weapons from the tree and used them to win victory over the Kauravas. In the Treta Yuga, Sri Rama's coronation, after his victorious return to Ayodhya from Lanka, was also performed on Vijayadasami day.

Inner Meaning of Dasara

The term 'Devi' represents the Divine power that has taken a *rajasic* form to suppress the forces of evil and protect the *satvic* qualities. When the forces of injustice, immorality and untruth have grown to monstrous proportions and are indulging in a death-dance, when selfishness and self-interest are rampant, when men have lost all sense of kindness and compassion; the Atmic principle, assuming the form of Shakti, and taking on the *rajasic* quality, seeks to destroy the evil elements. This is the inner meaning of the Dasara festival.

Inner Meaning of Devi Worship on Dasara

When the Divine Goddess is in a dreadful rage to destroy the wicked elements, she assumes a fearful form. To pacify the dreaded Goddess, Her feminine children offer worship to her with red *kumkum* (sacred red powder). The Goddess, seeing the blood-red *kumkum* at her feet, feels assured that the wicked have been vanquished and assumes her benign form. The inner meaning of the worship of 'Devi' with red *kumkum* is that thereby the Goddess is appeased. During the ten days of Dasara, the demons (*rakshasas*) in the form of wicked qualities have been routed. *Rakshasas* do not mean demonic beings. The bad qualities in men are the demons. Arrogance is a demon. Bad thoughts are demons.





The Resonance of Love

Dr. R Sai Satish

Asst. Professor, Dept. of Chemistry, SSSIHL

I usually carry Swami's pocket calendar on me. When I was informed that I have been given this wonderful opportunity to give a talk during the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha of the Dasara celebrations, I quickly looked at my pocket calendar to see what day my talk was scheduled. As my eyes fell on the calendar, I happened to see the lower portion of the calendar which highlighted the public holidays and festivals. This triggered a series of questions in my mind and I began to ask myself how these festivals came into being? How Rama was born for which we celebrate as Ramanavami, Krishna's birth as Sri Krishna Janmashtami and how the Divine Mother came into being, which we celebrate as Devi Navaratri? But why are these festivals are celebrated?

Every festival enshrines in itself that love which God has for His devotees and the love that the devotees have for the Lord.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says the Lord is as formless as the ocean and when the cool breeze of the love of the devotee blows over this ocean, certain portions of the ocean water becomes ice. Ice means the physical form or the Avatar. What we understand here is that as much as God created man, the devotee with his love has transformed that omnipresent, formless Lord into a physical living presence in his heart.

If we have to go back to the beginnings of all beginnings, there is a beautiful discourse given by Swami on 29 May 1996 at Brindavan where He says: I have separated myself from myself so that I may love myself. My beloved ones, you are all my own Self. This very statement is epitomized in the Vedas as:

Atmanah akashat sambhutaha, akashat vayuhu, vayar agnihi, agner apaha, adbhayah pruthivi, pruthivya aushadhyaha, aushadhibhyo annam, annat

purushaba

From Atman came ether, from ether came wind, from wind came fire, from fire came water, from water came earth, from earth came plants, from plants came food and from food came man. What was the reason behind all this? It was the love which the Lord has for His creation.

Let us take a time travel and go back to the origin of the Universe. One of the most popular theories in science which talks about the origin of the Universe is the Big Bang Theory. The big bang happened 10-15 billion years ago. Our own galaxy, the Milky Way came into existence 5 billion years ago. Our Mother Earth was born 4.5 billion years ago. Then it rained continuously for 1 billion years to create the water bodies which we call as oceans today. 3.5 billion years ago, we had the first life giving entities like amino acids, nucleic acids. It was the will of God to drive these life-forming entities to come together and make cells. From there Last United Common Ancestor (LUCA) came into being, one billion years ago. This single cellular entity had a soup of genes, peptides and other life forming entities. What we see as the diversity in creation today emerged from that single cell known as LUCA. This single cell required a humongous effort to become a multi cellular organism in water. These aquatic organisms required a tremendous effort to graduate to amphibians to terrestrial organisms to plants and then to animals.

Finally, 50-60 thousand years ago, the first *homo sapien* walked the face of the earth. It is said, *Jantunaam nara janma durlabham* - the human birth is the rarest of all. Sometimes when things don't happen in the time frame which I expect, I get very disturbed. Imagine, the Lord of the Universe, waiting for 15 billion years for His prized creation to walk the face of this earth. Then let us return that love, which He had sown in our hearts, back to Him.

The dashavatars, i.e., Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Vamana, Narasimha, Parashurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki - began with the Matsya Avatar or the fish Avatar, then the tortoise, then boar, then half man-half lion,

then the pygmy man and then man. This shows how the Lord participated in each of these phases to make man what he is today.

When the Big Bang happened, time and space came into existence. Time because the Lord hit on a stop clock and He was waiting for His creation to get back to Him. Space, because the Lord created a tiny space where the devotee can enshrine Him in his heart. With the coming of time and space, came cause and effect, name and form, the Yugas and civilizations. The common factor among all Yugas is the element of the love for the Lord. We know about tiny tots like Prahlada, Dhruva and Nachiketa of having that love for the Lord in the Satya Yuga. In the Treta Yuga, we know of Shabari, Hanuman, Bharata, Lakshmana and also Mother Kaikeyi playing their own roles to perfection to ensure that the Lord's Will is done. Let us now move on to Dwapara Yuga and I would like to share three incidents with you around the great battle of Mahabharata.

The first one is the very commonly known incident, when, on the eve of the war, Lord Krishna and Arjuna go for a stroll. As they go for a stroll, they see a tree and on the tree is perched a bird. Looking at the bird, Krishna turns towards Arjuna and says, "Arjuna, I think that bird is a dove." Arjuna says, "Yes, my Lord, it is a dove." After a few steps, Krishna turns to Arjuna and says, "I don't think it is a dove, rather it is a pigeon." Arjuna says, "Yes, my Lord it is a pigeon." After a few seconds, Krishna turns to Arjuna and says, "I don't think it is a pigeon, rather it is a parrot." Even to this, Arjuna replies, "Yes, my Lord it is a parrot." Krishna smiles and turns towards Arjuna and says, "Tomorrow is the great Mahabharata battle and today you are not able to distinguish between a dove, a pigeon and a parrot. How you will be able to distinguish between a friend and foe in the battle, tomorrow."

Arjuna replies, "I believe in Your word more than in my sight." Doesn't this message apply to us today? When we have the omnipresent Lord with us, if we hold on to his word, nothing will affect us with what we see around us. We will understand what the true meaning of life is. Our Lord, through His discourses and Vahinis, has given us so much of literature that we can hold

on to. That literature gives us what is the true purpose of life, i.e., to love the Lord with all our heart.

Due to the love of the Pandavas, the Lord was ready to do anything for them. Yudhisthira could make him an ambassador of peace, Draupadi could turn him into a textile mill, Arjuna could make the Lord his charioteer. But there was one task which Arjuna wanted to desist from doing. He had to use his toes to press the side of the brow of Krishna to tell him the direction in which the chariot has to move. This is because in the din and confusion of the war it is impossible to communicate orally to Krishna. This pained him a lot as he had to touch his feet to the head of the Lord which was worshipped in the three worlds. As Arjuna wore metal sandals, when he had to apply that pressure on either side of the brow of Krishna, the tender skin of the Lord would give way and develop blisters, and the Lord would bleed profusely. Over and above that, the Lord had to hold the reins of the chariot very hard and as a result, his tender hands would also develop blisters and boils. But for the Lord, His first priority was His devotee. Hence, that hand that held the reins of the horses of the chariot also held the reins of the destiny of the Pandavas and the entire Dwapara Yuga.

Going forward to the time when Duryodhana fell and only the Five Pandavas were left. Aswathamma wanted to put an end to all the Pandavas and was not able to find them and in that rage, he puts an end to all the Upa-pandavas and dispatches the Brahma astra at the last surviving progeny in the womb of mother Uttara. At this juncture, the Pandavas pray to their only saviour, Lord Krishna.

At that very moment, the baby sees an arrow coming to itself and it also sees a beautiful blue form appear there, shatter the arrow with a wheel to thousand pieces and instantly disappear. From then on, the baby had only this question in mind - Who is this beautiful blue form? How did he have a wheel and if he had it why don't I have it? The baby starts to examine every person who lifts it and hence the name Parikshit, the one who examines, begins to tag along. Finally, everyone understood what the baby was searching or

examining. The moment the baby saw Krishna who came for Dwarka for the naming ceremony, it knew that this was the beautiful form that it had been seeking. It straight goes to the Lord, holds tight the Lord's feet and prays to be lifted up. The Lord tries to test the perseverance of the baby by distracting it with toys, hiding behind the pillars, etc., but come what may, the baby always seeked the Lord and wanted Him to lift him up and be with him.

What do we learn from this? In the current time, if we ensure that our devotion for the Lord is childlike and if we have all our focus on the Lord, everything else which disturbs us will go out of focus. If we start having our focus on something which disturbs us then the Lord goes out of focus. We should have always Lord in our focus and keep Him as the first priority.

Let us now travel to the Kali Yuga. Before sharing some anecdotes, let me share an analogy from science. In science, we have the complementarity principle of the dual nature of light. It states that at some point, light exists as a wave, i.e., formless and at some point, as particle, i.e., form. Isn't it very synonymous with God whose omnipresence is formless and the physical presence, which is the Avatar, is with the form? What makes this entire back and forth equilibrium to happen? It is the love of the devotee which makes the form emerge from the formless and if the Lord wills then the form dissolves back into the formless.

With this backdrop, let me share with you a couple of incidents. In the 1970s, a student of X Std. in Sri Lanka had only one desire in his life, to be in the physical proximity of Bhagawan. So, every day, he would stand before Bhagawan's photo and pour his heart out asking Lord for His proximity. One day, when he was returning from a hockey match, he was gripped with this intense desire again and he felt a strong aroma of amrit enveloping him. When he looked at the ring which he was wearing and was purchased in Puttaparthi, he found it flooded with amrit. As if this was not enough, every time who would look forward to being in the presence of the Lord, he would find, amrit flooding his ring. Over and above that, Swami comes in the dream of his father and instructs him to send his son to Brindavan where Swami

will take care of him. After a couple of months, this boy comes to Brindavan and Swami handpicks him to join the college. Few weeks pass by and he is given the ultimate opportunity of his life, an interview with Bhagawan. As he enters the personal interview room, he breaks down and starts sobbing. He had attained the fulfillment of his desire. As he cries, Swami tells him, “You didn’t pray for this, you prayed for this more than a thousand times and today when I am giving it to you, why are you crying?”

To me, this very incident applies to these current times. If we were stand in front of Bhagawan’s photograph or close our eyes and think strongly about him and pour our heart out to Him, I am sure He will respond. Even if it is not today, it might be tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. God’s delays are not his denials.

This boy wanted to get closer to Bhagawan do something for him on a New Year’s day. He was a tabla player and thought that he will get an opportunity to play tabla that day. But he realized that it was not his chance that day. He was heartbroken, sits behind and prays to Swami, “Swami please give me an opportunity to do something for you today.” Swami comes for Darshan and goes on to give a discourse. As the discourse begins, this boy realizes that the glass of water which is kept for Bhagawan to sip into is not there at its usual place. This boy has only one prayer in his heart, “Swami, when you finish and turn around for a glass of water, please ask me to bring this glass of water for you.” He prays intensely and as Swami finishes His discourse and turns around to look at the glass Swami doesn’t find it in its place. Swami looks straight into the eyes of this boy and says, “Go bring water.”

If Swami is able to hear the prayer of that individual at that point in time, isn’t he hearing to our every single prayer of everyone seated here or anywhere in Swami’s sannidhi? Will He not respond to the prayers? Swami is the eternal videographer, He not only captures our every prayer but responds in His omnipresence. How many times has He not responded to us from the thought for the day of Radio Sai? How many times has He not responded to us from a book which we randomly open and see a message or from a

conversation which we have with our friend, from an unknown telephone call or from the kumkum showers from the photograph placed right next to the Gopuram gate.

Swami is responding to us every moment, it is for us to understand that He is responding. Swami is also very clear that His relationship with us should be a one-on-one relationship. When one of the boys was offering a letter to Swami, Swami said, “Let not this piece of paper come between you and me.” For Swami, the relation is from heart to heart and love to love. If we have to hold on to that love, we will surely grow in spiritual stature. This God of ours is so beautiful, that not only He gives us His love but also gives us an opportunity to share that love with others and give that love back unto Him.

Once, on this day of Dasara, Swami instructed boys to distribute Laddu prasadam to the devotees. After the distribution, the boys quickly ran back and sat around Swami. Swami asked them, “Do you know why I gave this opportunity to distribute Laddus today?” A bunch of answers come and as usual the final answer and the most important one given by Swami was, “I give you this opportunity to serve so that you earn merit and when you earn merit, Swami gets an opportunity to bless you a million-fold.” So, whether we do Grama Seva or any other service activity in our day to day life, if we suffuse it with that love and transform it into a worship, it will accrue us merit which we can offer back to Swami as He has given this love to us in the first place. That will ensure that Swami will bless us a million times.

Today, I want to share this most important thing with all of you. We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings having a human experience. Let me substantiate this with science. Professor Masaru Emoto, a Japanese researcher and entrepreneur, studied the effect of human consciousness on the molecular structure of water and published his work in the Journal of Scientific Exploration in the year 2008. In his study, a glass of water is exposed to positive or negative emotions be it in the form of words, pictures or music, and then frozen to form ice. This ice is then imaged and studied under a microscope. The findings showed that the glass of water

which is exposed to positive emotions shows a crystal structure which is more symmetric, more orderly and pleasant to look at versus the other set of samples.

To me it made a very profound impact. Every cell in our body is made of 80% water and we are made of millions of cells so per se we are 80% water. If we were to conduct this whole experiment on ourselves, suffuse ourselves with that resonance of love of the Lord, fill ourselves with those positive emotions, then we may have a paradigm shift in our consciousness. We will not consider ourselves a body with a soul within but an Atman that has a body. That is the true understanding of what we are.

Body is like a water bubble, mind is like a mad monkey, don't follow the body, don't follow the mind, follow the conscience, says Bhagawan. If we hold on to that conscience then we will know that, indeed, we are spiritual beings and not otherwise. When this understanding comes to us, we will no longer see duality - no wave, no particle, no ice-no water, no omnipresence, no physical presence. Everything will get united into that universal Divine Love.

With that understanding comes the dictum - *Ekam aeava advitiam brahma*.

Life will become a child's play for us. As Swami says: Life is a game play it. We will be able to play the game with love and joy. To that Divine Love who is celebrated as the Divine Mother during this Navaratri, I would like to offer a few lines of the following song:

*O! Sai Maa, O! Sai Maa, Hum Bacchon ki Pyari Maa
Pyari Maa Sai Maa, Pyari Maa Sai Maa
O! Sai Maa, O! Sai Maa*





Divine Message

Ihamuna Sukhiyempa Hemtaraka Vidya, Paramuni Sukhiyempa Brahma Vidya

One is for eking out our livelihood and other is for the purpose and meaning of life. The Vedas have taught methods necessary for earning a living and also how to free oneself from bondage. This has been the norm in the guru-shishya relationship from time immemorial. There are nine names given to this Veda. Sruti, Anusruti, Trayee, Aamnyam, Pramamnyam, Chandas, Swadhyayam, Gamanam and Aagamanam. It is important to understand the meaning of these nine names. The Vedas have been protecting our country Bharat from time immemorial. These Vedas are not meant only for study, they have to be understood, then practiced and then enjoyed. Only then, will the person who recites these Vedas, get real joy. A person who chants the Vedas without understanding the meaning can get some benefit and can sanctify his time but will not get full benefit. When one recites these Vedas knowing the meaning, then he will enjoy bliss.

Unfortunately, in today's Bharat, the people who can understand and explain the Vedas are not to be found. There are a number of meanings to the Vedas. Each one is interpreting the Vedas according to his understanding and explaining it. When Narada prayed to Sanathakumar, he said, "This Veda is like a thick forest. If you lose way and walk then you can get into danger. Each word has a number of meanings and hence it depends upon how well you understand this Vedas. Without getting into the scholarship of the Vedas, develop devotion to God, get immersed in that devotion and lose yourself." Then Narada undertook the composition of Bhakti Sutras which are known as Narada Bhakti Sutras. After listening to the teachings of Sanathkumara, Narada undertook a new path.

The purusharthas are four, namely dharma, artha, kama and moksha, but Narada realized that Divine Love is the fifth purushartha. He felt that this Divine Love is greater than the purushartha of Moksha. Moksha means, killing infatuation. By merely removing attachment one can't get bliss. Narada considered that continuously enjoying playing, talking, spending his entire time for Lord as true love. He felt that this Supreme Love is the very essence



of Vedas. It is very difficult to study or explain the contents of Vedas. It is impossible to describe the feelings of divinity. It is very difficult to establish a link between the present status of man and the exalted status of the Vedas. As the Vedas have declined in importance from ancient times, we have not been able to preserve the Vedas in its pristine glory.

There were a number of branches for these Vedas. Rigveda had 21 branches. But in today's Bharat, we have only two branches of Rigveda left. The remaining 19 have merged in the womb of time. In Yajurveda there were 86 branches. Today we are left with only four branches. In Samaveda, there were 1000 main branches but only three remain today. In Atharvaveda there were nine principal branches, of which only two are left. Whatever limited branches that are left today are giving infinite meaning and insights about the Vedas. If only we had all the branches, how much more sacredness and wisdom it would have preached to us. Even these few branches which are left today, we don't know for how much more time can we preserve them. These days people who study the Vedas have become very less. Vedadhyayana has today become a business. This is the reason why we are losing the remaining branches day by day.

We are forgetting that the Vedas are the life breath of the world. The mother of the Vedas, the Gayatri principle is being forgotten these days. It is said that *Gayatri Chandasam mate*, i.e., she is like the Mother of all mantras. The Vedic pundits of today are hesitating in teaching others the efficacy of the Vedas. The Vedas which have been passed on from generation to generation is being discontinued in the contemporary generations. They are declining today.

One small example. Gandikota Subramanya Sastri, who had mastered the Vedas, and who can be described as the embodiment of the Vedas was able to grasp the meaning of the Vedas very easily. He used to follow the principles propagated in the Vedas. After he left his body, this vedic knowledge got lost. In his family, there is no one who can chant this Veda. His children became slave to Western studies and therefore there is no one in his family who can chant the Vedas. As we are considering earning money as the most important requisite, we are losing this great wealth of the Vedas. In spite of he being a great vedic pandit, none of his children know these Vedas.



Kamavadhani's throat will be forever ringing with the Vedas, but in his house not even one of his sons is studying the Vedas. As these Vedic pundits have not taught their own children these Vedas, people are losing faith in the them. If these Vedas are so powerful and sacred, why don't they teach their own children? The world has started thinking that the Vedas have no power at all, they are practicing it only for monetary gains. We have to condemn the wrong feeling prevailing today and should go on declaring that the Veda is everything, it is the very life and it is the very form of the almighty. Every action of Bharatiyas are related to the Vedas. Only when people act according to the prescription of the Vedas, all their difficulties will disappear and they will get happiness.

Those who talk about the glory of the Vedas, they themselves don't have faith in the Vedas. Therefore, the Vedas should be practiced as a means of purification of the heart. What is the use of talking about the Vedas if there is no purification of the heart? The Vedas are sacred, no doubt; but just by chanting them, you won't get the benefit. Whatever might be the delicacies kept in the plate, just by remembering, one can't fill his stomach. By merely repeating the name of the medicines, the disease cannot be cured. By merely reflecting over the light outside, the darkness inside will not go away. We have to put a little bit of this into practice, derive benefits out of it and then teach it to others. We should also undertake to offer the sacred meaning of the Vedas to other countries as well.

Another reason for the decline in the Vedas is thinking that it is a monopoly of a few and not sharing it with others. Even if the Vedic pundits don't recite the Vedas, they should be ready to propagate the meaning and significance of the Vedas to everyone. They won't enjoy it themselves and cannot stand it if someone else derives benefit out of the Vedas. They don't share and don't allow others to share or chant the Vedas. They are ready with endless commentaries. This is not the correct the path. The Veda is the embodiment of truth and dharma and has taken birth from Sathya. If there is no Veda, where is truth and dharma? Dharma is dependent on Sathya. Veda is a changeless, eternal and permanent entity.



Follow the Master

Sri Aman Jhaveri

Doctoral Research Scholar, Dept. of Management & Commerce, SSSIHL

*Sarva Vedanta Siddhant Gocharam tama Gocharam
Sai Govindam Paramanandam Sadguruam Pranatosmayham
Yat satyena jagat satyam yat prakashena bhatiyat
Yadanandena nandanti tasmai Sri Guruve Namaha*

We offer our obeisance to the one because of whose truth there is truth, because of whose light there is light and because of whose bliss we all feel happiness.

Bhagawan we pray to you that let our speech be rooted in our minds and our minds rooted in our speech. Let us never forsake what we have heard, let the teacher and the taught be always protected.

When the brother who was giving the introduction mentioned gratitude, hearing that brought a lot of memories to my mind and I feel like starting this talk by paying gratitude to Bhagawan. It is almost impossible to think that we can repay Bhagawan in any way but sharing our gratitude gives us a sense of satisfaction and joy.

In 2008, I barely knew Bhagawan. I was so naïve that before joining here, I was called to Dharmakshetra for an induction programme. I asked the person who called me, “Where is Dharmashetra?” He asked me, “Are you the same person who has got admission in Swami’s College?” When I went there, I saw people writing letters to Bhagawan and placing them at the altar. I wondered, “Are these letters going to be posted to Swami and is Swami going to read these letters?” Today I feel bad that I have missed a lot of Swami when I was young, but I also feel grateful to Him. Before my entrance exams, I called up one of my friends and told him, “I don’t want to join this institution, that is why, I will not prepare for the entrance exam. I will not get an M.B.A. seat and I will come back home.” Little did I know that Swami had already made

His plans to give an M.B.A. seat to me.

Even after I got a seat, I still felt that I should go back home. Swami was coming back to Prasanthi Nilayam from Brindavan on 9 June and we were told by the warden that all the new students will get a chance to sit in the 3rd block. Swami came for Darshan in a chair and looked at me and raised His hand. Very spontaneously, I jumped and caught Swami's hand and touched his feet. That day, I ran back to hostel, called up my mother and said, "Do you know mother, I saw Swami so closely that I could see His fair complexion." After that day, life has never been the same. From where I was to where Swami has brought me for reasons best known to Him, I can only express my gratitude in these few words.

All of us come to Swami and learn from small experiences. Swami's life is so phenomenal. As Saint Kabir once wrote:

*Sab dharti kaagaz karoon, lekhani sab vanrayi
Saat samudra ki maasi kaaron guru guna likha na jaye*

It is almost impossible to write about Swami's glory even if we collect all the ink of this world, all the pens and the paper of this world. But experiences are important to recollect not for anybody else but for ourselves, as they become a source of joy and happiness. Before sharing my experiences, I want to say that Swami bursting into our consciousness is in itself an experience. Coming to Prasanthi Nilayam to Swami's sannidhi is in itself an experience. If we say that we have come to Prasanthi Nilayam, now we want some experience, we have lost the whole point because being here in Swami's Divine presence is in itself the greatest experience that we can have in our lives.

Today, I want to share some experiences that took place after Swami's Mahasamadhi and how they have taught me some very important lessons in life. I hope that from these experiences, each one of us can derive some benefit. We always say that being a Sai student is a job of great responsibility because our value suddenly goes up from negative to infinite. I experienced

this in 2012 in Mumbai, when I was at home. I was driving late one evening with my friends. The police there check for licenses, vehicle papers, insurance papers, etc. We were stopped at one barricade and a cop knocked at the other window and told my friend to lower his window. He looked at us very suspiciously and asked in a deep baritone voice, as if we were criminals, “Where are you coming from?” My friend panicked and didn’t know what to say. He mustered some courage and said, “This driver is from Sai Baba’s Institute in Puttaparthi.” I was wondering as to why he is saying this. The very next moment this inspector from his very serious demeanour shouted, “Sairam! Sairam! Sairam!”

Before I realized what was happening, he came and started hugging me. Instead of asking for a license, he started asking me, “Are you from Sai Baba’s Institute, Puttaparthi?” I answered in the affirmative. He asked, “Can I have your visiting card?” I gave him my Research Scholar card. The moment he saw the card, he kissed it, touched it to his eyes and enquired, “Sir, how is Puttaparthi?” I didn’t know what to say, it happened so fast. I replied that everything is fine. He asked, “Do you stay in Puttaparthi?” I said, “Yes”. He continued, “Do you go to Mandir every day, have you seen Bhagawan?” I answered in the affirmative. Then he said, “On this road there are two more barricades, if anyone stops you, just say Sairam and tell my name, no one will stop you.” I was driving the car and all this while, I was thinking, “Why did this happened to me?”

My memory took me to a time when I just finished my speech in Swami’s presence when I was pursuing my M.B.A. Swami asked, “How did my boys speak?” People said that the boys spoke well. Swami snapped, “They have to speak well, they have to be good boys, as they are my reflection, reaction and resound.” I thought that because we are close to Him, we will inculcate His values. It also struck me that time, that being Swami’s student is a great responsibility. Knowing that, we must strive extremely hard to live up to Bhagawan’s expectations. This is not true only for students.

One of my classmates is from Africa. He narrated a very funny story to me

which sounds funny now but at that time it must have been very scary. His apartment was a three-storeyed building and suddenly one day they found some men carrying guns coming to loot them. They looted the ground and second floors but when they came to this brother's house on the first floor, they saw Swami's photo. They put their guns on the side and took padanamaskar. This is unimaginable, that robbers coming and in place of looting the house, taking padanamaskar of Bhagawan's photo. They said, "We know you people, you have done lot of service to our community," and just went away. From cops to thieves, from India to Africa, if we associate ourselves with Swami, this the kind of value which it brings to our lives and that is the kind of responsibility that we have to live up to the expectations of Bhagawan.

This again happened in 2012. One of my friend's cousin brother, a young boy of aged fifteen, was in the last stages of cancer. At that time, I was happened to be at home, I had just finished my M.Phil. This friend of mine requested me to accompany him to see his cousin at their residence. He was in the last stages, doctors had given him just seven more days of life and was literally in coma. Spontaneously I asked him, "Would you like to have Bhajans at your house?" He called up that boy's mother and said, "One of my friends has come from Sai Baba's ashram in Puttaparthi and he is asking whether we can have Bhajans at home." She agreed.

I told my brother to arrange for around ten people to sing Bhajans as I was not acquainted with the Sai fraternity in Mumbai. My brother said, "Aman, there is a Bhajan workshop today by students who have come from Prasanthi Nilayam, so all will flock to Dharmakshetra. It will be difficult to find people for this Bhajan." I wondered why in the first place Swami prompted me to make this offer to that family. It will look so embarrassing that Swami's students have come from Puttaparthi and there is nobody available for Bhajans. As I was thinking about this, I get a call from one of our alumnus who had been in Prasanthi Nilayam for several years. He has composed many Bhajans which we sing today in Swami's presence.

He said that he was in Mumbai. I requested him to join us for a Bhajan and readily agreed. I told him that I will pick him up and I put the harmonium in

the car and when I start, I get a call from another alumnus who has performed in front of Swami on numerous occasions. He said, “I had a music class which got cancelled, your brother told me about the Bhajan, I am midway, can you pick me up?” He was at the exact place where I was supposed to pick the other alumnus. I asked him to wait there, I picked them up and went and sang Bhajans, just the three of us.

After the Bhajans, the boy’s mother told us, “In the past one week since the child has come back home, this is the first time that the boy has shown an emotion or a response. He is moving his eyes and I think he is understanding what you people are doing here. I felt so grateful to Swami that in the last days of my child’s life, Swami’s name entered his consciousness. Two days later, that boy passed away. When I reflected on this, I realized what Swami means when He says: If you want to do seva, the only thing you need is good intentions, and all the resources will come to you. This is a real example in my life that taught me that everything Swami says has so much meaning.

On similar lines, another experience occurred. One of my classmates was doing M.Phil. but due to some financial constraints, he had to leave the Institute and join an M.Tech. course. When he applied for an M.Tech. at another University, Swami came in his dream and asked him to do B.Tech. which is done after 12th class before an M.Tech. This brother had finished his B.Sc. Physics, M.Sc. Physics and M.Phil., i.e., he was seven years past his B.Tech. age. I was really surprised at this and thought that as he was sad, Swami came in his dream to give him some happiness.

A few days later, this brother tells me that he has got a seat for M.Tech. in Computer Science at a reputed university. When he went for admissions, the Dean told him, “You have applied for M.Tech. and the undergraduate course required for it is B.Tech. but you have a B.Sc. and a M.Sc. in Physics. So, we are giving you seat in M.Tech., but simultaneously you have to do a two-credit B.Tech. course. Once that is done you will be able to permanently join the M.Tech. class.” When he narrated this to me, I was stunned. It is almost impossible that somebody will do B.Tech. after an M.Phil. but Swami’s words did come true. Swami asked him to do B.Tech. and he did B.Tech.

worth two credits. It taught me a wonderful lesson that everything Swami says is definitely going to happen but we don't know when things will happen and in what way they will happen.

Talking about experiences, we also know that experiences have their own limitations because ultimately, we are also an experience. Every day we arise from the bed and with us arises the memories of who we are, what work we are supposed to do, what is our degree, who is our father, who is our mother and again we go to sleep, and in that sleep, we forget everything. We forget who God is, who we are, what we have studied and we forget everything in this world. Then we awake the next day and remember our identity and live our whole life in this manner.

But with Swami, I have realized that true learning starts where experiences end because being with Bhagawan, after some time, we get used to experiences. We feel that it is Bhagawan's duty to give experiences every now and then so that we can be happy in life. When any problem comes, we say, "I have prayed to Swami, some answer or experience will come." These experiences, we start taking them for granted. When these experiences stop, then our real learning starts. As we come closer to Bhagawan, as we gain experience, we start to develop love for Swami. But along with this love come a dichotomy because to love God is to follow God. In our lives, we know that we love Swami but we are not able to follow Swami. Then we start wondering, what is this dichotomy? I know Swami is God yet I am not able to follow God. Following doesn't mean the way we want, the way that is convenient to us. Following means implicit obedience to the guru. Truly speaking, implicit obedience is the first step in our learning.

I want to share a story about Swami Sathyananda Saraswati from a place called Munger in Bihar who passed away in 2011. He was a disciple of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh whom Swami has also met. Satyananda writes this experience in one of his books where he says, "When I was 18 years old, I could go to a state beyond the mind." But he didn't know what to do beyond that. So, he keeps on struggling and meeting gurus and one day someone tells

him to go and meet Swami Sivananda. He goes to Rishikesh and tells Swami Sivananda, "I can reach a no mind state, but I don't know what to do after that." Swami Sivananda says that he will teach him the further journey and asks him to come the following morning. Satyananda was very happy and thinks that he will be taught some great meditation technique.

When he arrives (the following morning), Swami Sivananda says, "In our kitchen, there is a shortage of workers, we are cooking upma today, why don't you go and cut vegetables today?" Satyananda wondered, "I came here for learning a special meditation technique and this person is asking me to cut vegetables." For five years he works in the kitchen, 18 hours a day and not one minute of meditation. After five years, he tells his master, "I think I had enough, let me go back to my place." Swami Sivananda replies, "Oh, I was caught up in lot of other things, why don't you join the press for a few days, then I will definitely teach you the technique. He joins the Hindi press as an editor for the next five years and works for 20 hours a day without proper sleep, food and meditation.

Ten years elapse and Swami Satyananda was 28 years old by then. One day he gets very irritated and comes to his Guru and tells him, "I have got a job in Delhi, I am going tomorrow." Swami Sivananda tells him, "Don't go tomorrow, wait until Thursday. On Thursday, when Swami Satyananda comes with his luggage, Swami Sivananda calls a barber and asks him to shave the head of this disciple and tells him, "From today you are a sanyasi and your name is Satyananda Saraswati." Swami Satyananda tells him, "I have been asking you to teach me meditation to reach the state of Samadhi but you never taught me all these years." Swami Sivananda interrupts, "I have taught you, go and meditate." When he goes and meditates, he instantly transcends the barrier of the mind and reaches Samadhi. He later writes, "Who would have known that cutting vegetables in the kitchen and washing dishes would have given me the experience of Samadhi. Nobody in the world can enable that, except your guru."

Hence if your guru tells you to do something, do it implicitly because he

knows what is best for you. You will never be able to comprehend that in your whole life. Let me recollect an incident from the life of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, a fully realized saint. One day somebody asked him, “Maharaj, you talk about Advaita, but you also do Bhajans at home. Why is this dichotomy?” Maharaj replied, “I know, I am fully realized but my Guru has told me to do Bhajans every day, twice a day. Until this body exists, I will obey every word of my master.”

Nisargadatta Maharaj, a realized saint doesn't question his Guru, but on so many occasions, I have questioned Swami about Bhajans, Vedam, Suprabhatam. When such great souls don't question their gurus, we are in no position to question Swami. We have to follow Swami implicitly but we are not able to do that. When we are not able to do that, there is a deep sense of sorrow comes into our hearts. This sorrow is what we call as contemplative sorrow.

It is not like Duryodhana, who said that he knows what dharma is but can't follow it. It is the despondency of Rama in Yoga Vashishta. Rama was once very despondent and sorrowful and Vashishta asks him, “Rama why are you sorrowful?” Rama replies, “O! Sage, I had gone on a trip to Ayodhya and in this trip I saw so much sorrow and poverty. Seeing this, I should have got vairagya but I didn't get it.” Same is the situation with us - despite being aware of Swami's Divinity, we are not able to follow Him. What should we do? When such things happen in our lives, so many questions arise and experiences stop. When experiences stop, you are forced to look within. You don't know what sadhana to do, what to ask Swami for. In that state of blankness, spontaneously, our mind turns inwards.

When the mind turns inwards, a few things happen. Firstly, we realize that we are taking our thoughts too seriously, we are giving too much of importance to ourselves. Thoughts are unreal but we give so much value to them. Secondly, we realize that we don't have self-love. If you ask someone to close his eyes and think about himself, he will think about everything else except his own Self. As Ramana Maharishi says: the mind goes where the

heart is. Close your eyes and you will realize that our hearts are not in our selves, they are in iPhones, cars, the future and in our families. Thirdly, a new dimension of our life opens up, the dimension of silence, where we realize that we don't need to react to everything in our lives. In fact, silent acceptance is our natural state of existence. Beyond all this, there is a fundamental shift in our relationship with Bhagawan. This is beautifully explained by the poet Kumar Vishwas in a Hindi couplet:

*ho kaal gati se pare chirantan,
abhi yahaan the abhi yahii ho.
kabhi dharaa par kabhi gagan men,
kabhi kahaan the kabhi kahiin ho.
tumhaarii raadhaa ko bhaan hai tum,
sakal charaachar men ho samaaye.
bas ek meraa hai bhaagy mohan,
ki jisamen hokar bhii tum nahiin ho.*

Swami, I find you everywhere in this world, you are omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. The only place where I don't find you is in my destiny. But when we start looking inwards, the whole perspective changes.

*na dvaarakaa men milen biraaje,
biraj kii galiyon men bhii nahiin ho.
n yogiyon ke ho dhyaan men tum,
aham jhande gyan men nahiin ho.
tumhen ye jag Dhoondbataa hai mohan,
magar ise ye khabar nahiin hai.
bas ek meraa hai bhaagy mohan,
agar kahiin ho to tum yahii ho.*

Oh Lord, the world searches for you outside, but nobody realizes that there is one place in this world, that is in my Self, in my own being and nobody can take you away from my destiny.





Divine Message

In the womb of the Universe is heard the pranava sound, please hear attentively to the satisfaction of your ears. This is a kalpa vruksha - a wish fulfilling tree which can satisfy all your desires. This is the word of truth, please don't forget about it.

Lord Krishna says: *Vedanaam saamaavedosmi* - I am Samaveda among Vedas. *Saamna Udgitho Rasaha* says Chandogya Upanishad, i.e., Om is the essence of all. Omkaara expresses itself in Samaveda in the form of love and melody. Utgita means pranava. For Samaveda, Omkara is the essence and the life breath. *Omkaaram Sarva Vedanaam* - Omkara has expressed itself as the essence of all Vedas. From this, you can understand the importance and the primacy of Omkara when it is said to be the essence of all the Vedas. In the world of alphabets, Omkara is the basis of all the alphabets. Pranava is a synonym of the word God. The Samveda is the manifestation of this Pranava. There is no place which does not have Pranava. There is no time when you can't hear Pranava. You can't live without Pranava for even one second. Pranava rings and resounds in every atom of living beings. Pranava is all pervasive. Pranava is the basis for all sounds. It has also been proved that Pranava is only the form of Brahman. Hence it is known as Ekakshara Brahma. Om is the one lettered Brahma. The sum and substance of all is that Omkara is the synonym for God. Today, we have to recognize the fact that just as God is all pervasive, the Pranava also is all pervasive.

There is one more statement: *Ayam Atma Brahma*. This Atma is also the form of Brahma. Hence, Om Atma and Brahma are all inseparable. Every human being is experiencing four states of consciousness - Jagruta, Swapna, Sushupti and Turiyam. These four can be described as four legs of Brahman. Omkara also has four *padas* - Akaara, Ukaara, Makaara and the Adhiratha. Adhiratha represents a state when Akara, Ukaara and Makaara join together and a sound is produced. Akaara is the first part of Omkaara sound. For the world of sound, it is the basis. In sound waves it is the most important component. In all the alphabets, it occupies the first place. It is associated with the waking state and considers vipra and virat swaroopa. He is known as Vishwudu. Hence, for the waking state, Akaara is the very basis. Akaara



has a very close relationship with the Viraata swaroopa. The dream state is associated with Ukaara. This is the second sound in Omkaaram. The Ukaara takes the form of effulgence. It gives light to everything. There is no blindness to this. The third one is Makaara. This is the third syllable of Omkaara. This gives expression to Pragna. It gives expression to pragna which is inherent in all human beings. It is also called as *sutrapatrudu* or *sutratmaka* or *antaryami*. This Makaara runs through everything like how a thread gets everything together. He doesn't have any form which is the Makaara. When Akaara, Ukaara and Makaara come together then the sound that is heard is related to the turiya state. That is Omkaaram.

Hence Omkaara has four forms - Akaara, Ukaara, Makaara and Adhiratha. For Atma, Brahma and Omkaara there are four limbs it is called chatur mukha Brahma, i.e., four-faced Brahma. This Omkaara is described as Shabda Brahma. Gaana Brahma is an integral part of Shabda Brahma. It has been described in a number of ways. Among the eight attributes of Brahma, one is this sound. This is not confined to one place, it is all pervasive. Hence it has eight types of powers - Shabda Brahmamayi, Characharamayi, Jyotirmayi, Vaangmayi, Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi and Srimayi.

Only when we recognize this truth that this Omkaara has to be established in our heart and then realize that the individual, his voice, his vision, everything is Pranava then one can understand the Samaveda. Only when one can recognize the Pranava in Saamveda, he can become a sage or seer. One can't recognize this Pranava by superficial spiritual practices.

When you have light burning in your own house, why go to the neighbour's house for fire. When the form of God himself is there within oneself in the form of Omkaara, why undertake external spiritual practices. We have to develop the conviction that this Pranava swaroopa is residing in my heart. That is the reason why, one should not waste this sacred Pranava energy by excessive talk. Wherever you see, there exists this Pranava. Whatever you say is Pranava. Hence it is said: See no evil, hear no evil, talk no evil.



See the idols of the three monkeys - one closes its eyes, the other its ears and the third one its mouth. Don't forget such a good word. Even monkeys are teaching such great lessons to us. Don't indulge in excessive and talk and waste this sacred Pranava energy. Ears which should hear only sacred and melodious sounds should not hear bad things. Criticizing or making fun of others, ridiculing others or condemning others should not happen through our mouth. If we do this, we will waste that Divine energy.



The Glory of Bhagawan Baba

Sri Jandhyala Mahati Shankar

Telugu Pandit

The one who is the manifestation of the *trimurtis* namely Brahma, Vishnu and Eshwara is Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Can anyone speak even a single word without your will or prompting? To come to Puttaparthi or speak in front of Bhagawan is a merit accrued over several lifetimes. Even if we touch the soil of Puttaparthi, we won't have a rebirth; this soil of Puttaparthi is so blessed. The ones who are seated in this assembly are not ordinary beings. They have drenched themselves in the love of Bhagawan and the torrents of his Divine Discourses and led their life to the fruition of devotion to Bhagawan.

Forty years ago, when I came to Puttaparthi with my uncle Jandhyala Papayya Shastri during the Dasara celebrations, I remember seeing Prof. Kasturi holding a silver urn upside down and Bhagawan taking out endless amount vibhuti out of it. This vibhuti did an abhishekam to the idol of Shirdi Sai Baba.

In our shastras, there are three navaratri - Vasant Navaratri which comes in the month of Chaitra, Ganesh Navaratri which comes in month of Bhadrapada and Sharada Navaratri which comes in the month of Ashwin. Adi Parashakti or Divine Mother created this whole Universe. It is said that Mother Saraswati carried this creation for nine months in her womb and delivered it in the form of this creation hence as a symbolism these nine days are celebrated as Navaratri.

It should be the life goal of all individuals to worship Devi during Navaratri and go beyond the cycle of birth and death. Divine mother killed Madhu Kaithabha in the form of Mahakali, she took an Avatar as Mahalakshmi to destroy Mahishasura and as Mahasaraswati, she annihilated Shumbha Nishumbha. Hence the objective of Mother's incarnation is the destruction of the wicked and protection of the virtuous. The Lotus feet should be our

only refuge in this world.

Today is a day devoted to the worship of Mother Mahalakshmi. She is Mahalakshmi in Vaikuntha, Swarga Lakshmi in heaven, Rajyalakshmi in a kingdom, Gruhalakshmi in a home and in every being and every material, the one in the form of beauty. Mother Lakshmi is the moonlight in the moon, effulgence in the sun... You are power of the burning in fire, I bow to you, Oh auspicious one. Today we are worshipping that Mother Lakshmi in the form of Sai Lakshmi.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is considered a Shiva Shakti swaroopa. Once, a sceptic questioned the adoration of Swami saying that one who doesn't even put a dot on his forehead, how can he be revered as a guru? Swami came in this sceptic's dream and showed the midpoint of His forehead - *Bhrumadhya* point and showed him a small black mole. This black mole became gigantic and enveloped the whole universe. In the middle of the black mole manifested a small vibhuti dot. This vibhuti dot kept on growing in size and became the body of a woman. This body of the woman and the black mole kept on reducing in size and finally merged back into the *Bhrumadhya* point of Bhagawan. Then Bhagawan addressing that sceptic said, "You know the significance of this - the the black form pervading the whole universe is Lord Shiva and I am that Shiva. The white woman form is Adi Parashakti and I am that Parvati. I have that Divine Mother is manifested in my face. This is not possible for anyone."

Bhagawan is the form which has all the human values in it, i.e., Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema and Ahimsa. Swami said that He is not Sarva Devata Swaroopa but Sarva Devata Atita Swaroopa. He had come down to the earth only to nurture love. How to worship such a God? If we take flowers to worship Him, He doesn't accept them. We have to offer the flower of our heart to Him, which He will readily accept. Where can we find him? He says not in a devotee's heart but in the selfless seva or service done by the devotees. If you render seva, you will receive prema.

This village which had only ant hills and thorny bushes in a remote area of Anantapur district, is now a world famous spiritual center. Is it not because of the Grace of the Lord of Puttaparthi, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba? This place now reverberates with the sacred vedic mantras, Bhajans and continuous namasmarana of Bhagawan and feels like the modern day Vaikuntha.

Although Bhagawan has given up his physical body, we still feel He is walking among us, taking us out of our worldly miseries, calling us 'Bangaru' in His sweet nectarine voice and giving us the boon of fearlessness. Therefore, there is no doubt that Swami is here and is all pervasive. He is always there in the heart of His devotees as He is beyond birth and death. This whole world is a stage and we are all actors in the drama whose director is Bhagawan.

In 1957, Veluri Sivarama Shastri garu, a great scholar, spend around six months in the presence of Bhagawan in Prasanthi Nilayam and experienced and enjoyed the Divinity of Bhagawan. People asked him, "Who is this Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba?" He replied, "He says that devotion is within the reach of everyone, he reads your heart and mind like a book and removes many incurable diseases. He creates many valuable gifts, sweets etc. just by His mere sankalpa. Swami is a God who responds to your sincere call, provided it comes from the depth of your heart. Call Him, test Him, and He will definitely respond."

Bhagawan has not come for any particular religion or region. He has come for all religions and He is beyond, caste, creed or nationality. There are many types of Avatars like Poorna Avatars, Amsha Avatars and Avesha Avatars. All of them come with a special purpose and are known only to a few people. But this Avatar of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is special, where in His lifetime, His glory was known to the entire world. It is our greatest good fortune to be the contemporaries of Bhagawan Baba. He gave Darshan to Amruthananda Swami, a disciple of Ramana Maharishi in the form of Maha Ganapati. He gave Darshan to the Bhatt couple of Mysore in the form of Lord Subramanya, and to the Bellary Commissioner Ramaraju garu, He gave Darshan as Parama Shiva.

During Shivaratri in February 1974, Bhagawan took out the Atma Lingam from His mouth and sanctified our birth. In Brindavan, Bhagawan gave Darshan to His mother Eswamma in the form of Lord Rama and she declared that that Kodanda Rama has taken the form of Sathya Sai Rama. Swami told his students in Kodaikanal that He is the Maharanarayana taken birth as Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. A Japanese scientist who visited Dr. Balakrishna in Hyderabad had Darshan of Swami as Lord Gautam Buddha. He is the one who is in all forms and names and is beyond all of them.

Bhagawan himself delineated the purpose of His Avatarhood:

I have a task: To foster all mankind, and fill people's lives with Ananda (bliss).
I have a vow: To lead all who stray away from the straight path into goodness again and save them.

I am attached to a work that I love: To remove the suffering of the poor and grant them what they lack.

I have a definition of devotion: I expect that those devoted to Me treat joy and grief, gain and loss, with equal fortitude.

I have worked as a faculty member for 52 years but I have never come across such virtuous students like the ones I see at this University. That is why Swami calls all of you Bangaru - pure gold. Swami has set up world class hospitals where all the poor and sick people get free treatment. Not only this, He has set up drinking water projects for the parched districts of Andhra Pradesh. Hence to such a Divine being, we pray that He should bless all for a long, healthy and peaceful life.





Divine Message

On account of the actions that we perform, we get births. Actions are responsible for the joys and sorrows and again they are responsible for the good and bad that happen. One should remember that joy and sorrow are almost permanent and they will be occurring always.

Karmanu bandhena manushya loka - Man is bound by karma or action. The world which is permeated with Brahman is also saturated with action. Creation itself is a very important action. Man, who is part of creation is also karma. Man essentially refers to jeeva Shakti. Body is the vesture which houses this energy of Jeeva Shakti. Body is made up of actions or karma.

Due to karma, man gets this body. The basis and cause of this whole Universe and human kind is karma or action. Recognizing the principle of karma, one has to perform action. Even to perform action, we have to understand the working of karma. The actions done by thought, word and deed are called karma. There are five principles which govern the law of karma. First is the body, the second one is the doer and the third one is the different organs; fourth one is different types of tasks, and the fifth one is the principle of divinity which in the form of prana pervades all. Everything happens by the Will of Divinity.

Man doesn't recognize this particular fact of divinity. He thinks that it is his limbs and organs that are performing the actions and expects the fruit of his actions. Man, in turn, takes birth to enjoy this fruit of this karmas performed. Man is reborn because he is expecting to reap the consequences of his actions. Therefore, man should perform the actions without any expectation of fruit.

There are two types of karma. The Bhagavad Gita has expounded this as Swadharma and Paradharm. People think that Swadharma refers to actions performed based on caste, community and such other worldly aspects. Swadharma doesn't belong to any caste, creed, religion or community as people think. Swa means atma. Hence, dharma referring to the Atman is Swadharma. This never changes or takes any other form. This dharma is without any attributes and blemishes. It is truthful and changeless. This is



associated with Atman. Therefore, this means that humans have to undertake actions according to the Atman and this will result in Shreyas, i.e., good and beneficial. Paradharma is associated with the body. This is associated with likes and dislikes and relates to ego and attachment. Therefore, this is rather dangerous. The Bhagavad Gita therefore declared that Swadharma is very beneficial and Paradharma is beset with a lot of danger.

The dharma of the body is always expecting fruits thereof and hence has to again take a body to enjoy those fruits. All the actions which are undertaken with the body are undertaken with the fruits in mind. Hence this is rather detrimental to us. While performing the actions, we don't understand the implications. We don't anticipate the results which these actions will bring forth. We are like the rats who jump at the site of onions kept in a bone. They don't know what is in store for them. Whatever actions are performed, temporarily expecting some fruits, are going to bind us. Hence, we have to make every possible effort to sanctify the present birth by performing meritorious actions.

In this aspect as well, there are three types of karmas. All these three are associated with gunas. One is Sattvic karma, second is Rajasic karma and third one is Tamasic karma. The action performed without any association with ego and mineness and without expecting any result, performing all actions as an offering to Divine are satkarmas or meritorious actions. These actions which are performed with sadgunas are performed to please God or winning the Grace of God. Actions done with egoism and attachment and with an eye on the fruits of the actions are Rajasic actions. These are the actions which human beings undertake at a mundane level every day. Every man on this earth is performing these Rajasic karmas in large quantities. One has to make an effort to make them Sattvic. The third one is Tamasic karma. Actions which are performed with selfishness and self-interest by hurting others and harm others are Tamasic karmas. These are also associated with violence and harming people. These actions are devoid of compassion towards fellow living beings and filled with narrow-mindedness. These Tamasic karmas are very dangerous. Knowingly or unknowingly, man performs different actions



in his earthly sojourn. In order to overcome the bad implications of these actions, five types of *yagnas* have been prescribed.

The first one is *deva yagnam*, the second one is *pitru yagnam*, and the third one is *bhoota yagnam*, fourth one is *manushya yagnam* and the fifth one is *rushi yagnam*. The fifth one is also described as *Brahma yagna*. We have to understand the inner meaning of all these *yagnas*.



The Yagna of Life

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During the Dasara celebrations, we participate in numerous events. The Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yagna, the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha which runs simultaneously with the Yagna, and we have another Yagna of Grama Seva which is a karma Yagna where the students and staff of Bhagawan's educational institutions with few others are active participants. Let me take up the first of the three - The Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yagna. Like all Bhagawan's projects, it began in a very small way on the 6th of October 1961. It has been a hallmark of all of Bhagawan's lasting projects that they begin with a tiny seed and thereafter blossom into a gigantic tree. A tree which provides shade to many and inspiration to countless more.

It was in the 1950's, while inaugurating a school at Bukkapatnam, Bhagawan, for the very first time, spoke about a University. Today you have numerous educational institutions in Bhagawan's mission. You have a world class University that provides high end courses, and you have numerous schools providing education to one and all. What began as a small hospital to the people of Puttaparthi in the year 1956, is today a massive medical mission which has attracted the attention of the world. A medical mission which has amongst itself, two super specialty hospitals, two general hospitals, mobile hospitals and countless number of medical camps conducted by sister organizations and affiliated organizations in all parts of the world. So too was the Veda Purusha Saptaha Jnana Yagna.

It was in the year 1960, when Swami was planning a trip to West Godavari and East Godavari districts (in Andhra Pradesh). The Konaseema region is known as the rice bowl of India and also known as the seat of Vedic scholarship. When the organizers of the trip came to Prasanthi Nilayam to discuss about the trip, they suggested that they should have a yagna. Swami said very casually, "Why do you want to have a Yagna, I am coming to give joy to the devotees who are there. I am visiting the whole of West and East

Godavari to give joy to the countless number of devotees who can't come to Prasanthi Nilayam. Why have a Yagna there? Instead, why don't you bring all your pundits and have a Yagna in Prasanthi Nilayam?"

It was a very casual remark but that was the beginning of that gigantic mission of Vidwat Poshana and Veda Poshana, the two pillars of His mission. It began with a small trickle in the year 1961 with a few pundits coming to Puttaparthi, which, at the time, was a small village described by Prof. Kasturi as 'back of the beyond' or 'a stone's throw away from the stone age'. Many of these pundits didn't know much about Swami, some of them were even doubtful and skeptical of this young ochre robed Swami and what he was trying to do. These were pundits steeped in vedic learning; veterans in their field who had a name and reputation built with years of practice and learning the Vedas. When they came to Puttaparthi, they came just as professionals to conduct the vedic rites of the Yagna. What they came across left them totally awestruck.

When they started discussing the Yagna with Swami and started putting in their requests, they realized that He knew everything about the intricacies of conducting the Yagna down to the kind of the Veda kundas, the size of the Veda kundas, the materials required, the other paraphernalia, what needs to be positioned where etc. All the intricacies of the science of which they thought they are adept, was known to this young lad of 35 who didn't have a proper schooling to boast of. Awestruck, they decided to conduct the Yagna. All the preparations of the Yagna were made in true vedic style with all the details that the pundits could think of, right down to the kind of kusa grass which was used for the seats on which the pundits would sit, the kind of cow ghee and all the other paraphernalia.

The Yagna took place and a very small event took place on the first day of the Yagna which left these awestricken pundits even more dumbfounded. As I narrate this incident to you, let me narrate a little bit of the background story. This story begins with the Raja and Rani of Chincholi. They were ardent devotees of Shirdi Sai Baba. The published literature would have us

believe that Shirdi Baba never traversed outside the borders of Shirdi after having come there. But there are incidents which narrate how Shirdi Baba was found in the kingdom of Chincholi which is near Raichur. He was found in a procession in a *tanga* in Raichur as a guest of the Raja and Rani of Chincholi. This couple were ardent devotees of Shirdi and were naturally left grief stricken when Shirdi Baba left his mortal coil. Added to this was the grief of the Rani losing her husband a few years later.

Completely grief stricken, she was carrying on her life aimlessly. A few years later, she heard about Swami. She was told by someone that the Sai Baba of Shirdi has reincarnated in a place known as Puttaparthi. She decided to travel to Puttaparthi and saw Swami for the first time in the house of Karnam Subbamma. With a few interactions with Swami, she got convinced that He was the same Shirdi Baba to whom her family was devoted. She invited Swami to visit Chincholi. Swami very gleefully accepted the invitation as if He was waiting for it. He went as a guest of the Rani of Chincholi and spent a few days there.

He described to her in detail about the town of Chincholi, about its streets, etc. when He had visited as Shirdi Baba. The slightest trace of doubt was erased from the mind of the Rani of Chincholi. She was so convinced about Swami being Shirdi Sai Baba that one day she landed in Puttaparthi with the *tonga* of Shirdi Baba, saying that it belonged to Swami. This was the devotion of the Rani of Chincholi. In the year 1960, when she was cleaning up one of the rooms in her palace, she found various objects that she wanted to dispose of in various ways.

One of the objects which she found was a small kamandalu. She dusted the kamandalu and kept it. She was struck by the intricate workmanship on that kamandalu. She decided against disposing off the kamandalu and decided to keep it in a showcase in her palace in Hyderabad. She realized that without her knowledge, a cobra had come and settled coiled around the kamandalu. This lady due to her devotion to Shirdi Baba took didn't get frightened by the cobra and took it as another manifestation of Shirdi Baba. She had heard

that Lord Shiva gives Darshan in serpentine form. After all, Shirdi Baba was the incarnation of Lord Shiva. She got some milk, got a lamp and did Arati to that cobra taking him to be Shirdi Baba giving her Darshan.

The cobra seemed to be happily accepting the Arati and the milk and finally when no one realized, it slid away somewhere. She took this as an indication that Shirdi Baba was not happy that she wanted to use the kamandalu as a showpiece at her Hyderabad palace. When she thought about the kamandalu, she realized that it was used by Shirdi Baba when He visited them. This was one of the artifacts which they had preserved as a memory of Shirdi Baba's visit. At the time, she was a newlywed Rani and now she was in her sixties. She thought over it and decided that just like the *tonga*, this Shirdi Baba's object belongs to Swami. She mentally decided that she would hand over this object to Swami.

A little later, she comes on a visit to Puttaparthi and brought the kamandalu with her. As she was entering Puttaparthi, Swami — seated on the first floor of the Mandir — was telling somebody, “The Rani of Chincholi has come, she had brought my kamandalu, go and see.” No one knew that the Rani was coming and she had actually entered the ashram and was carrying the kamandalu. Shirdi Baba was known to be a fakir who never had any possessions, who never believed in having anything leave aside hoarding anything. But here was the reincarnation of Shirdi Baba asking for His kamandalu. As soon as He gets the kamandalu, He turns it and shows everyone the bottom part of it where ‘Sa’ and ‘Ba’ are inscribed and said that it was His name.

With our limited intelligence, we always want to understand why He did something, we always want to interpret His actions.

Years later, when Swami was inaugurating Shivam in Hyderabad in 1973, He said, “Do not try to understand me, just accept me and enjoy.” But little minds that we are, we always try to measure Him and understand him with our limited intellect, an exercise, when we are wise enough to give up, we

will benefit from. Coming back to the incident, everyone in the room was wondering why Swami was so particular about the kamandalu and was so happy receiving it. Swami didn't utter a word. He took the kamandalu with Him, went inside His living area and kept it somewhere.

A year later, coming back to the yagna, in 1961, all the preparations were done, down to the last detail. Every single fancy of the pundits, Swami was ready to satisfy. On that day, one of the senior pundits suddenly realizes that something is amiss. The Yagna was supposed to start at 9.30 AM and he comes running to Swami at 8 AM and begs for an audience with Swami. When he is ushered into Swami's presence, he falls at Swami's feet and begs for pardon. Swami asks the reason as if He doesn't know. He replied, "Swami, we made the lists, we asked for everything but we forgot something very, very important." Swami very casually and nonchalantly asks, "What is that?" The pundit doesn't know how to say, he beats around the bush and says that one more article is required for the ceremonial worship.

Slowly he mentions that they require a kamandalu. Swami says, "Ok, I will give you." The pundit tries to interrupt, "It is a very special kamandalu, with a specific measurement, spout and design. I found it only once in Rishikesh, I don't know whether we can get such a kamandalu." Swami pretends as if nothing has gone wrong, casually walks into his chambers, picks up the kamandalu that the Rani of Chincholi had brought, gives it to the priest and says, "Will this be okay for you?"

The priest, dumbfounded, answers in only one language which humans have learnt to communicate with the Divine, and that is the language of tears. God moves us to tears when we finally realize that our intellect is no refuge. We are moved to tears when we realize that we are in front of a phenomenon which is so powerful that nothing we know, nothing we have experienced is equal to that. It was then that this vedic pundit realized that he is in the presence of none other than the Veda Purusha for whom this Yagna is being conducted. Five and a half decades later, this Yagna has become an integral part of the calendar of events at Prasanthi Nilayam. Barring a few years in

these five decades, this Yagna has been conducted every year. We are moving closer to the golden jubilee of this yagna.

Along with this yagna, a year later, in 1962, Bhagawan inaugurated the Prasanthi Vidwan Maha Sabha where a galaxy of scholars would enlighten people on different aspects of the shastras and other esoteric topics. Apart from what these pundits have said, let me quote what Bhagawan has said about this Prasanthi Vidwan Maha Sabha at the time of its inauguration:

“Yagna or sacrifice is the destiny of every living being, life is sustained by the sacrifice of the living. Every being from the tiniest amoeba to the most accomplished scholar is perpetually engaged in Yagna. The mother sacrifices for the child, the father for the progeny, the friend for a friend, the individual for the group, the present for the sake of the future, the rich for the poor, the weak for the strong. It is all Yagna - sacrifice or offering. Most of it is not conscious, most of it is not voluntary and most of it is not righteous. It is done out of fear or greed or with a view to the fruits thereof or by mere instinct or primeval urge. It must be consciously done, it must be done for spiritual elevating purposes especially in man. When life becomes yagnamaya, sacrifice filled, then egoism will disappear and the river will merge into the sea.”

Bhagawan’s message at the first Prasanthi Vidwan Maha Sabha
1 October 1962.

It was relevant then, as much as it now. Needless to say, all Bhagawan’s words and actions are timeless.

The reason I thought of quoting this today is because, on one hand the Yagna is going on and on, and the other hand, we the students and staff of Bhagawan’s educational institutions are engaged directly in the Yagna of Grama Seva; a Yagna which teaches us to sacrifice, help, reach out and the one which makes as much impact or even more on our lives than on the people to whom we reach out. Swami has put us on the path of Yagna. Let us be mindful that there is nothing we get in life if we don’t learn to sacrifice.

Na Karmana na prajaya dhanena tyagenaike amruthatwa manashubi

Immortality can be gained only by sacrifice. We must learn to sacrifice consciously for the sake of others and not out of greed of getting anything in return. Love lives by giving and forgiving. Love lives by putting others in front of ourselves. If we can convert our life to a Yagna, not for ourselves, but for a larger goal or a larger purpose without looking at the fruits that will incidentally come to us return, then we will fulfill the purpose of our life and attain immortality which was the ultimate reason for which Swami came down amidst us.





Divine Message

When man carries out his day-to-day activities, a number of living beings die. Without our knowledge, when we perform actions like pounding, grinding, etc., a number living beings lose their life. These sins are not committed knowingly. Without our knowledge, we are responsible for the death of living beings. To atone for this sin, deva yagna is prescribed. Not only this, in every limb of the body, Gods reside in the form of rasa, i.e., essence. That is the reason these Gods are known as Angirasa. As these Gods protect and nourish our body, as a mark of gratitude, we have to be remember them and meditate upon them. Studying sacred texts is our duty. During sleep and periods of unconsciousness, these Gods take care of our bodies. People who realize the fact that this body is given for performing actions which is protected by these various Gods, should be grateful to them.

Sbarira madhyamamu khalu dharma sadhakam

For performing righteous actions, this body is the basis. Deva Yagna is one which makes us to remember with a sense of gratitude, offering worship, meditating with a sense of love, those Gods who have been protecting and giving sustenance to the human body. We have to firmly believe that this particular yagna has to be performed in order to overcome and remove the sins arising out of killing a number of living beings unknowingly.

The second one is Pitru Yagna. We have to understand the inner meaning of this yagna. While cutting trees and branches, while plucking flowers, many living beings die. We have to recognize this fact that we are responsible for killing so many living beings and hence to remove the sins arising out of this, we have to perform Pitru Yagna. The people who are responsible for this body are parents. Our blood, food, intelligence and head are gifts of our parents. Hence these parents who have given birth to us, we are indebted to them. Until they are alive, we have to perform actions to make them happy. The *shradha* ceremonies are performed in remembrance of the parents once they leave the body. The Sraddha ceremony has to be performed in order to give



joy to them and get their blessings. Pitru yagna has come only to satisfy this particular requirement.

Bhoota Yagna. When we take bath, while sweeping the floor, when washing clothes many living beings die. Hence Bhoota yagna has to be performed to the satisfaction of these small insects. This particular yagna had started from our ancient sages and seers. In ancient days, in ashrams, the great rishis used to foster, develop and protect living beings like cows, deers and peacocks for sake of helping these and also atone for the sin of killing small insects. Due to our ancient culture, people put sugar or rice flour near ant hills. Another aspect is that when people would finish eating plankton leaves and throw them out, the remnants on the leaves were partaken by crows, dogs and other beings. Even today, in some houses you can see people domesticating cows, dogs and small birds and take care of them. This particular sacrifice is performed to remove the sins which you would have done unknowingly.

The fourth one is Manav Yagna which is also known as Manushya Yagna. When we light the stove, cut vegetables or walk on the road, a number of living beings lose their lives. To atone for the sins committed in such activities, such yagnas were performed by great people in the olden days.

The fifth one is Rushi Yagna or Brahma Yagna. *Jantunaam Nara Janma Durlabham* - this human birth is very rare. A human birth can be earned after performing meritorious deeds for many births and by the Grace of God and not entirely by human effort. The great Rishis of yore prescribed rules and regulations in order to help man to reach the goal of human life itself, which is liberation. The four goals of life: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha have been formulated by these sages. These ideals have been given to man to make him live a life of truth. The rules and regulations which don't apply to birds and animals have been prescribed to man. It is so because man has the faculty of discrimination between good and bad. He has to use this discrimination and follow the right path. The sins and merits accrue only to man and not to birds and animals. The laws and scriptures have been prescribed only to man and not to other living beings. Curses also are applicable to only man and not



to others. Paapam, Shastram, Shasanam and Shaapam are applicable to man and not for birds and animals. The maharishis have exhorted man to walk on the royal path to sanctify his life and human birth. Therefore, it is our duty to follow the path laid down by them and expressed our gratitude to them by thinking and meditating on their glorious contribution.

As we are doing many actions without our knowledge, we have to regularly undertake these five types of sacrifices. We don't need to have a sacrificial pit for these Yagnas. Obeying the commands of the parents, meditating on the Gods, provide food to the beings inside or outside our house, give food to beggars or offer some eatables to a dog is the essence of these five types of sacrifices.

No charity is greater than offering food; no God is greater than father and mother; no penance is greater than truth; compassion is the greatest form of Dharma; the greatest profit is good company and anger is the greatest enemy; taking loan is the greatest disease of humans; ill repute is equivalent to death; the greatest wealth is a good reputation and what is greater respect than thinking of the Lord? We have to foster the good qualities and distance ourselves from bad qualities and should enjoy pure bliss all the time.



Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan

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How I wish my two tiny eyes could see you seated on the throne to my right, dawning the resplendent orange robe, waving your palms in midair, writing and re-writing our destinies, brushing away that lock of curl that the passing breeze flicks on to your charismatic countenance, communicating so much to so many seated in front of you in your supernal silence, closing your eyes, instilling calmness and eternal knowingness. How I wish that every pair of eyes here would have feasted on that heavenly sight!

I feel, each of us seated here have to congratulate ourselves for the singular blessing that we have earned, especially on two accounts. First is that we all have arrived at Prasanthi Nilayam, the ultimate destination on the world. Prof. Kasturi reports that when Bhagawan wanted to name Prasanthi Nilayam, He did not use the word Ashram because that would mean a place where a sage or saint lives. Bhagawan didn't name it Mandir because that would mean where idols are worshipped. He named these holy precincts as Prasanthi Nilayam.

Nilayam because there something is firmly established and what is it that is firmly established? Prasanthi – the Supreme peace. Everything that we do day in and day out is for happiness and peace. If we have already arrived at a place where there is supreme peace, that has to be taken note of. The second reason why I think all of us seated in the Sai Kulwant Hall are especially blessed is because despite the numerous other probable engagements that we could have been engaged in, even within Prasanthi Nilayam, we have all chosen to be here at this *satsang*. Swami has reiterated the importance of being in holy company, in the presence of noble thoughts and noble ideas. Bhagawan says: dull and dark charcoal in the presence of glowing embers begins to glow, hence our presence at a *satsang* that happens every evening in the name of Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha, is one such opportunity to glow with nobility and higher purpose in life.

However, in this audience of a few thousands of people, there are two categories of people. There is this first category of us who had enjoyed Divinity in the physical proximity of Bhagawan and there is the other category — comprising mostly of our students and devotees — who have experienced divinity through the video clippings they see, through the audio clippings they hear, through the narrations of the devotees, through the books and the pictures that they get their hands on. I believe that whatever I share today should be equally relevant to both the categories in this audience. It shall be my humble endeavour with the inspiration of Swami to link a memorable past to a very meaningful present.

Let me dwell on that memorable past of which I am making a reference. Darshanam, Sparshanam and Sambhashanam were the three major things which occupied anyone who came to Prasanthi Nilayam in the earlier years.

Darshanam - Man's perception of the physical world is through his five senses. Even the experience of the Divine, he expects it to be through the gateway of his senses. Therefore, a lot of importance is given to Darshan. We need something for the eyes to see, to enjoy the Divine being and hence the Divine being descended in the form of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to give us the bliss and joy of Darshan. People crossed the seven seas and came from all the six continents to this remote hamlet just to have Darshan of the Divine in the human form. The entire Prasanthi Nilayam revolved around Bhagawan's Darshan timings. The sevadals came to duty according to the Darshan timings, the devotees gathered in the Darshan premises according to the Darshan timings, the children from school came and sat here according to the Darshan timings of Bhagawan. Everything revolved around Darshan.

It was in January 1999, when Swami called the teachers of the Anantapur Campus for a personal audience in the small interview room to my left. At the end of the interview, one teacher made bold decision to place a doubt which she had in front of Bhagawan. She said, "Swami, every time I come for Darshan, I somehow seem to go back very disappointed. In contrast, when I go to any other place of worship like Tirupati or Srisailem, I am returning

happily even though I got Darshan just for a couple of seconds. Why does this happen to me?”

Pat came a beautiful revelation from Bhagawan, “Bangaru, *adi jadamurthi, idi Chaitanya murthi* - That is a Darshan of an idol but this is a Darshan of a living God. When you go to Tirupati, you stand in line for 4-5 hours and then get a glimpse of the Lord which makes you happy. In contrast, when you come to Prasanthi Nilayam, if you don't get a front line for Darshan, you are not happy. If Swami doesn't take your letter, you are discontent, even after taking letter if you don't receive padanamaskar you feel disappointed. You come to Prasanthi Nilayam with a lot of expectations, you won't hear anyone going to Tirupati with a letter and expectation that Lord Balaji will come and receive it.”

The presence of the form led to some or the other form of expectation from it. The attraction of the form far beat the illusion that it carries with it. Talking about the next thing that occupied all of us coming to Prasanthi Nilayam before 2011 was Sparshanam. Darshan was not enough, we always wanted to have the Divine touch...Bhagawan placing his palm on our head, allowing us to touch His lotus feet. In fact, Bhagawan granted Pada Namaskars to appreciate us when we made an achievement. Bhagawan allowed us to touch His feet when he granted us permission to pursue a career or higher studies. Bhagawan granted the touch of His feet to cure an illness or leave for vacation. Name any kind of situation which the devotee placed in front of Bhagawan, a touch of the feet or Pada Sparshanam was the answer.

I have a particularly memorable incident about the bliss of Sparshanam in this context. It was the year 2006, I was recovering from two major surgeries after an unfortunate road accident. In the three months that I was recovering, Bhagawan was very, very gracious to send Vibhuti, to enquire after us, to send the right doctors to give us every kind of care. I was waiting for my first opportunity to see Bhagawan face to face to express my immense gratitude.

On 27 May 2006, I was still learning to take baby steps on crutches, the teachers

were creating a separate block which Swami would notice in Brindavan when Bhagawan came by so that we could have the special blessings which we always took before the new semester began. On that particular day, I was the last person in the line because from then now on, I wouldn't be able to squat before Bhagawan. I was uncomfortably seated on a chair, the last among twenty-odd people. Bhagawan came, started to give Pada Namaskar and all of a sudden, He crossed the second or third person and enquired from the then Principal, where those of us who met with an accident were. She pointed to us and even as Bhagawan's chair stopped, I lurched and tottered towards him. Bhagawan, with His most compassionate gaze, looked at every step that I struggled to take towards Him. Even as I broke down, expressing my gratitude in a few broken and choked words, Bhagawan beckoned to me to take the Pada Namaskar.

Here was the best of moments and the worst of moments too. It was only when I bent with both my arms on the crutches that I realized that the Lotus feet were a few inches away from my reach. I couldn't leave my crutches as I was unsteady on my feet nor could I forgo the Pada Namaskar that I was been granted so mercifully. Cloud burst poured down my cheeks and dropped on to Bhagawan's robe when I heard that sweetest, gentlest and merciful voice that you can ever hear on this earth. It said, "Don't bend bangaru, catch the hand." Then Bhagawan's Divine right palm came up in search of mine. Through the cloud of tears, I searched for his palms and enjoyed the bliss of Sparshan for those few moments. But discontent that we generally are, Darshan, Sparshan still don't always satisfy us.

We still want something more, and with Bhagawan it was Sambhashan. A word or two from Swami could be so energizing and so encouraging. This happened in my second-year graduation. A friend of mine and I decided that we were good enough to warrant at least two words from Bhagawan. We threw a challenge at Swami - when you are young and immature, you do these things. We said to Him, "Despite wherever we are seated in Darshan, you must find an opportunity to say at least two words." As luck would have it, we were thirteenth in the line very close to the Krishna idol to my left.

Those were the days, when we sat on the sands and there was no roof above our heads. Bhagawan would come out of the interview room without the alarm or the alert of the Darshan music. Just a while before Bhagawan would emerge, it started drizzling so we covered ourselves with the loose end of our *pallu* putting it over our heads so that we don't get wet.

Bhagawan emerged, and in the hustle and bustle, we didn't realize that Bhagawan was already in front of our block. This friend of mine and I dropped the saree end from our head to notice that Swami was looking right at us. From there, He gave that all knowing mischievous smile and said, "Burkha burkha." We had asked for exactly two words, this is the mistake we make when we ask. If we don't ask, He knows how much better to give us. Swami granted us the beauty of a tiny Sambhashan that we challenged Him for.

Come 2011, Darshan, Spashan and Sambhashan, which were an integral part of lives at Prasanthi Nilayam, seemed to have come to an end. How are these things relevant to anybody anymore? This was a tough transition to make. There were many prayers and battles of the mind which many of us went through. I came upon a particular verse from the Guru Gita which gave me an answer to my own dilemma. This śloka of Guru Gita which is part of Skanda Purana is a conversation between Lord Siva and Mother Parvati. Lord Siva was the guru and Parvati devi was asking Him questions on guru. One answer of Lord Siva became my answer to the dilemma of missing Darshanam, Sparshanam and Sambhashanam. Both categories of people will probably benefit from this verse. The śloka goes like this:

*Dhyana moolam guru moorty Pooja moolam guru paadam
Mantra moolam guru vaakyam Moksha moolam guru krupa*

Guru's form is for dhyanam, guru's feet are for worship, guru's word should act as a mantra to us and Self-realization or moksha can be attained only by the Grace of the Guru.

That form for which we ran for Darshan, is etched in our minds, that image

keeps coming back in our minds and now when we can't see it in flesh and blood, what is the purpose of that form and that image? It should be the object of our meditation. The mind always seeks an object to concentrate upon and what better object than the form of the Guru. I remember reading a particular incident in one of the Radio Sai articles of a particular ex-student and ex-faculty member of the Institute regarding meditation. He had the habit of controlling the mind for which he used to imagine the best poses of Swami that he enjoyed the most. In the evening when the Bhajans would go on in the mandir, Bhagawan would come to the 2nd portico in the Mandir and against the setting sky, sway rhythmically to the Bhajan being sung. This was the sight that this individual particularly liked to meditate upon. He says, "On one particular day when the Bhajan started, Bhagawan left to oversee some construction and then I decided that I would meditate on that beautiful form that I often did."

He closed his eyes, imagined Bhagawan as usual in his favourite posture, standing on the 2nd portico against the setting sky, swaying to the Bhajan that was going on, His hands cupped behind. He doesn't remember how much time the meditation went on. Suddenly, he felt a tap on his head. He opened his eyes and there was Bhagawan standing in front of him in exactly the same posture as he was meditating. Then Bhagawan says, "The inner Sai and the outer Sai are one at the same."

Antar bahischa tat sarvam vyapya Narayana sthitaha

The outer Sai who gave us Darshanam has to become the inner Sai, the object of our meditation. If we close our eyes, Bhagawan's Divine form is what should naturally appear in front of our eyes.

Pooja moolam guru paadam - What are the feet for? Earlier, the feet were add-ons to the Darshanam, which was Sparshanam. Today, when we seek Bhagawan's blessings, we naturally and automatically lay our head at His foot stool. Today, if you see a whole picture of Bhagawan and if people go for seeking blessings, they naturally touch the feet part of the picture. Even

today, in the samithis, when devotees do the *archana*, they place flowers at the picture of Bhagawan's feet.

Once when Bhagawan was giving the meaning of Pada seva, He told the real meaning of pada seva, "Walking in my footsteps, walking in the path shown by me is the real pada seva." I remember once in 1999, we at Anantapur felt that Bhagawan was particularly displeased with us and we should do something real radical to get back Bhagawan's affection, Love and Grace. So, we decided to do a pada yatra - come walking to Prasanthi Nilayam. We walked the last few kilometers without attracting the attention of the media as that would have annoyed Bhagawan. When we entered Prasanthi Nilayam, the morning Bhajan was going on. We sat waiting for Bhagawan to emerge after the morning Arati. When Bhagawan emerged, one of the senior teachers, in her innocent openness told Bhagawan, "Swami, all of us came walking to Prasanthi Nilayam." Pat came the reply from Swami, "You need not walk all the way to reach here, walking in the path shown by Swami is enough." When we do pada seva or pada Pooja, this is an injunction which we will do good to remember.

Mantra moolam guru vaakyam - The sambhashan which we enjoyed, should become our mantra now. The nearly 3000 discourses that Bhagawan has given us, the Vahini's which He has written, the interviews that Bhagawan has given to devotees, many of which are documented, all of it is a collection of Guru Vaakyam. Even one thing from there picked or chosen would amount to a mantra that we can chant day in and day out.

While there can be many examples, let me close with one. In 1969, during Dasara celebrations, Bhagawan, while giving a discourse, made a mention of a minister who was there in the gathering. This minister after visiting Prasanthi Nilayam, wanted to do something for the Nilayam as Bhagawan says. He seemed to have mentioned that when he goes back, he will talk to his ministry and ensure that proper tar roads are laid leading to Prasanthi Nilayam. Bhagawan goes on to comment on this offer, "I am not particularly interested in tarring the roads that lead to Prasanthi Nilayam, I am more

interested in the roads that lead to your heart that will lead me into your heart. Let that be paved with purity and nobility. That is more important than laying a tarred road to the physical location of Prasanthi Nilayam.”

Bhagawan goes on to add, “In fact, if the roads leading to Prasanthi Nilayam are little inconvenient, that will enforce a bit of a spiritual discipline because you have to drive with great care and caution. I would rather have it that way.”

We have seen parallels from the memorable past filled with Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan to a meaningful present which can be filled with Dhyanam of the Guru Murthy, Pooja of the Guru Paadam and mantra chanting of the Guru Vaakyam.

Moksha moolam Guru Krupa - Guru Krupa is the most important ingredient in the life of a spiritual seeker because one does not get Darshanam, Sparshanam or Sambhashanam without Guru Krupa.

Darshanam paap naashanam
Sparshanam karma vimochanam
Sambhashanam sankata naashanam

All of this can make us purer and closer to the Divine. The same holds good for the present: One can't meditate or do worship or chant the mantra without the Grace of the Guru. How many times have we decided to meditate for five minutes? How many times have we decided that we would worship in one particular manner or we that we would chant a mantra particular a number of times, but have failed? If we have succeeded, that is indeed because of the extreme and absolute compassion of the Guru. Guru Krupa is the most important thing because with a single thought everything else can fall in place.

How would one earn Guru Krupa?

I think with unquestioning, unswerving, unflinching faith...a faith that is same in the past when we had Darshanam, Sparshanam and Sambhashanam

and the faith which is the same when we have only the *murti* for dhyanam, the *paadam* for the Pooja and the *vaakyam* for the mantra. If we have the same faith through all times, through all phases of life, that is when the Guru Krupa will come and then there will not be any difference between the past and the present.

To help myself understand this, I have a favourite analogy. Imagine that our spiritual journey is like air travel, when you wait to board the flight, the pilot might just pass you by, when you are seated in the flight before it takes off, you might catch a glimpse of the pilot before his steps into the cockpit but once the flight takes off one doesn't get to see the pilot. The form called Sri Sathya Sai Baba is invisible because He has got into the cockpit to take us through this spiritual journey and each of us here will see Him when we land at our destination.





Divine Message

We cannot limit Divinity exclusively to a particular nation, region, caste, community or time. Let us take the instance of Krishna. To which particular caste did Krishna belong? He was not the family deity of Brahmins, not a wealthy Kshatriya, nor a wealthy Vaishya either. He incarnated for the protection of the entire humanity. Thinking that He came for only one or the other is attachment. The Yadavas came to ruin and were destroyed because they felt that Krishna was exclusively theirs. We have to understand that God is for all and not exclusively meant for one. There is only one God who is existing. He manifests in different forms and names so that many people may derive satisfaction. If you want to really understand such divinity, in addition to sadhana, enquiry is also essential.

Today, people who try to bring in differences are increasing in number. They are trying to turn unity into diversity. That is why, the importance of Divinity is on the decline. Due to worldly attachments, businesses and people are trying to divide the Divine because of which people are not able to understand the true form of Divinity. On account of this, they are not able to differentiate between dharma and adharma. In a country where Goddess of Dharma and Shanti are flourishing, they alone will have all prosperity and plenty.

Today, man is going against dharma and morality and giving importance to caste and creed and creating disturbance in the country. Great and saintly people are merely watching when such people are creating such a strife in the country. Wise people and scholars are also watching this. People who are occupying high positions of authority are also becoming mute spectators. No one is able to stall and control this and oppose it as it is adharma. That is why they are losing all their powers, skills, understanding. Even if they are not doing adharma, they are encouraging adharma.

There is a small example in the Mahabharata. Dharmaraja, realizing that a war will bring lot of calamities, approached Krishna and prayed to Him to go on a mission of peace. Krishna entered the court of Duryodhana and



explained in detail the implications and the consequences of this war. But in the court consisting of great preceptors and scholars like Bheeshma, Dronacharya, Krupacharya and Aswathama, Krishna's counsel was heard, but it was of no use.

On account of association with the wicked Kauravas, they became party to the adharma. Vidura, who recognized this unrighteousness, tried to oppose this idea of war. He tried in a number of ways to tell the assembly to follow the words of wisdom coming from Krishna and give up the pursuit of war. But it was all futile. Vidura thought it would be better to go on a pilgrimage than stay with these wicked people and left the kingdom.

Bheesma, Dronacharya and Krupacharya felt that as they have eaten the food of the Kauravas, they should pay back their gratitude by supporting them in one way or the other. All the three were great preceptors, they knew the difference between Dharma and Adharma. They also had the discrimination between truth and untruth, but of what use is it when it is not put into practice?

Finally, the way the Kauravas met their end, these Acharyas also met their end in the same way. Krishna believed that those who have the capacity to oppose evil but keep quiet are considered party to the evil. All those people who watch helplessly all the unrighteous things that happen, they will be considered party to all those wicked acts. They will also have to face the consequences of the evil actions. The wrong association has made them to take this wrong path.

Let us take a few examples from day-to-day life. At night, one or two mosquitoes might bite us, bed bugs might give trouble. In order to destroy them, we spray some pesticide. It might be one or two mosquitoes which have bitten us but all the mosquitoes die because of spraying this insecticide. It is not merely those one or two bedbugs but all the bedbugs are destroyed. Are we killing just those that bit us? In the same way, if we don't control the wickedness of evil people, we also will have a share in the consequences. God



also will consider those who do not control wickedness and unrighteousness as sinners. He will not spare even if someone is a scholar or a wise person. If you are a wise person, why did you not stop it? Why did you not teach those people the truth? Hence that defect is there in you also. Your defect is not giving a wise counsel to the one who is doing wrong.

Therefore, when we face the evil and wicked activities happening in society, we can say we are participating in the establishment of Dharma. Even in the Treta Yuga, Vibhishana was not able to tolerate the unrighteous acts done by his elder brother Ravana. In a number of ways, he tried to oppose and put him on the right path. When all the limits were crossed, he didn't want to get associated with Raavana and left Lanka and took refuge at the feet of Lord Rama, the embodiment of Dharma.

In this case, only Ravana and all other Rakshasas who supported him are guilty, hence all of them were destroyed in the war. For their support and appreciation, they also faced the punishment. Whether he is a relative, friend or son, when he is committing some mistake, if you can't oppose it, correct it or rectify it, you will also become party to the entire process of committing mistakes. Hence whenever you see an unrighteous act being done, you shouldn't merely be a witness, you should oppose it, only then you would have done the correct thing.

In ancient times, Duryodhana, Shakuni and Dharmaraja behaved according to their nature. But today, Dharmaraja is behaving like Duryodhana. Seeing him with all humility and obedience, you feel he is Dharmaraja, but if you observe his mentality, he will look like Shakuni. All appear to be devotees, but in their conduct, they exhibit evil traits. If you really are devotees, are you performing the activities which a devotee has to perform? There is a proverb in Telugu - All the residents of our street are Brahmins but a chicken has disappeared suddenly. If you are truly a devotee, will there be no place for disturbance, gossip and vilifying others.

A devotee has to prove his devotion by action, only then the divinity which



is all pervasive will manifest in front of us. Wherever you see, you should behold oneness. Wherever you go, your faith should be firm. But today's devotion is taking the opposite turn, hence people are turning into fools who can't understand divinity. The main reason for this is selfishness, self-interest and greed. When wicked thoughts enter the mind of man, there will be no obstruction to his acts. People become very cruel due to this. This is not the trait of humanity. We have to make effort to understand the sacredness of Divinity.



The Divine Mother

Sri Mallapragada Srimannarayana Murthy

Telugu Pandit

Around eight years ago, when I had the good fortune of speaking on Ayodhya Kanda, in the presence of Swami, I once turned to look at Bhagawan. I was not sure whether I was looking at Swami and speaking about Rama or I was looking at Rama and speaking about Swami, but I remember the beatific smile given by Swami. I deem it as my good fortune to stand in this august assembly and speak a few words in His Divine Presence.

Today is Mahanavami. This is the day when Mahishasura, who had become a bane to humanity, and was behaving in the most devilish way, was annihilated by the ever-compassionate Mother. The role of the Divine is to transform, but when transformation can't be brought about, then annihilation has to be undertaken, which happened in the case of Mahishasura. Vyasa Maharishi has said that the Goddess of death is ready to engulf all the living beings into its mouth with sharp teeth at the beginning of the Vasanth season and the Sarada season. At this time, Vyasa Maharishi exhorts us to pray to the Divine Mother. As the Divine Mother is the embodiment of time, she will mitigate all the ills which come forth due to *kala* (time). Sage Vyasa says that she will confer all the powers to human beings to tread the path of truth and righteousness.

When we think of Divine Mother and Swami, we get this doubt, whether one has become two or two of them have come together here to Prasanthi Nilayam. How is the principle of Mother? She is Mother Annapurna to her children, Mother Rajarajeshwari who rules over the whole universe, Mother Saraswati who confers vidya, Mother Gayatri who bestows wisdom, Mother Tripurasundari who confers the icchha Shakti, Kriya Shakti and Jnana Shakti. As Bala, she confers wisdom which is beyond the limitations of age and scholarship and helps us to tread the path of truth and shun the path of untruth. All these traits can be seen and experienced in Bhagawan. In this place, Bhagawan has set up a special university with discipline and

values as its foundation. The students here participate in a one of its kind service activity which is Grama seva. This University, in addition to worldly knowledge, also imparts spiritual wisdom to the students. The Narayana seva which is taken up by all the devotees of Bhagawan in all places across the world is a testimony to Bhagawan's dictum of Love All Serve All. The educational institutions running across the globe based on the principles delineated by Bhagawan are again a reminder of His teachings spreading far and wide.

This world has been created with the help of the five elements and from these five elements has emerged Maya. Man is bound by Maya and this maya is controlled by Madhava or God. Swami is that same Madhava who has come in the human form. He is the one who quenched the thirst of millions of people in this parched land of Rayalseema which is not humanly possible. Giving succor to those who suffer from diseases and impart values-based education to all without any distinction is done only by the Divine Mother. A mother will provide the food to her children based on their age, i.e., she will give a 3-year-old, the food needed by it and a 30-year-old man the food needed by him. If we give food the other way round, the 30-year-old's hunger will not be satiated and the 3-year-old will have indigestion.

Bhagawan, who came with the objective of human welfare and provided whatever is needed by the mankind has now given up His limited form and has donned the cosmic form. The cosmic form to show the glimpse of a physical form is possible only when we worship that cosmic form by the path shown by Bhagawan himself. There are many instances where Swami has actually manifested and shown that it is possible.

Bhava dava sudha vrusthi paparanya davanala

According to Lalitha Sahasranamam, Mother is like a shower of nectar on those who are bound in this fire of samsara. Swami has given us a beautiful dictum regarding this samsara and its bondage. He says: This *bhavam*, i.e., samsara is not a bondage but our *bhaavam*, i.e., our thoughts and feelings

created the bondage. If you take your family not as a bondage but an opportunity for you to see the Divine who has come in the form of your wife and children, then this world ceases to be a bondage.

Mother Lalitha is like a forest fire which destroys the forest of sin. In the same way, when devotees come to the abode of Bhagawan, they come with different thoughts and feelings and they realize that by coming to Prasanthi Nilayam, their evil and negative thoughts have been annihilated and positive thoughts have increased and they have start walking on the path to Divinity. Stories of devotees in Sanathana Sarathi are a testimony to this fact.

Dourbhagya toolavatoola jaradhwanta ravi prabha

If all our miseries are a heap of cotton, Mother Lalitha is like a strong gale which pushes it away from you. Many devotees, not only from India but from around the world, recount their experiences where they had not heard of Puttapparthi but once they heard, once they came and had Darshan of Bhagawan, all their miseries and sufferings just vanished. This proves beyond doubt that our Bhagawan is that Divine Mother.

Roga parvat dambholi mrutyu daaru kutharika

At the beset of old age, the body is subjected to many diseases which leads to death. But in case of devotees of Bhagawan, they don't worry about the diseases but chant the name of the Lord incessantly and hence live a life which is free of anxiety and full of bliss. These devotees look as if they have got a small fraction of the bliss of Bhagawan Himself.

Why should we go to Puttapparthi, why should we set foot in Prasanthi Nilayam, why should we have Darshan of that Divine Abode, why should we read Sanathana Sarathi? The answer is the difference in our mindset and behaviour before doing all this and after following all this.

Sometimes He looks like Goddess Saraswati when he dons the white robe

during His Birthday, He looks like Lord Krishna when He adorns a yellow robe, He looks like the mother who wears the crimson coloured saree when He wears the ochre robe.

Once I went to Eluru, a town in the state of Andhra Pradesh and saw Swami's photo in every house. In one house, I commented, "What is this, I see Swami's photo in every house." Later when I went to Prasanthi Nilayam for Bhagawan's Darshan, Swami came to me and said, "What did you say in Eluru, Swami is there in every house. No, that is wrong, He is not only in every house, but in every inch." Why has that Divinity, which is all pervasive, taken a human form? The answer is to be within reach to all of us. Can we bear the energy of that form, if He gives Darshan with conch, disc, mace and lotus as the Mahavishnu. It is out of His infinite Grace that He decided to take a human form amidst us. Those who follow the path of truth and dharma and keep God in their hearts, pull the Divine who is formless to take a name and form. This is for the sake of the devotees. The form comes to remove the fear, doubts and negative thoughts of the devotees. The negative thoughts in all of us are the demons and the positive thoughts and virtues are nothing but the Gods in us. This has been described in detail by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita in Chapter 16 - Deva Asura Sampat Vibhaga Yogam.

According to Swami, there are three categories of human beings. Daanava manava- Demonic man, Manav manava- Human man and Daivi manava- Godly man. Swami says human beings have to transform the demonic nature to human nature and then finally to the Divine nature. Divine Mother killed just one Mahishasura but Swami is annihilating the bestial qualities hidden in each one of us. How can such Bhagawan not be the incarnation of Divine Mother?

If we consider these few lines from Lalitha Sahasranamam:

*Bhava dava sudha vrusthi paparanya davanala
Dourbhagya toolavatoola jaradhwanta ravi prabha
Roga parvat dambholi mrutyu daaru kutharika*

Bhagyabdi Chandrika Bhakta chitta keki ghanaghana

These lines state that she showers rain of nectar to extinguish the flames of *samsara*, she is the fire which burns the forest of sins and a strong wind which blows away the heaps of the cotton of misery. She is that sun which dispels the darkness of old age of her devotees and the sun that is found in the *akasa*. She is like the full moon to the ocean of luck and moon is a component of the *akasa*. She is like the axe which fells the tree of death and this tree comes from Mother Earth. In these few lines all the five elements are described as the implements in the hands of the Divine Mother to remove the ills plaguing humankind and giving succor to them from different miseries. In the same way, Swami also has declared that He is Madhava in the manava form.

When Swami says that He is there in every inch, it is not just to give us courage and faith. He has shown His presence in many incidents across the globe. Many a time, it has happened when the devotees were in grave difficulty, Swami had come and protected them and given them the boon of fearlessness. Swami named His abode Prasanthi Nilayam not merely to make this abode the Abode of Supreme Peace, it is for making the entire world an Abode of Supreme Peace.

Sage Vyasa says: *Paroksha priyaya vahi devaha*, i.e., Gods like to work behind the scene. In the same way, Swami also has taken the role of the being behind the scene to run His mission. He came in a physical form to sow the seeds of His mission and after that He has taken the incognito form to continuously monitor the progress of His mission. Then, we had to open both our eyes to see Bhagawan, now we have to close both our eyes and see Him with the eyes of our heart.

When devotees came to Him for the mitigation of their physical suffering, He also took upon Himself some physical suffering and disease and used to come in a wheel chair to show them that when you are in a human body, it is natural to have some disease and suffering. The purpose of His taking over

suffering is to give us the courage to carry on our earthly sojourn and not get dejected or disappointed by any ill health and physical discomfort.

There is a story in Devi Bhagwatam of Satyavrata. There was a dumb person and he used to feel very bad as he was not able to speak. He left home as his parents were not able to see his suffering. He went to the forest to do penance and realized that he has no mantra to chant and even if he gets one, how will he chant the mantra. He witnessed a wild boar was being dragged away by a hunter and it was making a noise 'a...a...a...' due to the pain. He heard this word 'a' and started to utter this word himself. He started chanting this as a sacred mantra thinking about Mother in her heart. He thought to himself, "If I get my voice back due to this penance, I will never speak untruth, come what may."

Mother wanted to test him. After a few days, another wild boar was being dragged away by a hunter. The wild boar tried to escape and came and hid in his ashram. The hunter came after some time and asked him, "Did the wild boar come this way?" When Utatsha wanted to answer him by sign language, he realized that he is able to speak. He said, "I have seen with the eyes and eyes can't speak and the mouth which can speak can't see. How can I answer your question?" He followed his vow of truth and also was able to save the wild boar. The hunter pleased with his reply, showed His real form of Lord Shiva and Mother Parvati and named him Satyavrata - the one who has taken the vow of speaking truth. The alphabet 'a' is just half of the beejakshara of aeem. So just by uttering half of the beeja mantra he was able to get the grace of Mother Parvati.

*Muukam Karoti Vaacaalam Panggum Langghayate Girim
Yat-Krpaa Tamaham Vande Param-Aananda Maadhavam*

That which makes the dumb speak with eloquence and the lame cross high mountains, I extol that Grace which flows from the supreme bliss manifestation of Madhava.

Swami removes the *mahisha tatwam*, i.e., the bestial quality and ignorance of His devotees and gives us peace and happiness and changes all our hearts as Prasanthi Nilayam. This is the reason why He has donned this human form. Now He in His cosmic form responds to His devotees whenever they need him and gives them His Divine Darshan. What gratitude can we show in return to what Swami has done for us? If we can fill our hearts with His Divine message and put that message into practice and transform that into selfless service, then our life is sanctified. The students of Swami's institutions are carrying out such activities.

For anything to happen, Swami's Will is important; without His Will nothing can happen. Swami said, "Sai Baba means S-ai Baba which means I am Ai which is mother, Sai means I have added the Mother principle to Baba which is father as I am in the form of a Purusha." This is not an illusion. Hence, He said that He is Sathya Sai Baba, i.e., in truth He is Sai Baba. He declared this at the tender age of fourteen and established His Divinity in the fourteen lokas.

Once I was speaking on the Ayodhya Kanda of Ramayana in front of Swami. I was describing how Mother Anusuya was able to remove drought by the power of her penance. That same Anusuya was sitting in front of me in the form of a Purusha. When I was saying this and went to Swami to take His namaskar, Swami said with a smile, "You have come from the Mother, have seen the Mother and shown it to all?" My joy had no bounds when I heard this from Bhagawan.





Divine Message

The songs which are sung in Delhi are not heard in a house where there is no radio. Even if you have a radio, if you tune into the Madras station in place of Delhi, will you be able to hear the song? You can hear the song only when you tune the radio to the correct station. In the same way, the all-pervasive Divinity can be realized in the radio of the *chitta* by switching on the switch of concentration. These sound waves are not getting wasted, they fill the whole space. We have to transform them into jyoti waves which is known as meditation or yoga shakti. The Gopikas were able to do this hence they were able to see Krishna everywhere. Their hearts were always saturated by the image or name of Krishna. One can't find reasons for such a phenomenon. These kind of experiences are beyond reason. It is impossible to get a direct experience for everything. If direct experience or proof are not possible for many worldly things, how can you have a proof for Divinity. This is the path of adhyatma and the one who has taken to this path will never tread the foolish path of questioning Divinity.

Everyone knows their feelings and devotion to God. One can't understand the devotional feelings of another. Even in the ancient days, many of the sages and saints experienced this kind of divinity and shared their experience with others. This kind of experience is there in every religion. In Christianity also, there are instances of experiences of this kind. It is the fault of human beings not to have come to that level to experience Divinity. There is nothing wrong in the Divine. If, in a continuous downpour, you keep the pot upside down, not even a single drop will get into it. If you keep the pot properly, some amount of rain water will get collected in it.

Today, God's Grace is there in full measure everywhere at all times but we are not able to open our hearts properly to receive it. As we have not been able to fill our hearts with Gods' Grace, we have doubts at every step and every moment. Man has not been able to have faith in himself. If a person can't have faith in Nara for four minutes, how can he have faith in Narayana? All these are defects in our faith, there is no defect in God. You should have firm faith in God, it should not change from moment to moment. For one whose heart is not pure, how much ever time elapses in doing spiritual sadhana,



he will not receive God's Grace. God examines only the purity of our heart and not the different types of worship which one does. Even if you are not offering any type of worship or doing any type of meditation, if your heart is pure, God will enter your heart.

The first stage as one student explained is - You are mine. But this might lead to ego, and therefore the second stage should be - I am yours. Gopikas always prayed: We are yours. Yadavas said that Krishna was theirs and because of this, their ego got bloated up. Where there is ego, the individual goes to ruin. That is why in the Yadav clan, the mausala (iron bolt) was born, which destroyed the whole clan. The Gopikas perpetually prayed, "Oh, Krishna we are yours."

That's why Swami says three important things to the children with lots of Love:

Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow

Don't walk behind me, I may not lead

Walk beside me and be my friend.

If you try to walk in front of me, you might try to show the way to me which might be a wrong path and you don't know the path. Suppose you are walking behind me, you may leave and go away. Walk with me, then there is no chance of going on the wrong path or escape from the path shown by me. The essence of this is that you and I are one, i.e., Divinity is everywhere. God is the indweller in every body. In every *deham*, He is the *dehi*. In that case, you can't go ahead of me or behind me, take Divinity with you and in you - this is the true attribute of a *sadhaka*. You may say, "Wherever I am, I will serve Swami." But you don't have that broad heart. This is the foolishness of a selfish man. This is the method by which he covers many of his shortcomings and wastes his life. If a person has full faith in God, he will not have any desires. Until we reach that state, we have to follow. Krishna and Rama also served their gurus had their education near them and give joy to their preceptors. That is why they were able to teach their disciples in turn. One has to experience, enjoy and then share it with others. Due to the



thinking that this world is permanent, there is increase of wicked and worldly thoughts.

What is the use of all the education? Who can save you from your fate if wicked thoughts enter you? All your intelligence becomes dry and barren. Such people, how can they understand Divinity? We are associating with such people and trying to follow them. Your defect is not correcting them and putting them on the right path and it will be detrimental to you and effect you in a negative way. Therefore, we have to enter into the society and oppose all the defects and unrighteous deeds and try to set them right. This is the effort which you have to do. Only that person who has this qualification can be called a true social worker. Whatever difficulties or dangers come, face them with fearlessness. The criticism is only to the world and not to you. You are eternal and the embodiment of truth. Such a person should not be afraid of criticisms. Develop firm faith in the Divine and practice that faith and experience bliss - you will get the strength of a thousand elephants.

Dhairyam sarva sadhakam - With courage anything can be achieved. We should develop three types of *sheelas* - purity, patience and perseverance. If we develop these three, we can achieve anything in this world. A person without purity will not have patience and someone who has no patience can't have courage or perseverance. If one doesn't have courage, he will become weakling and also pollute the whole surroundings. That kind of life can't be a human life at all. We have to be good and try to make others also good. You can lose everything else but not Divinity. We have to inculcate such strong faith in Divinity.



Divine Message

What is Vedanta? The quintessence of Upanishads is Vedanta. The essence of Upanishads is wisdom. Advaita Darshanam Jnanam - the vision or experience of non-duality is Jnanam. Non-dualistic experience is not possible for everybody. Everyone is drowned in a dual mind. Because of the dual mind, the mind becomes fickle. A man with a dual mind is half blind. The one who is half blind, how can he experience Divinity? It is not possible for everybody to know Vedanta. The quality and sanctity of Vedanta can't be found anywhere else. If we investigate and enquire into each śloka, there is boundless bliss in it. To describe each śloka, even if you change the whole ocean into ink, it is not possible. That is the greatness of each śloka. The inner meaning of the śloka is not understood hence he is drowned in *shoka* or misery. The one who is miserable or in *shoka* can't understand the śloka or canto of the Upanishads.

Valmiki went on declaring: I have included all my knowledge in the Valmiki Ramayana. This Valmiki Ramayana has got so much of inner significance that it can't be comprehended so easily. Who can understand the truth of Divinity? Only a powerful devotee can know it. How can the all-powerful God be known by a low-minded man? Vishwamitra said this and told King Janaka to get Mother Sita with the garland. King Janaka said, "It is my resolution that whoever lifts this Siva bow, I will give Sita in marriage to him." *Sarvo hiteh rataha* is a quality in Rama, i.e., wishing for the well-being of all. *Sarva guna sampannaha* - one who has all the Divine qualities was Rama.

When Janaka went to Rama to ask him to marry Sita, Rama said, "I can't marry without the consent of my parents. Without the permission of my parents, I don't even look at the face of Sita." Janaka felt crestfallen, "How is this youngster speaking like this!" In today's times, people forget everything in the name of marriage, where is the question of the consent of parents? Sage Vishwamitra came and told Rama about the promise of Janaka and asked him to accept it. Rama said that he can't accept this. He said, "I will accept what is dear to me, which is the principle of Atman. I want someone with all the virtues so I have to wait till my father comes here." In the



meantime, Janaka sent a message to Ayodhya to King Dasaratha inviting him to come to Mithila. Vishwamitra said, “You can wait until your parents come but why can’t you have a glimpse of her.” At that time, Rama taught us about Dharma and said, “I will not look at any other woman’s face until I get married. Until then she is like a mother to me.” Saying this, he returned to his room. Then Vishwamitra came and tried to convince him. He told them in all his humility, “This is how Dharma is. I will obey Dharma and not people, but, I will respect everybody!”

Vishwamitra had to keep quiet as he was not able to convince Rama. After three days, Dasaratha came from Ayodhya and went to Rama. Vashistha told Rama about the auspicious time of 8 AM the next morning for the wedding and asked his consent. Rama wanted the consent of his father before accepting the request and when Dasaratha said that he accepts this proposal, Rama gave His consent.

But during coronation, He didn’t listen to Dasaratha or even Vashistha and said, “I have to uphold the vow of father given to mother Kaikeyi. If I follow the command of getting coronated, it would be disrespect to my father. I can’t get disrepute my father. I don’t want this kingdom and this coronation. I will go to the forest.” But in the case of marriage, He accepted his father’s word.

The wedding ceremony was going on and a screen was put between the bride and the groom. Until then they should not look at each other. After the curtain is removed, they should see each other. Not only Rama, but Sita is also virtuous. Like Rama, she also didn’t see Rama when the curtain was removed.

What were they looking at? They are watching only the ground. Vishwamitra said, “Rama, you are looking at the ground but not the one who is the daughter of the Mother Earth.” Still Rama didn’t see Sita as the marriage was not over. It is the determination of Rama not to see another woman before marriage. Due to the force of the parents, finally Rama beheld Sita. That was the determination of great souls. Each one should have its eligibility. The husband might be virtuous and great, but if the wife is not, it is useless and vice versa. Both of them should be virtuous and each one should be good to each other.



Until the *mangalsutra* is tied, she is like my mother. They were garlanded by all with flower garlands. But Sita didn't garland Rama and Rama didn't garland Sita. First the bride has to put the garland and then only the groom has to put the garland. She got the garland and was holding it for a long time but Rama didn't bend his head to facilitate the garlanding. Vishwamitra also went and requested Rama but he didn't agree and said, "In such an august gathering, if I bend my head to a woman, what will happen to the honour of my father."

Then, silently Lakshmana was asked to handle this situation. He was told to lift that part of the earth a little bit. Lakshmana had subtle intelligence. The devotion which Lakshmana had for Rama, no one else had. He had surrendered his heart to Rama. Lakshmana said that it is not possible to lift the ground, but said that he will tackle the issue. All of a sudden, Lakshmana ran and fell at the feet of Rama and didn't get up. Rama bent down to lift Lakshmana. Immediately Sita put the garland around Rama's neck. To pick Lakshmana up, when Rama bent his head and at the very moment when Sita garlanded him, that is the *sookshma buddhi* of Sita too. That is how they are made for each other.

If we have to realize the Divine, we have to inculcate that Divine strength in us. That is true spirituality. This is the essence of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. If you earn the Grace of God and understand the essence of the Upanishads, everything will be under your control. Therefore, the one who can understand the essence of Upanishads, the form of Upanishads will be revealed to him. The form of Upanishad has nothing to do with Rama, Krishna, Govinda, etc. It doesn't have any power. It is the symbolization of energy and is the Shiva Shakti Swaroopa. It is total wisdom and nothing else. There is no dearth or shortage here. We should have such sacred power to understand the sacred nature of God. If you want to have temporary Grace, it is not possible. There should not be anything like a short-term plan. You need permanent devotion for a life full of stability, purity, selflessness and full of virtues. Then you will be able to see this Divinity.



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