



SRI SATHYA SAI INSTITUTE OF HIGHER LEARNING

(Deemed to be University)

SUMMER COURSE

in Indian Culture and Spirituality

2011



PREFACE

The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL) organized a Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality from the 10th June to 12th June 2011 at Prasanthi Nilayam, to mark the commencement of the new Academic Year. All the students and teachers of the Institute participated in this programme.

A Summer Course on this theme is perhaps the most appropriate way to commence the academic year for an Institution founded by Bhagawan Baba, akin to the ancient Gurukula System, offering values-based integral education. The Summer Course orients students to Bhagawan's educational philosophy and gives them deep insights into what they could imbibe while pursuing their higher learning from this unique Institution. It prepares them to make the best use of the extraordinary opportunity that lies ahead of them.

One of the methods of presenting these thoughts to students was by way of talks on topics that ranged from the salient features of our Indian culture, the philosophy and concepts of the ancient Gurukula System, the Relevance of Sai Education Philosophy in the Contemporary World, the Role of Values and Ethics in Education to the Life sketch of Bhagawan as an ideal Student and an ideal Master and the blending of science and spirituality.

Other components included specially produced video shows on Bhagawan Baba, interactive sessions and presentations based on select Discourses of Bhagawan Baba from earlier Summer Courses, sharing experiences of being with Bhagawan Baba by devotees, quiz and cultural programmes, etc.

This book is a compilation of the talks delivered by elderly devotees, senior administrators and faculty members of the Institute. We hope that this assemblage of thoughts on a number of related themes pertaining to Indian Culture and Spirituality will give the reader a glimpse of the vast and ancient wisdom of Bharat. To draw attention to Bhagawan's insights on these topics, select relevant excerpts from His discourses precede each of the talks.

It our earnest hope that this model of education as envisaged and brought to fruition by Bhagawan Baba will inspire other educational institutions to take up such initiatives and share the responsibility of transforming India into the glorious and effulgent Bharath of yore by moulding young minds and orienting them to our rich cultural and spiritual heritage.

Dr. Naren Ramji
Registrar, SSSIHL

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the speakers of the Summer Course for their precious time and for having shared their thoughts and valuable experiences. Their insights will go a long way in exposing the rich treasure of *Bharatiya* culture to the young minds of the students.

We take this opportunity to place on record our heartfelt appreciation to Sri. Pragnyat Lalwani, Sri. C. D. K. Sai Narain, Sri Venkatesh Iyer, Sri Pushkaraj, Gumaste, Sri Vijay Santhanam and Sri T. N. Giridhar; all senior alumni of the Institute who very graciously came forward to help in the arrangement of various aspects of this summer course.

We thank the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust for providing the venue and their kind support. We also wish to express our appreciation to the Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust – Bhaktha Sahayak Division, for the food arrangements during the summer course. A very special thanks to Sri Y. V. C. S. Vijay, who so kindly oversaw the operational details in this regard.

We are also very grateful to volunteers who contributed to the successful compilation of this volume. Among them is Sri K V R K Bhargav, an alumnus of the Institute, who patiently transcribed all the talks of this Summer Course. We are also thankful to Sri Mandip Sandhu, visiting Faculty at the Institute, who was instrumental in helping us organize the interactive sessions for the students based on relevant excerpts from Discourses given by Bhagawan, during the earlier summer courses. We also thank him for helping us in preparation of the extracts of Bhagawan's discourses that precede every talk in this compilation.

Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality – The Genesis

Bhagawan Baba organized Summer Courses in Indian Culture and Spirituality for the benefit of students. Typically, the Summer Course would be held in the latter half of May, and, except for one occasion, the venue had always been Brindavan. The main objective of the Course is to give students a strong dose of spirituality, which is achieved in part through lectures delivered by learned scholars, senior devotees and men of esteem. The highlight was the daily discourse by Swami, delivered typically in the evening.

Swami usually chose a theme for every Summer Course; for example, in 1976, Bhagawan's Discourse revolved mostly around the human aspects of the Krishna Avatar and in 1993, it was on the Mind.

Summer Showers in the 70s

The Summer Courses began in the early seventies. At that time, the student strength in Bhagawan's College being relatively small, participation in the Summer Course was open to students from all over India; including at times some overseas participants. However, once the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning came to be established, participation in the Summer Course was confined to the students of the Institute and some select guests.

As in all such activities, Swami took complete charge. For the entire duration of the Summer Course, food was served free for all - students, teachers, guests, supporting staff, etc. Further, Bhagawan made sure that sweets and fruits of the season, were regularly distributed to one and all. Evening entertainment and cultural programmes were organized almost every day during the entire duration of the Summer Course.

Summer Courses on Indian Culture and Spirituality in the 1970's
An Overview

No.	Year	Theme
1	1972	Multiple Themes
2	1973	Adi Shankara and Bhaja Govindam
3	1974	Multiple Themes
4	1976	Mahabharatha
5	1977	Ramayana
6	1978	Bhagawatham
7	1979	Bhagawad Gita

After a gap of 11 years, the Summer Courses were resumed once again at Brindavan in the year 1990.

Summer Courses on Indian Culture & Spirituality in the 1990's
An Overview

No.	Year	Theme
1	1990	The Glory of Indian Culture; Body, Mind; Buddhi; Egoism and Attachment; The Three Gunas; Self-Knowledge; Freedom; Vedic Wisdom
2	1991	The Upanishads
3	1992	Multiple Themes
4	1993	Shad Darshanas: Six Systems of Indian Philosophy
5	1996	Ramayana
6	2000	Multiple Themes
7	2002	Ramayana

For the benefit of posterity, the Divine Discourses delivered during the Summer Courses are compiled and published under the generic title: Summer Showers in Brindavan. The 1976 volume alone bears the title: Summer Roses in the Blue Mountains as this was held in Ooty.

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Welcome Note

Dr. Naren Ramji

Registrar, SSSIHL

This summer course of two and a half days, though much shorter than the 15 days long summer course conducted by Bhagawan, has been conceived along similar lines. The primary focus of this summer course is to give students exposure to the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of Bharat, and to create awareness among students about lofty ideals and profound teachings latent in our scriptures and epics.

Bharat, as Bhagawan explains, is not a country limited by manmade geographical boundaries. Bharat stands for Bha - God, Rati - love. It is the land that fosters and encourages love for God. *Bharatiya* culture stands for unity of all mankind as one family, '*Vasudaiiva Kutumbakam*', and always prays for universal welfare '*Samastha lokah sukhino bhavantu*'. The *Gurukulas* of yore imparted education that gave young minds insight into our *Sanathana Samskriti* - the eternal heritage, thereby helping them tame their minds, nurture human qualities and ultimately manifest divine qualities in their thought, word and deed. This verily was true education. It is said '*sa vidya ya vimuktaye*', true education is that which liberates.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the *Sanathana Sarathi*, the Eternal Charioteer chose to establish educational institutions in the very first phase of His Avataric mission for this very reason. The human mind has to be refined to usher in a peaceful, harmonious and happy society. Bhagawan has conceived Sri

Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning on the lines of the ancient *Gurukula* system, which imparts values-based education. The summer course is therefore the most appropriate way to begin the academic year. It orients newly admitted students to Bhagawan's educational philosophy and gives them first hand deep insights into how they can directly benefit from this unique and Divine Institution.

It is our earnest hope and prayer that the next two and a half days will do the same for all of you. It is a matter of great fulfillment that the proposal for this summer course in Indian Culture and Spirituality, which was blessed by our Revered Founder Chancellor Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba only a few months ago, is today a reality. The fact that we have been able to organize this summer course on this scale is a testimony of His Will and to the fact that He is always with us at every step, helping and guiding each one of us. In this context, I wish to share a small incident.

In the run-up to the summer course, as we were designing and finalizing diaries, pens and badges, some of us felt that the course ought to be confined to basic functionality. A senior member of the organization (who is also an alumnus of the Institute), however, reminded us that as Swami is watching us, the design and quality of the course ought to meet His exacting standards and approval.

Swami is always watching over us, helping us and guiding us. I pray to Bhagawan to bless this programme, speak through every speaker, reside in the heart of every student and initiate the process of refinement to transform each one of you into ideal human beings and worthy Sai students. His grace is ever there in abundance, but we need to make efforts to change ourselves for the better by always remaining connected to Him.

Inaugural Address

Prof. J. Shashidhara Prasad

Vice-Chancellor, SSSIHL

All of us have gathered here today to offer our respectful *pranams* to our beloved Lord and take the oath that we will dedicate ourselves to Swami's mission and vision for the transformation of every individual's mind and heart, and for the redemption of the world. Every now and then we feel that we have been orphaned due to Swami leaving His mortal coil, but rest assured that by shedding the finite form, He has taken the infinite form. We can feel His presence at all places and at all times if we have absolute faith and surrender ourselves at His lotus feet. Just yesterday, I returned from my visit to Turkey and Israel where I had to inaugurate the International conference on *Chemical Sciences and its applications* in commemoration the International year of Chemistry. The main interest was not the conference, but to visit places sanctified by Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammed.

As I walked through the birth place of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem; the path tread by Christ to Golgotha where he was crucified in Jerusalem; the mount of Olives, where Jesus spent many days before he was arrested; and the rock of the mount which was sanctified by prophet Mohammed; I could feel the presence of our Beloved Bhagawan at all these places. As I knelt before the spot where Jesus descended into this world, kissed the spot where the body of Jesus was brought down from the cross and laid in obeisance, tears rolled down from my eyes as it reminded me of the mortal coil of Bhagawan in the casket for the final

Mahasamadhi. I could feel His strong vibrations in far off lands, which assured me of His infinite presence, which would take care of us every moment and lead us on the right path shown by Swami in human form, in spite of being the Avatar of the age.

We should be connected to Sai *Mata* just as a child connects to its mother, with infinite love and faith and without an inkling of doubt. It is necessary to have '*Ekalavya nishtha*'. We distinctly remember the loving smile of Bhagawan and His blessing from the dais, which was a panacea for all problems. We can still perceive His smile and blessings when '*Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu*' is repeated thrice in Sai Kulwant Hall. Swami has lit the lamp of love in each one of our hearts by singing '*Akhandajyoti jalao...Sai man mandir mein*' and it is our bounden duty to light the lamp in each human being. Jerusalem is the confluence of the three religions – Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The people of Jerusalem live in perpetual fear and suspicion, but Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of all religions has '*Sarva dharma priya deva, Sathya Sai deva*', hence people of all faiths are in perpetual love and selfless service depicting the unity of all religions.

Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning blessed by Bhagawan is *Nalanda* and *Takshashila* for values-based integral education. According to Bhagawan, education is for life, not for mere living. Every student who walks out of this university should have holistic training. Swami has given a simple technique for our redemption – *Bhajans*. He has taken great pains to guide both students and faculty through His discourses, which were referred to as Summer Showers. It was as if Sai Krishna gave the Bhagawat Gita for life in the Kali Yuga as a *Poorna* Avatar. These discourses of Swami are of great spiritual depth and offer pragmatic guidelines for everyone. The idea of having a workshop for teachers and an orientation programme for all students of all campuses was put up before Swami a couple of months ago. He

was very happy about it and said that this initiative should continue.

On this day last year, i.e., in 2010, I had the wonderful privilege of experiencing Swami's love and affection in bounty when He blessed me with the responsibility of being the Vice-chancellor of this Institute. I am very happy that the revered elders, Sri V. Srinivasan, Sri S. V. Giri, Sri G. Venkataraman, Sri V. N. Pandit, Sri A. V. Gokak, Sri K. Chakravarthy, Sri B. N. Narasimha Murthy and other senior colleagues who are associated with Swami for a long time, have graciously agreed to address the students and faculty on various subjects while sharing their experiences.

At this juncture I sincerely feel that we should let go of our internal bickering and work with unity and dedication for the vision and mission of the divine empire of the Avatar. I was out station for nearly ten days leaving all the responsibilities of organizing the summer course to my colleagues with the support of the administration. They have done a good job and my loving thanks to all of them.

Salient features of Indian Culture and Spirituality

STUDENTS! Preceptors! Educationists! From times of yore, Bharat has been promoting peace and security in the world by its spiritual message. The quintessence of that message is contained in the pronouncement: "Let all the peoples of the world be happy." The culture of Bharat is based on the eternal truth, which is unaffected by time and place, unchanged by circumstances, untainted by historical changes and untouched by natural calamities.¹ Help ever, hurt never. This is the teaching of the ancient culture of Bharat—*Paropakaraya Punyaya Papaya Parapeedanam* - one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them.² Bharatiya culture stresses the tremendous importance of *sathya* and *dharma* through the injunctions: *sathyam vada, dharmam chara* - Always speak the truth and follow the path of righteousness. *Sathya* and *dharma* are the fundamental guiding principles of mankind.³ The rishis of yore crowned sacrifice and not people. They accorded *dharma* a place of pride in their lives, were committed to justice, and embraced *sathya*. It is such sacred practices alone that have protected Bharat through the ages.⁴

Instances abound in the history of Bharath, of sages and rulers who sacrificed their lives in order to fulfill their plighted word. Emperor Harischandra stuck to Truth in spite of travail and temptation. He refused to deny the word he had spoken, though he had to sell himself and his queen and son as bond slaves and reduce himself to the position of a watchman in a burial ground. Lakshmana too stuck to his promise to accompany Rama during the years of his exile though he had to leave his mother and wife

¹ Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 24, Chapter 27, 10th Convocation of SSSIHL, Vidyagiri Stadium, 22nd November 1991

² Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 33, Chapter 17, Prasanthi Nilayam, 29th September 2000

³ Summer Showers 2000, Chapter 15

⁴ Summer Showers 2000, Chapter 15

and palace behind. Emperor Bali carried out his promise to Vamana though the Guru whom he revered predicted that he would be destroyed, if he stuck to Truth; and gifted three foot-lengths of land to Vamana. So he won God's Grace, as Harischandra won it and both gathered immoral renown."⁵

Indian Culture - '*Bharatheeya Samskrithi*' - *Samskrithi* means culture, which cleanses the metal, shapes in the mould, melts in the crucible to purify, brightens and straightens. Indian culture removes the dross of animality thereby enabling man to devote all his time towards the pilgrimage to God within him. *Samskrithi* is a double process; the plucking out of weeds and the sowing of seeds. And, it starts in India, right from the cradle. It has to be continued through kindergarten, school and college. ⁶

The basic Truth of Creation is Unity in Multiplicity. The service that every religion offers to mankind is to expand the consciousness of man beyond the material sphere and light the spark of Divinity already in him. The Bharathiya mode of worship is based on the awareness that the One manifests through many discrete forms and many discrete attributes, when confronted by many discrete situations and conditions. So Bharathiyas have the intellectual tolerance, among all peoples of the world, to proclaim to all the quarters that God exists and can be found in every religion. This is their unique good fortune. ⁷

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

⁵ Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 18, Chapter 26, Prasanthi Nilayam, Institute Auditorium, 1985

⁶ Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 08, Chapter 32, Anantapur College, 5th September 1968

⁷ Vidya Vahini, Chapter 13

Salient Features of Indian Culture and Spirituality

Sri Anil. V. Gokak

7th Vice-Chancellor, SSSIHL

It is my proud privilege to share with you my thoughts on the salient features of Indian culture and spirituality. The culture and spirituality of our nation and its people is very important as it determines the character and conduct of an individual and more importantly, the pace and direction of our nation's progress.

'What is culture?' Many books have been written just to define culture. Mathew Arnold defined it by using four words: Hebraism (strictness of conscience), Hellenism (spontaneity of consciousness), sweetness and light. Sweetness represents the delight that comes out of peace. It is not just the absence of strife but much more than that. In the words of Shelley, "that calm surpassing wealth the sage in meditation found"...i.e., peace. Kroger talked of its social aspects as subsistence culture – tools of technology for making livelihood easier. I will try to deal with social and values culture briefly, to the best of my knowledge.

Shakespeare said that man is the paragon of animals; Victor Hugo said on the other hand that man is a hyphen between beast and angel. Let us first reflect on the Indian view of Man. Bhagawan gave the definition of MAN, which is a spiritual one. M stands for *Maya* removed, A for *Atma* realized and N for *Nirvana* attained. One who has overcome the duality of *maya*, who has pierced through its veil, realizes the divine spark within

him and thereby attains nirvana. In Judaism there is a covenant between man and God for which both are equally committed. God needs man to fulfill the purpose of righteousness in creation. Buddhism and Jainism believed in the ascent of man to godhead. Hinduism believes in both the theories of descent of God to man and ascent of man to godhood. We also have the great Vedic ideal of *Swarajya* and *Samrajya*. *Swarajya* refers to the empire within, the empire we rule over due to Self-conquest. *Samrajya* is the empire without and around you which can be conquered if one has *Swarajya*. Vedic seers attached great importance to both inner life and outer life, the balance between action and contemplation.

Let me now take up the salient features of Indian culture and spirituality. First and foremost, the Indian view strongly endorses the divinity and dignity of man. *Aham Brahmasmi*, That Thou Art - the absolute that fills all space that is eternally present, right from the creator down to the smallest matter, is within you; you are Brahma yourself. That Thou Art - the guru tells the pupil not to be diffident as you are the ultimate reality yourself. In this manner, the divinity and dignity of the individual is emphasized. As already mentioned, spirituality and culture have both individual and social aspects. If spirituality and culture are confined to what Arnold Toynbee called the creative minority, the purpose is not served. Both have to be diffused to the people at large.

Our ancestors adopted wonderful strategies for diffusion of culture and spirituality. First among them are our scriptures like the Vedas, which embody the grandeur and sublimity of the responses of our ancestors to the beauty of nature and the vast expanse of the universe. They saw in the sun, moon, water and mountains, the embodiments of divinity. The Vedas talk about sacrifices that are symbolic in nature. The Upanishads on the other hand touch upon a different aspect, as the sacrifices became

mere rituals. While the Vedas concentrate on the outer world and the responses of the ancestors to the outer world, the Upanishads deal with the exploration of the soul, the inner self. They are very critical of the sacrifices, questioning their validity as everything belongs to God. According to the Upanishads, the sacrifice should be of one's self and will. As time passed, owing to the fact that they were in vedic Sanskrit, both the Vedas and the Upanishads became confined to a minority, and not understood by the majority. Bhagawan himself has said in one of His discourses that Valmiki wrote the Ramayana in *Loukik* Sanskrit rather than Vedic Sanskrit, so that the common man may get the message of spirituality.

There is no need to talk about Ramayana and Mahabharata, as they have carried the message of spirituality to the doorstep of the common man. The Bhagawad Gita is a part of Mahabharata. 'Gi' stands for sacrifice and 'Ta' for spirituality. It emphasizes both sacrifice and spirituality, and a balance between action and contemplation. It is a fitting reply to the western critic who says that Indian religion is out worldly. The other strategy adopted was, to give the individual all the options required to make a sincere and concerted effort, as attaining divinity is very difficult. The individual was provided with four *Margas* (paths), which everyone is familiar with but I would only highlight one of these four, *Raja-marga*, which is the science of concentration. Here, we begin with Yama or self control and end with Samadhi where the person who meditates, the object of meditation and the process of meditation all merge into one. Another aspect of all the four options is that the intellect has to be trained along with mind, as intellect is as dangerous as the mind itself. For instance, if you take a conscious decision with full intellectual awareness that you should be indifferent to the fruits of your actions then it is Buddhi-yoga. But in order to take such a decision, the intellect has to be purified, which Bhagawan called as Yoga-Buddhi.

Let me take you to another unique feature of Hinduism - the Indian view of the universe and its creation. According to the great Indian tradition, God projected the universe out of Himself. In the Bible, God took six days to create the universe and accorded a special position to man, and hence when Charles Darwin came with the theory of evolution, there was a conflict between science and religion. Man is the supreme creation of God, so how can he be part of the evolutionary process, was the conflict. But there was no such conflict in this respect in Bharat, and this harmonious relationship continues to remain the same to this day. Dr. Abdul Kalam in this book 'Wings of Fire' says that in the dance of an atom, he can see the cosmic dance of Shiva. Another view, which is unique to Indian spirituality, is, that the universe is the manifestation of the divine or a projection of the divine - '*Isha Vasyam Idam Sarvam*'. Everything here is a manifestation of the divine, which can be understood by a quotation of Mahatma Gandhi, "Since he pervades every fabric of my being and that of you all, I derive the doctrine of equality of all creatures and this should satisfy the cravings of all philosophical communists". He said that this is the principle of brotherhood not only of all human beings but all creation. He also says in it the message of continuous service to all human beings. When we realize that all are sons of the same creator, then the conviction that everything in the universe has a rightful place grows within us. One may conclude that this mantra provides a strong spiritual foundation for the concept of equality. '*Aham Brahmasmi*' gives the spiritual foundation, spiritual roots for the concept of liberty.

The next feature is that the whole world is one - '*Vasudaiiva Kutumbakam*'. Differences in race, caste, creed, religion and nationality are all superficial and they hide the unity that underlies them all. It is this essential unity that has to be tapped. Another important principle is '*Ekam sath vipra bahuda vadanti*', i.e. unity in diversity. Diversity is as important as unity but it is

relevant only so long as it is a play of unity. When it separates from this essential unity, diversity becomes divergence. One more aspect is the universality of Indian culture and spirituality. It is because the Vedic seers did not communicate what they discovered but what was revealed to them, and I can do justice to this by quoting Dr. Radhakrishnan. He said, “The inspired sages proclaim that what they communicate is not what they discovered for themselves. It is revealed to them without their efforts. Though the knowledge is an experience of the seer, it is an experience of the independent reality impinging on his consciousness. It is the impact of the reality on the experiencer or direct disclosure, revelation of the divine”.

Let me now talk about the social and national dimension of our spirituality and culture. First is the caste system, which all of you are aware of. It had a divine origin as mentioned in the *Purushasukta*. The cosmic *purusha* was sacrificed from where the four divine orders were born. All are embodiments of divinity and all are necessary for the efficient functioning of society. The concept of king was very important as he was considered the representative of the divine on earth. He was supposed to enforce ‘*ritam*’ - the supreme truth. He had to abide by Dharma and was accountable to Dharma. The king’s ministerial council provided for the representation of all the four orders. According to Sri Aurobindo, there were reservations for all four castes in the council. The King could not act singly but had to consult the council before taking a decision. He could not have direct legislation but issued administrative decrees, which were in conformity with the Dharma. There was no state religion, and people were free to decide their own religion. So, in India we never had a priestly theocracy as in Tibet or a landed, military aristocracy as in France, England and Europe. Our monarchies, excluding the foreign ones (e.g. Mughals), were not despots like their counterparts in western and central Asia and later on in Europe.

I will now give you a historical perspective, without which our understanding of Indian culture and spirituality is incomplete. Up until the 6th century B.C., when Buddhism emerged, it was the Vedic culture that predominated. It had, however, deteriorated by then, and form had become more important than substance, reason gave way to superstition, and the caste system acquired a hereditary character. Buddhism came as a counter check on the caste system and also to Vedic sacrifices. But Buddhism suggested that the message be propagated in Pali language and not Sanskrit. It had emphasized the social side of the religion and corrected the imbalance that had crept in. The concept of *Bodhisatwa* in Buddhism is a noble one where the individual attaining Nirvana, postpones it for the sake of suffering humanity and helps uplift them.

Let us now go to Middle Ages, where Islam and Hinduism clashed but also had a healthy interaction. The Bhakthi movement was impacted by the presence of Islam as it rushed towards the original tradition of Vedas and Upanishads due the presence of Islam. It attacked casteism, propagated the message in regional languages, and combined music with devotion to popularize spirituality. Many of its luminaries belonged to the backward classes. Raidas was a cobbler, Namdev was a tailor and Mirabai a princess who came to Raidas. Sikhism also saw its birth in the middle ages. It preached the message of universal religion and Guru Nanak combined the dress of a Hindu and a Muslim. Sufism shows the impact of Hinduism on Islam as it accepted the concepts of a Guru, music and number of other Indian concepts. Sufism was a great relief to Indians who were forcibly converted to Islam. Akbar sheltered all religions and even started a new religion called as '*Deen-A-Elahi*'. It didn't have any adherents but the concept of a universal religion from a king of that time was admirable because during the same time, the Crusades (wars carried out in the name of religion between Christianity and

Islam) and the persecution of Protestants by the Catholic Church were going on in Europe. During the British period, rationalism and humanism impacted Raja Ram Mohan Roy, resulting in a spurt of literary activities. The western impulse stimulated Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo to search our traditional treasures and to come out with new forms of literature, but the products they gave us, like '*Gitanjali*' and '*Savitri*', were typically Indian. Swami Vivekananda affirmed the Indian position, but impacted by the West, he came out with the synthesis of East and West. He pleaded that the one hope for India is a Vedantic brain with an Islamic body. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's great contribution was that he practiced three religions and concluded that the different paths lead to the same God. Mahatma Gandhi's contribution was that he spiritualized politics.

What does such history show? I can't but quote Swami Vivekananda who says that India gave away her spiritual treasures in addition to her mineral and material treasures. She welcomed invaders, immigrants and absorbed them. The message of India is spiritualizing of the human race, according to Swami Vivekananda. Today, he said, in and after the Middle Ages, we have lost action, and concentrated too much on contemplation. Hence, according to him, we have to exchange the marvels of the region of spirit, which we possess, with the marvels of the region of matter, which the West possesses. Thirdly, he says that, it is the cultural and spiritual unity of India that has enabled her to stand the test of times. Whenever divisive forces threatened India, it is the spiritual and cultural unity of India that came to its rescue. Lastly, today, we face the challenges of globalisation. Globalisation is welcome but we can't afford to lose our identity altogether, and hence the study of our own spirituality and culture becomes necessary.

Coming to Bhagawan Baba, He gave us a universal message that is in tune with what has already been said earlier by our seers and

Avatars; The caste of humanity, the religion of love and the one God who is omnipresent and omnipotent. He also said that revolution is not the one like the French revolution but the need of the hour is a spiritual revolution. He propagated the spiritual revolution but he adopted the evolutionary approach. We need Him today, so call Him back brothers and sisters! Let Him not be a mere form or name, a legend by the fireside, but a life giving flame. He has already promised us that He will come again in the form of Prema Sai. Let us all await for that golden moment!

Philosophy and Concepts of the Ancient *Gurukula* System

Our ancient education gave scope for the exercise of the Divine qualities in man. India became celebrated for her culture because in the *gurukulas* (hermitages) of ancient times, great teachers taught these ideals to their pupils, having already realised them in their own lives.⁸ The education that was practised in ancient India was far superior and far more fruitful, for it equipped the student with a healthy spirit of self-reliance. It endowed him with mental peace and equi-peace. It never allowed him to be enslaved by the glittering fancies and fascinations of other cultures. It taught him to discriminate between the flippant and the stable, the upgrading and the down pulling. It enthused the student to offer his life at the feet of his Motherland with a glow on his face and a sparkle in his eye. It armed him against all obstacles on the path of self-culture and self-realisation. It exhorted him to oppose, without rest or relief, untruth, injustice and violence.⁹ In the *Gurukulas* [hermitages] of the past, instruction was provided for right living, spiritual advancements, and moral conduct and behaviour. In those days students were trained to lead lives marked by humility, sense control, virtue and discipline.¹⁰ From early times, the ancient system of education developed a broad outlook and promoted virtues and morals, which served to foster noble ideals in society.¹¹

In the ancient hermitages (*Gurukulams*), after the pupil had finished his studies under the guru, the guru gave him such exalted advice as no pupil in any other country received from his master: “*Mathru Devo Bhava* (May the mother be your God),

⁸ Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 14, Chapter 6, Teachers' Training Camp, Brindavan, 25th July 1978

⁹ Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 13, Chapter 21, Bangalore, 1st August 1978

¹⁰ Summer Showers 2000, Chapter 07

¹¹ Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 27, Chapter 19, Discourse in Sai Ramesh Hall, Brindavan, 19th July 1994

Pithru Devo Bhava (May your father be your God), *Aacharya Devo Bhava* (May your preceptor be your God), “*Sathyam Vada* (Speak the truth), *Dharmam chara* (Act righteously), *No Itbaraani* (Do not adopt other ways).” These were the commands.¹²

The Gurus (preceptors) of old taught only from experience; they loved their pupils and sought to correct their faults and failings, in order to make them happy and useful. When the pupils finally left his home the Guru exhorted them to follow two *Sutras* (guidelines), which were as essential for life as the two *nethras* (eyes)---*Sathyam vada*, *Dharmam chara* (Speak the truth; Walk on the path of righteousness). The Guru had the faith that the *shishya* (pupil) would take the advice to heart, for, he himself was the living proof of their value and validity.¹³

The ancient Universities emphasised the Immanence and Transcendence of God. Teachers did not calculate and clamour for wages. Their needs were fulfilled by society. They never worried about material comfort or discomfort. They were after spiritual treasures. Pupils too insisted that they should be shown the way to liberation from the shackles of material desires. Teachers were more affectionate towards their pupils than to their own children. They were renunciants, willing and eager to undergo trials and tribulations, ever contented, happy and joyful¹⁴. The preceptors sacrificed much for their disciples, and, for their part, the disciples were not far behind either, in the matter of sacrifice.¹⁵

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

¹² Vidya Vahini, Chapter 7

¹³ Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 14 Chapter 26, Bangalore, 21st June 1979

¹⁴ Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 14, Chapter 50, Brindavan, 10th July 1980

¹⁵ Summer Showers 2000, Chapter 07

Philosophy and Concepts of the Ancient Gurukula System

Sri S.V. Giri

6th Vice-Chancellor, SSSIHL

It is a great privilege to be present here, addressing you on this very important occasion. I reminisce about the last summer course we attended in 2002. The summer course was a regular feature till the early 1990s. It was discontinued and then revived, the last one being nearly a decade ago. I congratulate the Vice-Chancellor and the University for reviving this wonderful practice, because it serves as an introduction to Swami's holistic and integral education. In fact, the topic that I am going to dwell upon is fundamental to the practice of integral education, the philosophy of it, and how Swami has so perfectly crafted the ancient system to the demands of the modern educational system. I will take help of a few slides that I will be presenting so that the ideas fix in your minds more easily. The ancient Gurukulas had a very important role to play. I am taking a leaf out of what Mr. Gokak said about Indian culture and spirituality. They are noted for their antiquity and continuity. The continuity is established mainly by the educational system. We are familiar with the old saying that many of our people are not literate but are educated, in the sense that they knew what is right and what is wrong. The fundamental human values were deeply implanted in them, not through formal schooling, but through institutions which otherwise serve the purpose.

I propose to deal with the presentation in eight topics. I will deal with the importance of education; the instrument that imparted education at that time (in the ancient times), i.e., the Gurukula, which was more like a family than a school; and what characterized the Gurukulas, i.e. their ambience of discipline. Discipline was not mere a mechanical discipline but discipline based on values. We will study the characteristics of Satyakama, Jabala and Nachiketas, who turned out to be exemplary students, and the qualities of exemplary teachers. Next, we will study the end of education – character; and what character means. Finally, to sum it all up, how our divine master Bhagawan Baba evolved His integral system of education, and proved its viability and superiority by the instrument of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning and other Sai educational institutions.

As I was mentioning, the backbone of Indian civilization is its integral system of education. If India is refined today in its culture and willing not only to tolerate differences but also accept differences as real, it is because of education and the refinement it produces in the individual. Education and refinement are interrelated. Throughout the ages, in India, educating a person correlated to the building of character, which primarily means '*Trikarana Suddhi*' – congruence of thought, word and deed. In this system, one's worth is not gauged by the amount of knowledge acquired through books, but by the degree of self-perfection attained. The purpose of education is to attain this perfection. Every individual is inherently divine and perfect, so education should help him/her to blossom into perfect individuals.

We will find a lot of difference between the modern schooling and university system of education and the Gurukula system of yore, which was like a family. Rishis and rishipatnis welcomed children aged around 8 years into their family. The children

stayed in the Gurukulas with other children, got up early at 5am before dawn, went to the river with the Guru, performed household chores, conformed to the discipline and studied all the facets of the life. It was life training, not merely acquiring bits of knowledge or reciting some portions of the scriptures or performing certain rituals. It was learning life skills, social skills, survival skills, all brought together to mould life to a total living. It was a beehive of community living, a cooperative effort where no time was wasted, and every moment was utilized, just like how your hostel life and college life blends so well right from 5am to 10pm. An idle mind is the devil's workshop – one has to be constantly and meaningfully engaged, to find that balance. The art of teaching lies in this balance. We often recite '*Sahanavavtu sahanou bhunaktu sahaveeryam karavavahai*' i.e., all individuals blending towards a harmonious performance of activities to evolve a total symbiosis of energy, full of cooperative effort, full of activities not having divergent purposes, but for a community living.

Gurukulas were headed by *Kulapathis* who in modern parlance are the Vice- chancellors. *Kulapathis* had total control on the Gurukulas for imposing and making students imbibe proper discipline. The discipline in the physical conduct, in the first instance, leads to discipline in the mental effort, finally becoming part of the personality, which helped in liberating the mind for further concentrated efforts. Rishis and rishipatnis were part of the family staying together and working together, as it was not a commercial proposition.

In the formative years, what was most important was an ambience of discipline, hallowed seclusion and purposeful isolation. It was akin to a laboratory where students got trained for meeting the challenges of the outside world. This practice is followed at our University. This was the answer that Bhagawan had for the critics who used to say that the institute is protected,

making students vulnerable when they step into the outside world. They are not isolated in the strict sense of completely protecting them from the realities of the world. The realities of the world are administered in graduated doses and students are asked to discriminate. If you recall what happens in awareness classes; often you are presented with '*Dharmasankats*' (dilemmas) where you have to make a choice weighing the positive and negative points on both sides. The mind is put to practice to take a decision based on discrimination in defined conditions, and thereafter, it becomes a part of your personality so that you can handle real life situations. Planned and purposeful drives towards perfection in education is the ultimate goal, which every human being strives for.

Swami beautifully says how a thought becomes the genesis of one's character. He says sow a thought and reap an act, as thought is fundamental with the mind as the driving force. Sow an act and reap a habit, because doing an act repeatedly makes it a habit known in good sense as '*Abhaya-yoga*'. Sow a habit, reap a character; if you are continuously practicing a particular habit or approach, it becomes part of your character. Sow a character and reap your destiny.

Ultimately, you realize that thought is the fundamental thing that shapes one's destiny. Hence, control the mind and good things will follow; start with good thoughts and have a good destiny. Swami says that much of it is our own making, so start with good thoughts, a clean mind and get a good destiny. Do not wail about how you are visited by adverse circumstances and getting poor rewards whereas someone else is doing so many wrong things and getting away. It is our own making that we are passing through this phase, so wait it out and let it pass away. So do good, have good thoughts and shape a good destiny.

Coming back to our ancient system of education, *Kulapathis* were the lawmakers of the institute and seekers of knowledge had to submit wholly to their discipline. So conditioning of the mind, making it think of good things is very essential and part of the discipline. Next is the importance of controlling the mind, which is often stressed by Bhagawan. The mind strays away with one moment of indifference. The *Vivekachudamani* compares the mind to a top, which keeps falling down from a staircase and requires an enormous amount of effort to get back to its normal state. The mind (as an instrument) is extrovert as it goes and fixes on something outside. The real strength of an individual is turning it within and diving deep inside one self, thereby acquiring enormous amount of power. '*Bhava samadhi*' - constant practice of turning inward, and '*Bhava samsuddhi*'- purity of thoughts and attitude, these are given importance in the Gurukula system. Let the mind function after this, without the hindrance of the five senses. It is easily said than done, as it requires constant awareness, constant control of the mind and turning it inside. One will realize that a voluntarily withdrawn, internally focused mind accumulates extraordinary potentiality. We should focus the mind just like sunlight, when focused on a piece of paper through a magnifying lens, burns the paper. A practical example of mind is the Internet, where, by using search engines, we constantly hop from one site to another, and often forget what we started with. We sit in front of the computer for three to four hours but come out with practically nothing accumulated in our storehouse of wisdom. The most important thing here is concentration; decide what we need and keep the mind internally focused and voluntarily withdrawn. So to get the best out of the mind we must look inward. It has got many advantages, like going beyond the limitations of your own self and looking at the universe as emanating from the same source. This perfection is achieved gradually and with practice.

Next is the stress on values that the Gurukulas teach. Gurukulas teach much more than only discipline. They have a planned and purposeful drive towards perfection; progress from self-centeredness to selflessness. Swami repeatedly says that you have to grow beyond your self in every activity, and if you are moving from self-centeredness to selflessness, you are evolving. His mission statement for this integral education is that, every student in this institute will be assisted to acquire self-knowledge. The word ‘assist’ is very important as divinity is within each one of you and the teachers have to only assist the students to acquire self-knowledge. When an individual moves from self-centeredness to selflessness, he is in a position to practice self-sacrifice (self sacrifice of the little self). You should be in a position to take a broader view, listen to a different viewpoint, and consider that there can be a different viewpoint (hence, self-sacrifice). Learning to practice self-sacrifice is the road to earning self-realization. This comes about by subordination of pleasure seeking to perfection seeking, which is the entire theme of Kathopanishad. *Preyas* verses *Shreyas*, the want of immediate pleasure verses long-term perfection. The student is conditioned to have a larger, long-term view of life rather than a self-centered, pleasure seeking life. This is beautifully summed up in the Upanishads about a disciplined student.

A thoroughly disciplined student is ‘*asisthaba*’, ‘*dbritistaba*’, ‘*balistaba*’, i.e., he is sterling in character, keen in intelligence and able in execution respectively. The emphasis is again and again on character as you witness in Satyakam Jabala’s story. When he went to his Guru, he didn’t know his family lineage, so when the Guru asked him about his lineage to ascertain whether he is fit to receive education, he said he is Satyakam, the son of Jabala. The Guru knew that he was speaking the truth and had the courage to speak the truth. This made him accept the boy immediately under his tutelage. Nachiketa as a student showed the virtue of Shradha. Shradha cannot be translated into a single English

word; it can connote faith, sincerity, and steadfastness, a whole range of traits combined in one. Shraddha is something that a student should have, which includes curiosity, an urge and determination to learn, and sticking to a larger view compared to immediate pleasure seeking. Yama offered Nachiketa three boons and several pleasures, but Nachiketa was steadfast in learning the wisdom from Yama as he treated Yama as his Guru.

A very good example of how a teacher imparts his own character and teaches students, is the analogy of fuel coming in contact with fire and becoming fire itself. The teacher has to be an exemplar, an Acharya, i.e., a person who knows and the one who practices what he preaches. Hence, he commands all the credibility and not merely a teacher in the classroom, transmitting all the qualities to the students. The process of educating oneself commences from within and as reiterated, the student will be assisted in his search. I am reminded of a familiar story where a professor after twenty years of teaching various students was asked, whether she is teaching the same subject as she was teaching twenty years ago. She replied that, she is teaching the same class and the same thing. The next question asked was, 'is it not boring to you to do this over a period of twenty years'? Her answer was that each year she gets a new set of students and each student has different attitudes and different capacities, therefore the lessons have to be modified in relation to each student for them to appreciate and understand the subject.

Swami tells us that we must teach students to live like a master not like a slave. You should have self-confidence, i.e. believe that you are the spark of divine. If you have self-confidence, you abide in the self. On the other hand, if you are submissive and think that you are like a slave, then education has had no benefit on you. More than anything else, education should build self-confidence leading to a sterling character.

What is character? How to ascertain a man of character? According to me, character implies a well-trained will to be straightforward i.e., *Trikarana suddhi*. Character is being fearless and honest, coupled with a sincerity to act and fight nobly and courageously, in order to embody (in one's own life and in society), all that is true and that which can foster solidarity and unity. Character has a connotation much beyond the individual level; it has a social welfare implication leading to unity and solidarity in society. An example of a person with impeccable character was Hanuman. A *shloka*, which describes him, goes like this:

*buddhir balam yasho dhairyam nirbhayatvam arogyatam
ajadyam vakpatutwam cha hanumath smaranat bhavet*

i.e., discrimination, might, fame, valour, fearless, full of health, always active not lazy, and dexterity of the tongue as he knows how to convey a message. Character is harmony in what you think, say and do. Bhagawan wants you to evolve into a man of character after you pass out of this Institute. Character can be considered to have four dimensions: The dimension of wisdom (buddhi), dimension of heroic will (nirbhayatwam and dhairyam), the dimension of compassion and universal love, and the dimension of competence, chiseled skill and untiring labour. Swami's expectation is always perfection, so you should strive for perfection in whatever you do. If you want to do something, plan and execute it skillfully so that nothing is wanting. Summing up, a well-developed character is an integrated character, which is able to sharpen in-born capacities and potentials towards their highest values.

A developed character harmonizes the demands of physical education, vital education, emotional education, rational education, aesthetic education, ethical education and spiritual education. It is not merely the accumulation of knowledge from

books, but much more in terms of refinement, values and attitude. A person of character is a person of integrity. Integrity means to have the courage and self-discipline to live by your inner truth. Imagine a human life lived in that manner, which is a great honour, as this is exactly what Swami expects from all of us. The five key ideas in the definition of integrity are wholeness, goodness, courage, self-discipline and living by inner truth. If you have your own values then be courageous, be bold to stand up to those values and defend them.

We often discuss this in awareness classes; that you should be an independent personality not a viable or malleable non-entity. So feel free, have the self-confidence that Swami is always there to guide you to take you to greater heights in life. I conclude by saying that Swami gave me the opportunity to be the educational secretary and then the chief vigilance commissioner where I have seen people in different capacities and in different walks of life. I have also seen children and young men with bubbling enthusiasm but not necessarily getting directed always towards values. In my latter capacity, I saw hundreds of people who moved astray initially for a very small compromise, which eventually became bigger and bigger either by attraction or by blackmail from someone who had a benefit for him resulting in irreversible damage.

I believe it is best if one addresses the problem at the school level and/or university level so that the attitudes get solidified and people have the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong. Often times today, this lack of capacity to discriminate between right and wrong leads them astray. This is where the Sathya Sai system of integral education or Educare scores over other forms of education. You students, being the beneficiaries of this system of education for five to seven years, should set an example in society. You have a vital role; a defining role for yourself and for people around you; perhaps in the office or in the family. Learn

to understand the specifics of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable to Swami and stick by it. I pray that Bhagawan Baba showers His immense grace on you and guides you all at every point in time.

Ideal Masters and Disciples from Ancient India

From time immemorial, this sacred land has had good traditions, had expounded many spiritual truths and is noted for the exceptionally good teacher-student relationship. A guru like Vasistha and a disciple like Sri Ramachandra, a guru like Sandeepa and disciples like Krishna and Balarama, a guru like Datta Govinda and a disciple like Adi Sankara, a guru like Suka Maharishi and a disciple like Parikshith created the sacred traditions of our country which have remained as shining examples to all from that day till today. The traditions have no parallel in any other part of the world.¹⁶

If man has to attain salvation, he requires *vidya* and *thapas*. *Vidya* is of two kinds. One is the *Vidya* relating to the external situation. The other is the *Vidya* relating to the internal situation. The first one enables you to eke out a living and the second enables you to reach your destination...*Brahma Vidya* is something that will take man to his ultimate destination. In this world and in the spiritual world, in your life now, and after this life, what gives you happiness and bliss is the *Brahma Vidya*.

The ability of an individual to convey the meaning of *Atma* and *Para Brahma* to the seekers makes him a guru. A guru really means a great person. When we talk of the greatness of the guru, we mean the capacity of the guru to experience the aspects of *Brahman* and teach them to others. So, when we talk of the position of the guru, it cannot mean what we generally talk of today. Here the “gukara” is something that is above *gunas* and “rukara” signifies something, which is above a form. The guru must thus be able to experience creation without being affected by the form and the *gunas* in the creation. We should try, through *Sadhana*, to acquire the position of such a guru. One

¹⁶ Summer Showers 1973, Chapter 01

aspect of real *thapas* refers to our ability to bring your thought, word and action into harmony. You should be able to unify your work, mind and talk. *Thapas* gives you the ability by which you can do this. To a guru, both these things should be like his two eyes. If we want to clean a cloth that has gathered dirt, we need clean water as well as soap. Similarly, if we want to get rid of the dirt that has gathered in our mind, we need *Brahma Vidya* as well as *thapas*. *Brahma Vidya* gives you the ability to control your mind and action and turn them toward God. It has been established that this creation is filled with *Easwara*. It is not a great sacrifice to give away one's material possessions. It is truly great to be able to give up one's self.

Bhagavatha is sacred in teaching these aspects. The guru that comes in this story and the disciples that sit at the feet of such a guru are good examples; and if we can understand them, it will lead us to the right path. Krishna is the central figure for Bhagavatha. Arjuna was also a principal character in this play. Arjuna is an ideal example of a disciple. Krishna is an ideal guru. Here, the best of human beings, Arjuna, is the disciple; and the greatest of Gods, Krishna, is the Guru. Arjuna holding the *Gandiva* (bow) is the disciple. Krishna the *Yogeswara* is the guru. It is not easy to find another parallel to such a confluence of a guru and a disciple. Bringing such a disciple and a guru together and teaching the sacredness of this confluence to the people of Bharath is the basis of Gita. Guru is a person, who can wake up a sleeping and ignorant devotee, by the alarm bell of *prajna*. The guru keeps saying, "Awake, arise, wake up to the fact that you are not an ordinary human being but that you are divine." This is the work of a true guru. One who is called a guru should have himself had the experience of *Para Brahman*.¹⁷

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

¹⁷ Summer Showers in Brindavan 1978, Chapter 8

Ideal Masters and Disciples from Ancient India

Sri B.N. Narasimhamurthy

Warden, Muddenahalli Campus, SSSIHL

When I stand on this sacred platform and look at the students, the elders and the teachers seated in this majestic auditorium built by Swami in 1974 with His complete involvement, my mind is flooded with numerous memories of His association with this wonderful place. Every plaque of this flooring was laid with the permission of Swami; every painting from the epics here on the ceiling was chosen by Him; every inch of this auditorium is sanctified by the touch of His holy feet, and the wonderful ambience is pervaded by His melodious voice reverberating through the space of this auditorium. One memory that stands out most, was on the 19th of November 1994 when the first music festival named ‘Spirit of Unity concerts’ was inaugurated in this very place. In my forty-five years of association with Swami I can say that it was the longest function in His presence. Swami walked into this hall and sat for a long time on one of the chairs in the pit and many times moved up and down as the musicians commenced and completed their offerings at His Lotus feet, it was as if angels sang for God. Swami came here at 2 o clock in the afternoon and was here till 1 am in the morning, the longest we have ever had.

During the valedictory function of that music festival in 1995, on this very stage, the famous chief election commissioner Sri T. N. Seshan spoke from this podium. Swami sat on the stage and the

Prime Minister of India, Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao sat by His side. Sri T. N. Seshan said, that looking at Swami, the future of this country is safe in the hands of the divine incarnation Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He looked at the prime minister and said that now I am convinced that the country is protected not from Delhi but from Prasanthi Nilayam. He then looked at Swami and Swami nodded with an approving smile. Befitting this, we the students of Swami, and the students of this wonderful institute founded by our most beloved Bhagawan, start our initiation into this great system of education by being in this *Poornachandra Auditorium*.

I thank and congratulate our esteemed Vice-chancellor and the administrators who restarted this summer course in Indian Culture and Spirituality. This is the first time this course is being held in Prasanthi Nilayam as the earlier ones were held in Brindavan, except one, which was held in Ooty. The topic given to me today is - Ideal masters and ideal disciples from ancient India. In the convocation address delivered in the Poornachandra Auditorium, the late Nani Palkhiwala said, “our country’s future would be brighter with half our intelligence and twice our character”. As it has been very wonderfully enunciated by Sri Giri Sir, the purpose of the ancient Gurukula and also this modern Gurukula i.e., Swami’s educational system, is one and the same – to create men and women with individual character, professional excellence and social responsibility.

In fact, in 1908 when Sri Aurobindo was acquitted of the Alipur bomb case, he spoke at the Uttarapara and said, “I am sure that our country will win independence but what is important is that if you want to revive the ancient glory of this wonderful land, it can be done by reviving the Gurukula system of education”. This was a dream for many spiritual luminaries in the 19th and 20th centuries like Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. They

all dreamt of a university and their dream came true when Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba started this university, i.e., Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. This deemed university is the dream University not only of the spiritual luminaries of this country but also of the ancient sages. Lord Krishna declared on the battlefield in Kurukshetra:

*sarganamaadirantascha madhyam chaivaham arjuna
atmavidya vidyanam vaadah pravadatamaham*

I am spiritual education among all types of education. That is why, again and again, whenever He spoke to students, whenever He spoke about education, He was agog with passion and many times He repeated in His inimitable style in Telugu, ‘the soul of education is the education of the soul’. It was E. F. Schumacher, one of the profound thinkers of modern times, who diagnosed the ills of the problems of the world and education who said, “The problems of education of today are the reflections of the deepest problems of our age. The problems are not physical but metaphysical, therefore the solutions should also be metaphysical”. He also warned about forty years ago, “If the present anti-metaphysical ambience that pervades our universities continues, education, far from being the greatest resource of mankind will become an agent of destruction.” We see today how his words of warning have come true because all over the world we have soulless systems of education. We have education that solely focuses on intellectual development, forgetting the body and the spirit. Who is an ideal master? Swami has written with great clarity in the little treatise on education, *Vidya Vahini*, that an ideal master is one who has *Atma-jnana*, self-knowledge imprinted on his heart. Who is an ideal student/disciple? He is an ideal student who has in his heart, the burning aspiration to attain *Atma-jnana*. This is the true education according to Swami. This doesn’t mean that He ignored temporal education. Even the Upanishads didn’t ignore temporal education.

In the Mundaka Upanishad, Shounaka was called a *mahagrihasta* because he discharged all his duties as a competent *grihasta* (householder). He went to a great sage by name Angirasa and asked him: '*Kasmin bhagavo vignayte sarvam idam vigyantam bhavati*', meaning, what is complete education? What is it by knowing which one comes to know everything? Angirasa said, '*Dve vidye veditavyaha iti yat brahmanido vadanti parachaiva aparacha*'. Complete education should have first, 'Apara-vidya', the material education in whatever field for which the student has aptitude training as a skilled professional in his field. Secondly, 'Para-vidya', God realization, which Giri Sir explained very well as Self-perfection, because when you attain Self-perfection you become God yourself. So, an ideal master according to Swami is one who is competent in education for '*Jeevanopadhi*' and '*Jeevita paramavadhi*'. First is *Jeevanopadhi* where the students learn to earn their living for prosperity, contentment and inner peace because your parents have sent you here for this very purpose. *Jeevita Paramavadhi* is self-knowledge as without it no one finds fulfillment or real happiness in life. How does self-knowledge express itself in the life of an ideal master? A practical example for this is Swami Himself. Self-knowledge doesn't drive men and women away from the din and buzz of the society, doesn't drive them to mountaintops, and doesn't drive them to meditation and contemplation in the ashrams. This was the message of Sri Krishna to Arjuna when he wanted to run away from the battleground. Sri Krishna said that this is not the way to spiritual attainment.

Yogastha kuru karmani - Do your action with complete control over your mind at all moments with the goal of self-realization. In my own humble assessment, first of all, a true teacher should be competent in his subject whether it is Physics, Accountancy, management or economics. Secondly he should be adept in spiritual wisdom. How does spiritual wisdom express itself in an

ideal spiritual master? To put it in a simple formula, I call it A B C D of spiritual wisdom.

A is awareness of God within as bliss and beauty. When I know that God exists within me as bliss, I can see Him everywhere as beauty. *Vidyate hrudaya granthibi chindiyante sarva samshayaha. Kshiyate chasya karmani tasmin druste paravare*, i.e., what the Upanishad declares, when you see God within, the knot of ignorance in the heart is cut asunder; all doubts fly away, all problems flee, you become an embodiment of joy and bliss and see God everywhere as beauty. This is the definition of an ideal master. We have such masters even today.

Once I had an opportunity to talk to Swami about the masters in the world today, of course, apart from the supreme master Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. While talking about a historical personality, whom the world recognizes today, who lived 2000 years ago, Swami suddenly remarked that he was an infant in the spiritual domain. I was shocked when He said that though the world worships him, he was a spiritual infant. When I asked about who is the real spiritual master, He said many live even today in the Himalayas. Then I asked Him very ignorantly that if there are such masters why don't they come for your darshan? Swami smiled and said, "They don't need to come for my darshan, I go wherever they are.

The fundamental qualification of an ideal master is to see God within and see beauty in every being, every atom, every leaf, every creeper, every cloud and every bird that flies in the sky.

B is balance of mind. Being born as human beings in the world, ups and downs are inevitable, success and failure come one after the other like day and night. How do we face such situations? Does one have humility in success and courage in failure, i.e. balance of mind? Lord Krishna said in Bhagawat Gita,

Samatwam yogamuchyate i.e., take whatever comes our way as a gift of God which is Yoga.

C of an ideal master is control of senses. The acid test of an ideal master is control of senses. One can claim to do meditation for many hours and can claim to see God within oneself. But when the temptations and provocations come, how do we react? An ideal sage will not swerve from the balance of mind i.e. *Samatwam yogamuchyate*.

D is dedication to serve mankind. These are the four yardsticks as enunciated by Swami. I can quote two or three different shlokas from the Bhagawat Gita and Upanishads to elaborate in these yardsticks A, B, C and D.

Looking at ancient India, which is India before 1000 A.D. (medieval times starting after 1000 A.D. with Muslim invasions, and modern India comprising the British rule), we can find several great masters and disciples. Just to name a few of them from Upanishadic and Vedic times: Yama and Nachiketa from Kathopanishad, Yajnavalkya and Janaka from Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and in Prasnopanishad the master Pippalada and his six famous disciples Sukesha, Bhardwaja, Satyakama, Kabandhi, Kausalya and Shouryayani. Then we have Riakwa and Janusriti from Chandogya Upanishad, and, Jabali and Swetaketu from Chandogya Upanishad, where the dictum ‘Tat Tvam Asi’ was given to the world. We also have Haridrumata, Satyakama, Angirasa, Shounaka and many more. From the epics and mythology we have Vashistha and Sri Ramachandra; Sandepani and Sri Krishna, Sri Krishna and Arjuna, Vyasa and Shuka, Shuka and Parikshit which are the famous ones. Coming to history we have the example of Buddha and Ananda, and perhaps the last recorded pair in ancient India is Shankara and Padmapada. At some point or another, Swami has spoken about all these great masters.

In the limited time available to me I will try to give images of these wonderful masters and disciples. W. B. Yeats, the great English poet, said that wisdom always speaks in images. At this point of time, I want to say that Giri Sir has written a beautiful treatise named *Sai Upanishad*, which has very enlightening remarks from Giri Sir himself and also quotations from Swami. It is a wonderful book if you want to get into the study of this wonderful world of Upanishads. I will deal with *Sveteswara Upanishad*, which is not a very well known Upanishad. Its language is poetic and musical and you will find the seeds of the Bhagawat Gita in this Upanishad. The last line of the Upanishad deals with the nature of relationship between an ideal master and an ideal disciple.

*Yasya Deve parabhaktihi yatha deve tatha gurau tasyayate
kathitakartaha prakashante mahatmanaha*

This is the last of the instruction to the *antevasin* (disciple) who continues to live with the Guru in the form of a whisper. Fundamental is devotion to God. Swami says:

*Bahula vidyala aniyu paakshastambulu vantakambulu Bhakti okate
vantakamu vede paakshastrambula venudu veer Bhartiya suthuda*

i.e., all forms of education are like books on cooking (theory) but the actual act of cooking is devotion to God. What is the use of all books on cooking without cultivating devotion to God? The Upanishads declared profound Advaitic truths such as you are God, I am God but finally they say that these truths will shine forth (*prakashante mahatmanaha*) only to a person who has selfless devotion to God and a similar devotion to the Guru. As you have devotion to God, similar Devotion should be there towards Guru (*yatha deve tatha Gurau*). Does this mean that the disciple should be completely submissive to his Guru? Let us go

to another image in Prasnopanishad where six disciples went to Pippalada and asked him to teach them Atma-vidya. He doesn't give them an answer. Instead, the Guru says

bhooyayeva tapasa brahmacharyena shraddhaya samvatsaram samvatsata. Yatha kamam prasnaan pruchata yadi vignasyamaha sarvam vakshayama iti

I am very happy that you boys have come and asked me this question. Stay back in my ashram and I will feed you; however for one year you are required to do as I say in order to gain qualification to ask questions about God. This is the right spirit between Guru and disciple. In the Upanishadic times, it was not given to everybody to ask questions about anything and those who sought real answerd, were asked 'Samvatsaram samvatsata' – to be in the ashram for one year doing 'tapasa' (penance). Penance is yearning for God. 'Taapamey tapasu', Swami says i.e. if you have yearning in the heart for God then Arunodaya or Suryodaya (sunrise) of self-knowledge is bound to happen.

Next is Brahmacharya which means concentrating only on Brahman (God). As Swami says, 'Vidyarthi vishayarthi kakudadu' - the disciple should concentrate on God to the exclusion all sense pleasures. It is said 'Vidyaturanam na sukham na nidra' i.e. a sincere seeker of truth should be oblivious to material comforts and sleep. When Pandit Ravi Shankar was a student of a famous Guru for learning Sitar, his Guru told him 'Vidya tatpasvion ke liye hai vilasiyon ke liya nahin hai'. Vidya is for a tapasvi and not for those who run after sense pleasures.

If there is stringent discipline in our Institute (with regard to giving complete liberty to our senses as is happening in society today), it is to prevent the corrodng of values and preserve the moral fabric of students. It is a protection given to you from the onslaught of materialism through the various media.

Third is *shraddha*, which is sincerity of purpose. For the one year you are asked to stay in the ashram without doing anything, if you lack *shraddha* (sincerity), you will run away. The Guru then says, *Yatha kamam prasnaan pruchata*, that is, after staying like this for one year if you persist with questions which show the openness between Guru and disciples (where the disciple is free to ask any questions including the ones relating to Guru himself), and if you know the answers to them (*yadi vignasyamaha*), I will tell everything (*sarvam vakshayama iti*). This shows the type of transparency that existed between the Guru and disciples of yore. It also shows the humility of the Guru Pipplada when he says that he will answer everything given the fact that he knows them. Pipplada is addressed as Bhagawan Pipplada in the Upanishad as he was a Brahma-jnani, the knower of Brahman. As the Upanishads declare, *Brahmavid Brahmaiv bhavati* - the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself. This was the relationship between an ideal master and ideal disciple.

I will touch upon another interesting image from Upanishadic times which is that of King Janusriti and sage Raikwa taken from the Chandogya Upanishad. Chandogya Upanishad can be considered as a storybook due to the number of stories narrated in it. The composer of the Upanishad explains the reason of having so many stories in it as making the highest truth palatable and understandable to common minds. King Janusriti was loved by his subjects for his benevolence, charitable nature, nobility, magnanimity, love and compassion. He also had a gift of understanding the language of the birds and the beasts. One summer evening when he was relaxing in his palace, he saw some swans flying in the sky. One swan warned another swan, whose name was Ballaksha (blind eyed bird), "O! Ballaksha be careful don't fly over this King Janusriti who is resplendent with the radiance of his nobility and penance; you will be burnt to ashes". The second bird enquired, "You are talking as if he is another sage Raikwa who is staying in the same kingdom". The first bird

replied, “No! Janusriti is definitely not as great as sage Raikwa, who is head and shoulders above Janusriti.”

First the king was praised and then he was criticized, but it didn't hurt his feelings as he was a good man. The king set out in search of the sage as he heard the bird saying that he resides in the same kingdom. He sent his messengers and people to places where Brahma-Jnanis and Brahmanas live, but he was nowhere to be found. Finally, one spy of the king comes and says that this Raikwa is a very ordinary person, a cart puller in your kingdom who doesn't have a house of his own and lives under his cart. Then Janusriti sent his minister with lot of gifts, cows, and gold to be offered to sage Raikwa. The sage seeing the gifts said, “Take all this away, who is this ignorant Shudra, who wants to buy self-knowledge with these gifts and gold.”

This is the spirit with which Swami started free education because nobody can purchase self-knowledge with money. This master had the courage to rebuff the king of his land calling him a shudra who tried to purchase self-knowledge with money and gold. When the minister informed King Janusriti what had happened, Janusriti fell at the feet of sage Raikwa accepting the sage as his master. He said, “Forgive me O! Master and teach me Atma-vidya.” There are many such stories of ideal masters and disciples like Bhrgu and Varuna, Krishna and Arjuna, Vashistha and Sri Ramachandra.

Education Philosophy of Bhagawan Baba

That which has no origin knows no beginning. It was before everything or anything was. There was nothing prior to It. For that very reason, It has no end. It expands as far as It wills, progresses as diverse as It feels, and through Its Fullness, It fills the Universe, too. Knowledge of this supreme Principle is known as *Vidya*, Knowledge, Wisdom, Awareness.¹⁸ There are two parts in this word *vidya* and they are 'vid' and 'ya.' When the two root parts of this word join together, we get the word *vidya*. 'Vid' means brightness or light. 'Ya' means that which gives you.¹⁹ That which gives you light and sheds your ignorance and that which gives you wisdom and superior knowledge can alone be called *Vidya*. What promotes ignorance and darkness cannot be called *Vidya*.²⁰

Man has to master two fields of knowledge in order to reach this goal.²¹ The patent and latent, direct and indirect, *Prathyaksha* and *Paroksha*, real and apparent. *Prathyaksha* or *Aparoksha*, (the patent knowledge) is gained through the ear and other sense organs and through the words of others. The *Paroksha* (or the latent), the real knowledge knows no plurality; it analyses and understands the attractions and objects, which haunt the mind. It purifies the mind and widens the vision of the heart.²² The first is knowledge of the world, that is to say, knowledge concerning the manifested Universe. The second is knowledge of the other world. The first confers the means for living (*jeevan upadhi*); the second confers the goal of life (*jeevan paramaavadhi*). The knowledge of the goal of life involves inquiry into problems like: For what end one should live? Who is the creator of all that we become aware of?

¹⁸Vidya Vahini, Chapter 1

¹⁹Summer Showers in Brindavan 1977, Chapter 20

²⁰Summer Roses on the Blue Mountains 1976, Chapter 1

²¹Vidya Vahini, Chapter 7

²²Vidya Vahini, Chapter 2

What exactly am I, this distinct individual I? This inquiry ultimately reveals the goal?²³

If we can understand and acquire the essence, *Atma Vidya* (knowledge of the Self), then every other *vidya* will become available to you. All these material *vidyas* that we learn for the sake of the material world are like individual rivers. But the *Adhyatmic (spiritual) Vidya* is like the ocean. These different branches of education, which are like the rivers, go and join the ocean of spiritual education, and they lose their individuality.²⁴

While the word *vidya* has its origin in the Sanskrit root *vid*, meaning wisdom, effulgence and bliss, the equivalent term for *vidya* in English is education. Education is derived from 'educare', meaning 'to bring out' or 'to elicit'. It refers to manifesting that which is latent in man. Educare comprises two aspects; one is related to the head and the other to the heart. Those faculties that enable man to carry on activities like reading, writing, undertaking a job, and earning a livelihood are related to the head. Sacred qualities like compassion, love, patience, truth, righteousness, and justice originate from the heart. These are meant for life, not for a living.

Every bit of learning should be based on the foundation of ethical, dharmic (righteous), and spiritual principles.²⁵ True education is that which fosters the sense of oneness, draws out one's divine qualities and promotes the blossoming of human personality.²⁶

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

²³Vidya Vahini, Chapter 7

²⁴Summer showers in Brindavan 1977, Chapter 20

²⁵Summer Showers in Brindavan 1996, Chapter 1

²⁶Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 23, Chapter 33, Benedictory Address

Educational Philosophy of Bhagawan

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When Sri Narasimha Murthy garu was speaking about Ideal masters and ideal disciples, I was reminded of an ideal pair from ancient times. Swami often would refer to this pair of Sri Krishna and Arjuna. While talking about them, Swami once observed that if think of it, when the message of Gita was given, Sri Krishna was 86 years old and Arjuna was 84 years old and they were considered young because Bhishma was 120 years old. From a very young age both have been associated with each other but not once did Krishna whisper the message of Gita to Arjuna. It was on that occasion, when he was faced with the greatest challenge of his life, that the two armies were face to face with each other, and Arjuna lost his confidence and turns to Krishna to seek His succor and solace. At that point of time in the practical stage of battlefield, the message of Gita was communicated.

The subject given to me is the educational philosophy of Bhagawan. As students of this university, we first practiced that philosophy and the understanding came over a period of time. When this university was born, there were already 108 universities in the country. What was the need for starting the 109th university? Swami wanted to show to the world what education is all about and what higher education should do for national and world development. When the sanction was given to the university in the charter of permission, the government

enunciated and amended with a clear purpose - to pioneer in values-education in our country. Even before the birth of the university the mandate was set, because Swami had a vision for his education system. One may ask about the relevance of a topic like the educational philosophy of Bhagawan in a course entitled - Indian Culture and Spirituality.

Swami's educational philosophy or His philosophy for life is deeply rooted in Bharatiya culture. It is be my endeavour today to share some thoughts and experiences on how Sathya Sai education is rooted in Bharatiya samskriti.

Bharatiya culture has a message for us at every stage of our life, whether as individuals, members of the family, members of a community or the citizens of a country or the world. What has Sanathana Dharma said for the individual? '*Satyam vada Dharmam chara.*' Perhaps some people feel that as Swami has taken Mahasamadhi, who will take care of us in the university? Swami has always been taking care of us care of us, not just today. When the university was born, he gave us a motto, which is established in the emblem of the university. It says, '*Satyam vada Dharmam chara.*' These are not just for us, but the whole of humanity, because He told us, that don't think the atom bombs are going to protect the nation; only Sathya and Dharma are going to protect the nation. It is Sathya and Dharma, which will sustain the university as long as the students, faculty and the administration of this university subscribe to these two values. This university will grow from strength to strength and reach much greater heights. At the level of the family, our scriptures say *Matru devo bhava, Pitru devo bhava.* At the level of the society, *Paropakaraya punyaya papaya parapidanam.* Swami used to say Help ever Hurt never. At the level of the nation, Ramayana says *Janani janma bhumischa swargadapi gariyasi* and at the level of the world *Samasta Lokaha sukhino bhavantu.* These are the fundamental, eternal values of Bharatiya culture and it is these

values that have woven themselves into the Sathya Sai education system. As I said earlier, as we slowly graduated from students to teachers, and on to other responsibilities, it was a learning at the feet of the Divine Master. Our association with Him was itself such a great education, and it would be my endeavour to share some experiences in this regard.

‘*Satyam Vada Dharmam Chara*’, Swami says the decline of human civilization took place when people thought that our obligations to our eternal values are fulfilled if we just speak about them. These are values not to be spoken about, but to be practiced, and from practice will come the experience. Sathya is not just speaking the truth but also aligning yourself in such a way that whatever you speak is the truth, which Swami was. Speak that which is your innermost conviction. Once it so happened that Swami was in the old bungalow in Brindavan, and He was coming out for darshan. It was a great privilege to students as they can walk up to Swami’s residence and wait to receive Him first, before he goes out for darshan. He was near the staircase, about to come out when Swami suddenly asked the first student, “Who are you?” The student was taken aback as it was a routine thing for the student to be standing there and Swami asked a philosophical question. The boy quickly collected himself and replied, “Swami, I am your servant.” Whenever students gave this answer, Swami used to put them to task. He used to say that if you are my servants you should follow whatever I say; on the contrary I am your servant as I follow whatever you say. Then Swami went to the second student and asked, “Who are you?” The second boy didn’t want to give the same answer, which the first boy gave. He thought for a while and said, “Swami, I am your child.” He went to the third student and asked the same question, and the student decided to remain mum as it was best option. By this time the fourth student had lot of thinking in his mind and planned an answer, anticipating Swami to ask the question. Swami asked him the same question, “Who are you?” The boy said, “Swami I

and you are one.” Then casually and spontaneously Swami said, “I was about to go out for darshan, but since you and I are one, why don’t you go and give darshan instead of me.” Immediately the boy was flattened. It is not that the boy was wrong, but He didn’t want His boys to remain at the stage of words but it should become the inner core of your being innermost conviction and from their words should flow which is Sathya. ‘Dharmam chara’; I used to tell some of our friends that Dharma is consideration for others. In this summer course on Indian culture and spirituality some thoughts have been expressed on culture as Sri Anil Gokak quoted Mathew Arnold, ‘Culture is passion for perfection’. T. S. Eliot said that culture is a way of life. Recently, one of our professors, Prof. Gangadhara Sastry shared an incident how many years ago when they were sitting in the interview room with Swami and He asked the same question. Swami answered that culture is concern for others. The man who has this type of concern can be deemed as a man of culture and this is the kind of culture we saw in Swami. If you consider the human aspect of Swami (leaving aside the divine aspect). He had utmost concern for all His fellow human beings, including His students, His teachers, and His devotees.

I remember there used to be a student in the hostel whose father was a heart patient. He was very worried that anytime a phone call will come from home with bad news. One day in the morning, the phone rang, and he received the heart breaking message that his father had passed away in a heart attack. The telephone receiver went dangling and he rushed to my room telling me what had happened. My first response to his words was, “let us first tell Swami and immediately make arrangements for your departure.” He went to the mandir and Swami came out for darshan asking for this student by name. There were 600 students in the hostel and Swami remembering this student’s name was calling out for him. Everybody assumed that Swami was calling him for an interview, and yet the boy had not come,

or that he was late. Swami called some people in for an interview and after Swami went inside, this boy reached the Mandir. He had to wait outside as a result. The interview got over, Swami came out, saw him and rushed to the boy and the boy rushed to Swami like a mother deer rushes to its calf. In a few seconds the devotees were wonderstruck to see the two woven with each other. The boy was not just crying but howling at the top of his voice and the whole mandir was reverberating with the boy's cries. Swami was hugging the boy to Him and in few seconds Swami's robe got fully drenched with the boy's tears. He caught hold of the boy and took him inside the interview room. In two minutes, Swami came out and the boy's tears had dried up. Swami told the elders seated there that when the boy went inside he was crying and when he came out his tears have dried up like a tap, which has been closed. He then started asking for best way to go to his place. This, is the type of concern Swami has for each individual.

Once Swami was traveling to Kodaikanal and Prof. Sampath, our former Vice-chancellor, was with him in the car. At one secluded spot, Swami asked the driver to halt. Prof. Sampath was feeling very uncomfortable and was not able to tell anyone, least of all Swami. Swami halted the car and said, "You can ease yourself and come." If Swami would have come out of the car, people would swarm around Him, but for the sake of an elderly devotee, he stopped the car. This is what is known as Dharma in action. When you reach the level of the family, *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava* is very important. I tell my students in our institute that even if you don't pick up any of the human values, it is alright, but never forget the value of reverence to parents. If Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning is in existence today, it is the fruition of the prayer of a mother. Mother Eswaramma prayed to Swami that the children of our village are having so much of difficulty due to lack of proper education, please start something where they can be taken care of. Swami not only started a school but also a university.

In the great epic of Mahabharata, when the war is over, Krishna goes to meet Gandhari and she is distraught, complaining, “Krishna, Kunti had five sons before the war, all of them are still alive, I had hundred sons before the war, not one is alive today, could you not spare at least one of my sons to do our last rites”? Krishna said, “Don’t blame me; Kunti lost her husband when her children were very small. From that age till now she has taken care of her children like the apple of her eye, with so much of care and concern. All the time she focused her vision on them and that is why they have achieved so much in their life today. What about your children? From the moment of their birth they didn’t have the fortune of getting even one glance of their mother. He who can’t get the love, affection and grace of his own mother, how can he dream to get the grace of divinity.” This is the great teaching of the Mahabharata.

Another incident that comes to mind took place many years ago in Prasanthi Nilayam, when I was serving as the warden of the students’ hostel. It so happened that the students were up to some mischief and Swami was a little annoyed. The first recipient of His annoyance was the hostel warden. It is very difficult to manage the institution when Swami is not talking to you, and it was during this period when the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi took place. It is a very important festival, where on immersion day, students get all the idols in a procession, get them blessed by Swami and take it for immersion. The statues had come from the ashram for blessings on that day. All were eagerly waiting for Swami to tell the warden about the Ganesha immersion day but Swami was not talking to me. One day, I was returning to the hostel from the college in the afternoon for lunch break, when a student came up to me and informed me that my mother had arrived. She was waiting in a small room called the mother’s room, constructed by Swami in the hostel. She had come with the Delhi *sevadals* for service, a routine that lasted for nearly 12

hours everyday. In spite of her hectic schedule, she had walked in the hot sun to come to the hostel. I scolded her for coming so far, walking in the hot sun. She narrated to me that earlier on, when she went to Ganesha at the ashram gate, she had taken a coconut, and broken it in Ganesha's presence. When the coconut broke, and it was opened, a flower emerged from it. Everyone around was very excited saying it is very auspicious. My mother said that she came all the way to give me the Prasadam. This touched me. She had something special which she wanted to share with her son. That day evening, I thought that I have Ganesha's blessing so let me make an attempt to ask Swami about the Ganesha immersion. For the first time in so many months Swami spoke to me. That day I learnt a great lesson, first earn the grace of the physical mother then you will get the grace of divine mother i.e. *Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo bhava*. Coming to the level of the community, the statement to be followed is *Paropkaraya punyaya papaya parapidanam*. Living with Swami was true education as He was always ready to help you and never to hurt those who hurt you.

It was the time of the 60th Birthday, and Swami was celebrating mass marriages in Prasanthi Nilayam. He had ordered red silk sarees from Dharmavaram for the would-be brides. Mr. Kutumba Rao, who was the in charge of the ashram in those days, had been specially deputed for this purpose and the consignment had come. Swami had called a few students to open the bundles and keep everything ready. As the students were opening the bundles they found that while the sarees at the top and bottom of each bundle were made of silk, the ones in-between all were ordinary sarees. Immediately, it was brought to the notice of Swami and He summoned Kutumba Rao. Sri Kutumba Rao rushed to Swami's presence where Swami showed what has happened. Sri Kutumba Rao was from the legal profession, and so in his immediate reaction he said that he would sue that man. Swami asked him not to worry about that, and that his own karma will take care of

him. Imagine that! Someone accumulating karma to cheat God Himself. Swami was in no anguish, He went inside, got some money, gave it to Kutumba Rao and asked him to get a new consignment as the marriage was on the next day and make sure that everything is silk. They were not able to get a red silk saree and had to settle for a green one. Even when you want to do good, people don't cooperate, but Swami never compromised. We students have, if I may say so, shamelessly received from Swami and now is the time to give back our offering at His lotus feet with gratitude. He set up such a beautiful educational system for all of us, so it is now our opportunity to do something for humanity.

Coming to '*Janani Janma Bhumischa Swargadapi Gariyasi*', at the level of country, Swami is a real patriot. In spite of having such a charismatic personality, He never went abroad. The only time he went was to East Africa and that too to persuade His devotees to return to India as it was not safe to stay there any longer. Whenever He got an invitation to go abroad he use to turn it down saying that I have to set right my home first. Many years ago in 1989, in Kodaikanal, we use to have debates in Swami's presence. On one such occasion, we had V.K. Narasimhan, editor, Sanathana Sarathi and Madam Jayamma of Anantpur participating in these wonderful intellectual debates. That day, the debate was on Shakespeare and the topic they chose was Polonius's advice to his son in the play Hamlet. Heavy discussion was going on in English when suddenly Swami looked at me and said "you also say something on this Sanjay". I was at loss of words about what to say as intellectual giants were debating on English literature. There was a little phrase in the middle of the passage 'neither lender nor borrower be' relating to commerce where I thought I can contribute, and so I spoke. At this time, the Indian government had taken a huge loan from the World Bank and the bank had passed some caustic remarks on our country. Some people were wondering how Swami would react to

it. He didn't react immediately but the next morning after breakfast in a little session where all of us used to sit near His feet, He spoke for nearly one hour on Bharat. He said that He has given enough resources to this country but the problem of this country is that those who have the resources don't share it with those who don't have it. That day I realized what a patriot Bhagawan is. It is for this reason that at the time of Mahasamadhi, we saw the government sentries coming forward and draping Swami with the national tricolour. Who is Swami? Is he the Prime Minister, is he the Chief Minister, is he a secretary of state? The answer is no, but He ruled the realm of the hearts of the men and women, not only of this country but the whole world. When we drape the national flag on Him, it is not we, who have honoured Him but the country is honoured.

Whenever God has decided to take an Avatar, He has always only chosen India. At the level of the world, Swami declared '*Samastha lokah sukhino bhavantu*'. He always told us not to think of ourselves, of our community, of our country, but think that the whole world is one. He gave us the education that He belongs to the whole world and the whole belongs to Him. One day we students were sitting near Him and He asked, "I give you so many opportunities (to be near me). Why, what is special about you? Is it because you are very intelligent, handsome or beautiful, or is it because your parents have so much of wealth? It is none of these reasons; I give these opportunities to my students because all the time my focus, my vision is on *Loka kalyana*. If you all become good, the whole world stands to gain". It is for this reason Swami gave Himself to the students, to the teachers. This is the philosophy of education, which we had an opportunity, not merely to see, but to experience in our own lives. It is that little experience, which I thought, I will share with my young brothers and sisters.

Relevance of Sai Education Philosophy in the Contemporary World

"All education that is devoid of spiritual purity
Is replete with hatred and envy,
Like a dark dwelling infested with bats,
Know this to be the truth."²⁷

Educational institutions today are full of disorder and indiscipline.²⁸ Students are behaving in a manner which makes others feel that he is only after getting higher degrees like M.A. or M.Sc.²⁹ Young people take great pains to acquire degrees for securing good jobs. But they hardly take any trouble to develop their character and personality.³⁰ If there is no sense of discipline, and if one is not educated in matters relating to the *Atma* or the Self, the only result of such education will be slavery.³¹

Modern education develops the intellect and imparts skill, but does not promote good qualities in any way. Of what value is the acquisition of all the knowledge in the world, if there is no character? Knowledge has multiplied and with it desires have grown. The result is that one is a hero in words, but is a zero in action. What is the use of acquiring intelligence and skills if even a small fraction of what is learnt is not put into practice?³² Worldly education is information oriented, while spiritual education is transformation oriented. The information-oriented education makes man a computer, whereas the transformation oriented education makes man a composer. Man should become a composer, not a computer. Man should

²⁷Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 22, Chapter 1, SSSIHL Auditorium, 1989

²⁸Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 30, Chapter 31, Benedictory Address, 1997

²⁹Summer Showers 1973, Chapter 1

³⁰Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 17, Chapter 4, Prasanthi Nilayam, 1984

³¹Summer Showers 1973, Chapter 1

³²Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 18, Chapter 24, 4th Convocation of SSSIHL, 1985

therefore understand the meaning of real education. Today, the moral, ethical, and spiritual values are on the decline. Modern students have no trace of these values in them. They have no respect for their parents and society. In that case how can they expect to be respected by their children?³³

Education should promote discrimination and humility. The quantitative explosion in the number of educational institutions - schools, colleges and universities - has been accompanied by a corresponding decline in the quality of education. To have no respect for your betters, to be ungrateful to those who have fostered you, to revile even the teacher who taught you; can this be called "progress" in education?³⁴

Man should be transformed to become compassionate. Of what use is education that does not melt the heart of the student to the plight of others? Modern secular education is making man hard-hearted. Good behavior, good intellect, commitment to truth, devotion, discipline, sense of duty —these are the six aims of education. Who is teaching all these today?³⁵ Because good qualities like sacrifice, forbearance, truth and love have been somewhat pushed to the background, the society is suffering from various ills. It is the sacred duty of good education not only to rectify such ills and give proper shape and form to society, but also to rid the minds and hearts of people as well, of all evils.³⁶

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

³³Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 32, Part 2, Chapter 1, First Sri Sathya Sai Seminar on Values, July 1999

³⁴Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 21, Chapter 32, Seventh Convocation of SSSIHL, 22 Nov 1988

³⁵Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 32, Part 2, Chapter 15

³⁶Summer Showers 1972, Chapter 1

Relevance of Sai Education Philosophy in the Contemporary World

Prof. G. Venkataraman

5th Vice-Chancellor, SSSIHL

I remember that the first time I saw Swami at closed quarters was the summer course two decades ago. I also remember very vividly, the last day of that summer course when there was this ceremonial lunch. He walked into the dining hall, inspected the arrangements and came to the high table placed for Him. He started interacting with a devotee, Sri Ramamulu sitting next to me and occasionally He would put some items in His mouth. Then Swami turned to the audience and said what are you all waiting for, start eating the food, you have to catch trains, planes and buses to go back. Nobody moved so Swami turned to this elderly devotee and said, “see these fellows are not eating after my giving instructions”. The devotee, Mr. Sri Ramamulu told Swami that *Brahmarpanam* (food prayer) has not been done. Swami said that even before your offering, I have already taken, and walked to His seat and started eating. I didn’t know much of Telugu to follow the conversation and I was not trying to eavesdrop, but this statement made by Him, I have not forgotten. It was a reminder that He was not what He seemed to us, in the human form.

First of all, I welcome all of you who are coming to the portals of this institute for the first time. You may not know it now but

when you go out after completing your education and reflect on your time spent here, you will realize, what a blessing it has been for you. I have been given a very high sounding and profound topic, which as the Americans say, is way above my pay grade as it is difficult to deal with it in the allotted time. I am going to keep it simple by talking about individual, society and God. I start by mentioning a quote, which appeared in the book Sai Inspires. Swami said that 'today, people think that spirituality has no relation with mundane life and vice versa. This is a big mistake. because true divinity is a combination of spirituality and social obligation. National unity and social harmony are both found on spirituality. It is the divine that links spirituality and social existence'. Basically this quote makes two important points; firstly, every individual has to discharge his/her social obligations at various levels. It means that we have duty to our own self, our parents, our family, our community, our country and finally humanity at large and nature.

Secondly, we must discover the divinity latent within all of us and manifest the divinity. It is not enough to say that God is within me, but that He should reveal Himself through our actions to the outside world. My talk will centre around two key words of sensitivity and integrity. Let me start with sensitivity, which means having concern for fellow human beings. It is also equivalent in a larger sense to compassion. Compassion should not be confused with pity, which one human being of higher status feels for a person of lower status, who is disadvantaged. Compassion is a divine quality as God says when you suffer; I also suffer because you and I are not different but you and I are one and the emotion that evokes help is compassion.

Let me illustrate with my personal experience what this sensitivity means in real life. This incident happened in Mumbai in 1971-72 when I was working for the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). Many of the middle to senior grade officers

were accommodated in a place called Worli near the sea. The colony had 32 flats and I occupied one of them. There used to be an old man who used to work as a servant in many houses and his main job was to get milk. His wife used to work as a maidservant in our house. Near our building there was a milk processing plant (the biggest in Asia at the time) that was funded by UNICEF. The milk used to come to this plant for pasteurization, chilling and was transported in bottles all over. We had tokens and according to the tokens we could buy the number of bottles. This old man, known as Buddha, used to deliver it everyday. One Sunday morning, he didn't come, making us go without coffee or tea. When he came in the afternoon, everyone chided him. He came to my flat on the 2nd floor and knocked on the door. I opened the door and asked him, "Why he didn't you come in the morning?" The old man started crying. I asked him the reason for his crying, but he continued to cry for a long time. Finally he stopped crying and while sobbing he said, "Sir, this morning my child died and I had to bury it that is why I was not able to come. Wherever I go I am getting a scolding, which I am not able to bear". That was something that shattered me because that is what insensitivity is all about. It comes when we live in our own bubbles of selfishness or *swartham* as Swami says.

This incident highlights three lessons. First, do unto others, as you would have them do unto you, from the Bible. Second, destiny can swing overnight; today one may be a rich man and tomorrow he can become a pauper. This is not fiction because in September 2008 this happened literally overnight in USA when there was a huge economic collapse and the country went into a recession. Millions of people with high salaried jobs lost their savings overnight due to the stock market crash. Swami always used to say '*Maa kuru dhan jan youvana garvam harati nimisha kala sarvam*'. Third, lack of sensitivity implies that we are ignoring the divinity in between. To call attention to this divinity immanent in everyone, Swami used to address everyone as

'Divyatma swarupulaara' at the beginning of every discourse. *'Divyatma swarupulaara'* means embodiments of divine atma. In fact, in one discourse He said, "I call you *'Divyatma swarupulaara'* because I am very confident that atma is within you or I am sitting within each one of you so I know I am there. I don't call you as my devotees as I am not at all sure of your devotion." Sensitivity is not specific to any religion as all religions extol it. Even atheists believe in helping those who are in need because it is a basic human quality. A person can't be called a human being if he lacks sensitivity. Sensitivity is required at all levels, whether it is one to one or one to many.

Let me explain one to many by taking the example of an acute famine, which we faced during the British era, when millions died. If there is a famine or drought, it is not proper for the well to do to spend lavishly on weddings, parties and dinners. Incidentally, during the war there was a limit of only thirty people, including the bride and groom, to attend the wedding with a simple menu, due to shortages, which went on for many years. But, strangely in neighbouring Pakistan there is a Supreme Court ruling that in any wedding feast, be it that of a billionaire, there would be only one soft drink and one item to eat (which is usually biryani) and it is strictly enforced in 2011.

I come to the next topic of integrity, which means that one must be absolutely honest and not cheat anyone, under any circumstances. Once again, integrity is required on the one to one level and the one to many level. One to one means there must be perfect honesty between father and son, mother and daughter, brother and sister, husband and wife, patient and doctor, lawyer and client, teacher and student and it goes on like this. One to many can be understood with the example of a vendor who shows honesty and doesn't cheat his customers in marketing a product. Mahatma Gandhi used to say, 'customer is king', Swami says

‘customer is God’ and yet in today’s world of commerce, adulteration and cheating in the service has become rampant.

I will share one example to show how bad things can become due to self-delusion. One company in China wanted to manufacture milk powder in collaboration with a big company in New Zealand (famous for dairy products). A factory was set up for making baby food but the Chinese added melamine as it makes the milk look thicker and nutritious when the mothers prepare milk. Melamine is the product used in making cups, saucers and other kitchenware, which is a poison. As it made the milk look nice, they added it with impunity. As a result of this, many infants below 5 months suffered and even died due to this adulteration in China. This milk was exported to America and when they discovered the fraud they came down heavily on China by banning milk powder and many other products like toys. So, China lost its international reputation in addition to their business due to this incident. Swami says reflection, reaction and resound; the evil you do will come back to haunt you, no matter how long it takes.

In closing, I summarize and give you the take home lessons. First, spirituality is not an individualized quest for God. It is true that individual is searching for God; however God will not come looking or you in pooja rooms, temples and sacred places. God says, “I have installed myself in your heart, so why look elsewhere when I am so close to you. Look for me within and find me there.” Having opened the door, we have to move into the outside world and see God installed in the hearts of all others. See God immanent in all the beings in the cosmos. In 1984, Swami gave 34 discourses in the mandir on Bhagavad Gita. Those discourses were unusual because He focused on only the 2nd and 12th chapters of the Gita. Chapter 2 is Sankhya-yoga and chapter 12 is Bhakti-yoga. Swami says, “I am in all even if many people don’t realize this. If you consider yourself as my devotee

you should not hurt anyone; you will do so only when you forget that I am also there in that other person.” This is what happened in the case of the milk vendor Buddha. Nobody realized that God is there in him.

It is understandable because being in atomic energy we knew about the atom but not about the Atma. But all of us who are here don't have that excess; we have to realize that God is Immanent in all. Swami has said many times, '*Mamatma sarva bhoota antartma*' and in order to make sure that we don't forget it, He gave two simple dictums; 'Love all, serve all' and 'Help ever, hurt never'. We all repeat these mantras and tell stories about How Swami helped and showered love on us. But we don't seem to think that the lesson applies to us and not to Swami. He was an exemplar for us to follow and often He would say, 'Your life has to be my message'. The time has come to take it very seriously and put it into practice. I will go back to the quote of Swami, which is relevant now, "True divinity is the combination of spirituality and social obligation. They are not divorced from each other. It is the divine that links spirituality and social existence". We are not Himalayan monks who cut themselves away from the world and sit in caves meditating on God. We live in this world so our approach to divinity should follow this prescription, where spirituality manifests in the way we relate to the society. This is where the two key words of 'sensitivity' and 'integrity' are important. Integrity means absolute integrity on all occasions and under all circumstances, without any exceptions. I stress this because many people think that I will be honest with ABC but not with XYZ, as they are useless. This is false logic because truth is one and can't be sliced or fragmented. If you go to the Brindavan campus, you see in the garden there, many stone slabs with sayings of Swami. I wandered around many a time when would I go there to teach. One slab that always caught my attention was one which says, "There cannot be national character

without individual character. Character and integrity are synonymous’.

Today there is a lot of talk about corruption and how widespread it is. Many people suggest that we must pass tough laws and throw people into jail, which will solve the problem. The police and law have never solved the law and order problem; they can do it only when a large number of people decide to self regulate themselves and be honest. A distinguished academic, Neol Fergusson, British in origin but a professor at Harvard in History of business, talked about the American recession and the fraud that preceded it. He said, “If you impose regulations, people will always find a way to escape it; it is a cat and mouse game. The need of the hour is to teach people to be honest”. Many decades prior to that Swami said ‘the end of education is character’, which includes sensitivity and integrity. This university has a much longer tradition because this country has a long tradition going back thousands of years, as mentioned by Prof. Gokak yesterday. On innumerable occasions Swami said, ‘I am God and you are also God, the difference is, I know that I am God and you don’t know that you are God’.

My talk has endeavoured to say that we can discover God within us by focusing on sensitivity and integrity. I don’t say that goodness and virtue have any other shades but these two are critical in one’s daily life. If we keep track of these two, we can solve most manmade problems; and then the prayer ‘*Samastha lokaha sukhino bhavantu*’ will have some meaning. Otherwise, it is just a cry in the wilderness.

I appeal to all of you to take Swami’s message very seriously and try to implement it. As Swami often used to say, you don’t need to follow all the 700 shlokas of the Bhagavad Gita, but practicing half a shloka is enough.

Role of Values and Ethics in Education

Students! Embodiments of Love! Educationists! Bhaarath, which has been the treasure house of spirituality, is steadily going down in Dharma (righteousness).³⁷ Spirituality has declined sharply in recent times, and consequently human values have been forgotten. In turn, this has led to the disappearance of ethics and morality. Owing to the absence of ethics and morality, dharma also has vanished. Since there is no dharma, there are no ideal persons anymore and there is no idealism left.³⁸

Injustice, dishonesty, immorality and other demonic qualities are having free play in the country.³⁹ Students should strive to awaken in the people recognition of their inherent divinity, the loss of which accounts for the degradation of humanity today. Students should develop social consciousness. It is not enough to acquire academic knowledge and technical skills, which are all that present-day education is concerned with. If there is no love of God, fear of sin, and practice of social ethics, how can there be peace in the world? Slogans on the walls, lectures on the platform and pontifications in the press are not what the students need. They need the example of leaders who stand up for integrity and morality.⁴⁰

It is in this context that much emphasis is laid on 'Educare' instead of Education. What is 'Educare'? Educare is manifesting one's own innate divine nature. One can experience bliss by doing so. There are several colleges and universities in different parts of the world today. There are innumerable professors and Ph.Ds too. But, could their high academic degrees confer peace and happiness on them? Why did the world not experience peace and

³⁷Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 30, Chapter 31, Benedictory Address, 1997

³⁸Summer Showers 2000, Chapter 15

³⁹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 30, Chapter 31, Benedictory Address, 1997

⁴⁰Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 24, Chapter 07

happiness in spite of producing so many educated people? The reason being, all their education is meant to make a comfortable living. Education is for life, not for a mere living. Education is related to the outside world, whereas Educare concerns itself with one's inner being. It relates to the *Atma* (soul).⁴¹

Students should not be obsessed with earning *dhanam* (money). They must be keen on acquiring *gunas* (good qualities). Education without ethics is no education at all. Education must teach men to be sincere in thought, word and deed as the mark of humanness.⁴² Education which is not based on ethics, morality and spirituality is utterly worthless.⁴³

Between the tree of the past and the tree of the future, the present is the seed, which is of utmost significance. It gets sustenance from *neethi* (morality). Without *neethi*, *manava jathi* (the human race) is bound to be ruined, and even its existence is impossible.⁴⁴ True knowledge is that which establishes harmony and synthesis between science on the one hand and spirituality and ethics on the other.⁴⁵ The social scenario and the educational system today are riddled with many defects. Education today is concerned with imparting worldly knowledge, with no place for ethics or spirituality. It is essential to carry out a total, radical change in the educational system. What is needed is a total revolution. Only then the value of education will become apparent.⁴⁶

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

⁴¹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 41, Chapter 14

⁴²Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 30, Chapter 31, Benedictory Address, 1997

⁴³Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 29, Chapter 15

⁴⁴Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 32, Part 2, Chapter 15

⁴⁵Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 18, Chapter 24

⁴⁶Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 30, Chapter 2

Role of Values and Ethics in Education

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It is a great occasion, not only because the teachers and students of all the four campuses are gathered to share this workshop proceedings, but also because the points of discussion are important, and serve as guideposts for future work. Moreover, Swami is with us; we are very confident about that, and we use this occasion to rededicate ourselves to His mission, and as all of us know: education has been the cornerstone of Bhagawan's mission. Bhagawan has told us on many occasions that this institute is established to produce role models for tomorrow's world. Swami said that the world is watching us. To this divine statement; I want to add with conviction that He is watching us. I feel privileged to speak from here as I had my first darshan in this very hall and heard Him speak for the first the time from this podium. It was way back in 1982 during the first convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, which incidentally was my first visit to Prasanthi Nilayam.

I will start with a simple question, what is education? Education is a process which brings out the hidden goodness and capability in all of us. We call it 'Educare', which is not new as it was used by Greek philosophers two thousand years ago. According to the Greek philosophers, education should derive the simplest and most effective methods to turn minds towards light, not implant sight in it because it is already there, but to correct its orientation;

which is what Educare is all about. Therefore we should get down to the most commonly understood terms, where we refer to education as information which leads to knowledge, facilitating in building skills and capabilities in human beings, and further on, to wisdom which is the cap of it all. Wisdom is the that which gives us priorities, and then there has to be an interaction between wisdom and knowledge. In recent times, however, some major changes have taken place in the world of education. Firstly, education has become a business, which is a recent phenomenon. Secondly, the wisdom part of the agenda has been totally ignored. Wisdom is no longer considered necessary; education is simply the formation of skills. We can say that in education, something undesirable like folly and vice have replaced wisdom and virtue. The results are there for everyone to see as Prof. Venkataraman has pointed out. Let me briefly refer to Swami Ranganathananda in a recent writing, towards the end of his life. He put it very nicely as, “Moses gave us Ten Commandments, but highly educated persons today think that there were eleven commandments. These intelligent and highly capable people follow the eleventh commandment which says that even if you disobey the Ten Commandments make sure that you are not caught by the law - that is education”.

Education today teaches you, how to manipulate the systems to your advantage; *Swartham* and *swaprayojanam* - selfishness and self-interest. As Prof. Venkataraman mentioned, it is very sad to see crime and corruption when you open a newspaper. We are still reeling under the global recession, which has left its mark on everyone due to national and international policies adopted by highly educated people. Who and what is at the root of the problem? The root of the problem is highly skilled, highly educated and competent people. The corruption is the nexus between government and the corporate sector, which is run by highly educated, efficient and selective people. Products of modern education are clearly committed to the eleventh

commandment; the first Ten Commandments don't really matter. It is not a new problem. Two centuries back we had a similar problem, which the poet Bernard Mandeville in 1714 AD put as follows, "with luxury employed in millions of the poor and odious pride in millions more; envy and vanity were ministers of industry; their darling folly, fickleness in diet, furniture in dress; that strange ridiculous voice was made, the very veil that turned trade".

Things have gone even worse now. At that time, at least some employment was created; today the policy makers are promoting Consumerism to generate employment, without much success. The tide of history has gone from bad to worse. We are loaded with massive unemployment, unprecedented inequality in income and wealth in all countries, including India. Fifty years ago, in 1960, a reputed philosopher Bertand Russel warned us about this. He said, "The human race has survived hitherto, owing to ignorance and incompetence; but given the knowledge and competence combined with folly there can be no certainty for survival. Knowledge is power but it is power for evil as much as it is for good. Unless man increases in wisdom as much as knowledge, increase in sorrow is certain".

Where do we go from here and how to turn next? The only way to turn is to Bhagawan. Bhagawan taught us that human values must be cultivated in all spheres of life and must start from education. He said, "Education means broadening the heart, development of control over senses, making one seek and promote good of the world. Education devoid of this is worthless". This is where sensitivity and integrity come into picture. It is not only a relationship between God and man, but a relationship between God, man and society. this relationship is referred to as the golden triangle. These human values are basic and all educational systems should promote them. What is the route and what is the agenda? True education is the training of the mind as our scriptures (yajurveda) say,

*'Yath pragyanam utacheto dbrutischa
yath jyothir ananta amrutham prajasu
yasman narithe kinchan karma kriyate
tanme manaha shiva sankalpamastu'*

may that mind of mine which is the instrument of gaining special and general knowledge, which is steadiness itself, which is the immortal light in the living beings, without which no work is done, be of auspicious resolution. Regarding ethics, the word ethics is not sufficient; we have to rise beyond ethics. Why? It is because ethics is contextual over time and space. What is ethical today might not be ethical tomorrow. We have to rise from here to Dharma, which is permanent over time and space, the same at all times for everyone. Dharma should lead to Sathya as mentioned by Mr. Sanjay Sahni. Sathya doesn't mean factual truth but the one truth that is God. We have to rise from simple terms like ethics and morality to dharma, leading finally to God. The problem lies here, in the outside world today; even the media uses terms like rationality whose meaning is not very clear. Rationality, reason and verifiability; rationality is directly concerned with behavioural sciences; reason is concerned with philosophical subjects and verifiability with physical sciences. Rationality is the self-interest in behavioural pattern. In other words, it is consistency or selfishness. This has been disputed by many personalities; one of them is Nobel laureate Amartya Sen. He says that if one is concerned only with the manifest world, with the calculable losses and gains, one is missing lot of life. He warned us not to be rational fools because it is foolish to think of life as pure rationality. Another Nobel laureate in Economics, Herbert Simon talks about bounded rationality. Bounded rationality says that reason tells us how to go but doesn't tell us where to go, and for both the questions, it is important to know where we to go. Bounded rationality takes into account all the value systems we adopt and does not go by selfishness. A meta-

psychologist who has tried to understand the Hindu scriptures in great depth is Carl Jung. He says in a book, 'memories, dreams and reflections', "Reasons set the boundaries far too narrowly for us and would have us accept only the known that too with limitations and live in unknown framework, just as if we know how far life extends. The more the critical reason dominates, the more impoverished life will become".

I want to recall the 1985 convocation address given by Prof. E .C. G. Sudarshan, an eminent physicist who talked about binocular vision. Binocular vision means that you have to combine the manifest world with the unmanifest world; spirituality and science must go hand in hand. All of us are looking for happiness. Where does it come from? A large number of empirical studies have been conducted between the relationship of income and happiness. Even in countries where GDP is secularly gone very high, happiness has remained constant. We are here to talk about true happiness, not whether one is happier than a neighbour, who doesn't have a house or job or income. If you ask individuals who have been well off now compared to what they were a decade back, there answer is invariably 'no, we are not happier than earlier'. The only way out of all these, is the concept of golden triangle; God, individual and society. The greatest gift for all of us is Bhagawan, as He has come to transform and rejuvenate the whole world and not to destroy or annihilate anyone. He has come to give us hope, come to show us the way in terms of social commitment. Spirituality and social commitment should go together; skill formation, values and spirituality should be combined and there cannot be any compromise in this aspect.

I will make two to three observations regarding Swami's system of education. First is ceiling on desires. It is amazing that Swami spoke about this thirty-five years ago, way back in 1976. He says, "Today in the world there are several economic problems that are troubling us. We should enquire from the spiritual angle on how

these problems have arisen? The available commodities are limited and our desires are unlimited. To take only the steps that will increase the economic output is not the correct thing to do. It is indeed a weak point; the shortest cut is to contain our desires to match the available material. Students should take great care to see that they do not waste food. They should take what they need and do not waste anything. Share your excess food with others”. This is very relevant today, when we are talking about food security and food inflation. Due to unlimited desires promoted by consumerism, on several occasions, a lot of food is wasted. On the other hand, there are some people who don't get one square meal a day. The next commandment from Bhagawan is let us 'be sensitive' to each other, which He describes beautifully in an epithet, 'the best study of mankind is man'. He says, "Just as all parts of the body form one organism, similarly all beings are the different limbs of God. When there is an injury to the leg, it is the eye that sheds the tear. The same type of intimate relationship exists between God and all the beings". This is the way in which we should feel concerned about society. Do unto others what you would like them do unto you – this is the slogan which we should not just talk about but out into practice in everyday life. Swami also talks about equity because one problem, which is plaguing the whole world, is increasing inequality and unemployment.

In the United States and Europe, unemployment has risen to over 10%. The only solution is that the system has to change. This is partly fed by inequality in the distribution of income. In the US, 45% of all income goes to the top 5% of the income bracket. The in the last 10-15 years, the income of the upper 10% income bracket, has increased nine times whereas that of the top 50% has increased only four times. Much of this is attributed to highly skilled personnel; part of it to education. Education is for service not selfishness. Swami lays a great emphasis on Bharat, talking about equity. He says, "Bharat taught that a small section

of the society can never command the inexhaustible resources of the world. For the effective functioning of the society, it is necessary to divide different tasks to particular group of people in employment, and yet each section of the community contribute its share to the common good". It is a dual solution to the problems of unemployment and inequality in distribution of income and wealth. He next emphasizes on the role of duty.

Several years back, in the mid-nineties, Swami was gracious to call and talk to me. He asked me if I had any questions for Him. I asked four different questions, one about myself, one about a relative, one about the general condition in the world around, and lastly, a professional question. He gave only one answer; 'Do your duty'. I was thinking that I was not able to put it across clearly or may be Swami didn't hear clearly or Swami's mind was on something else. But many days later when I thought about it, I found to my amazement and pleasure that He gave answer to each of those questions, 'Do your duty'. On duty Swami says, "Man has to contribute his best for the welfare of others so that he may be happy. Each has his particular duty, particular task, and particular role as an individual and as a member of the society to which he belongs. Do that duty, carry out that task, play the role as best as you can. A society can be happy and healthy when each worker does his/her duty and does it well". This commandment is relevant to all of us; whatever task has been assigned, particularly to students and teachers and all other functionaries; let us do our duty well and contribute to the divine mission. In this case, it happens to be education, which is a cornerstone of Bhagawan's mission.

Head and the Heart

“*Vidyannasti parodharma.*” (There is no *Dharma* greater than *Vidya*). Therefore, one has to acquire real *Vidya*. Heart is the source of real *vidya*. Mere accumulation of information is not *vidya*. *Vidya* is eternal bliss. Real *vidya* is educate. But head is the source of education. Educare starts from the source of the heart and comes out through *buddhi* (intellect) whereas education is merely bookish knowledge emerging from the mind. Educare is *Buddhigrabhyamateendriyam* (Educare transcends the senses and can be grasped only by the intellect).⁴⁷ Secular knowledge is for earning your livelihood. It is through spiritual knowledge that you attain the supreme bliss. But as long as you live at the level of the mind, you have to pursue secular studies. The moment you transcend the mind, this education can be overlooked. Man ascends to the Divine by transcending his mind.⁴⁸ The process of education has to inspire man to discover the Truth seeking it through the study of the objective world. Fulfillment lies in the awareness of that Truth which, when once known, does not need correction or modification or revision.⁴⁹

Education must include the education of the mind of man, of his impulses to hate, to hoard, to fight, to defame. It is not merely the acquisition of certain skills by which the materials found in nature can be reshaped into utility products; it is not merely the acquisition of information about the laws of nature. It is the process by which man makes the best of his own inner equipment, his *Anthahkarana* (inner consciousness), to know himself. It should open his inner eye, more than his outer; the outer must reveal the glory of God, the inner must reveal the God within.⁵⁰ Man should be transformed to become compassionate.

⁴⁷Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 37, Chapter 4

⁴⁸Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 33, Chapter 20

⁴⁹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 19, Chapter 26

⁵⁰Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 07, Chapter 15

Of what use is education that does not melt the heart of the student to the plight of others? Modern secular education is making man hard-hearted. Just as you try hard to sharpen your intellect, you should broaden your heart also. If this fact is not realized, of what use is your intelligence and learning? With proper education, both the mind and heart should be transformed.⁵¹ It should not make him self-centered and narrow minded. Spontaneous sympathy and regard for all beings should flow from the heart of one who is properly educated. He should be keen to serve society rather than be preoccupied with his own acquisitive aspirations.⁵² You can be called truly educated only when your education benefits people at large and you become recipient of their love. The purpose of education is not merely to sustain the body; it should broaden man's mind and make him an ideal and virtuous person.⁵³

The essence of education is concentration of the mind and not collection of facts.⁵⁴ *Vidya* reveals and makes clear that "good" and "bad" are only reactions caused by the failings and feelings of the mind of man.⁵⁵ The system of education practised today does not divinise the mind and turn it towards the 'I', which is a reflection of the *Atma* within. Make not the stomach an excuse for seeking education! You must study so that your mind becomes sacred and your thoughts become noble.⁵⁶

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

⁵¹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 32, Part 2, Chapter 15

⁵²Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 19, Chapter 2

⁵³Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 34, Chapter 22

⁵⁴Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 19, Chapter 2

⁵⁵Vidya Vahini, Chapter 5

⁵⁶Summer Showers 2000, Chapter 1

Innovation in the Head, Passion in the Belly and Compassion in the Heart

Sri K. Chakravarthy

Member, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

My talk will deal with the training of the mind of the students, rather than innovation per se. Similarly, we will cover the cultivation of sympathy and altruism, so as to have a compassionate heart. In regards to passion in the belly, I will talk on it on another occasion. The talk on the whole is part descriptive and part prescriptive. Our institute will be thirty years old by the end of this year. During this period, the institute has earned a good name for quality education encompassing academic excellence, physical training and character building. The five year integrated courses have provided the students with strong, solid foundations at the undergraduate level and a fair degree of specialization at the post graduate level. Of the 20,000-odd colleges offering undergraduate education in the country, the Institute may rank among the top 200; that is to say in the top 1%, which is certainly a commendable achievement. As for postgraduate studies, amongst the 500 plus universities, our Institute would rank in the first 50 universities, which is again an achievement we should legitimately feel proud of. As for the research work the number of research is not significant, but the quality of work would be more than the national average.

Considering the size of the university, the question we should ask ourselves is whether the quality of students could be even better?

If it is to be better, in what direction should we improve? I believe, there is scope for improvement in the 'art of learning'. By this, I mean that the students learn to learn. This becomes possible when students read on their own accord, the classics in their respective subjects. Such reading would enable the students to appreciate the structure of the original text, the style of the author, the logical evolution of the thoughts of the author and the sustained manner in which the author refutes the reasoning of another leading exponent of the subject. Reading excerpts from the classical texts does not benefit the students to the same extent, to reading the texts themselves. There is a need to develop the understanding different points of view. Critically develop the art of finding the flaw in the argument, the questionable basis and the doubtful conclusions.

Students have to develop the skills of analysis and synthesis. It is necessary to analyze the point of view or an argument by breaking it into a series of steps and establish inconsistencies. Equally, it is necessary to develop ability to synthesize various points of view and establish the most convincing conclusions. What is taught in the class must be considered as a basis for learning on one zone. To train the mind and to read and absorb original text, must therefore be an objective of serious learning at the university level. Words that are heavy on reading, boring, unintelligible and difficult to grasp have no place when the student has to make a serious effort in understanding the text of great thinkers. If it is not difficult to grasp, then it is not worth grasping. Intellectual development is possible only when the mind is trained to do a serious study of worthwhile subjects. Of course, light reading of books which provide relief may be resorted to; but I would recommend reading aloud if you can, great poetry in the midst of your reading original text subjects, because, poetry not only relieves stress and tension, but elevates the spirit and ennobles the soul. After reading Haggler and Kant or Keynes and Friedman, I read great poetry, and then went back to read the original books.

Listen to the majestic lines of Milton, for e.g. from 'paradise lost', 'what in me is dark, illumine; what is low, raise and support that to the height of this great argument, I may assert eternal providence and justify the ways of God to men', or the pulsating poignant lines of Sri Aurobindo from Savitri, the gentle lines of Khalil Gibran from 'Jesus, the son of man', 'when Jesus came to my seasons it was indeed a spring and in Him was all the promise of all the years to come. He filled my heart with joy and that the violets that I grew a shy thing in the light of His coming and now the changing seasons of the world not yet ours shall not erase this loveliness from our world. Nay! This is not a phantom or conception of the poet's, he was a man like yourself and myself but only to sight and touch and hearing; in all other ways he was unlike us, he was a man of joy and it was upon the path of joy that he saw the sorrows of all men, from the high roofs of sorrows that he beheld the joys of all men. Jesus was among us yet not one with us. He was upon the earth, yet he was of the sky and only in our aloneness may we visit the land of his aloneness and felt you not when his face disappeared from our sight as if we are not but memories in the mist...' or the moving lines of Shelley from his poem 'the spirit of solitude', 'art and eloquence and all the show of the world are frail and vain, to weep a loss that turns their lights to shade it is avow too deep for tears, when all is reft at once when some surpassing spirit whose light adorned the world leaves those who remain behind not sobs or groans, the passionate tumult of clinging hopes but failed despair and cold tranquility, nature's vast frame the web of human things - birth and the grave that were not as they were'. Or the evocative and emotional lines of Rabindranath Tagore expressing the incertitude of emotions, 'in the twilight of the exhausted consciousness, I saw this body of mine float along the din tides carrying the cluster of emotions, its varied misery, memories knowledge since birth as in a cart drawing carrying a flute, a dark mystery descends on the world on land and water, my body merges into an endless dark, turning into a shadow, a point

standing alone...at starry altar I cry with folded hands raising upwards; O! the fosterer, you have withholden your raze of light now reveal to me your form that is loveliest, let me see the self that is same in you and me’.

The training of the mind – which combines the virtue of rigorous logic and exalted poetry, can enable one to move on to explore new areas in one’s own subject. It is possible to embark on meaningful research with creativity and innovation only after getting sufficient mastery on our subject. Our reading of the literature will help us to appreciate the continuity of human civilization. Profound thinkers are not dated or period specific, they are always modern because they plumb into the depth of human consciousness and human consciousness never changes. It is the mind, which is the creator and destroyer of values and systems, and so we have to train our minds to eschew all thoughts that drag down human life instead of ennobling them to the heights of the divine domain. The reading of history, similarly, shows the peaks to which the human spirit could soar and the unimaginable depths to which it can descend. Heights and depths are our making; it is a conscious cultivation of values and the things small and big which cause our ascent or descent. Whether our lives are governed by hatred, violence, betrayal and treachery or by tolerance, generosity, forgiveness and sacrifice is to be determined by us.

We can distinguish the areas of studies broadly as those dealing with natural and physical world, and those that deal with human societies and organizations. In the first category we study Physics, Chemistry, Geology, Plant science, Astronomy etc., and in the second category we study History, Politics, Economics, Anthropology, Sociology etc. In physical and natural sciences, one works towards definiteness and certainty, and in social sciences, one tries to give plausible explanations for complex phenomenon because human behaviour doesn’t lend itself to

definite conclusions. Approaches are different but studious scholarships and thorough familiarity with the existing body of knowledge is required in all areas of study that students undertake. Pushing the frontiers of knowledge in one's own subject is done only when there is a climate of original thinking. The intellectual atmosphere in the university must be such as to spur the students to creatively engage themselves. An atmosphere of this nature can be created only when there are a significant number of research scholars who challenge the existing notions of the current and historical thinking. An effete and tired group of people cannot bring excitement to a stale environment. There must be a passionate and unflagging desire to pursue new vistas and the white heat of reason must be accompanied by fire in the belly that doesn't get extinguished.

All research is for the long haul – for zeal to excel, the doggedness in the pursuit of the goal that will sustain the intellectual atmosphere which is so essential for the successive research scholars to contribute to the growth of the Institute. The charter that Bhagawan has given to us will demand more than the above. The students along with their efforts to expand the horizons of their knowledge will be called upon to develop a keenness to share their knowledge with the outside world. This could be done by contributing effectively through the teaching of various subjects, particularly the sciences to the colleges in disarray. We have a social obligation to ensure that a large number of rural students get access to the growing body of scientific knowledge through the wise use of information and communication technology. The university, while being an island of excellence, should be, as a matter of national priority, be able to show a visible and tangible improvement in the quality of education all around us. Such a programme would draw national recognition and would further the cause of quality education, which will propel the country to a higher trajectory of all around development.

There is therefore a need to have intellectually strong students with a passion for participation in worthy national endeavours and who will finally grow into sensitive human beings. Of what avail is it to develop ourselves in mind and body without growing in spirit of the 120 crores brothers and sisters in the country, a majority of who have a low per capita income. We can estimate therefore their level of human existence. Economic development of various countries shows that they are not accompanied by more equal societies. In this context, I would like to say that a sharing and caring attitude towards our brothers and sisters will soften the edges of inequality. Such a sharing attitude is guided by the compassion springing in the heart. Nature endows countries and people differently and unequally; perfect equality will therefore prove unattainable. It would be necessary for us to cultivate a caring and sharing attitude; not only is this feasible but essential, if you look at it from the point of view of fostering one's own higher self and developing a spiritual attitude.

Spiritual attitude results whenever there is a willingness to forgo part of the benefits that accrue to us through our greater efforts or superior talents. The basis of such an attitude is compassion or mercy. As Shakespeare says, 'the quality of mercy is not strain it droppeth as gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed, it blesseth him that gives than that takes. It becomes a throne monarch better than its crown...mercy is above the sector sway, it is enthroned in the hearts of kings, it is an attribute to God himself.

Systems and ideologies will seek to deal with this problem from a materialistic point of view; our students will have to deal with it from a humane point of view; that is to say deal which such a large mass of lost and lonely brothers and sisters with the quality of love which Bhagawan displayed throughout His life amidst us. It will not be possible to make so many people rich but it would

be possible to show concern and compassion towards them. We need not be daunted by the magnitude of our task because the thrust of our work will not be provision of materials in the conventional sense; but to extend to them, certain richness and generosity of the spirit of our love.

Historically, every generation had felt as if it was going through a critical time and that its own survival was uncertain. But history has been moving on; wars have been waged for varieties of reasons, but mainly due to the rulers' desire to annex other's territories. The urge to expand one's control over vaster territory in order to secure economic resources or gain geo-political advantage has been noticed through the centuries. Wars have become progressively costlier, both in terms of human lives and material resources. The huge expenditure incurred in waging a war or averting wars is draining the country's exchequer. The scale of destruction has also enormously increased. There is more fear generated in the name of securing peace. We are torn between the inability to avoid wars and the compulsive necessity to establish peace. In the midst of such a disturbing environment, the better part of the human nature has to assert itself, to establish long-term peace.

The real danger of vast annihilation should shake us out of spiritual torpor. The more human and compassionate nature of our being should be collectively and consciously nurtured and institutions such as ours have a significant role to play. Students of this institute should grow with the conviction that the future of our civilization and indeed the world civilization, depends on the cultivation of the noble and sublime side of our human nature. Restraint of violent impulses is as much necessary, as a conscious promotion of inward peace and harmony. There is a constant urge in us to push the known frontiers of knowledge. There is also a natural exuberance to push our levels of endurance. Further, there is a call within to strive for greater beyond the immediately

perceivable physical power and mental strength. These are understandable aspirations.

I am hopeful that you will strive to make this institute a hub of intellectual activity. Some of you will stay for the growth of the institute and to be recognized as leading luminaries in your subjects. Most of you will pursue your careers in this country and abroad, participate in service activities with great vigour and enthusiasm. All of you here and elsewhere, will have sensitive hearts which respond to the need of the vast number of our fellowmen. The institute can look forward to new generations of students who will have a splendid illumination of a bright intellect and a warm glow of responsive hearts. Wish you God's feet and may Bhagawan's love envelope you wherever you go.

Guidelines for the Institute

In the Sai Educational System, there are no problems of student unrest because education is free. Our students are happy. All of us are also happy. Because of free education the students' behaviour is exemplary. All the students feel spontaneously: "Here we are getting free education. We must conduct ourselves well to show our gratitude to all concerned."⁵⁷ You have complete peace in the absence of all fees...Education, which is purchased can lead only to agitation.⁵⁸ There should be no link between money and education.⁵⁹

In order to effect real improvements in the system of education, it is necessary to free educational institutions from Government control and make them independent like the judiciary. They should be run by autonomous agencies free from Government and political influences. Education should be under the control of a national body of educational experts, who have the interests of students as their sole concern.⁶⁰ To propagate human values, it is advisable to keep as far away as possible from the powers that be. It is not possible to promote sacred values through the help of governmental authorities.⁶¹

There is something wrong with our system of examinations and promotions. An examinee is "passed" if he gets 30 percent marks in a subject. This is improper. A few mistakes may be excused, but if one commits 70 mistakes does he deserve to be passed?

⁵⁷Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 30, Chapter 31, 16th Convocation, 22 Nov 1997

⁵⁸Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 33, Chapter 20, 19th Convocation, 22 Nov 2000

⁵⁹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol.19, Chapter 2, Music Academy Auditorium, Madras, 20 January 1986

⁶⁰ibid

⁶¹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 20, Chapter 21, National Symposium on Value Orientation, 1987

This is wrong. It is because of such practices that educational institutions have lost all credibility.⁶²

Elders should lead from the front. All elders should resolve to practice and propagate the human values. Chairmen, secretaries, and coordinators should plunge into action. Only then will there be transformation; otherwise, the whole life will be spent in giving and receiving information. Quality is essential, not quantity. Leaders should introspect and find out what transformation is effected in the individuals rather than keeping track of the number of certificates they have been awarded.⁶³

There are three kinds of teachers. The first type consists of teachers who revel in 'complaints'. The second type consists of teachers who 'explain'. To the third type belong teachers who 'inspire'. This category of teachers arouses the enthusiasm of students and inspires them to take deep interest in their studies.⁶⁴

I call upon all teachers and the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar to involve themselves in...activities and encourage the students in every way.⁶⁵ Does Sai take any day off? No! Every day, every minute, every moment, I discharge my duties. Discharging one's duty is true yoga. So, do your duty. Duty is God; work is worship. When elders set an ideal, children will follow their footsteps.⁶⁶

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

⁶²Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 17, Chapter 07, 1984

⁶³Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 03, Chapter 31, First Overseas Convention of Chairs of Sai Centres, 1998

⁶⁴My Dear Students, Vol. 5

⁶⁵Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 27, Chapter 02, Purnachandhra Auditorium, 14 January 1994

⁶⁶Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 03, Chapter 31, First Overseas Convention of Chairs of Sai Centres, 1998

Guidelines for the Institute

Sri V. Srinivasan

Member, SSSIHL Trust; Member, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust

Let me welcome and congratulate all of you on this unique privilege and good fortune, which has been bestowed upon you by our beloved Bhagawan. Not only you, but every single person who has ever come in contact with Bhagawan has been blessed and personally selected by Him. Nobody comes to Prasanthi Nilayam unless Bhagawan wills it so. This is something which we must cherish in our hearts; that over the eight decades of Bhagawan's presence on this earth, He personally selected and handpicked the people, who were to be the messengers and also to be benefited by His grace and whose lives have to be changed by coming in contact with Bhagawan, and having some role to play in His divine mission.

The Sathya Sai avatar has not come for the destruction of evil unlike Rama and Krishna, but for transformation of mankind. What is this transformation? The transformation that leads us to the realization that we are divine. Many of you are aware that people have asked Bhagawan on several occasions; Are you God? His answer has been, "yes I am God; you are also God but the only difference is that I know it and you don't know it". This statement indicates Swami wanted that all should realize their innate divinity and this is the secret of how He goes about with His mission. The unique distinguishing character of Bhagawan has been His abounding and limitless love. It is this love that

attracts millions and millions of people all over the world. You are all aware that for all functions that take place in Prasanthi Nilayam, there is never an invitation or intimation that is given to anybody, yet people come. All of us used to say that there is a Sai wireless through which information moved before the days of Internet, e-mail or cell phones, making people come to His lotus feet from all over the world. The medium of communication is love; the greatest energy that Bhagawan possesses is the power of love. With His love, He makes ordinary people perform extraordinary tasks. Bhagawan's projects have been executed at record time and lowest costs. Whom did He use for these projects? He used ordinary people who, working elsewhere would not have achieved what they did, working in the auspices of Bhagawan. It is this power of love which makes everyone work unitedly with singular commitment and devotion, which brings them all together to achieve the extraordinary events which the world is witness to, and which we proudly mention as the landmarks of Sai mission. Nobody has contributed as much to society and humanity as Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. In history, if one recalls, there is no one who has contributed so much to mankind. We are fortunate to be the legacy of the Sathya Sai Avatar.

Regarding the topic given to me, I was trying to collect the thoughts whether to talk as a devotee or as a trustee of the institute, when I came across the book Sai Inspires. In that book I found two messages that seem to strike a chord in my heart for what I would like to speak. The first one is about divinity, where Swami says, "Being a part of the divine, each one of you should serve society. The existence of man is for the sake of society. Similarly, society has an existence for the sake of creation; in fact creation is a manifestation of God, in which man has a unique position. Indeed service to society is the primary duty of all of you, which will endow you with divine power. Service to society is in reality, service to divinity". In the other message, He talks about

love and says, “your very form is love, have more faith in love and develop loving relationships with others. Cultivate the feeling that you belong to all and all belong to you. All are one, be alike to everyone. All are the children of the same divine mother; being the children of the same mother, all should live like brothers and sisters. The very foundation of this country is based on truth and right action, which must be propagated. Everyone must consider the adherence to truth as the greatest deed they can perform. Truth and right conduct are very important in the life of every human being; youth in particular should strictly adhere to these virtues like truth, which means harmony in thought, word and deed. Wherever these three things are in harmony, there you will find truth. You should not say one thing from the platforms, have something else in the mind and act in a totally different manner from what you spoke and thought. This is the worst sin possible”. In this message Bhagawan has condensed the essence of all our philosophy, all our scriptures in simple form for all of us to understand. So love and truth have to be the foundation of every single person who has had the benefit of being associated with Bhagawan. Keeping this in mind, what should be the future guidelines for the institute? I recall what Rabindranath Tagore said, ‘where the mind is free, let my country awake into that heaven’.

Once during an interaction with Bhagawan, when boys talked about Swaraj or freedom, Bhagawan asked the boys, “What do you mean by freedom?” After listening to their responses, Swami said that Swaraj is something, which only God has. No individual has real Swaraj or free will; it is only God who has this free will. So keeping this in mind, what does it mean when we say, where the mind is free? Is it free to move in anyway it likes? With greater capacities of ingestion and digestion, our mind jumps from point to point; is that what we want? So much is said about how much life is lost with our preoccupation with living; how much of wisdom is lost due to our pursuit of knowledge; and how

much knowledge is lost due to our pursuit of information. So, when we say that we are free, do we have the understanding and contemplation of, what the freedom implies in order to give us fulfilling life? Gain Self-satisfaction and Self-confidence to earn Self-sacrifice leading to Self-realization – this is the secret expounded by Bhagawan. People ask God for material trinkets such as a job, money, position, etc., which you can get from anyone else, but, Swami has said very often that there is only one thing that divinity can give, and that is peace of mind. This indicates a mind that is complete in itself, a mind which is all encompassing, holistic and not fragmented, and a mind which is not engaged in chasing its own tail, but engaged in the pursuit of wisdom, rather than, in the pursuit of information. This to me should be the cornerstone of how this institute should distinguish itself as a centre of *real* learning. It should not be an institute where people pursue information and ingest a lot of facts, but *that* place where one breathes the air of true freedom. We should not be bigots or dogmatic, but constrained and restrained by our own rules of conduct. There are rules for the regulation of society, for the conduct of any institution, but within these rules, how one should conduct oneself? It is this point that we should examine, that the university is one which pursues true knowledge, offers every single facility to support, encourage and inspire seekers of real knowledge. Not to have a preoccupation with the distribution and dissemination of degrees, but to inculcate the capability, thirst and hunger for real knowledge.

An analogy would be the story of Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa, which Bhagawan used to tell us, whereby Vivekananda asked Ramakrishna, “Do you see the *devi*?” Ramakrishna said, “I do see her”. Vivekananda asked, “How do you see her?” Ramakrishna replies, “I see her as I see you”. “Then why is it that I cannot see her?” asks Vivekananda. Ramakrishna replied, “It is because you don’t cry for her? Unless the yearning or pining is not there for the darshan, you can’t get union with

divinity.” In the same way, if the yearning and pining for knowledge is not there, what we will get is the trinkets, scraps. Bhagawan used to say that people come to Him and ask for a locket, ring or bracelet, which Bhagawan gave to them; but He also said, “Do not hanker for these things, I give them because you want them, but I want you to want what I have really come to give, which is true knowledge and peace of mind.” So, being the students of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, it should be our objective for having that pining for truth. As Bhagawan said, love is divine, service to society is divine, truth is divine and *that* should define the basis for all existence.

In the functioning of our University, when we are forming our curricula or designing our programmes; when we are looking at our new courses, doctoral programmes, we have to keep in mind the distinguishing features of love and truth. These are the foundation as Bhagawan has said; that education without character is meaningless and valueless. Scientific progress by people who have no character is a double-edged sword because it can be put to wrong use. Bhagawan says that technology is technology when it is used for the benefit of mankind, otherwise it becomes *tricknology*; He also says that we should have skill and not kill. By this small play of words, he conveys fundamental truths. We have reached a certain degree of maturity and we have to chart our future course of action. In charting these plans, right from the foundation, we have to make sure that the grass root messages of Bhagawan (which are eternal), should continue to be our core of teaching, whether it is at the undergraduate level or the postgraduate level or the doctoral and post doctoral level. When we talk about scientific research, there should be an atmosphere of freedom and unity. This doesn't mean that there should be no discipline but that the only relation that should percolate towards each other, is selfless love. The relation from the Vice-chancellor to Professor to Lecturer to student should

not be a hierarchical one, but one which is imbued with the spirit of love and the pursuit of truth.

Every single activity in this institute should be in the service of society because Bhagawan has said that service to society is service to divine. When we come here, our capability to serve humanity is enhanced. This is the path on which Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning should proceed. Every student and faculty member should be inspired by real freedom; the freedom which only divinity enjoys. By feeling that we are an image of the divine, we earn a right for freedom, and at the same time, since we are divine, it also imposes on us our own regulations. Take an example of dressing in white clothes. It is a norm to wear whites, but we should feel privileged to wear white, and have the feeling that it reflects the growing purity of our soul and the spotless nature of our heart. By the converse, if our mind is not pure, our thoughts are not pure, it is a sham to wear this white uniform. This self-regulation should become the basis of real freedom. I have shared a very simple analogy, but this is the principle that we should apply to all forms of search for knowledge. Academic freedom should not be misused or misunderstood, but it should be the one in the right spirit, which divine scholars, divine researchers or seekers enjoy. This gradual *parivartana* which Bhagawan wants us to have, should become the characteristic of every single student of this institution whether he/she is an undergraduate student or post-doctoral fellow. This is the greatest power which Bhagawan has given us; the power of love, knowledge and truth; He said that if you subscribe to this, there are no limits to what you can achieve.

What is the thing, which we seek to achieve? We don't seek to achieve meaningless honours or medals or degrees, but Self-awareness, Self-confidence, Self-sacrifice and ultimately Self-realization. With this spirit, and with these kind of boundaries which we have set for ourselves, we need to open our portals to

have interactions with like-minded institutions. We need to exchange scholars so that we can have cross-fertilization. This produces the churning and stimulation, which is a vital part of academic activity. Only people who are mature can do this, otherwise, it will become a mindless aping of things which appear to be attractive but are of no real value. However, we should carefully look for benchmarks by which we want to interact with other universities and centres of learning, so that we get the best from them and give them what is the best. This is the real message of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Hence, my vision is that this institution will become increasingly a place which acts as a magnet for real scholars from all over the world. Bhagawan is the greatest magnet that attracts people from all over the world. Bhagawan was with us, is with us and always be with us. In fact, in the last two months or so, I feel the presence of Bhagawan more than when I was physically close to Him. He gives me new insights, new energy and a new direction to play the small part in the divine mission of Sathya Sai. I am sure that it is true for every one of you. Bhagawan's manifestations are exploding all over the world, the occurrences of supra-normal phenomenon, the *leelas* are happening everyday with people who have not heard of Him, never seen Him. This is the power of attraction of this selfless love that Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba personifies. I pray to Bhagawan to bless this University, so that it continues forever on the path of real knowledge, the knowledge of the self.

Vision and Mission of SSSIHL

My Sankalpa (plan of action) is to provide the youth with an education which, while cultivating their intelligence, will also purify their impulses and emotions and equip them with the physical and mental disciplines needed for drawing upon the springs of calmness and joy that lie in their own hearts. Their higher natures will have to be fostered and encouraged to blossom, by means of study, prayer and *saadhana*, contacts with the sages, saints and spiritual heroes and heroines of their land, and place them on the path of self-confidence, self-satisfaction, self-sacrifice and self-knowledge.⁶⁷ The main purpose is to help...cultivate self-knowledge and self-confidence, so that each one...can learn self-sacrifice and earn self-realisation. The teaching of the university curricula and the preparation..for the university examinations and the award of university degrees - these are only the means employed for the end, namely, spiritual uplift, self-discovery and social service through love and detachment.⁶⁸

These spiritually oriented educational Sai Institutions are being established to impart teaching in proper ways, in order to preserve the hearts of students in pristine purity, stability and unselfishness, to develop them into workers dedicated to the progress of Bharath, intent on removing the anxiety and gloom that have spread all over the land and determined to revive the glory of *Bharathiya Samskrithi* (culture).⁶⁹ This College has to set an example, by providing opportunities for the rising generations

⁶⁷Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 9, Chapter 31, Foundation laying ceremony of Anantapur College, 1969

⁶⁸Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 12, Chapter 44, Anantapur, 1974

⁶⁹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 15, Chapter 30, Foundation laying ceremony of Junior College, Muddenahalli, 1981

to practise the disciplines in order to purify and promote these ideals. That is the reason, which prompted its establishment.⁷⁰

There are now thousands and thousands of educational institutions in the world. But, there is a great difference between the rest and those founded by Sathya Sai. The fundamental objectives of Sai institutions are humility, adherence to discipline, and application of what is learned in daily life.⁷¹ Emphasis is laid on spiritual education so that good character becomes the core of the personality.⁷² Always bear in mind that the Sathya Sai Institute is a sacred institution. It has been set up for promoting the welfare of the world.⁷³

Students are My all. If you ask Me, what is My property, many expect the answer to be, "Oh! All these buildings, all this vast area of land." But, My answer is: "My entire property consists of My students. I have offered Myself to them."⁷⁴ The *Sankalpa* (Will) of Sathya Sai is to offer, for serving humanity, heroes of action and heroes of self-sacrifice.⁷⁵ We want leaders who will be persons of integrity and character.⁷⁶ Our hope is that by your lives you will be shining examples of spiritual awareness and its beneficial consequences to the individual and the society.⁷⁷

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

⁷⁰Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 08, Chapter 32, Anantapur College, 1968

⁷¹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 15, Chapter 30, Foundation laying ceremony of Junior College, Muddenahalli, 1981

⁷²Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 15, Chapter 18, 29 August 1981

⁷³Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 22, Chapter 12, 19 June 1989

⁷⁴Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 15, Chapter 33, Inauguration of University, 22 November 1981

⁷⁵Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 15, Chapter 18, 29 August 1981

⁷⁶Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 19, Chapter 17, 21 August 1986

⁷⁷Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 12, Chapter 44, Anantapur, 1974

Vision and Mission of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

Dr. Naren Ramji

Registrar, SSSIHL

Swami has clearly enunciated the vision of this university way back in 1968, with the inauguration of the Anantapur campus. My talk has been taken from three different discourses of Bhagawan. Swami says, “This University has not been established just for conferring degrees. The main purpose is to help students cultivate self-knowledge leading to self-realization. Teaching the University curricula and awarding degrees are only the means employed for the end, namely, spiritual uplift, self-discovery and social service, through love and detachment. Students should be shining examples of spiritual awareness and its beneficial consequences to the individual and the society”. Since the avatar of the age decided to form the institution, you will see that the vision of the institution is a subset of His avataric mission itself. It has got the spiritual mooring, which Swami wanted this institution to have. It is said ‘the soul of education is the education of the soul’- *‘Adharytma vidya vidyanam’*; this is the foundation of this institution. In a nutshell, if you see, what is the purpose of education of this divine institution? To put it simply, it is to make good human beings.

I will take an analogy so that the students of your age can appreciate. We have a pizza, where we have the base of it as the

good human being, the toppings are what we want to become, like a doctor, a lawyer etc. that are the secular toppings on the base of this good human being. How did this vision of Swami get translated into actuality? The Sathya Sai integral education, as Sri Narasimha Murthy told in his talk, was not to make sages and saints who meditate in the forest, but men and women of character, who will serve society, and through that gain their own emancipation. The dictum 'head in the forest and hands in the society' epitomizes the goal of this institution. We have two foundational pillars of the Institute; one the academic pillar and the other the character pillar. Though this model was there in Swami's mind, He didn't overwhelm us with this concept when the University began. Swami in His own loving way, added these concepts, bit-by-bit, so that we got used to it, and we could do it. Starting with the cultural class, then the sports meet and Grama seva; gradually Swami brought these things into the system, which gradually became second nature and today we get the whole picture. It is a small lesson for us administrators not to overwhelm anybody with the big picture and say that everything has to be achieved. Swami asked us to do one thing and when it got stabilized, He quietly did something else. Swami built this institution with His own effort, with His own sweat and blood.

There are four founding principles of our system of integral education. First is discipline, second is connection with Swami, third is having the right attitude and fourth is patience and perseverance. These are the values, which students all have to cultivate before leaving the portals of this institution. Swami has often told us teachers that you teach your subjects, but what about my subject? Swami's subject is discipline and that is the reason we say that the medium of instruction is discipline. Discipline has got various connotations and meanings but something I liked a lot is, 'discipline is doing the right thing, at the right place, at the right time in the right manner'. It has a particular relevance to our institution, where we have so many

activities that we perform in a day whilst constantly shifting our focus. Even though we shift our focus from activity to activity, we must be completely focused on that particular activity at hand. Students, when you are in class, don't think of games; in games, don't think of bhajans and in bhajans and suprabhatam think only about them. Swami has designed this beautiful system with components timed so well throughout the day. All we have to do is to follow the routine with full conviction and the job is made much easier for us.

Now I come to a very tricky question, should discipline come from the source or it should be enforced? A river has two banks within which it flows; similarly it is required to have some boundaries for life. '*Na sreya niyamam vina*'; though people say it is proscriptive to have disciplined institutions, I think it is easier to follow and when it is followed, it becomes your second nature as it comes from the source. Swami often says, 'a young plant requires protection, if it is not protected animals will forage it and it gets destroyed, similarly, Swami is giving us a beautiful protected environment here so that we can grow and bloom. Swami once said pointing to us, 'you are all young plants', He pointed to some old devotees and said, 'they are like trees, however the wind blows, whatever storm may come, that trees cannot be uprooted. But you young plants, a small breeze and you get uprooted'. Swami is saying that once we follow all these things and become strong in our convictions, nothing can change us and we will capitulate before nothing.

The next cornerstone is connection with Swami. When we use the word connecting to Swami, it is connecting to your own self. Swami has always said that students must have self-confidence. Swami is always with us; this feeling gives us the sense of boldness and fearlessness to face the world in any eventuality. This place is very conducive for developing this feeling. To digress a bit from the topic, it is somewhat difficult for people

like us who used to interact with Him regularly, to connect to Him now. I was a student of 1st batch of MBA and Swami used to shower a lot of love and grace on the whole batch. All students vied to be next to us because even if we come late from class, Swami would come out and spend at least five minutes with us, enquiring about what happened in the class. When we went for the summer project to Whitefield (in those days it was a company-based project of 6 weeks), we came back late because our project got delayed by 2 weeks. As a result, whomever Swami spoke in interviews, He said that this first batch of MBA boys has let Me down, I gave them so much. For a moment, it was very difficult to understand what we did wrong. It is very difficult to believe that Swami didn't relent for close to fourteen months. In fact, He spoke to our batch only in September in of the following year after we passed out and waited for Swami's guidance about what to do next. Why I am narrating this is because it is very difficult to imagine that He is talking to you everyday and suddenly stops talking to you for a long time. Those of you who know will recall that if He is upset with us, we will try all ways to ask for His forgiveness, but He closed all avenues. The first thing which we did was, to write letters, which He sent back through Ram Mohan Rao Sir (school teacher) saying, 'please give it back in hostel'. Swami then made a rule that boys should not sit where they were sitting earlier. He made all students move back by twenty feet. Swami kept adequate place to go to ladies side, go for darshan and we had no avenue to talk to Him. Though Swami cut off all our contact with Him, believe me when I say, that it was the most beneficial time of our lives. This is because, Swami showed us that there is another way of contacting Him, which we all did. What we were all forced to do was to contact Swami within which is a very important aspect of any student's life here, because once we do that, Swami is always available to us. He is not limited to His physical form or presence in some place. All practices and rituals in this institute are designed to facilitate our connection with Swami. May it be

Suprabhatam in hostel, bhajans in the college or in the mandir, Brahmaarpanam before breakfast, lunch and dinner finally the night prayer; these are all the explicit means available to us to connect to Bhagawan. What is most important is that instead mechanically following these practices, we should understand the spirit behind them. It is very critical to understand the spirit behind all these activities, because with out it, all activities become a mere formality, whereas any ritual with spirit is spirituality.

I would like to digress here again. God in an infinite form is nothing but energy and students of science will appreciate, that any energy has got a vibrational frequency. What do all these activities do? What happens when we chant Vedam? What happens when we chant Omkaram or sing bhajans with love? We are connecting to that frequency by raising our vibrational frequency to be in tune with that. So, when we do these practices, it is very easy for us to tune to Swami, and much more quickly. So, it is very important to understand why something is being done rather than doing because somebody tells us to do it. Swami never encourages doing something just because it has been told to be done. He always encourages us to introspect, and if necessary, ask and appreciate why something is being asked to be done rather than doing it for the sake of doing it. So, students, if you make this sort of connection and practice it regularly, the result is a 24-hours hotline to God. He is available anytime and at all times. As Vice-chancellor Sir said in his inaugural speech that Swami is not limited to His finite body, but has become infinite. Please believe me, when I echo the same sentiments of V. Srinivasan that Swami is more than ever available now. If you ask Him anything, His reaction time is overwhelming and frightening because His response is immediate.

The third cornerstone is to have a right attitude. It is said in spirituality, 'your altitude depends on your attitude'. Whatever

reason we have come to Him for, He has brought us for only one reason i.e. to make us grow spiritually. In 1986, similar to now (when we are awaiting the approval for the Muddenahalli campus from Government of India), the approval for the MBA programme was pending, and it came through only in August. Though the college began in June, the examination was held much later and the semester began on August 21st, 1986. A little before I joined the hostel, Swami called me and my grandmother for interview and asked me that what I want? At that time, I was very keen in getting into the institute and I didn't know how I would fare in the exam, so I said to Swami that I want to study MBA in your institution. Swami said that He will give me a seat, but He again asked me that what else I wanted. Then I asked for His blessings, Swami said, "given, what else do you want"? I asked for His love and grace. He said, "don't you want me"? That time it stuck me that all these are peripheral, His goal was that we should all yearn for Him and walk the path towards Him. That is the fundamental reason for which He started this institution.

Coming back to right attitude, never forget that it is a spiritual journey for all of us, whether we are students, teachers or administrators. Right attitude has two aspects, everything happens by His will and whatever happens, it happens for our good. Sri Sathya Sai institute of Higher Learning is a unique laboratory and Swami, the divine master, creates situations tailor-made for each one of us, to make us grow. So the problems that I face are different from the problems somebody else faces. In this manner, for every individual who is here – how many ever they may be – there is always a tailor-made situation, only for them. Spirituality is eventually all about how we face situations, and what is our reaction to it? We can't change a situation, but we can definitely change the way we react to it. I want to clarify that the previous attitude is not defeatist. We cannot sit idle and do nothing and say it is God's will. Man must put his effort, Swami

has said, '*yatna prayatnam manava dharmam jayapajayamu deivadheenam*'- we must put effort from our side and leave the fruit of the effort to God. This, in a nutshell is Karma-yoga - do the action with full involvement and full conviction and leave the results to God.

The last cornerstone of Sai integral education is patience and perseverance. Shirdi Baba used to say two important facets of 'Shraddha and Saburi', which means patience and perseverance. In spirituality, we cannot expect overnight miracles, we need to have patience because when the results come, they transform our lives. Patience is the ability to wait and it helps develop the right attitude while waiting. Before I close I would like to remind all of us about the great good fortune that we have in being a part of this divine institution. Students should realize that a mere 350 or so of you are admitted, out of 3500 students, which comes to roughly 10% of the total strength. Many of you will not know that the post-admission time period is the most traumatic time for the administration, because of anguished parents and students asking why they have not got admission. We answer several e-mails, phone calls and reply personally to many applicants between mid May and mid June, every year.

What is so special about us? I don't think we are special, but Swami in His infinite compassion has brought us here for some reason. Please understand this very clearly that nobody can come to Puttaparthi or join this institute without His will. A testimony to this fact is, that in this year's admissions test, four students of MBA didn't join, so we contacted the next four students in the list to join, making them extremely happy. We have our rules wherein if we have a policy to take 30 students into a course, we don't take the next student even if he is 0.2 marks behind the cut-off point. But Swami has His ways of getting people if He decides to get them because eventually, His will prevails.

Swami has created this wonderful and sacred environment for our growth and progress but how much we receive will depend upon how much effort we put. Students – we have two options, get frustrated, crib and cry about the discipline or be extremely positive and say this is good for me, let me do it with full conviction and get benefited. All these restrictions, which you may feel, in this age of yours, the restriction of your freedom, is actually enabling you to be totally free. Residing with six to fourteen in a room, getting up early in the morning, breakfast at a particular time, are all disciplinary regulations. On the other hand, I know of people who will have a headache, if they don't get a cup of coffee in the morning. Waking up at 5 o'clock, is that freedom or is that slavery? The specialty of Sai students is they can be comfortable in a luxurious atmosphere or when nothing is available, which is true freedom. What this institution is giving you is actually true freedom; you can live in any condition and be absolutely equanimity. What is the goal of all the students? By the time you leave the portals of this institute, all the practices we talked about, should become second nature to us. It should come spontaneously and automatically to the students. Swami has shown anguish many a time that students don't follow what He says. He said, "It is not that they have to follow for my sake but for their sake because they can be so much better in life. That is why I feel anguished when students don't follow what I say". Before leaving the portals of this institute, one must experience Swami and that will happen when we follow the four cornerstones as laid down in Sathya Sai system of integral education. This is my firm conviction, but you should have an open mind and firm faith.

Let me close with a small anecdote that happened in Trayee Brindavan. Many of you will recollect that Justice Ms. Padma Kastagir, judge of high court, was called by Swami to speak. In some context, she mentioned about her son to Swami. Swami asked, 'who'? She said that Swami, he has done B.Com. from

Brindavan campus. Swami again asked, 'who'? This went on for many times till the tension was very palpable, when suddenly Swami said, "he is a student of the Institute, not of Swami". What I want to convey is that just by the fact that you got admission into the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning doesn't make you Swami's students. We become Swami's students only when we follow the cornerstones laid down by Him and experience Him. I pray that let us all strive to be His students.

Blending Science and Spirituality at SSSIHL

Spiritual knowledge and scientific knowledge should go together. There should be no dichotomy between science and spirituality. True bliss can be experienced only when science and spirituality are combined. Development of science and technology alone will not help people to get rid of bad thoughts, bad desires and bad deeds, because science by itself is not competent to sublimate life. Only spirituality can promote ethical values, the spirit of tolerance and equal-mindedness. The science of spirit is essential for developing human values.⁷⁸

Today man is found of accumulating information by studying books. He likes to indulge in argument and explanation. He can analyse matter and talk along about it. But in the field of the spirit; study, experiment and analysis do not take you a long way. What is required is inner experience resulting from actual practice.⁷⁹

What are present-day scientists and technologists are doing? Have they any idea? They assert that all that is on the earth is for the use and exploitation by man. Indiscriminate mining of all kinds of minerals and ores is carried on for so called benefit of mankind. The earth is spherical. Systematic removal of material from one side causes imbalance as the other side becomes heavy. It is divine dispensation that maintains balance. This balance should not be disturbed. The loss of balance is the cause of earthquakes and other natural disasters.⁸⁰ Scientists and technologists, in pursuit of selfish interests as well as of name and fame, utterly disregard the security and welfare of the society and the nation, by upsetting the balance in Nature, which results in

⁷⁸Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 20, Chapter 20

⁷⁹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 14, Chapter 7

⁸⁰ Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 25, Chapter 17

various accidents, calamities, losses and misery to the public at large.⁸¹

About fifty years back, scientists believed that there is no greater power than the atomic energy. They expressed the fear that if the atomic power is further split, it will lead to disaster. But now after exploring and experimenting during the last fifty years, the scientists have been able to discover that there are greater powers than the atomic power. Similarly, persons who presently have no experience of God may have such experience, say, after ten years. Along with physical sciences you should also try to understand the spiritual science to some extent at least. Whatever the scientists claim as their "creation" is only derived from a combination of the basic materials found in Nature. For example, the scientist produces water by combining hydrogen and oxygen. But then, which scientist has produced or created hydrogen and oxygen? These elements are produced by sunlight.⁸²

The scientist examines the objective world of matter; he tries to excel in external vision. The one who examines the soul and develops the internal vision is the Saint; the Scientist plans machines, the Saint relies on *manthra* (sacred formula). The balance can be restored only by cultivating the Inner Vision. This has to be done even in schools and colleges. They have neglected this aspect far too long.⁸³ The advancements in science and technology have enabled man to roam in the sky like birds and move in the water like fish. But he has not mastered the art of living well on earth. If man has not learnt how to lead a worthy human life, what is the value of his existence?⁸⁴

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

⁸¹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 25, Chapter 17

⁸²Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 25, Chapter 17

⁸³Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 12, Chapter 7

⁸⁴Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 22, Chapter 1

Blending Science and Spirituality at Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

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It is my practice, that whenever I begin to teach to the first batch of MA students about 20th century literature, I begin by telling them that in the first quarter of the 20th century, times were so hostile to the writing of poetry, because of vast upheavals taking place in all spheres, that many people said that poetry is dying. But I also tell my students that despite the unfriendly environment, the major poets of the 20th century like W.B. Yeats, T.S. Elliot, W.H. Hoyden and others, faced the recalcitrant times with courage, squeezed meaning out of meaninglessness and wrote some of the finest poetry ever written in the history of English language. I am mentioning this because I feel as if I am also placed in a similar position, because of the vast upheaval taken place in our lives. Dearest Bhagawan! We love you from the bottom of our hearts and we miss your divine physical presence amidst us; without your divine mercy, we are nothing. Dear Lord! Give us the strength, to overcome the sadness, which refuses to leave us, no matter how hard we try and

give us the courage, to carry on your work; God's work is Good work and good work is Your work.

I have spoken from this very stage on various subjects, but when I was asked to speak on the blending of science and spirituality, I thought that there are many qualified people like Prof. Venkataraman to speak on this subject; but later, I thought to myself that this itself is an exemplar of Sri Sathya Sai system of integral education, where a person like me speaks on a topic of blending science with spirituality. Bhagawan Baba asks in one of His discourses, 'What really constitutes spirituality? Does devotional singing constitute spirituality or repeating Sai Ram or making pilgrimages to shrines?' He then replies, 'true spirituality consists of elimination of all animal instincts in man and manifesting the divine light within him. This is the true meaning of spirituality.' What does science mean? Science implies a search for knowledge. It also stresses on the need for systematic knowledge. Science has both its contributions and limitations. Its contributions are so immense that it is difficult to conceive of its limitations. What cannot science do? Albert Einstein said, 'science can denature plutonium but it cannot denature the evil in the heart of man.' In countries that are highly advanced scientifically and technologically, we find an increasing rate of crime, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, neurotic disorders and even suicides. These negative trends are gradually affecting developing countries as well, due to the prestige of western culture in the world today, and also because the respect people generally have for science. This creates a tendency to imitate the west and its scientific achievements. Consequently, we are faced with the problem of how to deal with man's growth, development and fulfillment.

The great British philosopher Bertrand Russell therefore said, 'unless men increase in wisdom as much as knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow'. In the pre-scientific age,

man was dominated by superstition, ignorance and fear. In the last four hundred years or so, through modern scientific explorations of the external world by various departments of the physical sciences, there has been a vast accumulation of precise and verified knowledge. The spirit of free critical enquiry drove this unique achievement. This free critical enquiry is a characteristic of modern science. In the process, science was able to eradicate disease, improve health and provide basic amenities. Despite the efforts of science to alleviate human suffering, the psychic and social disorders, together with the threat of ecological disasters and nuclear wars, have undermined the respectability of science. They have created a reaction against science itself, especially in countries where these adverse effects have been rampant.

In the first fifty years of the 20th century, there were two world wars; wars that were complicated by the fact that sophisticated manmade weapons of mass destruction were used to destroy man himself. The bullock cart gave way to bicycle and subsequently to the motor car. This mobility had an adverse effect on culture. Young people started leaving their homes, evading parental guidance and authority. Accelerated technological progress brought with it, unprecedented moral and spiritual relapse, producing intellectual giants and moral dwarfs. While scientific advancement proceeded at jet speed, moral improvement crawled at tortoise's pace. Hence, we can say that progress went along with regress. If man took ten steps ahead on technological front, he took twenty steps backward on the spiritual front. We know from our experience that too much technology is not good; it breaks culture and tradition, it erases warmth in human relationships and erases loving concern in community life. What harm a simple thing like cable television has done to our culture! But, pure science with its passion for truth and human welfare, will always remain one of the noblest pursuits of man. However,

pure science has to cover a wider ground than merely the external physical world; it has to study the inner world of man as well.

Unfortunately, the sciences of physical nature have outstripped the sciences of man, leaving him unstable and insecure. Man is being treated as an object. Martin Weber said, “instead of I and Thou relationships which we enjoyed earlier, now between two people it is I and it relationships”. We treat the other person as a thing to be used. If physical sciences have lifted from fears and uncertainties, it has landed man in new fears and uncertainties, arising out of the ignorance of his own true inner nature. If the study of the physical sciences or the study of the *without* of nature is science, it is important for us to understand that the study of inner nature of man or the *within* of nature is also science. The broader definition of science would not be something wrapped in body of facts, not tied down to any particular methods of enquiry, but as simply sincere critical thought, which admits conclusions only when these are based on evidence. Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology are tied down to a particular order of facts. These fields of knowledge have limited scope, but science itself has unlimited scope. Science is the unified knowledge of the *without* of nature whereas the science of spirituality is the knowledge of the *within* of the nature. Vedanta is the synthesis of the sciences of the *without* and the sciences of the *within* of the nature, in a comprehensive total reality.

Sri Krishna in the thirteenth chapter of Bhagavad Gita says that the knowledge of ‘Kshetra’ - the world of objects and knowledge of ‘Kshetragna’ - knowledge of the knower of these objects is true and complete knowledge. The science of spirituality is the inner search; it is a science of meaning and values. Values don’t result or are not derivatives of physical nature; they are not derived from machines or mechanical existence. They derive from the depth of personality, the depth of the human spirit. As Bertrand Russell puts it, ‘whatever else may be mechanical, values are not’. Science

and spirituality are blended in the curriculum of the institute, by incorporating values in the teaching of every subject. Thus we have, what is called as a value based education. Unfortunately, Western science couldn't develop a science of values. Even the psychology of Freud found only sex, violence and hunger for power, in the depth of the human psyche. This is due to the materialistic orientation of the West. The Western religious tradition has always been intolerant of the free quest for truth. The Church has sought to stifle science as in the case of Copernicus and Galileo. Science in India, as Sri Jawahar Lal Nehru has pointed out, is bound to make advances because of the hospitality of Indian heritage to all science.

Ancient Indian thought is based on a fearless search for truth. Reality can be studied but can't be exhausted by the physical sciences. Many scientists pronounce judgments on human life and the nature of reality. Sri Shankara says, "The science of spirituality deals with reality above the sensory level therefore it has no authority to pronounce judgments which lie within the sphere of sense perceptions". In the same way, material sciences, being in the realm of senses, have no authority to pronounce judgments on the realm of the spirit. India started investigation into reality more than five thousand years ago and started with the most palpable aspect of reality, namely matter. In the ancient Gurukula system, if a student went to the Guru, seeking knowledge of truth, no readymade answers were provided. For e.g. as you have seen in the Upanishadic stories, the Guru would ask the student to take the fifty cows to the forest and come back only when the fifty become hundred. After some years when the student came back with hundred cows, the Guru says, 'go again and come back when they become two hundred'. This is because to know Brahman is to be Brahman - '*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*'.

Answers to spiritual questions must be found by personal experience, hence the Gurus made sure that the disciple finds it out himself. In the Taitreya Upanishad, the Guru Varuna asks the disciple Bhrugu to start the search from Annam (food). Starting from Annamaya-kosha, Bhrugu proceeds with the subtle guidance of the Guru Varuna, realizing that the reality is, Prana then Manas then Vijnana, and finally Ananda. That is how we go deeper in the subtler psychic dimensions and finally realize that the Brahman is infinite, non-dual consciousness. Unlike the West, India sees no conflict between science and spirituality. It is a continuous journey to fulfillment beginning with the body, the senses and the surrounding world, and continuing beyond the sensory and the psychic to the spiritual realm. It is like a child leaves the toys of childhood naturally and spontaneously, in the adult search for knowledge. Bhagawan says that scientific investigations are based on the intellect and spiritual explorations are based on the heart. Scientists put their faith in Yantras - the machines, whereas spiritual seekers place their faith in mantras. Science is content with half of the circle 'C' whereas spirituality leads to the full circle 'O'. Bhagawan says, "Science starts at one point and ends at other point and in between there are endless doubts". There no absolute certainty about the scientific findings; what is true today may be proven false tomorrow. For e.g. the atom was considered a fundamentally indivisible unit at one point of time by the scientists, but fifty years later, it atom was split and this fact of science was proved false. That is why Bhagawan says that Atma is more fundamental than the atom. You cannot reduce the Atma to anything else; thus spirituality deals with what was true yesterday, what is true today and what will be true for all time to come. Bhagawan said, "Science and spirituality investigate the two facets, objective and subjective of the same reality. Science is concerned with the external nature and spirituality with the internal nature. Science tries to understand creation whereas spirituality tries to understand the creator. The findings of modern Physics are based on probabilities, whereas

the spiritual laws are based on certainties. Where science ends, spirituality begins”.

Bhagawan gives a beautiful explanation, “everything was in the form of Rasa concerned with ‘Rasayana shastra’ i.e. Chemistry; which solidified into matter concerned with ‘Bhoutik shastra’ which is Physics. Out of this arose plants relating to ‘Vruksha shastra’ or Botany; from this evolved the animals - ‘Jeev shastra’ or Zoology. But beneath everything, to hold the Rasa - the basic essence, God is the cup. True men of science and the true spiritual men accept the complementary nature of science and spirituality. As Einstein remarks, ‘science without spirituality is lame and religion without science is blind’. In the book Tao of Physics Fritjof Capra says, “Mystics understand the root of Tao but not its branches, scientists understand its branches but not its roots”. Bhagawan says, “We need physical sciences to be comfortable in this world but we need spiritual science to be happy in the other realm”. As Bhagawan has envisioned, there is a need for total and integrated development of the three constituents of man – body, mind and spirit. Material education is needed for the improvement of body and mind of man, and spiritual education is required to discover the innate divinity in him. It is for this purpose that Bhagawan has established several educational institutions. He exhorts the students to attain *Vijnana* – the knowledge of material sciences, but also *Sujnana* – the understanding of consciousness, and *Prajnana* – the one all pervasive divine principle.

There is no meaning in preaching spirituality to a starving man; we have to first alleviate the suffering, appease the hunger and thirst of fellow human beings, and then talk about God to them. Hence, the Grama seva programme or the component of service to fellow men is present in the curriculum of our institute. Bhagawan advises the educated to teach the illiterate and open the minds of the ignorant to knowledge. He says that the doctors

should render free medical service to the poor; lawyers should help those who need legal aid but cannot afford to pay for the services. Businessmen should be content to keep a reasonable amount of income for their needs and utilize the surplus for charitable purposes. Thus Bhagawan gives a human face to spirituality, He says, 'hands that serve are holier than lips that pray'. Swami also wants to humanize science; that is why He says, 'commerce without morality, politics without principles, education without character, worship without sacrifice, wealth without effort, devotion without steadfastness and science without humanity is not only useless but positively dangerous. All the scientific research that is being carried out in our University is therefore aimed at benefiting mankind. Let me conclude with a saying of Bhagawan, 'science and spirituality are like the two wings of a bird, the two wheels of a bicycle and the two eyes of a man'.

Life-sketch of Bhagawan – His role as an Ideal Student and Ideal Master

Swami had just completed studies in the sixth standard. The textbooks used in the sixth standard were available with Swami. In those days, the same books were used in the class year after year. Thus, the books with Swami could be passed on to someone just entering the sixth standard. Swami decided to give these used books to a Harijan boy in the town. He went to the boy's house, called the boy out and told him, "Take a look at all these books that I used last year. They cover all the subjects like civics, history, and so on." The boy examined the books. All that he needed were there; besides, they were in very good condition. These days, students do not take good care of their books. They scribble on them and even draw all kinds of pictures and cartoons. If books are spoiled, then so would be the heart. Books must always be maintained in a good condition – this is what Napoleon also advocated. The Harijan boy, after examining the books that Swami had brought, said, "Raju, these books are worth twenty rupees but I would be able to give You only fifteen." Swami said, "I do not want fifteen rupees; five would do."

Swami is telling all this in order to impress upon students, how young people ought to behave and conduct themselves in relation to elders and teachers. Always, help ever, and hurt never. This is the maxim followed by Swami, and that is how He grew up. These days, young boys have so many clothes – ten pairs of trousers, ten shirts, ten bush shirts...! Swami did not enjoy such luxury; He had to be content with just one shirt and one shorts per year. One must learn to manage with minimum possessions and be simple. As Swami often says, less luggage means more comfort. You must decrease your acquisitions and possessions. You must also decrease your desires. Do you think you will lose anything by doing so? No; on the contrary, by strictly adhering to

Truth, you can achieve anything you want...

One day as Swami was returning from Bukkapatnam, He passed by an elderly lady who was removing lice from the hair of a child. This lady had the habit of chewing betel leaves and spitting frequently. It so happened that when Swami was going past her, she spat and the red spittle splattered all over Swami's dress. It all happened quite accidentally of course – nothing deliberate. The lady saw what had happened and became quite upset. She lamented, "Raju, look what I have done!" She then tried to remove the stain left by the betel juice. Swami told her not to worry, went home and immediately washed the shirt clean. Had the shirt been given to a washerman, he would have charged about half an anna or so. But no; Swami would never spend money like that; money was not only scarce but also very valuable. Swami would wash and then iron the dress using an improvised iron – a vessel with burning charcoal in it.

That is how frugal Swami was. He never added to the financial burden of His parents. Swami never borrowed, never caused any dissatisfaction to parents, always upheld the family honour – that is how Swami spent His student days. You too should be like that, and bring credit to your parents. They struggle hard to bring you up and you owe them a deep debt of gratitude.⁸⁵

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

⁸⁵Summer Showers 2000, Chapter 14

Biographical Sketch of Bhagawan as an Ideal Student and an Ideal master

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Let me begin with an incident of 5th June 1976, when the summer course had just concluded in Ooty. We had cleaned the entire market place and the bus stand, and Swami was extremely happy because the municipality had passed a resolution, thanking the Sathya Sai colleges for their exemplary service. Bhagawan was very happy and announced a picnic for the following day. So the next morning, we went to the top of the hill, which was next in height to *Dodda Betta*, the highest peak in south India. There was a small shed inaugurated by Swami called Sai Darshan. It was a beautiful programme; we had vedam, bhajans and something to eat. The session was so informal that Swami asked the students that they have not given Him anything to eat. Two boys went to Him with a plate and held it close to Him. He ate a little and the rest was distributed to all of us as prasadam. As all beautiful things come to an end, this session too was about to end, as Swami's car came for Him to get in and go to His residence, which was around 100 metres down the hill. Swami looked at us and with a sweet smile said, "Who is coming for a running race"? All of us put up our hands (who won't be ready for a running race with God?) and Swami said that He would give a prize to whoever comes first. Swami said, 'ready, steady', we were on our toes already; He opened His car door and

got in and said, 'go'. We took off for the race, when we saw His car is going right down to the town of Ooty and then coming back to make sure we all got a prize. As Swami's car came, He got down and said, "good boys, you all got first prize, tell me what do you want and I will give you". One senior boy caught Swami's hand and said, "That there is nothing in this world greater than you, so we all want you". Swamis said, "take me, today evening I will give myself". That evening, only students and teachers assembled in the hall, no guests, no observers; and Swami asked the doors to be closed, turned down the volume of the mike and said, 'students, ask me what do you want?' One student got up and asked a very audacious question of how to teach a lesson to elders (*peddalaku ela buddhi cheppali*). Swami gave a beautiful answer, typically in the way Swami answers things. He said, "by practicing it yourself." "I will now narrate to you my life, from the time I was a youth like you, until this day; how I have taught humanity various lessons," Swami added. Then, Swami talked about His life, which was a wonderful and breathtaking session, and at the end of it Swami created a medallion representing the map of India. Swami said, "All along my life I have led youth on the correct path towards God. I will continue to do so always. In this plaque, is mentioned the future of this country. There are hundred shlokas in this, which describe the eighteen centres which will come up in future, represented with gems on the plaque, and the names of students who will be in charge of these centres". Naturally, there was a clamour that Swami should read out whatever is written on it. Swami said, '*nenu cheppanu* - I will not tell, if you want, you read it'. Immediately we pushed a student who was a gold medalist to read it to us.

The boy went and said: 'Swami! It is in Sanskrit.'

Swami: 'yes, it is in Sanskrit'.

Boy: 'it is very small'.

Swami: 'read it if you can'.

Improvisation has always been a strong point of students, so this boy identified another boy with thick spectacles, took them and tried to read the shlokas, but was unable to do it, as the shlokas were very small. Swami said, “Don’t worry, future has in its womb, wonderful things which all of you will get to see. I have a role for each one of you to play. There are a hundred shlokas written in Sanskrit on this small plaque, which describes the great social work projects that I am going to do in the future, and the role each one of you has in my mission. Until the very end, I will lead students”. We were very excited; one of the elders swooned in joy and the whole evening we were talking only about this, and the summer course came to an end.

The next year summer course was held in Brindavan in 1977. At the end of it, again everyone insisted that Swami speaks about His life. Swami spoke about His life in that year and every year after that in the seventies. These talks are the basis for my talk – a Biographical sketch of Bhagawan as an ideal student and an ideal master.

Swami said, “Even when I was a lad of seven years, I used to do lot of work. My grand father Kondamma Raju had two sons and his brother too had two sons. All the four members with their families, with wife and children used to stay together in a joint family. After some time, there came a point, where the necessity of going into smaller families arose, when Kondamma Raju called me and asked me whether he should do this. I told him that as long as there is a sense of unity, comradeship and love, it is nice to have smaller families. Then I added, Grandfather! What you have decided is correct. Kondamma Raju took it as an ultimate voice of truth and called all the four sons and told them, ‘whatever I have, please divide it amongst you and I don’t want anything, except one property’. They were all very anxious to know what Kondamma Raju wanted. Kondamma Raju said, ‘I

want to stay with my grandson, give Sathya to me, that is enough'. I was my Grandfather's favourite, hence, I was staying with him."

Swami described a typical day in the morning, how He got things ready for His grandfather and how He rushed to school in Bukkapatnam and in the afternoon when the school bell rang, He would rush back, serve food to His grandfather and Himself, eat together and run back to school to be on time. His grandfather thought that this is too much of trouble for Sathya and said, 'My dear Sathya! It is too difficult for You, it is better that You take some food for Yourself and don't worry about me, I will eat myself. Young Sathya wanted to serve Kondamma Raju but the grandfather prevailed upon Sathya to take a tiffin carrier. As there were no tiffin carriers available that time Swami used to take Ragi Sankati, make a hole in it and put groundnut chutney in it and carry it to school. Swami said, "Here there is an important lesson for youth to understand. There were many students coming from rich families bringing various rice items like lemon rice. I had only sankati. I didn't want them to feel that I was poor or from a humble background, so, for a few days I somehow managed to eat alone, but then I came to my grandfather and said that I want to eat with him as I don't want anybody else to feel that our family is poor." Sathya's grandfather agreed and Sathya started coming back home for lunch. Swami had a lot of work; He used to get up early in the morning, finish all the cooking, wash the vessels and run to school; come back for lunch, again run to school and in the evening when He would come back there would be a long line of patients. This line of patients was because word had gone around that Swami's cooking is very nice. "One day", Swami said, "*gruham abbayi* (father) came at lunch time to eat what I had cooked. The result was that he went and took to task Eashwarmma and Swami's sisters saying, 'what is your cooking, you better go and take a course from Sathya. He alone is cooking so well and you with all your assistants are not able to cook well'. The long line of people

consisted both young and old, who were sick, and wanted pepper rasam to be made”. Swami said that He would make hot pepper rasam, pour it into their glasses and they would get cured very quickly.

After describing His daily chores Swami said that the most important thing is to use every opportunity to serve fellow people. Swami’s entire life has been a saga of service; every single thing that he has told us to do, He has done it himself continuously, for years together. The *narayana seva* in 1960s was held where we have the Subramanya Swamy temple today. Long lines of people sat waiting and Swami would alone, (putting a towel and carrying a steel bucket), bend and serve continuously. This used to happen uninterruptedly until 3 o’clock in the afternoon. During this programme, He would indicate some tokens to be given to some handicapped people. After finishing *narayana seva*, He would go inside His room, freshen up quickly and come back in 10-15 minutes. Bhagawan would then call all these handicapped people with tokens and He would give clothes to all of them with His own hands.

The other experience that He used to mention at every summer course was about the Pushpagiri fair. When He was staying at Kamalapuram, there used to be a fair in Pushpagiri, a place between Kamalapuram and Kadapa. The scout teacher was very particular that Swami should join the fair as He was the monitor of the class, and therefore the teacher wanted Bhagawan to lead the scout group. But there was no way Swami would have done it, because a khaki shirt, khaki knicker, a whistle and belt were needed to join the scout group and in those days, He didn’t have money to buy them. Swami was not ready to accept that He didn’t have money in front of the teacher and classmates like Ramesh and Paresh. One of them, who was very rich, told his father, got a pair of clothes stitched for Swami and kept it inside Swami’s desk with a small slip saying, “Dear Sathya! I am your

brother and I want you to come and lead us in the scout service at Pushpagiri. Please accept this small gift of mine”. Swami said that He took another paper and wrote, “Dear Ramesh! If you want our friendship to last, then it should be built on the foundation of the exchange of love and not on the exchange of objects. I won’t accept this; I want only your love.” Swami took His books, which were very new, as He never read them, but still used to get the required marks, gave it to a poor boy in a slum and asked whether he needs them. The boy replied that he needed them but because they are so expensive, Rs. 12, He cannot afford them. Swami told him that He needed only a small amount, took the amount in the form of coins, and came to his house. The lady of the house hit Him and said that He has stolen all the money. All the money fell down and got lost, so Swami walked to Pushpagiri.

Swami started in the early hours of the morning and reached Pushpagiri. By then, He felt thirsty. There was a small cement tank where cattle used to drink water. Swami pushed the surface of the water to clean the straw floating on the surface and drank the water. Then, He got involved in service completely. Swami said that never miss any opportunity to do service. Is it not the reason why 1500 sevadals from Uttar Pradesh are serving in Prasanthi Nilayam presently? Thousands of devotees from all over the country come on their own accord to serve in Swami’s place. The example that He set that day as a student is being followed by many today.

Swami once told the government to take up the drinking water project and when nothing happened, in this very hall He declared that He will take this project Himself. There were 5000 youth who assembled from Andhra Pradesh and few from all over the country. Swami also permitted boys from Brindavan to come here. Swami came out at 5:45 in the morning and one boy who spoke in Swami’s presence, requested Swami to allow the youth to take

part in this noble mission. The boy said that the youth would use their holidays, dig up trenches in their respective districts so that it gets over in the holidays. Swami Said, “my dear children! It is a mammoth task of laying 1500 kms of pipeline. I know your enthusiasm and appreciate your love for me, but the poor people of this district have suffered for too long, so let us not make them wait for getting drinking water. It is only for this reason that I want it to be mechanized, but your enthusiasm for this is something that I accept”.

Now, let us learn about Swami as an ideal master. There are so many beautiful lessons in Swami’s life that if we start speaking about it we have to speak not for 85 years but may be 8500 years, because every second of His life is a message.

There was an old lady who was living in Prasanthi Nilayam, who was in her 50s or early 60s. She was very poor with no one to depend upon. She used to eke out her livelihood by selling peanuts outside. One day, Swami called her (I don’t know her exact name but we can call her Narsamma) and asked her: ‘how do you manage to eat?’

Narsamma: ‘I sell peanuts outside and manage to eat.

Swami: ‘Is it enough?’

Narsamma: ‘It is not enough for me.’

Swami: ‘How you manage then?’

Narasamma: ‘On days, I am able to sell something, I eat, other days I drink water and manage.’

Swami: ‘Do you have any skill?’

Narsamma: ‘No Swami, I don’t have any skill. I am an uneducated woman.’

Swami: ‘Think about something which you can do.’

Narsamma: ‘I can wash vessels Swami and I can carry water because I am very strong.

Swami: 'Tomorrow onwards, wash the plate in which I eat, get water for me from Chitravati for my bath, that is enough, and I will take care of you.

Look at the magnanimity of the Lord who didn't want the lady to feel that He is doling out something for her, but made her feel that she could earn it. This lady worked for 18-20 years and after that, one day she fell sick. Swami called Dr. Padmanabhan and told Him to take Narsamma to Bangalore and get her treated. The following morning, after bhajans concluded, Dr. Padmanabhan was about to leave. At this time, Swami came and sat in the car, saying that she is very serious and He must accompany her. They went in the car to the hut where this lady lived, made her sit in the car in the back seat with Padmanabhan's daughter to take her to Bangalore. In those days it was very difficult to travel to Bangalore due to the presence of huge cobblestones on the road, which were not fixed. It used to take around nine hours to reach Bangalore. There were many streams in-between which have to be forded without a culvert or bridge. At every such point the car would stop and Dr. Padmanabhan would tell Swami that he would call some villagers to push the car. Swami would say that it wouldn't be needed, as He would push the car. Swami would get down, push the car and go to the window where Narsamma would be sitting, enquire about the pain and tell that, it is just little more distance away.

In this way nine hours later they reached Bangalore and took her to Dr. Kalappa's nursing home. Incidentally, it was a Sunday. Dr. Kalappa felt sorry about the unavailability of an anesthetist, as it was a Sunday. Swami said that there is no need for one, and He offered Himself to act as one. Swami materialized Vibhuti, applied it on her forehead and said to the doctor, 'she will be unconscious for as long as you need her to be. The moment you say it is over, she will come back to consciousness. The operation was supposed to go on for 3-4 hours. There was a hard wooden

bench outside where Swami sat and waited for the operation to get over. Dr. Padmanabhan requested Swami to take rest, as it had been a long and tiresome day and suggested that they can come in the morning and see the patient. Swami said, “No! Padmanabhan, I must sit here because when she comes back and opens her eyes, she will ask for me’. So Swami sat there for the next 3-4 hours. When the operation was over, Narasamma was brought outside; she regained her consciousness, looked at Swami and said, “Swami! *mee ku enta badha ichaanu* - I gave you so much trouble”. Swami caught her hand and said, “Narasamma! For years and years you have served me, can’t I do this much for you?”

If there is a lesson we need to learn in life, it is this lesson.

An ideal Sai Student and Her Role in Society

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It has been my privilege to be the student of 1st batch of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. I passed out twenty-six years ago and I see the elders seated here today, who were instrumental in shaping my life and I take this opportunity to show my gratitude to them. Students who are here have attended the summer course for last two days. My question to them is, what is the first step to do anything? Many people give the answer as Self-confidence. Swami gave me the answer to this question in a dream, ten years ago. In my dream there was a quiz contest; Swami being the quiz master, and young bal vikas boys and girls from Mumbai were the participants. Swami asked them the question, 'what the first step to doing anything?' There was a young boy of seven years, who very spontaneously and confidently said that it is Self-confidence. Before Swami could respond, the entire audience started applauding. Swami waited very patiently and turned to the boy and told him that it is not the correct answer. Swami said, "Wanting to do is the first step to doing anything". Registrar Sir spoke about the difference between Institute students and Swami's students. As Institute students, our stay here is very limited (I was here only for three years), but as Swami's students, we are His students for life.

The question now arises, what is the first step to being a Sai student? Swami said that, wanting to be Sathya Sai student is the

first step to being a Sathya Sai student. Each and every one of you will agree when I say that wanting to be a Sathya Sai student is synonymous with, pleasing Swami with our thought, word and deed. If I am in some far off country and I have this idea that Swami is with me, but then I feel, Swami is in Puttaparthi, how can I please Swami with my thought, word and deed? So I need to be aware of Swami's presence, wherever I am, in practice, not as an idea or head concept, before I start pleasing Him with my thought, word and deed. The essence of the entire awareness course can be summed up in the statement – awareness of God's presence. Narasimha Murthy Sir explained very beautifully, the awareness of God within is bliss and the awareness of God everywhere is beauty. How can we start becoming aware? One of the easiest ways is to watch out for the coincidences in your life.

I was 23 years old, just got married, got a driving license and wanted to show off my driving skills. I asked my parents and in-laws to join me on my first drive in the car. My father sat next to me and my in-laws were in the back seat and as I drove through one of the crowded streets of Mumbai, I came to an intersection, where the light had just turned orange. I thought that I can cross before it turns red, but at that moment a traffic policemen blew his whistle looked in my direction and told to stop. I hit the brakes, without looking in the rear view mirror. What I didn't know was that there was a bus just behind me, whose driver had accelerated to beat the red light. There was a huge crash, the car came to a stop, but moved a few feet away because of the jerk. My spectacles flew out somewhere and it took me a while to figure out what is happening. I got down from the car, turned to look back and to my horror, the rear end of the car was totally flattened. The car was actually a write off, but most importantly the miracle was that my in-laws in the back seat didn't have a single scratch on them. How is that possible? I saw my father who had hit the windshield and had a few cuts on his forehead. The traffic policemen came and told me very sternly that I have

to move my car to the side of the road as I was blocking the road. My hands were shivering, as I was a new driver. I was desperately trying to find my spectacles which had fallen somewhere on the road. I called out to Swami and told Him that I don't think I can drive the car at this moment. You won't believe it, within moments someone called out my name and came to my help; he was our family driver. He took the keys, moved the car and came to help us. That was the first coincidence; he was driving his taxi and happened to be at the same intersection, at the same time, when the accident took place. On top of that, he had no passengers, so that he could quickly pull over and be of help. The next coincidence was that the nearest medical clinic was just across the intersection. All we had to do was cross the road and my father had medical help.

It is said that coincidences are those moments when God chooses to be anonymous. When we start looking at coincidences in our lives then we start realizing that Swami is with us at that point. I think of someone and before I call, he calls me then Swami is with me at that point. It is a '*saincidence*' not coincidence. Within a few days of the accident, I left for Australia to join my husband; it was a new country, new lifestyle, new career, new stage of my life, new relations, new friends; the only constant was Swami. I held on to Swami because it is only Him I knew, I could talk to and who I could share my feelings with. I started attending bhajans, took on a role as Bal vikas Guru. Swami used to come to me in many dreams, one of which I remember was when Swami came and gave me two Salwar Kameez on a hanger. I had left Anantapur college where we are used to wearing Sarees and Swami in his beautiful way was telling me that it is alright to wear Salwar Kameez. In fact, He took a Salwar Kameez of my favourite colour and gave it to me saying that, it will suit you. What I realized during my stay in Australia was, unlike now, there was no Internet or Skype and no cell phones; even ISD calls were very few. When we have dreams, when we go for bhajans,

when a flower falls from Swami's photo or when we find an answer to a question miraculously when we open a book. These are moments when Swami literally shakes you with the shoulder and tells you 'I am here right now with you'. Such moments are very necessary because we are very stubborn and we fall back into our old ways of thinking. Swami is with us all the time, standing next to us, watching over us all the time and waiting for us to acknowledge that He is there right next to us.

What I realized is that when I started having internal conversations with Bhagawan in my mind, I felt His presence. I didn't talk to Him all the time but as and when I remembered, I started talking to Him, and beauty of these conversations is that, you can have them anywhere. Even when you are surrounded by people, you can have these dialogues with Swami. Later on, as a software consultant, I often had to visit clients on site visits, as part of my job was troubleshooting. Troubleshooting is like a detective work, where you have to try different things and try their combinations, to see what went wrong and very often, the reason for the problem is not very obvious. There were opportunities where we kept trying for hours together without any solutions. At that time there would be people around me, watching over me and even in that time I would call out to Swami, 'Swami I am stuck here, I don't know what to do, please help me.' Within moments, guidance would come, 'try this' and then we would use our logical mind and sure enough, a solution would come. There would be colleagues around who would say that it was a good idea. I tell Swami that it I cannot tell them that it was your idea, they will not understand.

There was another occasion when, I was juggling many things at home and I got late for a Bal Vikas Gurus conference that afternoon. I was very irritated with myself as I was getting late; in that frame of mind, I came down and I was waiting for a taxi. As usual there was no taxi. I called out to Bhagawan, 'I am really

running late, please help, can you send me a taxi?' There was still no taxi and my irritation levels started increasing. Finally, I told Swami that it is His meeting I am going for; can He not send a taxi? Generally, my conversations are monologues but occasionally, the monologue becomes a dialogue and when that happens, it is very thrilling. There was an instant response to my angry statement from the inner voice, 'you are going for my meeting in that mood'. I quickly realized my mistake and the anger and irritation just vanished and I told Swami that I was really very sorry and it will not happen again. Just to prove that this was not my imagination, the moment I said sorry, there was a taxi waiting in front of me.

Dear students! Many of you would be asking this question, 'why did Swami leave now, when I just started my education or I have not yet finished my education in this institute?' Know this that each and every one of you have been carefully selected by Bhagawan, to be here at this moment. It is because Swami has complete confidence in your ability to feel His presence, wherever you are. There is a dialogue from the movie 'Shirdi ke Sai Baba', '*Shristhi rachane wala, shristi chalana bhi jantaa hai*' meaning, the one who created the universe, knows how to run the universe. As we start exploring the presence of Swami in our life, Swami reveals to us countless ways of His presence and when you start feeling the sweetness of His presence, then you will realize that your stay here, especially now, is Swami's grace and a complete blessing.

Ideal Sai Student

Students! You have pledged yourselves to lead ideal lives. This pledge should pervade every corpuscle of your blood. You will be guilty of treason to yourselves if you fail to live up to the pledge.⁸⁶

What is it that students, who have spent ten or twelve years in Sai educational institutions, can show as evidence of their having benefited from their education? It should be evident to some extent from their conduct and practices. If this is not present, what is the use of their studies? If they have not learnt during this precious period in their lives to practise self-control and self-discipline, they will be guilty of having wasted their great opportunities.⁸⁷

Your first objective must be to work for the welfare of the society. Next, you must try to make others happy. Last comes the acquisition of the wealth of spiritual wisdom. Therefore, first and foremost, you must strive relentlessly for the progress of society. You are a part of society, and your individual welfare is intimately tied up with the welfare of the society as a whole. Hence, you must study not for making money but for the sake of serving society.⁸⁸ For this service, one should acquire all the necessary knowledge. Students should have all good qualities.⁸⁹

I am depending upon you students, for a great transformation in outlook, a great revolution. Students of the Sathya Sai College

⁸⁶Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 25, Chapter 37, XI Convocation Discourse, 22 November 1992

⁸⁷Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 22 Chapter 38, Christmas Day Discourse, on 25 December 1989

⁸⁸Summer Showers 2000, Chapter 1, Inaugural Discourse, 15 May 2000

⁸⁹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 30, Chapter 31, Benedictory Address

must lead this movement.⁹⁰ You must all learn to become new type of leaders, leaders who have passed through the crucible of *Seva* (selfless service) as *Sadhana*; leaders who have passed through school and college and mastered the problems of the present and future, in the light of the past; leaders who appreciate the traditions and culture of this country.⁹¹ The older generation can only talk; it is you who must act. You have to prove yourselves worthy of this College. Be disciplined; be sweet in manners, in speech, and in your relations with the less fortunate. Be grateful to your parents, your villagers and those who strive for your welfare. Try your best always to earn a fair name for yourselves, for your College and for your parents.⁹² Have compassion in your hearts for the unfortunate brothers and sisters, who are unlearned, ill or suffering. Try your best to open their eyes, to cure their ills and to alleviate their distress.⁹³ To remove the chaos and violence prevailing in society today, you have to become *Karmayogis* and devote all your knowledge, abilities and energies to the transformation of society.⁹⁴

The university gives you a degree in education whereas I give you a degree in Educare. The degree I confer on you is related to *Atmananda*. That is educare. Discharge your duty sincerely and I shall take care of your requirements. Do not give room to laziness. Laziness is rust and dust. Realisation is best and rest. Be prepared to proceed along the path of self-realisation.⁹⁵

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

⁹⁰Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 12, Chapter 26, Brindavan

⁹¹Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 10, Chapter 17, Kadugodi, 23 July 1970

⁹²Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 12, Chapter 26, Brindavan

⁹³Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 13, Chapter 5, College day, Brindavan Campus

⁹⁴Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 31, Chapter 2, Sai Kulwanth Hall, 14 Jan 1998

⁹⁵Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. 35, Chapter 21, 21st Convocation Discourse, 2002

An ideal Sai Student and His Role in Society

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Standing here in this august gathering today, my mind goes back twenty-five years, before I joined as a student of this University, when I also attended the summer course before the beginning of the academic year. Twenty-five years is a long time for a person to prepare a report card of how his life has been from the time he came to the feet of Mother Sai and how life has progressed from there on. The main take away point for a student from this Institute, as Registrar Sir explained, is connecting with Swami. The experiences that I had as a student here, revolves around only this theme. Let me narrate some lessons that helped me in my corporate life and family life.

Having been born into a family that was already in Sai fold, I worshipped only Swami, right from the childhood. When a decision was taken by my family members that I should go and study at Swami's Institution, I was not very sure whether, I lived a good life prior to that that would enable me to get a seat there. I was very doubtful but yielding to my grandfather's command, I came here, wrote the entrance test, and attended the interview, still having apprehensions about my getting seat here. But Swami had different plans; I was in my hometown awaiting the results because I didn't have the confidence to come to Puttaparthi to

know the results. So, I had the audacity to send my grandfather to look into my results and inform me. While this was going on, I had a dream of Swami, where, I found myself standing under a tree and in front of the tree was a gate, which was closed. As I stood facing the gate, the gate opened and I found hundreds of students clad in white. They all were running out of the gate passing me by, behind them came Swami and stood right in front of me, smiled and told, 'I have given you a seat, you have been selected; come to Puttaparthi' and asked me to take Pada namaskar. I woke up from the dream, packed my bags, came to Puttaparthi and sure enough, my name was there in the results put up on the notice board. But as an indication to me that it was Swami's mercy, my name was last in the list. First thing I learnt was that the script of our lives is in Swami's hands and it is not we who decide what to do at any point of time. If we understand this, then next is how to move on from there, find ways and means to connect to our Lord so that we live our lives, according to His script.

There was another script for my exit as there was for my entry. I had just finished MBA and we were waiting for Swami's direction as to what to do. I had not planned anything for my life and Swami was leaving for Brindavan and thereafter to Kodaikanal. In those days, when Swami used to leave Puttaparthi, we would go a few kilometers outside Puttaparthi and stand at strategic positions on the way of Swami's route. We used to do this with the hope of catching a glimpse of Bhagawan or if luckier, the car would stop and you might get some fruit from Swami as prasadam or Swami can allow you to touch His feet through the window of the car. So with that hope, I went and positioned myself at a very strategic point. As I was waiting for Bhagawan's car to come, I saw the car of one of our guest lecturers (in our MBA course) approaching. The students used to position themselves far away from each other, to have a personal glimpse of Swami. While so many students were there, this

devotee chose to stop the car in front of me and told me, “our company has decided to take Sai students, so why don’t you give your bio-data as you have finished your MBA. We will also see if we can employ few of your batch mates”. I was not interested in this talk as Swami’s car could any moment and I didn’t want to divert my attention at that point of time. I quickly closed the conversation and concentrated. Sure enough, Swami’s car came within five minutes, and as the car was passing by, Swami lifted His hand and blessed me with an Abhaya Hasta. What happened for the next two months was beyond my comprehension.

The fateful day of 6th June 1992 arrived when Swami spoke to me in the beautiful Trayee lawns and said, “I have no work for you here, go and work outside and be happy in life”. He gave me six Vibhuti packets and set me off on my life’s journey. This was a reaffirmation that script of our lives is not in our hands. The validity of the statement comes from the fact that I am still with the same company for the last twenty-one years, for which that Sai devotee was working and came and gave me an offer on that day when I was waiting for Swami’s car. However, I joined the company after going through a lot of twists and turns, ups and downs, finally coming to that group as ordained by Swami for me. One more aspect is that Swami can change the script with a moment’s notice or without any notice. While we were students, we used to put up dramas on selective occasions like Swami’s birthday or sports meet, but not as frequently as it has been in the last five years. One particular year, He selected a theme and made a senior Sai student as its coordinator. Swami was giving us ideas about how the drama should go on.

The first scene was finalized and Swami agreed to come and see the rehearsal of the scene at the Institute auditorium at the Prasanthi Nilayam Campus. We were all ready, around 50-60 of us, waiting for Swami’s arrival, so that He sees the first scene and guides us further about the rest of the drama. Swami came with

four to five guests and asked us to start. We presented the first scene and lined up to take His Pada Namaskar thinking that the programme for the day is over. Without giving a moment's notice, Swami commanded us to enact the second scene. We all were taken aback, but the senior Sai student, who was the coordinator of the drama showed us at that point of time, what it meant to be a Sai student. This brother picked two of us, created a scene extempore, not for few minutes, but for whole fifteen minutes. The enactment was a Hari Katha and we were tensed to think that there might be a slip-up or confusion. But He never slipped and did the Hari Katha so wonderfully that Swami was extremely pleased. On that rehearsal Swami thoroughly enjoyed the students accepting the challenge, rising up to the occasion and not letting Swami down in front of the guests.

At the end of the scene, Swami blessed us all and went. It was a great lesson for me, marveling at the genius of the senior Sai student; how he could do such a thing. I didn't realize that what I learnt in theory would be put into practice 48 hours later. The second scene was retained as enacted by the senior brother. The turn of the third scene came and its plot was developed. Since I was shy and introvert by nature, this senior brother gave me a very subdued role where I had to utter a single line as my dialogue. Once the third scene was ready, Swami called as all into the interview room, and asked us not to enact but recite the dialogues, while He would be browsing through letters. In this interaction, He would do suitable corrections like correcting the diction of students. The entire scene was enacted, I also uttered my part and it was time for evening bhajan. He looked at me directly and said, "I never heard you speak, what did you do?" I told Him that I spoke then He said, 'come let me hear, what was your dialogue?' For a person who is very shy it was too much to repeat it in front of so many people. I had tears in my eyes and I blurted out my single line dialogue. As soon as I blurted it out, Swami approached me, wiped out the sweat from my face and

told the senior student, “please give him a more stronger and better role in the scene”. The senior student came up with such a scene, which was like a scene within a scene, where the entire stage had to be blacked out and I had to enter the scene alone with a spotlight firmly trained on me and act in an exaggerated and haughty manner in front of the audience for almost five minutes, and exit the stage, all along the spotlight focused on me. I was very scared about it and I begged and pleaded to this senior brother and told him that I cannot do this, as I don’t have the necessary courage in me. He was very firm saying that it was Swami’s command and I have to play the role and told me to be ready for the next day’s rehearsal as Swami is coming to watch it.

The next day, Swami came along with all the dignitaries, sat in the auditorium, when I had to learn the third lesson which He has been teaching me right from my undergraduate days. To put it in simple terms, whenever you are confronted with a difficulty, pray to Swami and surrender to Him and it is for Swami to decide what the result should be; your job is to do it with full faith in Swami. I learnt this lesson before going on to the stage, offered everything to Him, prayed to Swami to act through me. My scene started, I went ahead and did it, not knowing what I did. What followed afterwards was unimaginable and inexplicable. The scene got over, Swami came on to the stage gave Pada Namaskar to everyone, called out my name specifically and told, “Excellent acting, wonderful acting”. I thought that Swami is poking fun on me, but I saw that Swami was serious and after Swami, all the institute dignitaries came one by one to me and told that this is the best acting they have ever seen.

As the days went by in the hostel, I became a mini celebrity. It was the time when students right from 8th standard to research scholars stayed in the same hostel. The small students of 8th and 9th standard used to ask me to enact that scene and they enjoyed the way I depicted it. I was not able to understand that I did

something beyond my capability and everybody enjoyed it. Moving to the corporate world, in a career spanning two decades, when I got an opportunity to do an international assignment in the year 1999, I accepted this assignment because Swami came in my dream, lifted my work desk and shifted it to a different place. I understood that my place of work is going to change. So, I accepted this opportunity and went to Singapore. I was trying to attune myself to a new country, a new culture and a new role. Two months passed, when suddenly I found that the person who was heading the organization was leaving the organization. While I thought that the management would appoint someone else for this task, to my utter surprise and amazement, they decided to elevate me to the position of CEO of the company. The enormity of the task was so much that I didn't know, what is my business, who are my customers, my vendors; in short I didn't know anything about my job. I was under so much pressure, gasping for some direction, when I got a message from Swami, 'you have been pushed into water, either you drown or swim. You are not going to drown, so swim and reach the shore.' It was a wonderful message but I didn't have the guts to accept the message.

It was a Thursday, I went to the Sai center, bhajans were going on and I was sitting there with tears streaming down my eyes and I was the only person sweating in that air conditioned hall. The last bhajan sang had a profound meaning- 'lead kindly light, Sathya Sai Baba'. When the sister there sang the bhajan I was very clear as to what was expected of me and I got up and walked out of the bhajan hall. For the next six months, I was chanting the same prayer which I chanted before enacting my scene in the drama. I surrendered to Swami and told Him that it is beyond my capability; please, you work through me. I made it a habit to do this prayer before I entered the office and for six months, I slogged it out from morning 5 am to 10 pm at night and got a grasp of the business. The business grew manifold and reaped

rich dividends. So I realize that we have to be ready for a post correction even if the script is ready. We should be ready to act according to the direction of the Lord, even if there is a change in the script. Coming to the very specific directions that I got from Swami and how it helped me; let me move on to three such instances.

The university syllabus in those days was such that we had an internal examination and an external examination. We used to have series of tests like slip tests and quiz tests, which constituted our internal marks, and the external examination was the semester examination. Once, when we had a chance to talk to Swami in the Mandir portico on the topic of examinations, Swami asked us, what is internal examination? Everyone tried to answer this in turns but Swami was not satisfied by any of the answers. I was kneeling down behind Swami and watching the replies given by my brothers and Swami's reaction to them. Finally, Swami turned towards me and asked me for the answer. Mustering all courage, I said that internal examination is Swami's examination. Swami was very happy, patted my cheek and said, 'correct, good boy'. The message that I got was that externally, we are examined by our teachers, family, superiors or shareholders, but internally we are being examined by Swami, and we need to put in our best efforts in passing that examination.

One more important thing that I learnt was on one evening in Prasanthi Nilayam when, just before the commencement of bhajans, Swami stood in front of me and asked me, "how can you make everybody happy in life?" Swami Himself gave the answer and said that you cannot make everybody happy in life. Swami said, "When you have taps in the house and you want to fill water, you cannot have separate pipelines for each one of the taps. You keep an overhead tank and fill it with water and connect the taps to it. The water flows out of all the taps whether it is bathroom, washbasin or kitchen. Similarly, Swami is the overhead tank, you

fill Him with happiness and all the taps in the form of human beings, will be happy with you.” It was another lesson that I learnt at the lotus feet of Swami and marched on in my life. As explained by the sister who spoke before me about His omnipresence, it has been well proven to us that we never missed Him. The alumni who pass out from here literally take Swami with them wherever they go. Once we are tuned in to Swami’s frequency, just as we tune in and get Radio Sai Global Harmony, Swami does everything through you. Then we will see Swami talking to us through a book, a billboard, a movie, a newspaper or through strangers. As the elders before me explained, I am also a living example of Swami’s omnipresence, over the last two decades since I left the Institute. I just want to recollect one particular saying of Swami which I always hold dear to my heart: ‘the greatest adventure in life is to seek God, the greatest romance is to love God and the greatest achievement is to realize God.

ANANTAPUR PARAYANAM SESSIONS

10 JUNE 2011

1

Ms. Pushpa Ramana

Warden, Anantapur Campus, SSSIHL

The first summer course was in 1972, when Swami not only allowed our students, but also students from other states to attend the programme. That time, Munni Auntie, the present Principal of Sri Sathya Sai Primary School and Ms. Prem Behl (popularly known as Warden Auntie), the present warden of the school, also came to attend the course. There was a tent put up where we have the present Trayee Brindavan. Classes were held in this tent; men and women used to sit separately in chairs provided. Swami used to go around interacting with us and making sure whether we were taking notes or not. Eminent scholars, learned people and philosophers had come there to give lectures. They would give lectures in the morning and Swami would deliver a discourse in the evening.

Swami used to keep us busy by sending us Vibhuti, so that it could be packed and be distributed to all. The teachers wanted some cardboard boxes to store the Vibhuti packets in. I, along with one more teacher, came to Swami's bungalow at 3:30 in the afternoon. Swami came out immediately asking us that what the matter is. I informed Swami that I had come to ask Mr. Ramana Rao garu for a cardboard box. Swami immediately added that you should not talk to men like that. This message is not for one but for all of us. He is so protective that He doesn't want men to talk

to women. The intention may not be bad but the world will see, so He said that you should not talk. Swami went to the extent of saying that even when a girl is going with her father or brother, the world will think some thing else, so don't give a chance for anyone to talk anything about you.

In my first year, there was only one gardener but somehow I made it a point to put flowering plants around the library. We put zinnias and marigold around the library. We used to come to Puttaparthi in a taxi and he would charge us only Rs. 60. In those days, evening bhajans would start at 6 p.m. and Swami would come out to attend the bhajans and also to see Sai Gita, His elephant. The elephant would garland Swami, after which He would go and attend to bhajans. As Swami was passing by, I said to Him, 'the flowers are waiting for you Swami'. Swami said, 'is it?' Ten days later, Swami came in a car, all of a sudden, without any intimation. As soon as He came out, he turned back, looked at the garden and said, '*akkada okkate pushpam unde* (only one flower is there)'. It is not for me alone, it is for all of us. All of us are flowers in the garden of God and we have to blossom fully. Along with secular education, Bhagawan wants us to attain spiritual education. Even though 108 universities already exist in India when this University was inaugurated, this is a unique university. If you studied here and also at other universities, you would know the difference. The main difference is that the Founder Chancellor of this university is God Himself and when He guides and guards us, the university will come up in a very different way.

2

Dr. (Ms.) N. Niranjana

Hon. Professor and Head, Dept. of Commerce, SSSIHL

On the first day of college, I asked the newcomers, what Bhagawan has said about students? They replied that Swami calls His students as His only property. I will speak about how Swami used to look after His students (both then and even now), which we may not be able to understand. Starting with the small children, when Swami used to go to Ooty, He would play with small children. On one such occasion, He told the children that they will play hide and seek that evening. Before the game started, Swami took two 2nd standard children, hid them under some bushes, came out quietly and started the game. While hiding the children under the bush, Swami instructed them not to come out until he calls out for them. Hence, the two children were sitting under the bush and Swami started the game of hide and seek. He closed the eyes of the one child, made others hide and asked this child to search for the other children. The game went on for some time and it was getting dark so Swami said that let us go for bhajans and took all the children inside. The children went inside, attended the bhajan and then the teachers started to take attendance. When they took attendance, they found two children missing. The teachers started searching everywhere but were not able to find these two boys. The warden and headmistress informed Swami about this. Swami said that He doesn't know anything about this and asked them to search thoroughly. They searched frantically the second time, but didn't find the children. They prayed to Swami to help them. Swami came out, went to the bush and beckoned the two children to come out. After bringing the two

children inside He took the teachers to task and said, 'how careless you are. You have to take the attendance before the bhajan and not after the bhajan because you won't know whether all have come inside for bhajan. Parents send their children, having faith in me, that they are safe with Swami. What answer I would have given them, if these two would not have been found.'

The second incident is about a Brindavan student. After the holidays, this boy was coming back to college from Bangalore. He got into a Chennai bound train which stops at the Whitefield station. After the train crossed the Whitefield railway station, he realized that the train has crossed the platform. It was 9:30 at night and it was pitch dark everywhere; without giving a second thought, he threw his luggage outside and jumped out of the running train. He got up, collected himself and arrived at the hostel. He was scared to face Swami, thinking what He would say for his careless act. The following evening, when all the boys were standing for interaction with Swami, he went and stood behind, praying to Bhagawan not to scold him in front of everyone. Swami came to this boy, stared at him and said, 'careless careless'. The miracle was that nothing happened to him though he jumped out of the running train. This boy is none other than my own brother. Another incident depicts how particular He is about study hours, how He expects His children to study without wasting time. This happened in the old Brindavan days when there was a bungalow where Swami resided and the hostel was just adjacent to the bungalow.

One afternoon, Swami came from the bungalow to the hostel to see how students were studying during the preparatory holidays. He came to one room where a boy had kept an alarm for 3 pm. This boy had told his roommate not to disturb him, as he wants to sleep for some time and he will get up with the alarm. The alarm rang; he switched it off without opening his eyes and slept. The alarm started ringing again, and so he thought that his

roommate is disturbing him. He said, 'don't disturb me, and let me sleep for some more time'. This happened again and this time when he put his hand, one more hand fell on his hand. When he opened his eyes, it was Swami standing next to his bed. Swami asked him, '*itlaaga chadivedi nuovu alarm pettukuni* (this is how you study putting alarm)'. He got up and told Swami that he will study. Swami came out and saw another boy in the corridor fast asleep, keeping the book on his lap. Swami came quietly, took the book, kept it upside down and went away. When this boy opened his eyes, he saw that the book is not straight but upside down. In the evening, when all boys assembled for bhajans, Swami looked at him and said, 'I have seen students studying with the book straight but I have never seen students reading the books upside down'. The boy realized that it was Swami who kept the book upside down on his lap. Swami chided him saying, 'Boy! Keeping the book on your lap, you were sound asleep, did you realize that I kept the book upside down'.

The next incident is about Anantapur hostel. Once, Swami came and said that you should see carefully as to what students are doing during study hours, whether they are studying or not. We said that we are going on rounds and checking regularly as to what the students are doing. Swami said, "What rounds are you taking? You don't know, all the students gather in one room and play mischief." We found out later that what Swami told was perfectly true. Swami added, "They keep a student at the door, to give a sign that the teachers are coming for rounds." We were not aware of all these tricks and tactics until Bhagawan told us. In this way Swami showed His concern for students, always thinking about their welfare. He has always said that students are His real property.

3

Dr. (Ms.) Madhu Kapani

Head, Department of Education, SSSIHL

This is in 1986, when I was appointed here and Swami called me into the interview room. He told me that He is going to make me the warden. I was taken aback as the Vice Chancellor told me that I have been appointed as a lecturer. Swami asked me, 'along with lectureship, I want you to take care of the girls. Will you do it?' I replied saying, Swami I don't know anything, moreover they are grown up girls, and how will I take care of them. Swami said, 'don't worry, I will tell you everything. I have arranged a van, there are around 15 girls ready, they will go with you and you set up the hostel in Whitefield.' This is how the arrangement was done and I left Prasanthi Nilayam with a handful of girls to start the B.Ed. programme there. Swami asked me to take my elder sister with me to help me in my work. It was a new hostel with bare minimum things provided. But, they had these in-built cupboards in the rooms and some chairs were shifted from the college building. Swami told us all to go and start arranging the hostel and said that He will come in a week's time. We didn't know whom to approach or contact but the then Principal of the campus Mr. Narendra came to help us. He gave few photographs from the boys' hostel and few photographs were given by devotees for us to arrange to welcome Swami. The inauguration was on 18th September 1986 and Swami didn't come. Some dignitaries attended the inauguration and gave the message that Swami has some work and He will come little later. A few

days later, Swami came to the hostel with some VIPs, went to each and every room of the hostel, and blessed it.

In the ten days of His stay in Brindavan, He came every alternate day to the hostel. We didn't have a carpet to welcome Him, so we used new sarees as carpets for Swami. We collated new sarees between all of us, selected a good colour combination and laid them for Him to come. He came, walked on the sarees and said that He knew we have used our sarees as carpets. He walked only on the sarees and not on the flowers laid for Him.

He came to a room, which was used as a prayer hall and spoke to the girls. He asked me, 'do the girls do meditation?' I replied, 'yes Swami, they do meditation'. Swami asked, 'how do they meditate?' Swami himself gestured that the girls fidget a lot during meditation. It then stuck me that this is due to the presence of so many mosquitoes in Whitefield. Those days, the area around the Brindavan was full of trees just like a jungle, resulting in so many mosquitoes and the building didn't have a mesh. I complained to Swami, "how can the girls meditate, there are so many big mosquitoes; we need a mesh." Swami said that He would tell Col. Joga Rao about this. After Swami left, Col. Joga Rao came and asked me, "madam! What have you told Swami." I said, "I told Swami that there are so many mosquitoes and girls are not able to meditate so we should have a mesh." Col. Joga Rao said, "Madam! Do you realize that the adjacent boys building doesn't have a mesh, how can I have it installed for you?"

I don't know what Sir went and reported to Swami but you won't believe it when I say that from that night onwards, there were no mosquitoes in the living rooms or in the prayer hall, where the girls were saying their prayers. Mosquitoes were there in the classroom, but not in the rooms where we were sleeping and doing Suprabhatam and meditation. This is the love of Bhagawan.

4

Dr. Seethalakshmi Laxmanan

Hon. Professor, Dept. of Biosciences

I haven't had much physical proximity to Bhagawan, but I had a different experience with Him. Until last November, I was in USA pursuing my Post Doctorate degree. I had to learn how to drive and the area where I was living was snow-bound. Besides my research activity in a medical school, the only activity I used to go for was bhajans. Whether it rains or snows, I used to drive to go for bhajans. To attend the Bhajans, I had to drive a distance of 45 miles. The bhajans were held on a Saturday so I would drive and reach before it gets dark, attend the bhajans stay overnight in their house, drive back either to my lab or home.

One particular weekend, I went to attend bhajans and there was no forecast for snowfall. As usual, after Bhajans, I slept there and the following morning I got into the car and headed back to the lab as I had some work there. It started snowing and usually in the snowbound states, they pour salt on the road to avoid slippage. Since it had started snowing, there was no salt on the roads and they were very slippery. I was driving very slowly on a highway where you have to drive at a speed of 50-60 miles/hr. I was in the slowest lane (furthest to the right), driving at a speed of 30-40 miles/hr. I saw a turning where there was an exit ramp connecting the main road. I noticed a car coming very swiftly and applied the brakes, fearing a collision, which was a mistake. My

car skidded from the rightmost lane to the leftmost lane and back and overturned in the middle of the road. That year, we had a record snowfall of 110 inches and the snow had piled up on either side of the road. The snow on both sides of the road had hardened; so my car, when it hit the snow bank, it was not able to penetrate through the snow. I was stranded there and I shouted Sai Ram continuously. I managed to switch off the ignition, kept my head on the steering. My body was shivering and I was sitting inside not able to muster the courage to pull the car back.

Meanwhile, somebody came and knocked at my window and asked me to roll it down. I rolled down the window and he asked me whether I was OK. I replied that I was alright. He then asked me to reverse the car if possible. He had already stopped the traffic on the highway. I pulled my car back and then he asked me to go; I drove the car very slowly. The distance between my place and the place where bhajans are held is 45 miles. The journey normally takes 50 minutes, but on that day it took me 2½ hours. I went straight to my lab, but the story doesn't end there. I parked my car, went to the lab and picked up my samples, which had to be put in the scintillation counter for counting. The lab was on the 4th floor and the samples had to be kept on the 3rd floor. When I arrived at the 3rd floor, I found a person on a wheel chair, with a dead look on his face, pulling all the papers from the bulletin board in front of the lab. He was a mental patient who had escaped from the hospital and I saw the police coming to pick the person. Immediately, I turned, went back to my lab, waited there for some time, came down again to see that the person has been taken away. I opened this lab, put my samples for counting and returned to my house which was five miles from the medical school, but that day it took me 45 minutes to reach my house. I went home at 2 pm. and started crying. I cried till 10 pm with the feeling that why had I come abroad. I was angry with Swami as to why He had sent me there,

and I didn't have either lunch or dinner. I fell asleep and that night, Swami appeared in my dream and started scolding me.

Before narrating the dream, I want to mention that the place where I went for my Postdoctoral programme was University of Texas Medical School, Houston, Texas. This place was very unsafe as the crime rate here was the highest. My house was quite near to the medical school and I didn't have a car. I had to go to the medical school by foot or take a shuttle. In this particular locality, you could hear gunshots, police sirens and drunkards yelling on the road at night. Due to these incidents, my sleep was always disturbed. This made me very fearful and when I moved to Massachusetts, I met with an accident. Due to all these incidents, that night, I was so frightened that I was shivering. Swami scolded me in the dream saying, "fear fear fear, there is nothing in your head except fear! Why fear when I am here." Believe me, this dream had a magical effect on me. From the next day onwards, it was as if some spell has been lifted off me, the fear disappeared. That doesn't mean that I took unnecessary chances to go to places where I shouldn't go, but my fear left me; I became more courageous and I could manage my life in that country. Through this incident, He taught me how to be courageous and fearless.

The second incident happened in 1992, when I was doing a project that was very dear to me. A lot of research was going on in those days on growth factors and I also joined the bandwagon, taking up the project of epidermal growth factors produced by the salivary glands. In our medical school, the Doctors of Medicine (MDs) who do residency (a period of specialized medical training in a hospital; the position of a resident), need to spend one year doing research. I had a resident working with me on that particular project. At the end of the year, he submitted his report, which was greatly appreciated in National reviews, and he won an award. This inspired me, and I felt I could also get good funding

if I also submit this project. I sent my project to the National Institute of Health in Bethesda not knowing the fact that an eminent professor had submitted the same work. As expected, my project was not funded and my heart was broken. I came back home in the evening totally dejected; didn't turn on the light, pulled a pillow near my altar in the bedroom and slept. At night, I felt that somebody is caressing my head and putting Vibhuti like a mother does to her daughter. I woke up immediately. This project didn't get funded but another project that I was working on, did. The second project was a pilot study on prostate cancer, which won an award and was sent to the senate. I then realized that Swami compensated for the rejection of the big project by giving me another project.

In this way, He showed His presence, that He is always there for me. By this time I had developed a habit of sitting in front of His picture and telling Him everything. I would come and tell Him everything that happened that day, just as we do when we go home to our parents. I would tell Him whatever I did, right or wrong that day and even give Him the details of my shopping. What I am trying to say is, those of you who have not seen Swami, don't feel bad. I too didn't get a chance to talk to Swami nor did I have His Pada Namaskaram. Whatever I have, is a heart to heart relation with Swami. I made Him a part of my life, like my parents, sisters and brothers. Whenever I drive, I keep one seat for Him, if not the passenger seat, then the back seat. I would literally tell Him that today you would be sitting in the front seat or the back seat, as the case may be. Sometimes I wonder whether I am going crazy, but on mature deliberation, I feel that going crazy in this way is better than anything else. For me, Swami is not a man 5-feet tall living in Puttaparthi, for me He is everywhere. So, I request you all to open your hearts and make Him a part of your lives and accept him in your life.

I will narrate one more incident where Swami called my sister and brother-in-law for an interview in 1983, with their two children. The children were very small, the daughter was 5 years old and the son was 2½ years old.

Swami asked them, “where you have come from?”

My brother-in-law replied, “We are from Chicago.”

Swami posed the next question, “what are you?”

My brother-in-law replied, “I am a doctor.”

Swami added, “You are also a patient.”

My brother-in-law has a heart problem where the valve on the left auricle and left ventricle doesn't function properly. When he heard Swami say this, he was speechless, as this was their first interview. My sister was courageous enough to tell Swami that her husband has a heart problem. Swami said that not only heart, but there is some problem in the eyes, which they didn't know. Swami wrote OM on the slate for the girl and created a silver chain with a pendant of Swami in it and put it around the boy's neck. Then, Swami turned to my brother-in-law's cousin and mentioned to him word by word the quarrel he had with his wife recently. These things very clearly show that Swami is beyond time and space. If you feel bad that you have not seen Swami, reach Him in your heart, which will be permanent.

ANANTAPUR PARAYANAM SESSIONS

11 JUNE 2011

1

Dr. (Mrs.) Dwaraka Rani Rao

Hon. Professor and Director, Anantapur Campus

This 2½ days summer course reminds me of the first summer course which started in 1972, when I joined the campus. It took place about three months after my joining the campus, and perhaps I was as young as you. The summer course on that year time was held for a period of almost one month, and we had stalwarts from every field coming and speaking to us. We used to take down regular notes as people used to talk about the four Vedas, the ten Upanishads, and the world religions; and finally, there would be an evening discourse by Bhagawan, everyday. The interaction with Bhagawan was beautiful, apart from other speakers. While the one-month period filled our heads with heavy thoughts of Indian culture and spirituality, our hearts were filled with Bhagawan's love and grace.

I will recall two incidents from that summer course. When the one-month period would come to an end, everyone would feel sad. That year, it so happened that people from nearby cities like Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad left, but people from the north had to wait overnight. I happened to be in this group, as I had to travel north. The following morning Swami called all the remaining participants of the summer course into His inner room of His residence, as Trayee Brindavan was not yet built. He then started asking us questions like where we were going, how the

summer course was, etc. In the end, all of us were in tears as none of us wanted to leave Swami and go. Swami reciprocated our feelings saying I am always with you and with a wave of His hand, created a bundle of visiting cards, which had Swami's photo, His address and signature. He started distributing these cards to each one of us and wonder of wonders! The number of cards created by Swami matched exactly the number of people in the room. In the same way, once Swami was distributing apples and when the last student came, no more apples were left, but Bhagawan took out an apple from the empty basket and gave it to the last student. I narrated these incidents to illustrate the love and concern Bhagawan had for all of us. Following the summer course, He sent us back to our respective places.

The second incident is also regarding a summer course that was held in subsequent years; that one of my younger colleagues experienced. Her daughter used to accompany us (teachers) to the summer courses as a young child. These girls were seated separately and sweets were often served to them. One particular day, the sweet was Badushah. This girl used to like this sweet a lot and told her little friend next to her, 'It would be nice if we get a second helping'. She just expressed a small wish to her friend and in due course Swami glided into the dining room, interacted with the guests and looked at a window that was open and found these two children sitting there. He had so much concern for them that He closed the window to prevent them getting hurt when they get up and came over to the other side and asked Pushpa madam, "why is it that this small girl doesn't have a sweet in her plate"?

Swami then instructed Pushpa Madam that she should take a sweet and serve this child. It is none other than Sumana madam who enjoyed this privilege as a little child during the summer course. The point I want to drive home is, that with Bhagawan, our elation is heart to heart. This little girl didn't ask Bhagawan

directly but how He satisfied her wish shows the love and concern of Bhagawan for all of us.

The recitation of Vedas has been an important component of the summer course and also our daily routine, whether it is in the campus or in Sai Kulwant hall. This incident happened much before the Veda recitation became a regular feature in Prasanthi Nilayam. In one of our family interviews, Swami asked my two brothers whether they know how to chant the Rudram. Both my brothers giggled and Swami said, “shame on you, you are a Bharatiya and you don’t know how to chant any Vedam”. They put their heads down in shame and I was waiting for my turn, keeping my fingers crossed, but I missed Swami’s attention. I thought that this is a lesson for all of us. Immediately Swami turned to a foreigner devotee, a young girl and asked her if she knows how to chant the Vedas. She was very quick to rattle off the Rudram in her own accent. Swami remarked that these foreigners are learning our culture, but what about you, who are born and brought up in this country, which is filled with ancient wisdom. It was in that summer, on that very day, I made a promise to myself that I would learn the Rudram, and today it has become a part and parcel of our curriculum.

2

Ms. Suma Rao

Asst. Professor, Dept. of Commerce, Anantapur, SSSIHL

When I was a student and I too sat for summer courses, hearing what is expected of Sai students and what is in our culture which we have to put into practice; as I went back and tried to do those things, I understood some home truths. I think this is one predicament, which everyone will find themselves in, at some point in their lives. On one hand we have these high ideals and on the other hand, if we have a true and honest look at ourselves, there is another part of us; and sometimes the two are not reconcilable. A feeling of dismay and desperation therefore overtook me. One day I took a piece of paper and wrote to Bhagawan, ‘Swami, will our consciousness ever rise? Swami, will we ever become the students that you want us to become? Swami will you ever be able to say that I am happy with my students?’ I took this letter and waited with bait breath, and Swami came and asked for the letter. He took it, opened it and deliberately read it, line by line, in front me. He then looked at me for two seconds and said two words, which have been my source of strength always. Those words were in Sanskrit ‘*Sambhavatu Sheeghram*’- it will happen very soon. Now I understand that God’s love is like a torrent, which will flow through the broad and fair land of Bharat. Nothing can brook it, alter it or deter it; we only have simple choice to make. Do we cling to the bank or do we abandon ourselves to its joyous flow. In the light of the recent event, when we don’t have the form with us, it is a transition period for all of us, from form to the formless. The Anantapur campus has been a training ground for

this; we have learnt to relate to Bhagawan in many ways and though we don't have Him always, we sense Him. They are innumerable incidents that the senior students can rattle off in this respect. So I would like to narrate one incident when I joined the campus.

I joined in intermediate, so I was younger than you all. Swami was here and we were in Anantapur, so I used to think, does God know that we exist? Does He know I exist? He has so many students passing out of His institutions, how real is all this? On one occasion I was sitting on the steps, facing the library and I was watching this beautiful sunset and drawing it; we have a very orange and beautiful sunset in Anantapur; orange like Swami's robe. I was thinking that God's love is like this sunshine, so far away, and yet so close to you. The Sun is a billion miles away but the warmth of the sunlight can touch us all the time and it causes growth. Is Swami like that with us? We have great thoughts but we boil down to selfishness at the end of it. But after this high flown thinking I came back to, what is the use, I am just one roll number in this college, swami doesn't know me and so on. That evening my father (Prof. U. S. Rao) was called for an interview in Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami asked my father in the interview, 'do you have a daughter in Anantapur?'

Father: 'yes Swami.

Swami: 'does she draw?'

Father: 'yes Swami'.

Swami: 'tell her that Anantapur is full of my presence. Anybody, whose heart is open will sense, feel and receive it.' This is a very important message and it is true for all of us. The hallowed ground of the Anantapur Campus is the place where Swami walked, talked and stayed. He didn't do it without a purpose; the power of God goes into it. When we go to a temple and pray, that prayer gives it power, but imagine a place where God lived.

It is the first institution He made and He filled it with his presence. Our only task is to keep our hearts open for Him; we will discover God in ourselves, and that darshan we will have 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is the incident in which Swami showed His omnipresence to Anantapur campus.

The second incident is somewhat hilarious. Quite like the students now, we also had a big competition with boys. Why is it always 'my boys and not 'my girls'? Why is it that they get all the chances; an ancient feud, still goes on. Only when you grow up you understand that God has no distinctions, and we skew things when we are young. I had two desires, one is Swami should say 'my girls' and I have to hear it, and the second thing is that something I should do that is equal to boys, at that time it was undefined. An opportunity came during one interview. In all interviews, the men sit on one side and the women sit on another side, and Swami's chair would be in between. There would be a basket of vibhuti, which would be kept behind Him. Usually after the interview, He pushes the footstool gently with His foot, which means that the interview is over. Taking this cue, the brothers (whoever is called) sitting very close to Swami will jump up, pick the basket and stand behind Swami, and He would distribute vibhuti to everybody.

During one interview that I was in, I saw the basket and I decided that this time it will be me who will hold the basket and not the brothers. This was my decision and this decision greatly interfered in my interview because my whole concentration was on the basket and not on Swami. I was not sitting very close to Bhagawan and from there I was strategizing; how many steps to go there, how do I notice when Swami moves the stool. Today, I realize that it was such a waste of time; here He was sitting and telling us the greatest things on earth and my entire concentration was on a basket. I saw Swami's foot gently moving and I can't tell you the tension of that moment. When the foot

moved, I had to be at lightning speed because this brother was next to Bhagawan and I had to get my hands on the basket before he even gets up to reach the basket. As soon as Swami's foot moved I was up, and picked the basket and stood next to Him. Even Swami was shocked and looked at me, and a slow smile spread on His face. My parents were also shocked. When I stood with the basket rigidly, I was so triumphant and Swami looked at me, smiled and started distributing on the ladies side. I held the basket till He gave Vibhuti to everybody on the ladies side. The face of the boy was totally down, beaten by a girl. But Swami will not let anybody down, so by the time I reached the point of transition of ladies and gents, He asked me for the basket. I gave the basket to Swami; He called that boy, gave him the basket and finished the gents' side. The message was very clear; you can grab the basket and what has to be done has to be done, and secondly, Swami didn't want me to pass the basket directly.

This incident happened when I was doing security duty in Sai Kulwant Hall. We had a group of Russians sitting next to us and one of the leaders came and asked me to teach a few English words to them as they don't speak the language. I told them that most probably Swami will ask you, 'where are you from?' Then you should say Russia and when He asks, 'how many?' tell your number. They practiced with me for sometime; I would ask, 'where are you from?' they would say Russia and when I asked, 'how many?' they would reply, thirty-five. Swami always teaches us a lesson. He came to them, smiled sweetly and sure enough, asked them, 'how many?' They said, 'Russia'. Then I got the message immediately, 'you think you can predict me, please change your presumption'. Swami didn't leave it there, He went for darshan finished it and on His way back, He again came to the Russian group and asked, 'where are you from?' And these people said, 'thirty five'.

3

Dr. (Ms.) S. Kanaka Durga

Hon. Professor, Dept. of English Language & Literature, Anantapur Campus,
SSSIHL

I am overwhelmed to say anything; call it joy or delight that these two day sessions filled my heart with, and replaced the intense and immense emotions that the recent event has caused. Lately, I started rethinking about the whole thing; not that I have understood the omniscience and omnipotent of the divine, but slowly it is trickling in me. I have two incidents to corroborate what I want to say about the divinity of the Lord. He walked the face of the earth and on 27th March when we received the news of His getting admitted in the hospital, it came like a big tsunami. The 24th (of April) was the fourth ice age for me, all the joy started melting away like the glaciers. But the guiding hand, the protecting eye convinced me. It was around twenty years back, when we had informal interviews or conversations with Bhagawan in the interview room, Bhagawan started with, '*emi samacharam*' (what is the news). He will allow us to speak for some time, ask questions and then He will start in His inimitable style, about the higher spiritual guidelines that He has to give us.

During one such interview, suddenly out the blue came one statement from Bhagawan looking at me, '*nuvvu atma lo jeevinchu*'- you live at the Atmic level. I was little perturbed; for a moment I thought that perhaps it is meant for my neighbour or the person sitting behind me. So I ducked my head immediately, pretending it is not for me. Swami said, '*eai pichhi! Ninne* (O! mad cap, it is you).' I said, 'Swami nanna! (is it me)' Swami said, 'yes, it is you.' He said it very sternly, and still I didn't believe it.

These words of Bhagawan are etched in my memory chambers, and every time and every moment of my visit to Puttapparthi, I used to ponder over this. Recently I started to understand the truth of it.

Now I would like to narrate two incidents. The first one is about my mother and sister when we used to live at our house in Anantapur. My mother was very old and with the direction of Bhagawan, we built a house for her there. One fine morning my sister left for our native place and instructed me to look after mother properly.

One late evening my mother asked me to make Upma for her. I went into the kitchen, lighted the stove, kept the vessel with the required ingredients, put water, put Ghee (clarified butter) and started to make Upma. Suddenly, the lights went off so I had to light a candle and I kept the candle above the windowsill, just above the stove. The power was immediately restored and there was a white foamy layer on top of the vessel. I put the Rava (broken wheat), made Upma and offered it to Bhagawan, as was my habit. I offered it to Bhagawan very devoutly, served it in two plates, and we started eating. My mother put one morsel in her mouth and found the taste to be different. She asked me, if I found the taste to be different. I said that it tastes fine to me. My senses were locked, especially the sense of taste, so I finished half of the plate whereas she just put her second morsel. I found a long thread emerging out of my plate. I was shocked, and wanted to know, what exactly this is. I was wondering if I cleaned the Rava properly? The water was clean; and then it dawned on me very slowly that the candle was not fixed properly on the windowsill and it fell into the vessel. The white layer that I found was the wax, which I mistook to be excess Ghee. I immediately told my mother to stop eating, prayed to Swami's photo, took some Vibhuti, and gave her some as well. I wanted her to be safe

even if something happens to me as I have to entrust her safely back to my sister.

Some time later I happened to come to Puttaparthi, didn't find place in our usual spot, so I sat next to Munni Auntie (Primary school principal). Swami came, walked down the verandah after the interview, and started talking to the little primary school kids, enquiring about their breakfast that day. The children said Idli, but Swami said that is was Upma. He then came to Munni madam and asked that was it not Upma. Madam was taken aback and she told, 'no Swami it was idli'. Swami was not happy and turned to me and asked, 'was it not upma?' I kept silent and smiled at him. Swami started walking up repeating the word Upma many times. I felt grateful to Him that he heard my prayers as He is omnipresent.

The second incident is about my mother. My mother was a heart patient but we never gave her any medication strictly according to Swami's order. He also said that she should not be taken to any hospital. Whenever she used to get the attacks, we used to give her little honey with coconut water mixed with Vibhuti.

One fine morning after Dasara was over around October in 1997, I told Swami that mother is very sick. Swami said santosham and walked away. He retraced His steps and said, '*peddadi aipoindi, gunta lo pettu* (she has become old, it is time now to bury her)'. I was very attached to my mother, so He was preparing us mentally and it took six months for Him to prepare us (my sister and myself) mentally. This happened on 29th October, and in March 1998, for Ugadi, we took final year students to Brindavan for the festival. At the time, mother was not well, and my sister told me that she would look after her and asked me to go ahead to Brindavan. She gave me a letter and asked me to tell Swami about mother's illness, if I get a chance. I gave the letter to Swami, told Him about mother's health. He turned fully showing me His

back completely, which was a negative sign. I was trying to understand these signs and in April we went to our native place with mother because she wanted to see her kith and kin. It was the 29th and again she was not well, and so we sent a fax message to Bhagawan. The next month i.e. May 29th she breathed her last and before leaving the body, she called us and gave three hundred Rupee notes in a cover, sealed it and wrote a letter to Swami requesting Him to take care of us. When she was sealing the letter, a sadhu, who was of Swami's stature, came to the doorstep. He chanted Om Sri Sai Ram three times and didn't accept anything from us. My mother chanted Sai Gayatri three times and breathed her last. The purpose of telling you all this is that Swami's omnipresence and omnipotence has to be felt always.

4

Mrs. K. Hema Latha

Physical Instructor, Anantapur Campus, SSSIHL

My first experience was in 2006 when I joined the campus during the sports meet. I had a desire to go and talk to Swami about myself and tell Him how I joined. But the elders told me that it is not possible for us, as we are ladies. When we were in the shamiana, which is put up for our campus during sports meet, Principal madam called me, saying that Swami is calling us. After joining the Anantapur campus, I learnt how to drape myself in a saree, but that day I ran very fast to reach the place where Swami was, with my saree, which in itself was an experience. Swami asked the principal, 'where is drill *masterani*?' First, she did not understand what Swami meant, and then Swami asked again, 'where is the physical director?' Hearing this she beckoned me to come on to the stage. I reached the stage, where I was in a dilemma whether to jump on to the stage or not in front of everyone as the entrance was blocked by men and I was wearing a saree. Finally I jumped on to the stage at the behest of Principal Madam.

Swami asked, 'who are you?'

I said, 'Karanam Hemalata'.

Swami was very happy listening to the name as it is a familiar name to Him.

Swami asked, 'where are you from?'

I replied, 'Anantapur'.

Swami then said, 'do your work properly'.

I was very happy to meet Swami and these three questions are enough for my lifetime.

My next experience was during the Grama seva time. One day during packing, one of the newspapers used for packing had a photo of Swami with students packing the *prasadam*. I thought in my heart as to when we would get such a chance. One of my colleagues told me that whatever work we do, we ought to do it with a feeling that Swami is always with us. In 2009, during Shivaratri time, we were distributing Prasadam, when without our knowledge, Swami came and was there just behind me, which was a wonderful feeling. In that year, for the Annual Sports meet, we were doing auto stunts and to check the evenness of the ground (Sri Sathya Sai hill view stadium), I had come to Puttaparthi. I was taking rounds and no one was with me. I reached the farther end of the ground where we have a pump house. At this place, the ground was very uneven. Just then, I heard a voice from behind, 'how is this place?' I suddenly turned back and saw Swami there. I was dumb founded to see Him completely alone without any of His usual paraphernalia, walking perfectly in 2009. Is it possible! I asked Him, '*emi Swami ila vaccharu* (Why did you come here Swami)?'

Swami said, '*ground choodadaniki vacchanu* (came to see the ground)?'

I replied, '*ground choodadaniki meeru ravadamu emiti Swami, memu ikkada vunnamu kada* (why did you come taking pains, we are here for that Swami)'

Swami said that we can practice here, and added that autos will come tomorrow. But I told Swami that autos are arriving on the 20th, not tomorrow, as tomorrow is *amavasya* (on *Amavasya* or new moon, we don't start any new work). I even told Swami that I enquired from the madam in-charge just a while ago, and she confirmed to me that the autos are arriving on only the 20th. It was an open area and there was no one with us that gave me the

courage and audacity to argue at length with Swami. I kept on telling that the autos are coming on 20th and He kept on saying that they are coming tomorrow. The next morning, when I went jogging at 6 am, I heard from the teacher concerned, to my utter surprise, that the autos were arriving that day at 10am. The reason of autos coming one day early was due to a strike the next day, which would have made it impossible to transport the autos the following day.

5

Dr. (Mrs.) B. Andallu

Associate Professor, Dept. of Home Science, Anantapur Campus, SSSIHL

It was in 1986 that I joined the institution with a lot of difficulties at the domestic level. But whenever I had difficulties and I prayed to Swami, He used to would give me solutions to my problems. In 1990 when I got a baby girl, people advised me to resign my job to take care of the baby. But my colleagues advised me to wait and pray to Swami for a solution. To my surprise, somebody suddenly started a crèche in Anantapur. They hesitated to take my baby as it was only 5 months old and they don't take anyone below one year. They first agreed to keep the baby for some time and see whether the child is accommodative and then decide on keeping her. My child was there for three years and the need to take her to a doctor never occurred. Generally, every month, the people from the crèche take the children for medical check up for some minor problems, but my child didn't have even that problem. This is Bhagawan's grace and concern for His people.

Once, we were supposed to get sarees from Swami, for the benefit of new comers. Those were the days when we would sit on sand and there was no Sai Kulwant Hall. We all got white sarees, and I got little alarmed as it is not considered sacred for a married woman to wear a white saree, but I didn't have the courage to ask Him for an exchange. Bhagawan, after finishing His distribution, on the way back, stopped near me and asked me, '*cheera nacha leda* (didn't like the saree)?' I was a new person, so I was scared to say even yes or no' in retrospect I don't remember which direction I nodded my head. Swami called one of the

teachers who were carrying the bundle of sarees back as she finished the distribution and was keeping the remaining sarees back. He chose one golden coloured saree, gave it to me and asked me, whether it is good. This is another instance of His concern for His devotees; even a mother doesn't give without asking, but here was Swami who understood my inner feelings, came to me and changed the saree. However, I would like to highlight an important point that He will fulfill our wishes if they are reasonable and don't cause harm to anyone.

Once, our family was going to a certain place in a car when a big accident was averted. My husband was driving the car and the children were sleeping on the back seat. In the flash of a moment, a lorry from the opposite direction emerged from nowhere, whilst on our side of the road, there was a bus. I thought that a head-on collision was inevitable, and I closed my eyes and shouted Sai Ram. There was a big jerk and miraculously, the car escaped without any scratch, because of which I am here in front of you, addressing all of you. He listens to sincere prayers from wherever we call Him. One of our colleague's daughter was very serious; she was in a Bangalore hospital, put on a ventilator. We sent a message to Bhagawan and immediately He sent Vibhuti for her. My son, despite getting a low GRE score, not only got admission in a university in USA, but also a 2½ years scholarship, which amounts to 20 lakhs in Indian currency.

In 2009, I had to go to Texas for a lecture during the time of Swami's birthday. I was feeling bad as I wouldn't have been able to attend Swami's birthday celebrations. A person came up to me and said 'Sai Ram' to me, introducing himself as an alumnus of the Prasanthi Nilayam campus. He invited me to the local samiti for Bhagawan's birthday celebrations. We celebrated the birthday on 22nd November as it matches the time zone of India. They even requested me to speak there and I came overcame the feeling of not being in Puttaparthi. This summer, I was als

feeling miserable as I wasn't able to attend Bhagawan's Mahasamadhi, when Bhagawan appeared in my dream. He came to Anantapur in my dream, had food with us and gave me the privilege to serve Him, standing next to Him. Whenever we are in trouble, He is our only refuge, and if we pray sincerely, He will definitely protect us. As Vice-chancellor Sir was saying, He gave up His finite form to take the infinite form and He is available to all of us even more. Let us all work in unity, helping each other and be His true students and devotees.

Study Circle

A unique feature of this Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality was the Study Circle based on Discourses given by Bhagawan Baba in earlier Summer Courses, organised every afternoon for all the students, Campus-wise.

The key purpose was to enable students to develop deeper understanding of Bhagawan's teachings with respect to Education in the backdrop of Indian Culture and Spirituality.

The expected take-aways from this Study Circle were answers to the following questions:

What is education? What is the role of character building and spirituality in education?

How does knowing more of Indian Culture (Bharatiya Samskruti) and Spiritualism make me a better person?

Why studying at SSSIHL is different? How can I make the best of my stay here?

Methodology:

The Study Material consisted of One Anchor Discourse and 3 Auxiliary Discourses for Men students and 3 Auxiliary Discourses for Women students. This was done to align the discussion to the specific audience.

Students were divided into groups of 20 each, with one or more faculty member / research scholar acting as facilitators for each group. Members of each group received the anchor discourse that

formed the core theme for discussion. Each group was further divided into three sub-groups and each sub-group received one Auxiliary Discourse for in-depth discussion on the core theme of the Anchor Discourse.

The facilitators' role was to stimulate questions in the group and gradually move on to a more participative/interactive session through intra-group and inter-group presentations, where the students learn by doing and acting.

On the final day of the Summer Course, the students who had performed the best from each of the groups made a presentation to the entire audience on the essence of they had absorbed through the Discourses of Bhagawan. The presentation was in the form of panel discussions and skits portraying the practical relevance of Bhagawan's message and the significance of our ancient Bharatiya culture.

This methodology of active interactive sessions in groups with intra and inter group presentations proved to be a very effective way to facilitate absorption of the key concepts and principles of Bhagawan's insights on Indian culture and spirituality in the minds of the students.

Quiz Programme

ON THE LIFE, MISSION AND MESSAGE OF
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

Quiz has always been an effective tool in the teaching-learning process for many centuries. The formalised structure in which quiz competitions and programmes are conducted in schools, colleges and universities has always fascinated many generations of students into the 'art and science' of quizzing.

Quiz programmes have always been an important part of summer courses at the Institute. While they were held in the Divine Presence of Bhagawan on many summer courses in the past, there were occasions when quiz programmes were even conducted during Bhagawan's visit to the Hostels at Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan and in the Sai Sruthi Mandir at Kodaikanal. The objective of these programmes was always the same – to make the students aware of the rich and varied heritage of the hallowed Indian culture and to acquaint them with the life and teaching of Bhagawan Baba.

In line with this sacred tradition, there was a lively quiz programme on the life, mission and message of Bhagawan Baba during the Summer Course. Three teams of students (two from the men's campuses at Prasanthi Nilayam and Brindavan and one from the women's campus at Anantapur) participated. The quiz master, Dr. Shashank Shah, Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Faculty of Management and Commerce of the Institute, brought the entire life and mission of the Avatar of the Age in front of the audience through insightful questions and slide shows of rare

photographs of Bhagawan Baba. The five rounds in this Quiz Programme were:

1. **My Life is My Message** – This round covered landmark events in the life of Baba
2. **Journeys of Sai** – This round covered important journeys undertaken by Baba over the past 6 decades
3. **Audio Round** – This was an audio round which included excerpts from Baba’s Discourses
4. **Visual Round** – This round included visuals of important personalities associated with Baba’s Mission
5. **His Mission** – This round covered those milestone projects of Baba which have been benchmarks for the world at large

Along with the students, even elders enthusiastically participated in the event by answering questions passed by the participating students.

Fittingly, the quiz ended in a tie with all three teams scoring exactly 80 points. The quiz brought before the students, cherished memories of the wonderful times they were blessed to have, in the years gone by, in the immediate physical presence of their Revered Chancellor – Bhagawan Baba.

ROUND – 1
My Life is My Message ...

Who was the shop keeper who had the unique privilege of having Sathya as His advertisement manager? What was the name of the product?

Kote Subanna, Bala Bhaskara

What happened at the Virupaksha temple in Hampi in October 1940 when Bhagwan visited it with his Brother Sri Seshama Raju?

While Swami visited the temple with His brother Sri Seshama Raju, and waited outside the temple taking care of the luggage; Sri Seshama Raju went inside and saw Swami in the Garbha Griham of the Virupaksha temple. When he came out, he again saw Swami near the luggage. He repeated this couple of times and saw the same thing again and again. Thus Swami revealed His Omnipresence.

The 20th October 1940 is an epoch making day for the entire world. What happened on that day?

Sathya returned from school in the afternoon of October the 20th 1940, cast away His books in front of His sister-in-law and declared most emphatically. *“I am no longer your Sathya. I am Sai Baba! My Bhaktas beckon Me. I have My work to attend to. I am leaving!”* October 20th is celebrated as Avatar Declaration Day.

When was Prasanthi Nilayam, the abode of peace, inaugurated? What was the special occasion on the day of its inauguration?

November 23, 1950; 25th Birthday of Bhagavan

Name the three important Ashrams of Bhagawan established by Him in metropolitan cities outside Prasanthi Nilayam?

Sathyam at Dharmakshetra, Mumbai, 1968; Sivam at Hyderabad, 1974 and Sundaram at Chennai, 1981.

During the Gurupoornima Festival, 1963; Bhagawan revealed a closely kept secret in His Divine Discourse. What was this secret?

The secret was of the Triune Sai Avatar as the embodiment of Shiva and Shakti: Shirdi Sai – the embodiment of Shiva; Sathya Sai – the embodiment of Shiva and Shakti; and Prema Sai – the embodiment of Shakti.

ROUND – 2

Journeys of Sai...

Name the countries visited by Bhagawan during His only overseas visit? And in which year?

East African Continent in 1968. Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

During His visit to North India in 1957, Bhagawan visited the Sivananda Ashram at Rishikesh and stayed with Swami Sivananda and his disciples for a week. During this stay, He blessed yet another sage near Rishikesh. Name this great sage and the place where Bhagawan met him.

Swami Purushottamananda in Vasishta Guha.

Swami has visited the state of Rajasthan on very few occasions. Can you mention one significant occasion and the city which Swami visited?

Bhagawan visited Jaipur in March 1973 to lay the foundation stone of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women in response to the prayers of the Late Shri Poonamchand Kamani.

In June 1986, Bhagawan was accompanied by a select group of Research Scholars to a specific location for a special occasion. Can you name the location and the occasion?

Kodaikanal, Inauguration of the Sai Shruti Mandiram.

In May 1970, Bhagawan visited the famous shrine of Dwaraka in the state of Gujarat. After giving Darshan in the main shrine, Bhagawan accompanied the entourage to a nearby sea shore. A landmark event occurred on this occasion. Please share this event and its significance.

Swami alone could visit the temple at Dwaraka due to the unprecedented crowd. After a short visit to Mithapur, Swami led His party to Kuranga near the sea shore. Swami dug out of the sands a bright golden image of Lord Krishna playing the flute. He told the devotees that He had materialised the Lord for them since they could not have His Darshan at the temple earlier on that day.

During June 1961, Bhagawan visited Badrinath along with his entourage and Shri Burgula Ramkrishna Rao, the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. On the morning of 17th June, 1961, Swami performed a special Pooja there. Can you share the unique revelations that Bhagawan made then?

During the morning Abhishekam on the 17th, Swami chose to reinfuse the sacred shrine with eroded potency. While in the shrine, Swami materialized a beautiful Narayana idol. Soon, a thousand petalled golden lotus followed by the Netralingam that Sri Adi Shankara had procured from Kailash, and installed in

Badrinath, appeared mystically. Swami ordered all the devotees to sing Bhajans. He materialised a hundred and eight golden Bilva leaves, and the magnificent 'Thumme' blooms to adore the Netralingam. Swami performed the Pooja with His own hands, and after the adoration, the 'Netralinga' returned to its secret niche where it was installed 1,200 years back!

ROUND – 3

This was an audio round

ROUND – 4

Visual Round



Identify the person with Bhagawan. Name an edifice named after her by Bhagawan.

Rajmata of Nawanagar;

Sri Sathya Sai Hostel for Senior Students named as Gulab Kunwarba Block by Bhagawan.



Identify the person; the occasion and the unique feat achieved.

Sachin Tendulkar; Sri Sathya Sai Unity Cup (1997);
Was the captain of the winning Indian team against World XI
held at the Hill View Stadium.



*Identify the person and his unique
contribution to Bhagavan's
educational institutions.*

Prof. Vinayak Krishna Gokak;
1st Vice Chancellor (1981-85) of
SSSIHL;
Bhagavan's instrument in
implementing the Sri Sathya Sai
System of Integral Education.



Identify the occasion and location of this rare photograph.

The first Sports Meet of SSSIHL at the Hill View Stadium in 1983; Bhagawan with staff and research scholars.



This event is linked with Grama Seva; but in a different era. Can you name the location and the occasion?

The location is
Amagondapalayam;
Summer Vacation May 1985



This drama was a very special one. Name the drama, also name two other locations outside Prasanthi Nilayam where this drama was presented.

Bhaja Govindam Drama;(1987).
Shanmukhananda Hall, Mumbai and Chowdaiah
Memorial Hall, Bangalore.

ROUND – 5
His Mission...

Sri Sathya Sai Drinking Water Supply Projects have been undertaken by Bhagawan in a number of places. Please mention the major districts in which they have been undertaken. These also have a unique international distinction. What is it?

Anantapur, Medak, Mahbubnagar, East and West Godavari in Andra Pradesh; and the city of Chennai in Tamil Nadu. They are the largest of its kind water supply project undertaken by any NGO in the world!

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations(SSSSO) are one of the largest socio-spiritual organisations in the world. When and where was the First World Conference of the SSSSO held? What was the important message given by Bhagawan on that occasion?

1968 at Dharmakshetra and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai.

Who was Prof. Narayana Kasturi?

Bhagawan's biographer; Author of Sathyam Sivam Sundaram Volumes 1 to 4; First editor of Sanathana Sarathi from 1958 to 1987; Translator of Bhagawan's Discourses; Translator of the Vahinis; Compiler and Editor of the first 15 volumes of Sathya Sai Speaks; Outstanding orator of Bhagawan's Life, Message and Mission.

Bhagawan has penned a number of books called the Vahinis. How many Vahinis has He written? What is the unique record of sorts that Bhagawan holds in the field of spiritual journalism?

15 Vahinis: Prema Vahini, Dharma Vahini, Ramakatha Rasavahini, Bhagavata Vahini, Dhyana Vahini, Gita Vahini, Sandeha Nivarini, Jnana Vahini, Sathya Sai Vahini, Leela Kaivalya Vahini, Sutra Vahini, Prasanthi Vahini, Upanishad Vahini, Prasnothara Vahini, Vidya Vahini.

Bhagawan is perhaps the only author to have contributed an article continuously for 26 years every month to a single journal (Sanathana Sarathi) from 1958 (starting with Prema Vahini) to 1984 (Leela Kaivalya Vahini)

The Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality has been used by Bhagawan as an effective tool to mould generations of youth into ideal Bharatiyas, aware of their rich Indian culture and heritage. While all the Summer Courses from 1972 to 2002 were held at Brindavan, there was one Summer Course which was held in another location. Name the location. Also, state a landmark declaration made by Bhagawan on that occasion about the Sai Mission.

Ooty in 1976. Bhagawan materialised a medallion which had the map of India highlighting 18 centres across the country. He said, these would be the centres where the Sai Mission would spread from in the future. He also said that each of these 18 centres would be headed by His students.

The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning is the crest jewel of Bhagawan's educational mission. He highlights the Purpose of this Institute through a four-step process which each student would be facilitated towards achieving. What are these four steps?

“The main purpose of this Institute is to help you cultivate Self-knowledge and Self-Confidence so that each of you can learn self-sacrifice and earn Self-realisation.”



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