



SAMASTHA LOKA SUKHINO BHAVANTU

venugaanam

Sai Krushna Charitable
Trust Newsletter



IN THIS ISSUE

From Team venugaanam

This edition begins with Swami's Divine exhortation to all to have sincere faith in God and His words. Read this discourse of Swami and know His message in His own words.

In Atmajyothi, we start with a new series of discussion on Narada Bhakthi Sutras. These Sutras or aphorisms contain the secret of true devotion and highlight its glory.

Bhargav shares his thoughts on the state of the Chitravathi River in Puttaparthi today. The river which once gurgled with joy has been reduced to a tiny stream of dirty water and needs urgent attention.

"Science makes progress by asking questions and it goes on asking questions until it finds the answers. So, science is a matter of knowledge and faith doesn't come in to it." - so believed the young man until he met

his match. Read this real life incident recounted by Don Mascon.

God is there with us at each and every step. He shows His presence ever so subtly. Read this article of Dr Muruganant entitled: "The Journey with Sai because of Sai."

What is needed to make the stone image respond and speak to us? It is a child's innocent faith opined a wise man. Little Saishweta's experience in Kids Corner is an apt illustration of this statement.

Swami would often say: "Would I put you in the crucible of fire, if it were not for the fact that you will come out brighter than before. Examinations help you to know where you stand and how you can improve". In the article- "Test is to His taste- Part 2", Vinod shares an experience from his student days

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when Swami put them through the crucible of fire.

There have been some significant developments last month. By

Swami's grace the construction and building work for Phase 1 of Sai Krishna Mandir is almost complete. The next few weeks will involve the installation of solar street lights outside the building final coat of interior and exterior wall painting and other small cleaning and fixing jobs to have it ready in time for operations by end June. Solar hot water facility is also being considered subject to availability of funds. The boundary wall work is also progressing rapidly. The members of the SKM construction team are also making frequent site visits to monitor the quality and quantum of progress. Read more and see some recent photos in the construction update.

We also invite applications for a cook and watchman for the children's home once it starts functioning from June.

We are happy to have your feedback on how to make 'Venugaanam' a better communication tool. You may kindly mail us at contactus@saikrushnamandir.org. Do feel free to share with us your experiences in following Swami's teachings or on any other theme of your choice.

We invite our Lord to grace the occasion on 3rd June and pray to Swami to bless all the children and inmates so that they may all come up to His expectations.

May Swami turn our lives into a celebration of His message of love, sharing and caring.

With All our Prema,

Team ~~venugaanam~~

Sai Krishna Charitable Trust

Have Sincere Faith in God and His Words

From Bhagavan's Discourse

If you have steady devotion for God, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished. God Himself would come running forward to help you. Numerous such incidents occurred during the incarnation of God as Krishna.

Here is another example of Krishna's limitless compassion. On the ninth day of the Kurukshetra war, Bhishma took a terrible vow to exterminate all the Pandavas before sunset the next day.

Draupadi came to know of this and became highly perturbed. She said to Krishna, "O Lord, this must not happen. You have to do something. I

don't know how, but You must make sure that I do not become a widow." Krishna smiled and was non-committal. He just said, "Wait and see what happens." God may appear non-committal but when you appeal to Him with deep sincerity, He will certainly respond. Night came, and quiet descended on the battlefield, everyone having withdrawn to their respective quarters. In his tent, Bhishma was restless and was pacing to and fro. Meanwhile Krishna came to Draupadi and said, "This is the moment. Bhishma is unable to sleep and is pacing back and forth in his tent. He is regretting the vow he has

taken. You must slip into his tent this very moment and throw yourself at his feet." Draupadi nodded and started moving toward Bhishma's tent. She was wearing special slippers used by royalty, that made a squeaking noise. The noise could be clearly heard in the stillness of the night. Krishna signalled to Draupadi to stop and said, "If Bhishma hears this sound, he would know that a lady is coming. He should not know about your approach.

So remove your sandals and give them to Me." Draupadi did as instructed. Krishna collected the

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slippers, wrapped them in His upper cloth, and started walking behind Draupadi, some distance away. Quietly, Draupadi slipped into Bhishma's tent. Absorbed as he was in thought, Bhishma did not notice her entrance. Immediately upon entry, Draupadi threw herself at the feet of Bhishma. As she did so, the bangles in her hand made a sound. Bhishma heard the sound and realised that a lady was prostrating before him. Without a second thought, he blessed the lady in the traditional manner, "May you have a long and happy married life." Draupadi was happy when she heard the benediction. She said, "This is enough for me," and rose. It was then that Bhishma realised whom he had blessed. He exclaimed, "What! You, here at this time?! Who brought you here?" Draupadi replied, "Who else but Krishna?! He is the One who suggested this strategy to prevent the slaughter of my husbands. You have blessed me with a long and happy married life and so you now have to spare my husbands!"

Precisely at that moment, Krishna entered. Bhishma was happy about the turn of events, though it meant going back on his vow. The Pandavas were ideal men and great devotees of the Lord.

God in His Infinite Mercy had staged a drama as a result of which the Pandavas were now secure.

Bhishma was tired, having paced up and down for a long time. He sat down and said, "Krishna, have You brought any eatables for me? You seem to have a bundle slung on Your shoulder. Why don't You open it and give me some of the food it contains?"

Krishna smiled and said, "Do you think it is My job to bring food for you? This bundle does not contain food but the sandals of Draupadi. I carried them so that there was no sound when Draupadi entered your tent." Krishna then opened the bundle and the sandals fell on the ground. Tears flooded Bhishma's eyes. In a voice choked with emotion he said, "Lord, there is no limit to the extent You are prepared to go in order to save Your devotees!"

The Avatar is beyond petty worldly considerations and, where devotees are involved, no task is too mean or lowly for Him.

He will do what has to be done, anytime, any place. Protection and the welfare of devotees is His priority number one. Krishna always protected the Pandavas and they, for their part, worshipped Krishna with great feeling. Krishna's Name was always on their lips. The Lord was ever uppermost in their minds. The feeling was mutual, and Krishna too constantly concerned Himself with the welfare of the Pandavas. As is the sound, so is the resound. The Lord's yearning for the devotee matches the yearning the devotee has for the Lord. God is inscrutable. People think: "How can God do such lowly things?!" God does not have such distinctions or gradations. For the welfare of His devotees, God is prepared to do anything. Without devotees, where is God?! God's greatness and noble acts are all due to devotees.

The magnetism of Sai's prema! So many of you have gathered here. Why have you all come? There is only one reason for this. You have come for that which is not in you, that which cannot be got at home, that which is not available in your

village or town, or even country. What is that? Pure Divine Love, or Sai's prema! That is the reason why all of you have come, and not because someone invited you [loud applause]. That which you don't have is Sai's prema or selfless love! That which you cannot get in your village, town or country is Sai's prema! That love is available only here and it is in search of that you all have come! In short, you have come here in search of something that you desperately want but cannot get anywhere else. Having come in such a quest, collect all that you can before you return. Fill your hearts with this divine love. Without devotees, where is Baba? And without Baba, where are the devotees?! There is an unbreakable bond between Baba and His devotees. The two are inseparable and inter-dependent. Devotees are Baba's very life. Likewise, Baba is the very life of His devotees. The two lives have the same breath. If you thoroughly grasp this principle, then, wherever you are, you will always enjoy Baba's protection. Those who are firm and steadfast in their devotion will never face any troubles or difficulties. Surely, you must have heard or read many stories that illustrate that those who repose full faith in God and are always pure, never come to any harm. You must have pure, unsullied, and steadfast devotion. Your heart must stand firm like a rock. There are rocks on many seashores. Huge waves constantly dash against these rocks but the rocks remain firm. Waves repeatedly bash the rocks but they do not give way. Your heart must be like those boulders on the oceanfront. You may be constantly bombarded by worldly problems, but your faith in

God must remain firm like a rock.
That is true devotion.

Embodiments of Love! You can give
up everything but never give up God!
Never forget God! Engrave this

lesson in your hearts. God is your
most assured insurance and source
of protection.

Atmajyothi

by Shri Lakshminarayan Aithal

Lakshminarayan Aithal has served for over 3 decades in Swami's institution and is the former Principal of the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Institutions at Muddenahalli. Inspired by Swami's direct message to study the Upanishads, he first learnt Sanskrit and then studied the direct works of Adi Shankaracharya and Swami. Sincere perseverance led him to the reality of Aham Brahmasmi and He realized and experienced Swami's words: "I am God and so are you". He shares the import of the Upanishadic teachings with us in this series of articles.

In the world, everyone desires to have Supreme Felicity (Paramananda)PaP; but, he never tries to have it; he is caught up by the offensive pride of 'me' and 'mine' and by the defects of mind like – desire, anger, greed, mistaking one to other, arrogance, jealousy, etc., and, as the result of his good and bad works he attains different bodies. Thus, people suffer in the pulley of worldly life; due to their actions they obtain agreeable and disagreeable and accordingly they are either elated or depressed. Only devotion to God and no other means helps to cross such living beings from this difficulty; thus, the Spiritual Guide Narada apprehending through the scripture and experience wants to preach the Principle of Devotion concisely in the form of compilation of Aphorisms on Devotion and, hence, he starts his scripture. The following is the first aphorism of this scripture:-

A SOLEMN DECLARATION IN THE BEGINNING OF THE SCRIPTURE

अथातो भक्तिं व्याख्यास्यामः ॥१॥

ATHATHO BHKTHI VYAKHYANAMAH

1.Now, therefore, (we) explain devotion.

MEANING OF THE ATHA WORD

Here, the word *Atha* (here after) is employed to indicate the beginning of the scripture and, as well as, auspiciousness. Employing words like *Atha* and *Atah* in the beginning of aphorisms has become a traditional custom in the works of theists. By the declaration that 'we explain devotion' alone indicates the beginning of the scripture; therefore, this '*Atha*' word is mainly employed to indicate auspiciousness. The theists consider that listening to the sound of auspicious musical instruments like tabor, flute, conch, Indian lute, etc., itself is the auspiciousness; similarly, though the *Atha* word has another meaning, when the word is employed in the beginning of the work, it obtains the meaning of auspiciousness.

ओंकारश्चाथशब्दश्च द्वावेतौ ब्रह्मणः पुरा । कण्ठं भित्त्वा विनिर्यातौ तस्मान्माङ्गलिकावुभौ ॥

According to this sentence of the book of traditional law – first, the words *Omkaara* and *Atha* have emanated from the throat of Brahma-god; therefore, all theists believe that these words indicate auspiciousness. Hence, it has become a practice to employ this word for the successful end of without any impediment.

But, there is no obstacle to the works like the Scripture of Devotion; therefore, one cannot tell that the sage Narada has employed this word for the successful completion of the work without any obstacle. This is further explained :-

सर्वदा सर्वकार्येषु नास्ति तेषाममङ्गलम् । येषां हृदिस्थो भगवान् मङ्गलायतनं हरिः ॥

According to this sentence of a पुराण, श्री हरि who is the shelter for all auspiciousness always dwells in the heart of devotees; they never attain inauspiciousness. In spite of this, in order to follow the custom of good people (शिष्टाचार) of conducting auspiciousness, नारद who keeps the Lord नारायण in his heart has employed the अथ word in the beginning.



Phase 1 after completion

The Making of Sai Krushna Mandir Construction Update

With the Divine Blessings and grace of our Beloved Swami, the Phase 1 of the children's home – Sai Krushna Mandir – will be operational soon. The "*Gruhapravesam*" (House Warming Ceremony) of the children's home will be held on 3rd June and the first five children have been identified and will be attending the function.

By Swami's grace, Sai Krushna Mandir will be functional as a children's home from end June 2013. The children who will be coming will also be able to join Class 1 in English medium instruction.

We have found some volunteers to live with and take care of the children. We also invite applications for suitable caretakers. The caretakers would also be paid suitable as per their experience and ability. We are open to families coming and joining who feel the inclination to participate and involve in Swami's project. Volunteer families would be provided suitable accommodation and their children would be given appropriate educational facilities also.

We are also looking out for a cook and watchman for the children's home once it starts functioning from June. Interested people may contact us on +91 9663222362 or by email.

By Swami's grace the painting for the building for Phase 1 of Sai Krushna Mandir is now complete. The next few weeks will involve the installation of solar street lights in front of the building. Solar hot water facility is also being considered subject to availability of funds. The members of the SKM construction team are also making frequent site visits to monitor the quality and quantum of progress.



We thank Swami for arranging for the funding for the construction of the boundary wall. The work is in progress and likely to be completed by June 10th. This was an essential requirement from the perspective of safety and security for the children and inmates and we thank the sincere devotees who have enabled this activity.

The current state of construction is shown in the attached photos.

We look forward to all your active involvement and participation in this God given opportunity.

We also welcome you to come and visit the site and witness the making of Sai Krishna Mandir. From our side, we will keep you updated through Venugaanam and the website. You are free to contact us directly for any further information. We are confident that, just as Swami's bounteous blessings is ensuring the completion of Phase 1 of construction, Swami's grace will crown our genuine intentions and He will continue to guide and bless the children and residents to live in a happy home and grow to His ideals.



Sai Krishna Mandir after completion

Is It The Same Chitravati?

By KVRK Bhargav

Bhargav is a student of Swami who after completing his B.Tech in Textile Engineering graduated with an MBA from the the Sri Sathya Sai University in 2001. Ever since, he has had the great fortune of waiting for Swami's direct guidance. He has been blessed with many interactions with Swami. Currently, he helps out at the University Administrative Block.

Bhajans ended and I was walking back on a warm Sunday evening back home, when someone called my name from behind. It was a familiar voice which had echoed in my ears many years back. I turned around to see that it was my classmate who had been erased from my memory due to his not coming to Parthi since we passed out in 2001. He came and hugged me tightly in his characteristic style, we exchanged pleasantries and he asked me to accompany him for a walk. We just came out of Ganesh gate when he burst forth in excitement, "Let us go to our beloved river Chitravati." He had a child like enthusiasm in his eyes. He immediately got transported to that last few months of our MBA course when we once went for a bath to the Chitravati. He said with a gushing nostalgia, "You remember, how we enjoyed that Sunday when Warden sir took us to the Chitravati for a bath walking through the lush green fields behind the Sai Geeta shed." I nodded with a slight disagreement trying to show him that things are no more the same. He continued, "Remember, I taught you how to swim in waist deep water all the while holding your hand to wade against the strong current of water.

We were already deep into the Chitravati road and he in the course

of conversation noticed the long shadows cast by the tall buildings standing on either side of the road. "Hmm... urbanization has caught up with Parthi", he commented, gazed for few moments at the tall rise of buildings but the exhilaration to have a look at Chitravati overpowered him again and he fell back to that Chitravati experience. I was surprised at the graphic details he remembered in his description.

We crossed many shops and later some apartments with almost all of them having Sai as the prefix in their names. Just a few metres from the end of the Chitravati road a big board read ' Way to Kalpavruksham' and a long flight of cement steps got lost in the concrete jungle. The enthusiasm increased in him after remembering that both the Kalpavrukham and Chitravati had a very special role in the exploits of Swami. "You remember," he added, "we climbed up that day to the our beloved wish fulfilling tree and had a bird's eye view of the Chitravati flowing gracefully through the valley of Parthi." I recollected that spectacle. Chitravati expressed many emotions in its journey through Parthi. Sometimes it was gurgling, unable to contain the enthusiasm and joy of having been associated with the avatar, while at some other times it flowed with lot

of gravitas, deeply pondering on the great good fortune which has come its way or sometimes gently caressing those sand dunes with reverence, in whose lap God did all His leelas.

Finally, we reached the end of Chitravati road and his excitement was palpable anticipating to see the beloved Chitravati after a gap of twelve years.

I carefully observed his expressions. He stood transfixed with a face turned lifeless and an expression of utter horror in his eyes. There was a vast expanse of barren land, with a pool of black water at one corner perhaps the remnants of the scanty rainfall in the monsoons, with a group of pigs enjoying a Jacuzzi in it and few dhobis washing some white clothes in that water at the far side. The embankments were embellished by the rubble of the mushrooming construction activity in Parthi and the plastic waste produced by the Puttaparthites. Few stray dogs were resolving their issues with a vehement fight. A tractor was ready for its journey to a nearby building with a cartload of that legendary sand which witnessed myriad leelas and pranks of our Sai Krishna. The once full river bed of Chitravati had deep scars of the wounds inflicted by the denuding of its sands for the urbanization of Parthi(I am guilty of living in one such dwelling). A thin stream of untreated waste water of this spiritual town, untreated due to the non- functioning of the water treatment plant, was flowing on the river bed with a hope that the holy touch of the blessed sands will purify this polluted water. Only a small patch of land was spared to facilitate the smooth journey of departed souls, where the pyres jostled for the little space available.

We walked along the river downstream towards the bridge with words suddenly dried up and a disquieting silence taking its place. All his enthusiasm vanished and his expression was a concoction of disbelief, anger, sadness and empathy.

He saw on the other side of the bridge a small chain of shops bustling with activity. He looked for a long time in that direction when I broke the uneasy silence, "It is so sad that we have a chain of shops selling non-vegetarian stuff just outside the city limits of this sacred town of Parthi. Unfortunately, all the waste of that market is thrown into the Chitravati. It is generally very busy on Sundays." There was again a long silence and he shattered it when he blurted out, "How can we allow this to happen to the hallowed legacy of Bhagwan? Can't we do anything about it?" knitting his eyebrows, slowly coming to terms with this bitter truth about the present state of affairs.

We turned back to retrace our steps when the small kalpavruksham hill was in front of us. He took some extra

effort to spill out some words, "How is the kalpavrukham now, is it also in the same condition?" and tried to have a glimpse of the tree through the thick foliage. I replied, "The wish- fulfilling tree got completely destroyed in a thunder storm in May 2011 with only a small branch left of that legendary tree." He shrugged his shoulders in frustration, when I quickly added, "Life is an endless hope with god, when all thought that this hallowed tamarind tree will not survive, it shot forth new shoots and leaves last monsoon. Now, these shoots have multiplied into a strong branch with lush green leaves. It is a joy to behold this tree now."

His sagging morale got the much needed boost; his eyes got back some life. "Can we see it from here?" he asked with a twinkle in his searching eyes riveted on the Kalpavrukham hill. I also followed suit when there was a slight breeze and in the breeze, I showed him the strong branch of this beloved tree of the Lord dancing to the tune of wind and singing the symphony of life.

The Old Man in the Park

By Don Mascon

Don gained a 1st Class Honours degree in Physics from University College, London in 1957 and worked for the following 10 years for the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority at Harwell and Culham. He then left the UKAEA to study medicine at Oxford University. Mr Mascon retired in 2002 as Emeritus Professor of Immunology at Oxford. Since retiring he has written a short history of his family and has written a book, Science Mystical Experience and Religious Belief which was inspired in part by his scientific studies and part by the fact that his mother was a psychic.

In London there is a public park in which Londoners can escape the noise and bustle of the surrounding streets. One corner of this park is

called 'Speakers Corner' in which it is a popular Sunday morning activity for members of the public to address their fellow citizens on any subject that they wish. On the particular Sunday of which I write a very earnest young man, dressed neatly in black and wearing a clerical collar, prepared to address those strollers who were looking for free entertainment. A member of the clergy looked promising game and the gathering crowd was not disappointed. The earnest young man held up a copy of the Bible. "In this book is your salvation." he said. "Between the covers of this most holy book you will find God's truth set out for you. Believe only this and repent of your sins and you will be saved."

"Wait a minute." said a young man in the crowd. "How can you claim that the Bible contains God's truth? In Genesis for example there are two

different accounts of how Man was created. Which one is right and which one is wrong. Or are they both wrong? Darwin's theory of evolution is intellectually much more appealing to me." The crowd demanded that the cleric answer the question. "There are questions that we should not ask. They are divine mysteries to be answered only when the faithful enter the Kingdom of Heaven." This answer did not impress the crowd and it certainly did not satisfy the young man who had posed the original question.

"Science." said the young man "Makes progress by asking questions and it goes on asking questions until it finds the answers. So, science is a matter of knowledge and faith doesn't come in to it. With increasing knowledge more and more of the natural world will be explained."

"There are other problems that I have with the Bible. Why, for

example, if it is supposed to be God's wisdom, are there no accounts of dinosaurs in it? Surely they deserve a mention at least."

"Yes, what about the dinosaurs?" demanded the crowd.

By this time the crowd had grown considerably, enjoying the discomfort of the earnest young man who had set out that morning to save as many souls as he could. Recognising that he had little chance of success he prepared to depart, but before doing so he turned to his challenger and said "God bless you." It was said with obvious sincerity and the recipient of the blessing felt some strange sensation that he did not expect and could not account for. He shrugged it off.

With the departure of the speaker the crowd dispersed and the critical young man went to sit down on a nearby bench. Its other occupant was an old gentleman dressed simply in well-worn but well-cared for clothes. "That was a very effective dismissal" said the old man. "But let me make a few comments."

"Ever since humankind developed the capacity for abstract thought it has pondered on its own origins. The answers that it has put forward are its creation myths. There are many such myths but with increasing knowledge of the physical world they can all be seen to be flawed. Our clerical friend was unwise to attempt to defend what time has shown must be discarded. However, science too has its myths, or perhaps I should say, its misconceptions." The young man was surprised to hear this. "Surely the scientific method, with its insistence on repeatability of experimental results and their independent verification means that scientific conclusions are

founded on solid scientific facts. Only a fool would argue that the moon did not go round the earth and the earth did not go round the sun." The old man smiled. "I shall come back to that question later, but for the moment I should like you to take part in a little experiment, if you will." The young man was enthusiastic about experiments and



readily accepted the invitation. "Very well. Pick up a stone from the ground, whichever one you want." "Now, when you feel inclined and in your own time, put the stone back on the ground wherever you choose." "The young man did as he was asked but was very puzzled as to what all this was about. "Now think what you have done." said the old man. "The Universe is full of billions and billions of stars, each containing countless numbers of atoms. Each atom obeys precisely the laws of Nature which govern it. Even the uncertainty principle, of which you may have heard, is a law of Nature. Without such obedience all would be chaos and birds, trees, the sun, the moon and you, yourself could not exist...and yet you, a tiny part of the whole has the power to change a small part according to your own will. By some profound mystery you have been given dominion over a small part of creation and you can

bend a part of the cosmos to your own purpose. That is an awesome responsibility and you need to give careful thought to how you use that power. While you are engaged in that process ask yourself of the origin of that power that you hold. Bear in mind that you are not of your own making. "The young man said nothing and the old one continued.

"You must realise that knowledge is not wisdom. Certainly you had the better of the young preacher when he talked about the creation, but he was ready to act as a humble mediator of God's love when he blessed you. You demonstrated your greater knowledge

but he showed his greater compassion. Now the young man was beginning to feel uncomfortable but he wasn't ready to give in just yet. "You said that science has its misconceptions but you have yet to tell me what they are." "That is not difficult" replied the old man. "Let's consider the example that you choose. The elliptical orbits of the planets around the sun are explained well by Newton's laws of motion and even more precisely by Einstein's Theory of Relativity. However, these theories only account for *how* the planets are attracted by the sun they do not explain *why* they are so attracted. The *why* is called a 'law of nature' and that is where the explanation ends. One may say that the heavenly bodies attract one another because that is what massive bodies do. I'm sure that you will agree that is not an intellectually satisfactory explanation for

planetary motion. It might be fair to ask "If nature obeys certain laws, who, or what is the law-maker? Science gives no answer to that question."

The gentle way that the old man had spoken and the power of his words made a strong impression on his young listener. He had not sought to

humiliate but only to instruct and it was clear to the young man that he had much to learn. He diverted his gaze briefly, to see whether the cleric was still in sight. Ascertaining that he was not he turned back to the old man with the hope of continuing his own instruction. To his complete bewilderment he found that there was no sign of his new

teacher despite the fact that only a brief moment before the two of them were side-by-side on the park bench.

The memory of that Sunday morning remained with the young man for the rest of his life.

Test is to His Taste

By Vinod Cartic

Vinod is a student of Swami who after completing his B.Tech in Chemical Engineering from IIT Madras, graduated with a gold medal in MBA from the Sri Sathya Sai University in 2007. He received direct instructions and guidance from Swami to start Sai Krushna Mandir, the children's home project that he is currently involved in. Faith in Swami and his word drives Vinod to spearhead this project. He also works as an independent consultant at Frost & Sullivan

[Read the first part of the article here](#)

The opposite of love is not hatred but indifference. And here, we were literally ignored by the very Swami, who meant everything to us. Our plight was like that of the frog in Ramayana, which was pierced by Rama's arrow and wailed that it had no refuge to go to- all its life it used to remember Rama when in distress, to whom was it to turn now when Rama Himself was inflicting the pain? Our letters, entreaties and plea had been in vain. Swami had even stopped coming to the side where we sat and we were left feeling like 'untouchables'.

It is in the moments of greatest adversity that we often discover the greatest truths. It's not because an external teacher suddenly appears to teach it to you; rather the quest for inner harmony, love and truth becomes so intense that the inner fountain of knowledge is partially revealed. It is said that Prayer is Man's only strength and God's only weakness. We prayed like never before hoping that Swami would reverse this decision. After all we had waited hoping for His guidance and we wanted to leave only after securing the same. All 16 of us would sit in the evening in a circle and chant His name together. We knew that this could just be our final desperate attempt and success in this meant everything to us. We thought of Swami almost continually and prayed like never before. Even the hardest of rocks would melt with our pleas...or so we imagined!!

For in spite of all of this, there was no respite at Prashanthi Nilayam. We tried showing a card to Swami on one of the days. Swami just feigned anger and stormed away with our letters. Our prayers had the mixture of pleas, confusion, faith and the demand of a righteous child with its mother. Yet, it seemed to have failed to evoke His compassion. In its adamancy, the child hastens to achieve its objective failing to recognize that the mother tests it only to confirm its sense of constancy of purpose. How hard hearted could this Lord be, we wondered, in our childish immaturity?

2 days were left for D-day. In 2 days, we would have to pack our bags and leave forcibly, having failed to convince the Lord that we needed Him. That evening after we had finished our group prayers, one of us opined that before we left, we would express our love and gratitude to Swami. It is said that in true Love, you give the other person what they want and not just take what you like. In this case, probably, what Swami wanted from us was distance. However painful it might be for us, it was our bounden duty to fulfill the requirement of our beloved Lord. In a card drawn with tears in our eyes and heaviness in the heart, we wrote all of our feelings saying that while we valued His presence the most, we would move away if that was His final decision. We were like fish who were being asked to live without water, but we would try and do the same for we loved Him. That night, as we kept the

card before His image, there was a strange sense of peace that enveloped us. (Maybe, Swami had helped us learn an important lesson in love---give the beloved what they truly need, even if it means the sacrifice of all that you hold dear).

The next day, we sat in darshan with the card – tears in our eyes, but peace in our hearts --- the peace that comes from knowing that there was nothing more that we could do. Lo and Behold- Swami who had literally forgotten the path where we used to sit suddenly decided to come that way. We seized the chance and even as He came near in His chair, we jumped towards Him with the card hoping to express what we wanted to. But the lump in our throats would not let us speak and the tears in our eyes betrayed what we had written. No words were spoken, just silence reigned. Swami looked one moment at the card, then at our eyes and then we experienced that feeling that happens so rarely. It is said the most beautiful moment is the one where you see your beloved smile and cry (with joy) at the same time. Swami's eyes became moist even as He smiled at us and said: "**Sing from Tomorrow. Sit in front.**" Even before we understood the profundity of His love and mercy, He had gone past us. We were too dazed to even fully understand what had happened. Fellow students and teachers and authorities came and congratulated us on managing to convince Swami that we be permitted to stay with Him. Even as we tried to digest the moment, we knew that this was not our victory- it was a victory of love seeking the beloved. Later that evening, we got to know from some of the officials that while Swami seemed to be ignoring us completely, inside Yajur Mandir, He would enquire of us even individually and was taking much interest in our profile cards. He had specifically instructed the authorities to keep this a secret.

Next morning, when Swami came out for darshan, we were eagerly and emotionally waiting to sing His name loud throatedly again. Swami came and asked many of us to sing repeatedly. The grand finale was the benediction that He gave telling nearby authorities that 'These are My boys'.

The test no doubt had been severe. The benediction and grace that finally ended it were equally plentiful. There was at least 2 very specific lessons that I learnt from the whole episode:

1. Faith and patience have tremendous power to achieve the seemingly impossible
2. The greatest sign of love is sacrifice for the pleasure of the beloved. Such love when it combines with faith and patience can win His grace and achieve miracles.

The test that many of us today are faced with is also quite similar, though a notch higher in severity. The physical form of our Lord seems to be missing and many of His promises seem unfulfilled. Whenever, I feel depressed, I try and recall this incident and its message. Soon, there is a huge sense of hope- I know that His ways are mysterious – what it takes is sincere love, childlike faith in His words and sincere patience on our part to win His grace and be fortunate to witness what we all along have been praying for. It's not a question of can He do it--- for He is omnipotent. It's more a question of do we have that love, faith and patience to evoke His grace and omnipotence to work the seeming impossibility?

The passengers on the bus watched sympathetically as the bus again, he admitted to himself. But just the

Because Love is Blind

Anonymous

A tale on the power of the greatest of all emotions

the attractive young woman with the white cane made her way carefully up the steps. She paid the driver and, using her hands to feel the location of the seats, walked down the aisle and found the seat he'd told her was empty. Then she settled in, placed her briefcase on her lap and rested her cane against her leg.

It had been a year since Susan, thirty-four, became blind. Due to a medical misdiagnosis she had been rendered sightless, and she was suddenly thrown into a world of darkness, anger, frustration and self-pity. Once a fiercely independent woman, Susan now felt condemned by this terrible twist of fate to become a powerless, helpless burden on everyone around her. "How could this have happened to me?" she would plead, her heart knotted with anger.

But no matter how much she cried or ranted or prayed, she knew the painful truth her sight was never going to return. A cloud of depression hung over Susan's once optimistic spirit. Just getting through each day was an exercise in frustration and exhaustion. And all she had to cling to was her husband Mark.

Mark was an Air Force officer and he loved Susan with all of his heart. When she first lost her sight, he watched her sink into despair and was determined to help his wife gain the strength and confidence she needed to become independent again. Mark's military background had trained him well to deal with sensitive situations, and yet he knew this was the most difficult battle he would ever face.

Finally, Susan felt ready to return to her job, but how would she get there? She used to take the bus, but was now too frightened to get around the city by herself. Mark volunteered to drive her to work each day, even though they worked at opposite ends of the city.

At first, this comforted Susan and fulfilled Mark's need to protect his sightless wife who was so insecure about performing the slightest task. Soon, however, Mark realized that this arrangement wasn't working - it was hectic, and costly. Susan is going to have to start taking

thought of mentioning it to her made him cringe. She was still so fragile, so angry. How would she react?

Just as Mark predicted, Susan was horrified at the idea of taking the bus again. "I'm blind!" she responded bitterly. "How am I supposed to know where I'm going? I feel like you're abandoning me."

Mark's heart broke to hear these words, but he knew what had to be done. He promised Susan that each morning and evening he would ride the bus with her, for as long as it took, until she got the hang of it. And that is exactly what happened.

For two solid weeks, Mark, military uniform and all, accompanied Susan to and from work each day. He taught her how to rely on her other senses, specifically her hearing, to determine where she was and how to adapt to her new environment. He helped her befriend the bus drivers who could watch out for her, and save her a seat. He made her laugh, even on those not-so-good days when she would trip exiting the bus, or drop her briefcase.

Each morning they made the journey together, and Mark would take a cab back to his office. Although this routine was even more costly and exhausting than the previous one, Mark knew it was only a matter of time before Susan would be able to ride the bus on her own. He believed in her, in the Susan he used to know before she'd lost her sight, who wasn't afraid of any challenge and who would never, ever quit.

Finally, Susan decided that she was ready to try the trip on her own. Monday morning arrived, and before she left, she threw her arms around Mark, her temporary bus riding companion, her husband, and her best friend.

Her eyes filled with tears of gratitude for his loyalty, his patience, his love. She said good-bye, and for the first time, they went their separate ways. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday... Each day on her own went perfectly, and Susan had never felt better. She was doing it! She was going to work all by herself!

On Friday morning, Susan took the bus to work as usual. As she was paying for her fare to exit the bus, the driver said, "Boy, I sure envy you." Susan wasn't sure if the driver was speaking to her or not. After all, who on earth would ever envy a blind woman who had struggled just to find the courage to live for the past year?

Curious, she asked the driver, "Why do you say that you envy me?" The driver responded, "It must feel so good to be taken care of and protected like you are." Susan had no idea what the driver was talking about, and asked again, "What do you mean?"

The driver answered, "You know, every morning for the past week, a fine looking gentleman in a military uniform has been standing across the corner watching you when you get off the bus. He makes sure you cross the street safely and he watches you until you enter your office building. Then he blows you a kiss, gives you a little salute and walks away. You are one lucky lady."

Tears of happiness poured down Susan's cheeks. For although she couldn't physically see him, she had always felt Mark's presence. She was lucky, so lucky, for he had given her a gift more powerful than sight, a gift she didn't need to see to believe - the gift of love that can bring light where there had been darkness.

The Journey - with Sai because of Sai

By. Dr Murugananth

Ananth is currently the Chairperson of Sathya Sai Center of Wollongong Australia. He is currently the Managing Director of aSSent Conference & IT Solutions. He has served in academic, research and corporate world since 2002 after graduating with a Doctor of Philosophy from University of Cambridge, UK. He also happens to be an alumnus of IIT Chennai.

It was June 2012 and I had to come from Australia for my beloved father's first year Shraadha ceremony. But there was one another agenda of that trip, which was admission of our daughter Saishweta in year 2 at Sri Sathya Sai Primary School, Prashanthi Nilayam. This agenda was as important as the earlier. My father had merged into his cosmic formless being one with his SAI just 9 days after the eternal SAI willed to assume his Nirakara (formless) roopam (form). I would reserve an article on this for a later date. The current episode is about a trip in May 2013 that was being planned during our trip to Puttaparthi (Parthi) in June 2012.

We came to Parthi in June 2012 and met with the headmistress aunty as my nephew was being admitted to standard 1 in the Sri Sathya Sai (SSS) Primary school. We approached her with a request for our daughter's admission. She maintained that there were no vacancies and that we should come in May 2013. More so, a letter written by Saishweta (our daughter)



with the only request for admission in SSS Primary school kept in a sealed envelope in front of Swami was blessed with profuse vibhuti inside the envelope. This exactly was how our trip in May 2013 started taking form. But, wait, there is another twist to this as how this trip of ours to Parthi exactly manifested. For this I will have to take you with me through the Journey from Wollongong to Puttaparthi. Since November 2012 we had been searching for flight tickets to Bangalore, India for various dates in May so that we get a

reasonable price. But, we were not sure when in May we should exactly need to travel. All that we were told "come in May". So this planning went all the way till April 20, 2013. We were observing the flying costs over the web (on Malaysian airlines website) and thought that the prices are not changing much and hence we have more time. If you are wondering why we were waiting till this moment, I will have to write another episode of happenings which again I will reserve for later articles. But on April 20 we realized that the cost that Malaysian airlines website was projecting was not accurate till we get on to the checkout page from where we actually make the payment. The difference was easily 1000 Australian Dollars

per passenger. This literally means for four of us I would be paying around A\$ 4000 extra. So we started scanning for the prices for all available dates in May and found that only May 3, 2013 had reasonable prices. That is how we arrived at this date. Well, you would be wondering what I am trying to tell. Just bear with me a little further to know.

Since we had booked our tickets for May 3 out of our desperation I was wondering if it was Swami who is taking us through this process. Though the heart knows, the analytical mind tries to work on the cause and effect principle (which we call reasoning). So it kept my analytical mind wondering.

Now that the tickets are booked, I will take you straight to the check-in process. I always had a habit of processing my check-in through internet as I get to choose the seats. Needless to say I always choose seats with numbers that are multiples of 9 (like 9, 18, 27....). I am sure all sadhakas¹ in Sai fold would appreciate this number 9 and do know by now that it is considered God's number. That is because if you single out the multiples of 9 it still comes to 9 (like 18 singles out to be 1+8=9, similarly 27 singles out to 2+7=9). As God is implicitly present in all beings and eventually the only being – 9 is implicitly present in all its creation which are its multiples unlike any other number. Well, so I have been trying to get this number 9 during my check-in process. But till about 5 hours before the departure of my flight the website did not allow me to check-in online. It gave an error message saying I should go to the check-in counter. Hence I yielded to this message without a choice.

We are now in Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport. Our flight MH 0140 is at 21:40 pm. We have reached the airport exactly three hours before departure as is the requirement for International travel. After about 30 minutes of standing in the check-in queue we end up at a counter where Ms. Irene, a kind lady, is serving the passengers. Irene takes about 20 to 25 minutes to get our baggage tagged and she was trying to get us checked-in through from Sydney to Bangalore via Kuala Lumpur. She was also trying to find us an appropriate seat so that four of us which include me, my wife, my daughter and my mother have seats in the same row.

After a bit of struggle and after approaching a few of her colleagues, she came back with a sigh and told me "Sorry sir this is all the seats we have, I hope you do not mind". I responded saying "that is fine" mentally still thinking "Do I have a choice, you have decided it all (talking to Swami)". Once I get the boarding card I look for the seat numbers which were allotted viz. 27 (D,E,F,G) for four passengers. My wife tells me D-E-F-G stands for **Don't Ever Forget God**. So our beautiful Lord has reminded us of His presence through the number 27. So after a while we proceed to the boarding gate. About 20 to 30 minutes after having seated at the boarding gate we hear an announcement "We now invite all passengers with infants and children to board the aircraft". We decide to go leisurely in that first lot of the invited passengers which consisted of about 20 to



Kids Corner

Divine Games

By Saishweta Muruganant



I have come to India from Australia to try for admission in Sri Sathya Sai Primary School. In Australia on Tuesdays there are study circles in our home. On Thursdays bhajans are held at our home. On Thursdays after bhajans there is a five minute silent meditation. My father keeps Swami's photo open on his laptop (see picture). One day when the meditation was going on I opened my eyes and saw at the photo of Swami and I saw that Swami winked at me. This happened after Swami's Mahasamadhi. I like it when Swami plays with me like this.

30 passengers. As we slowly walk from the gate to the aircraft via the aerobridge Saishweta stops and tells "Papa, someone has dropped their boarding card" and I respond saying "Pick it up and we shall hand it to the passenger". She picks the boarding card up and reads thus "SAI", before handing it to me. I read out the passenger's name from the boarding card as "SAIPUMP" (see photograph). Though my eyes were reading this as SAIPUMP, my heart was reading it as **SAI PUMPISTHUNARU**, still wondering about the meaning of this word that is echoing in me. So, Sai is already inside the aircraft. I then voice this to my wife Dr Pallavi who gets back to me saying "PUMPISTHUNARU" means sending. Now the meaning becomes all the more clear "Sai is Sending us to Parthi". Dump founded I was that this Sai Krishna of ours also shows such gross clues in this game of hide-and-seeK. Among the 30 passengers who have already entered the aircraft, someone with Sai in their name had to drop their boarding card and among all passengers who had passed through the aero-bridge Saishweta had to pick it up. Do we not know who is behind this game of hide-and-seeK? Puppets that we are that the puppeteer pulls the strings and makes the show happen. How sweet is His game that with every effort we put to talk to Him, grosser are His revelations! Just like a child in a game of Hide-and-SeeK when called out to ask where the child is hiding – shouts back saying I am here. Is it not how this sweet Lord of ours answers to every seeking soul, from His hiding place our heart? This is but a small journey from one continent to another which was taken care of by the Lord and made us feel comfortable throughout the Journey till we reached Prashanthi Nilayam. What of the journey that He is taking us through and across for so many lives about which He and He alone can comment about. Let us just bask in His glory with thankfulness and gratitude for He chose to restrict himself (and get embodied) to this limited form and scale down for our sake, just to remind us all that we are sparks of the same Divine being indeed.