



Sathya Sai International Organisation

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Offering of Love and Gratitude to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

With love and gratitude, I offer my prayerful *pranams* at the divine lotus feet of our dearest, loving, omnipresent Lord, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Dear brothers and sisters, loving Sai Ram to all of you. We are all blessed and fortunate to be the contemporaries of the Avatar of our age, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He is not only the Avatar of the age, He is the *Poorna Avatar* – not only *Poorna Avatar*, He is *Paripoorna Avatar*, with full glorious manifestation of all the 16 Kalas, the 16 attributes of the Lord. He came on this earth on November 23rd, 1926 to bless humanity, and for the redemption of mankind.

He walked amongst us, He walked amongst all His creation, blessing us, showering His grace and love on all creation. And finally, He decided to leave His physical form on April 24th, 2011 to transition into His formless reality. But He is still with us as our eternal companion. He assured us that He will be with us wherever we are – whether we are in the sky, or on the earth, or in the forest, or in the town; or in the water – wherever we are, He is with us, guarding us, guiding us, protecting us. He assured us He is inside us, around us, above us, below us, in front of us, behind us, guarding us like the eyelids guard the eye.

How do we express gratitude to the Lord who showered so much grace, blessings and love on all of us? The best way to express gratitude is to remember Him, remember His story, practice His teachings and participate in His work, and in the divine mission.

His Story

The Lord's *Leelas* (*divine sports*), the Lord's story is unfathomable, mysterious, mind-boggling and blissful. The Lord, who has come in this form, has shown many *leelas*. Swami gave a very beautiful message on 20th October 1961 for all of us to remember – “*when you listen to my story, you forget the story of the world and live only in My story, so that you do not have any particular story to relate to. The purpose of My story is to make you story-less.*” This is the beautiful message: when we live in His story, we forget everything, and we live in bliss. This is called Sai Bhagavatham and is recorded in many books, like Professor Kasturi's Sathyam Shivam Sundaram (Truth, Goodness and Beauty), where the *leelas* and the divine sports of Swami's are recorded. Similarly, there are many books written by many devotees around the world which talk about the divine sports and *leelas* of the Lord. Reading such books itself is a spiritual practice. When done with sincerity and with love in the heart, it will take us to the realisation



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of the Lord. Hence, this is one of the important, spiritual practices.

Greatest Miracle

One of the *leelas* of the Lord is miracles, wherein the Lord has cured many people of incurable physical and mental illnesses. He has made the lame walk, the blind see and He has raised the dead to life. There are miracles galore – amazing, astounding, awesome and mind-boggling miracles. But these miracles, Swami Himself said, are like visiting cards – they are meant just to experience glimpses of His divinity. This is only the first step in His four-fold path to spiritual realisation. The four-fold path is – *chamathkara*, *samskara*, *paropakara*, and finally *sakshatkara*. *Chamathkara* are the miracles we witness, *samskara* is the transformation of the heart, which leads to *paropakara*, selfless service, and finally *sakshatkara*, self-realisation. But these miracles, Swami Himself said, are like mosquitos on a huge elephant, which is His huge, astounding, divine mission. We should remember that.

But, what is the greatest miracle? As I said before, His miracle is more than curing illness, it is the transformation of the heart. Many people have been so transformed, as experienced by all of us when we meet His devotees. The transformation of the heart manifests itself as we become more loving,

more kind, and selfless. Another aspect of this transformation is talking softly and sweetly, having a cheerful attitude, and being happy in all circumstances, praising the Lord. Most importantly, we should not have any negative qualities – we should not find faults in others, criticise others or insult others. Swami not only warned us, He also gave us the formula: *Sarva Jeeva Namaskaram, Keshavam Prati Gacchati* – when we praise and adore other beings, it reaches the Lord, and similarly criticism, insult and harm done to others also reaches the Lord. We should always be careful in our thoughts, words and deeds, so that we are always loving and kind to all beings.

God is Love, Love is God

In the next step, once we achieve transformation of the heart, we should dive deep into the teachings of Swami and His message. Swami's life is His message, and His message is love. Swami's life, His message and His humanitarian works can all be enshrined in one word, Love. That is why Swami often said, "God is Love, Love is God, Live in Love." He also said, "Start the day with love, fill the day with love, end the day with love... this is the way to God." In addition, He said, "Love is the Source, Love is the Path and Love is the Goal of human life." Swami, in His infinite kindness and compassion, has given more than 3,000 divine discourses and written



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many articles. He has even written many letters to many devotees for their own spiritual upliftment. His writings and His articles in the Sanathana Sarathi have been published in the Vahini series. These books are the treasure house of spiritual knowledge. They cater to the needs of spiritual seekers of many types. For example, Swami's Prema Vahini, Dhyana Vahini, Dharma Vahini, and Vidya Vahini tells us how to lead a daily life filled with love, based on dharma, and the practice of human values. Swami wrote two beautiful Vahinis, the Bhagavatha Vahini and Ramakatha Rasa Vahini – beautiful expositions on the divine sports, the Leelas, and the message of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna. These books are almost like autobiographies of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna because they are narrated by Lord Sai Rama and Lord Sai Krishna Himself. And then there are other volumes in Swami's Vahini series which talk about the highest *Advaitic* knowledge, the monism which is the oneness of all creation. The same divinity existing everywhere, in everything, forever is related in these three Vahinis. One is the Geeta Vahini with His commentary on the Bhagavad Geeta, the Upanishad Vahini where He gives comments on the Upanishads, and the Sutra Vahini, with the exposition on Brahma Sutras. Diving deep into these books makes the greatest *Advaitic* knowledge very clear to us. Swami is a wonderful teacher. He

is not only the universal teacher, but He comes down to the level of the common man in His teachings. His message is universal and eternal, but He makes it very practical so that even simple people can understand it. Swami not only conveyed this timeless message through His discourses, through His writings, and through His letters, but also through certain practical gestures.

The Handkerchief

I was fortunate to be around Swami to learn the divine lessons through the example of a simple handkerchief. Swami often uses the handkerchief, but He also utilises it to drive home divine lessons. First Swami says that the handkerchief is white. But with time, it gets dirty, and then when you give it to the cleaners, it comes back pure and white. Similarly, our heart is always pure and clean, but as it develops negative tendencies with time, it gets dirty. When we come to the Lord and practise His teachings, we get rid of the impurities, and it goes back to its original purity. That is, getting rid of the impurities restores the purity of the heart.

Secondly, Swami said that the handkerchief is white, but if you dip it in red water, it becomes red in colour. With blue water, it becomes blue. Dipped in green water, it becomes green. So, it assumes the colour in which you dip it. Similarly, the mind is pure. But if you dip it in



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worldly matters and sense enjoyment, it takes on those colours. On the other hand, if you are intoxicated with divine thoughts, divine words, and divine actions, the mind assumes the divine form. As you think, so you become. This is why Swami warned us, by saying, “Dust you think, dust you become. God you think, God you become.” Thus, we need to affirm our divinity and live in divine consciousness. This is another divine lesson.

Once, Swami taught us another lesson. Showing us a sliver of a handkerchief, He asked, “What is this?” We said, “piece of cloth.” Then, He showed the whole handkerchief, asking “What is this?” We replied that it was a handkerchief. He said that similarly, most of our knowledge is partial, not total. But when we live with divinity, we attain total awareness. That is what Swami calls, CIA - Constant Integrated Awareness, or *Prajna*.

Another lesson Swami taught us with the handkerchief, starts with, “What is a handkerchief? It is a cloth made up of threads. If you remove each thread, you can easily tear it up without any effort. But when these threads come together and become cloth, you may try to tear it, but you will not succeed.” Therefore, Swami says that unity is important. When we are united, we are strong.

Finally, another beautiful lesson He taught us is to note that from the cotton comes thread,

and from the thread comes the cloth. Thus, the cloth is made up of threads, which come from cotton. But they are all the same material essentially – Cotton, Thread and the Cloth is the same material, but manifestations are different. Similarly, in the world, we come across Nature – *Prakriti*, Embodied Being – *Jiva*, and God - *Paramatma*. All are manifestations of the same entity. What exists in all is divinity. He wants us to see the oneness in all these things. That is the wonderful, practical message which Swami conveyed with just the help of a handkerchief. He is the master of masters, Guru of Gurus. Swami also made it very practical and easy to implement His message in our lives. Swami has given us an opportunity to be part of His divine mission and we need to grab it and make the best use of it for ourselves.

The Divine Mission

Swami has said that many are called but few are chosen. Swami has been preparing us for many lifetimes to be instruments of His Love and take part in His divine mission. Let us now make best use of this opportunity. Swami has Himself established many institutions, which has never happened during the lifetime of an Avatar, in the history of mankind. He established educational institutions in India, where primary to doctoral education is given completely free of charge. Here the emphasis



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is not only on academic excellence, but also on character development. Swami wanted students to have all-round personality. He emphasized that His students should have all-round development – physical, intellectual and spiritual. Based on His example, we have established many Sathya Sai Institutes, Sathya Sai schools and Human Values education programmes around the world, imparting value-based education.

Similarly, the Sathya Sai Organisation has various medical institutions. Started originally by Swami, the General Hospital has expanded into Super-Specialty Hospitals where primary to tertiary medical care, including cardiac surgery and neuro surgery, is given completely free of cost, with emphasis on love and compassion. These institutions provide comprehensive healthcare, and we call them temples of healing, where the body, mind and spirit are all taken care of. Inspired by this example, we operate many medical camps, medical clinics, and mobile clinics around the world, where we offer health services to needy people. Millions of patients have been served over the past six decades by dedicated health care professionals.

Many humanitarian service projects were started by Swami, such as providing drinking water to millions of needy people in India. Inspired by His example, we have many

ongoing drinking water projects in Africa, Haiti, El Salvador, Nepal, Indonesia and various parts of the world. We also offer disaster relief services. Whenever communities are hit by natural disasters, we provide food, shelter, water and medical services. Such projects are ongoing in Haiti, Nepal, Ecuador, Philippines and many parts of the world. This is an opportunity for us to participate in His wonderful work.

The Sathya Sai Organisation

And most importantly, Swami established the Sathya Sai Organisation. He was kind enough to lend His name to this Organisation, which was started in India and is also present all over the world. Members of this Organisation are involved in selfless work in more than 120 countries, where the emphasis is on realising one's innate divinity and also helping our brothers and sisters realize their innate divinity.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, let us make best use of this opportunity to participate in any of His works – educational, medical, humanitarian or organisational work, and let us sanctify our lives.

Unity, Purity and Divinity

Finally, I want to conclude with an important message from Swami - one is Purity and the second is Unity. Swami said in beautiful words



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that Unity is Divinity and Purity is Enlightenment. All the spiritual practices we do, whether it is devotional singing, study circles, service programmes or self-enquiry, the whole purpose is to get rid of our ignorance and illusion so that we become pure. Once we are pure, Swami says that is enlightenment – the very minute we are pure, we are enlightened.

Also, Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

The other aspect is Unity. Swami has said “Unity is Divinity.” Unity at the individual level is where we practice harmony of thought, word and deed. Then, there is Unity at the Family level, Unity at the work level, Unity of faiths, Unity in the community, Unity in the Nation and Finally Unity in creation.

Once we practise this unity then we will experience divinity. What is this Divinity? You see only oneness – nothing else. Swami says that in every cell, every atom, and at every moment, there is only one thing that exists – divinity itself.

Swami says there are two Mahavakyas. The first is: ‘*Tat Tvam Asi.*’ (That Thou Art). You are that Brahman. When we do spiritual practices like listening to His stories, practicing His teachings, and participating in His mission, we finally realize the highest truth. What is that? The second Mahavakya is: ‘*Aham Brahmasmi*’

– (I am that supreme Brahman). We will realize this truth only by His grace.

Now, I want to conclude with my prayers to Swami to bless all of us with pure unconditional divine Love, absolute unwavering, steady and one pointed faith and opportunity to serve selflessly forever.

Thank you – *Jai Sai Ram.*

Narendranath Reddy M.D.