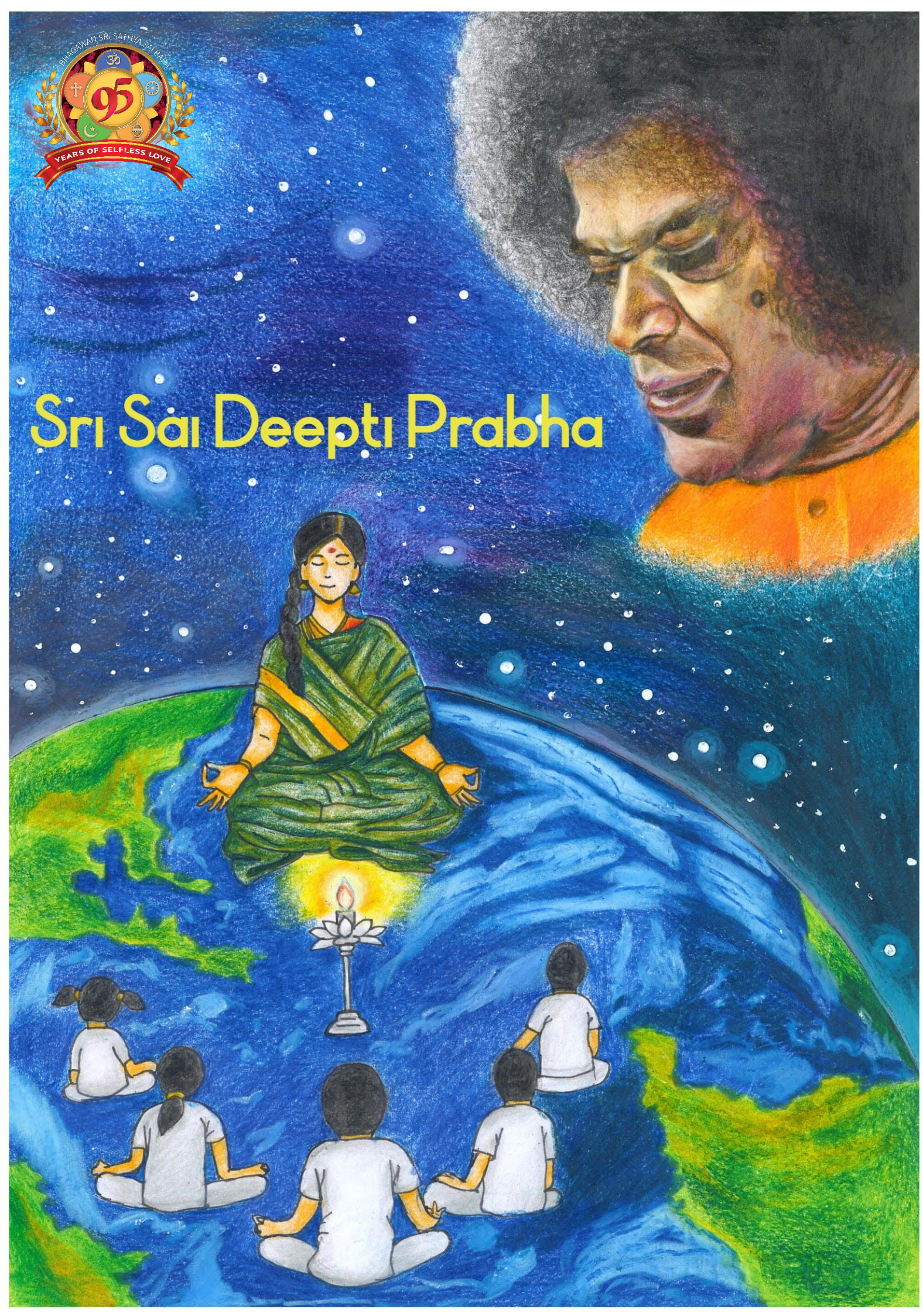




Sri Sai Deepthi Prabha





A loving offering to our dear Lord and Guru on His 95th Birthday

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations
Education Wing, Karnataka (South)



GRATITUDE



On completion of 50 glorious years of the Balvikas movement, the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas gurus remember with reverence and gratitude the invaluable contribution of the stalwarts who have left behind an indelible mark on Balvikas in Karnataka.



Smt. Kamala Padmanabhan

Smt. Vimala Seshadri

Smt. Saraswathi Natarajan

Smt. Usha Pillai

Smt. Shantha Diwakar

Smt. Sunandamma

Smt. Kalyani Sundaram

Smt. Meera Pai

Smt. Shantamma

Smt. Nallu Ganapathy

Smt. A. Susheela

Smt. Lakshmi Nagaraj

Smt. Sucharita Chandrashekar

Smt. B. N. Kusuma Kumari

Sri Cheelurappa B.

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DIVYA VANI



The Vedas tell us: na karmāna (not by acts), na prajāya (not by progeny), na dhanena (nor by riches), thyāgena ekena (only by renunciation) amritatwam anasuh (can immortality be attained). So, renounce, renounce! Serve and give your knowledge, your delight, and your love gladly to the children. Serve thus the society and the people.

The Sathya Sai Balvikas gurus are doing this service wholeheartedly. I believe they will continue their efforts even more sincerely and gladly. The resolutions you will arrive at in this conference should not only be inscribed on paper, but also must be followed and practised in actual day-to-day teaching in the classes. I am sure each one of you is determined to do your best in the service of the children, the society, and the precious heritage of Indian culture.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

November 20th, 1979

FOREWORD



Loving Sairam to All,

The noble movement of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas took roots in the year 1969 when Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba instructed the Mahila Vibhag to start classes for children. This movement thus lovingly founded by HIM has now grown into a huge, beautiful tree with a firm foundation.

Balvikas means blossoming of Human Excellence. The values are inherent within each individual and Balvikas provides the right environment for these latent human values to blossom and empower the child to unfold the innate values within oneself to the highest order of perfection. The focus is in bringing an inner transformation within each child. This 9-year program has made a great impact on children and we now have testimonials of children growing up into responsible citizens who are an asset not only to the family but to the society as well.

I congratulate the Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas Team of Karnataka for their zeal, dedication, and sacrifice over the years. It is indeed heartening to see the Balvikas alumni and gurus offering this garland of love in the form of articles and poems on the joyous occasion of Bhagawan's 95th Advent.

I pray that Bhagawan showers HIS Divine Grace and love on all the members so that they can continue to serve and help bring in a new world order based on human values.

Regards,
Venkataramana Gosavi

State President, Karnataka (South)
Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations





HIS Vision Our Mission



“My mother was instrumental in encouraging the gurus in their work, and in filling their hearts with love for Swami so that they too could serve Him by teaching young children Swami’s message of love and service.”

Smt. Geetha Mohanram on Smt. Kamala Padmanabhan



From “i” to “we” to “I”

My mother, Mrs. Kamala Padmanabhan, was born in February 1930 and passed away in July 2019. She has left a legacy of love and devotion to her chosen God, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. She saw Him for the first time in 1944 in Chamrajpet, Bangalore, when she visited her aunt. Swami, a young 18-year-old divine Avatar recognized by an incredibly fortunate few, was staying in south Bangalore at that time. Kamala, a young girl of 14 years, went to see Him; she was immediately called to His physical presence and told **“I will see you in a few months with your husband in Puttaparthi.”** This rattled the young girl who had dreams of becoming a doctor, but true to the divine words, her marriage was soon arranged in the tradition of those days to Dr. R. S. Padmanabhan, a young budding dental surgeon. As a newlywed couple, they went to Puttaparthi in March of 1945.

My father’s family, through his uncle Sri Sheshagiri Rao, were already devotees of Bhagawan, and so her journey with her life partner began under the divine umbrella of Swami. Love for Swami and the impact of His divine message of love and service to fellow human beings resonated in the hearts of this couple. Swami involved them in His universal mission wherever He thought they could serve. My father, Dr. Padmanabhan, was fortunate to serve Swami in various capacities, first as His companion and attendant, and then in the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation from the late 1960s when it was formed till his death in 2008. Swami graced our home with His divine presence regularly and my brother Prithvi and I were fortunate to enjoy His proximity and Divine *leelas*, as well as to imbibe Swami’s love and His message.

When Swami decided to start the Balvikas program in 1968 as the foundation for the golden future of the world, He chose a few blessed ladies like my mother Kamala Padmanabhan, Shantha Diwakar, Saraswathi Natarajan, Usha Pillai and Vimala Sheshadri to mention a few, to start small Balvikas classes for neighborhood children. As this program took root, Swami directed my mother to take on the responsibility of leading the Balvikas program throughout the state of Karnataka and to train ladies in the state to start Balvikas classes. This was a huge responsibility, but my mother took it on with deep faith in Swami. Having been married at such a young age, she was a housewife with just a high school education but her faith in Swami gave her the self-confidence to do His work for 25 years. Under Swami’s direct guidance, she served Him by training hundreds of Balvikas gurus all over the state of Karnataka, at a time when women hardly left home to pursue careers or take up outside responsibilities.

My mother was instrumental in encouraging the gurus in their work, and in filling their hearts with love for Swami so that they too could serve Him by teaching young children Swami's message of love and service.

As a child, I watched my mother put her heart and soul into this work. Swami with His loving guidance answered every question, whether it was about the training of gurus or creating the syllabi for classes or dealing with travel to distant villages and small towns to start Balvikas programs.



Before every trip my mother made, Swami would assure her that He would travel with her. My mother's joy knew no bounds for being chosen to do His work when there were so many people who were far more qualified than her.

I recollect an amazing incident in the early 1970s that showed Swami's Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omniscience when my mother had to travel to a small rural town in the north-eastern part of Karnataka. After taking permission from Swami, she left Bangalore with an older lady from Coorg, Mrs. Madiman, and Mrs. Sunandamma from Bangalore. They arrived at Bidar at 4 p.m. They were expecting to be met by the Sai Samithi organizers and taken by bullock cart to a small village about 45 minutes away where the Balvikas training program was to start the following day. Much to their surprise, no one had come to pick them up and they had no alternate arrangements for their stay or for their return to Bangalore. As the skies darkened into evening and they sat anxiously stranded under the tree in an unknown small town with no hotels, they quietly began to recite Swami's *Ashtottara Shatanamavali*.

My mother, who treated her gurus as her own children, felt she had failed in her duties in taking care of them on this trip. Suddenly a bus arrived, and a young man dressed in white clothes got out and saw the unusual sight of three ladies sitting under a tree, praying. It was about 7:30 p.m. He suddenly recognized my mother and introduced himself as one of the teachers from the Sri Sathya Sai school in Alike, Karnataka. He asked them why they were in this town so late in the evening sitting under a tree. On hearing their story, he made arrangements for them to stay for the night in the warehouse or godown of an acquaintance, and brought them some bananas and milk for dinner as their last meal had been at noon on the bus.

When they asked him why he had traveled here, the young man said that he was to have got off the bus about 4 towns before but had fallen asleep and missed the stop! He disembarked in Bidar in the hope of staying with his acquaintance for the night and returning the following day. Thanking Swami for His infinite grace and having spent a night in the godown with rice and wheat bags for company, the ladies prepared to go back to Bangalore the following day. However, early next morning while they were getting ready for their return trip, the Sai Samithi people arrived, almost in tears. They explained that the mother of the person who had organized the program had passed away in Madras and in his grief the man had miscommunicated the date of their arrival. This was 1971 when no cell phones or even land lines were available in small towns. The only mode of communication available in an emergency were telegrams which they had received late the previous night. The devotees took the ladies to their village and cared for them as though Swami Himself had arrived, with a great deal of love and apologies for the mishap.



After a successful training program, these ladies returned to Bangalore and then went to have Swami's darshan in Brindavan. Swami smilingly told them their story in His own words, "I sent Alike Krishna Murthy to help you. I made him sleep and miss his bus stop as you were chanting 'ASAHAYA SAHAYAYA NAMAHA'. He got down in Bidar instead and helped you." The love of Mother Sai was a tangible experience for these ladies.

After serving Him for 25 years from 1968 to 1993 as per Swami's direction, my mother had the great honor of being blessed by His Grace.

He blessed her with a ring with three diamonds and put a beautiful shawl around her shoulders, lovingly saying, "Kamamma, you served me with *Prema* and *Bhakthi* all these years! The three diamonds represent the Trikarana Shuddhi with which you did your work, and the gold represents the purified SELF. From the small "i" – pride – in the fact that you had been asked to serve, you reached the state of "we" and worked together with everyone to please Swami, and finally transformed to the universal "I" where Swami, the work, the gurus, and the children all became One."

As we sat in the interview room listening to these beautiful and profound words with tears rolling down our cheeks, we realized that the purpose of our human existence is to transform ourselves from "i" our ego, to "we", love for all God's creation and ultimately to the Divine "I", becoming one with our beloved Sai.



SMT. GEETHA MOHANRAM, U.S.A.

Daughter Of

SMT. KAMALA PADMANABHAN



Balvikas is not just a program. It is a noble movement that took roots in the year 1968 with the founding of Sri Sathya Sai Mahila Vibhag. Swami instructed Mahila Vibhag in 1969 to start BalaVihars for the children above six years of age and they were imparted education from the content drawn from ancient scriptures with Divine guidance, through the methodology of storytelling, enacting plays and singing Bhajans etc. Bhagawan later changed the name of BalaVihar into BalVikas in 1971, redefining the education system created by Him as the system aiming at the Blossoming of Human Excellence.





"It was a proud moment for me, to see one of my mother's students achieve such great heights in her life. It made me realize the extent to which my mother had touched people's lives."

Smt. Mrudula on Smt. Sunandamma



SWAMI THE DIVINE MOTHER

It is my proud privilege to narrate the exciting experience of my mother, Smt. Sunanda, who was a senior Balvikas guru and a resource person. She started *Balvihar* classes way back in 1969, both residential and school. Later, in the year 1971 *Balvihar* was renamed as Balvikas by Swami. Her earliest darshan of Swami was at Smt. Sakamma's residence, where Swami was on a visit for a few days. My mother and grandmother had the opportunity to speak to Swami directly at this time.

I lost my father at a very early age and we were four in the family – my mother, brother and younger sister. To find solace during these difficult times, we visited Puttaparthi for Swami's darshan, where Swami invited my mother for an interview and assured her that He would take care of our family. Those days, we were staying at Vyalikaval, where our uncle was heading a school. To run the family, which was an urgent need, my mother who was a science graduate joined the evening college for a B.Ed. course. After graduating from the course, she started conducting Balvikas classes in the school premises. This was the starting point for her illustrious career in the teaching profession. Subsequently, she underwent Balvikas training and travelled all over Karnataka as a resource person and a trainer for training the gurus. For these training programs, she would hand-make teaching aids to better explain the meanings and concepts contained in the *shlokas*, stories and *bhajans*. Her dedication was unparalleled when creating these aids. She had once prepared a chart by collecting pictures of all 36 deities described in the Sarva Dharma prayer. This was no easy feat considering the lack of mass media communications such as internet or magazines in those days. Her sessions on *Bhaja Govindam* and *Bhagavad Gita* are still fondly remembered by senior gurus today. My mother was honoured with the best teacher award in the Bangalore district by the Government of Karnataka.

I would like to share an interesting experience of a boy aged 8 years who joined the school where my mother was teaching. He lacked the power of speech and was unable to express himself. The boy's parents were very worried about the condition of their child. In accordance with the prayer *Sarva Vancha Phala Sri Gayatri*, my mother arranged to initiate *Brahmopadesham* to the boy and taught him to chant the *Gayatri mantra*. Much to the surprise of his parents, in a span of 3-4 months the boy started speaking words, and within a year was able to converse normally with others around him.

My mother as a Balvikas guru, for over 35 years has trained many children by inculcating moral values and Swami's teachings, thereby shaping them as good human beings. In one of the episodes of *Sai Bhagavatham*, a talk series conducted by Sri Sathya Sai International Organization – U.S.A., I stumbled upon the interview of Smt. Lakshmi Vyakaran who was one of my mother's students.



Smt. Lakshmi is the President for Region 7 in Sri Sathya Sai International Organization and was the headmistress of Delhi Public School, Faridabad. She is also involved in helping children in the Autism spectrum by conducting online SSE (Sai Spiritual Education) classes for them. It was a proud moment for me, to see one of my mother's students achieve such great heights in her life. It made me realize the extent to which my mother had touched people's lives.

My brother and younger sister studied in Swami's institutions and all of us are actively involved in the organization activities in our own might. As we ourselves were Balvikas children under our mother's wing, we had the opportunity to participate in the Balvikas rallies and activities. On one such occasion, I had the golden opportunity to be the *Kalasha* bearer, where I was able to walk alongside Swami from His residence up until the hostel in Brindavan. Now I have been a Balvikas guru for the last 25 years. We are ever grateful to our mother for having introduced us to Balvikas.

As He promised, Swami took care of us at our most troubling times. He continues to Bless and Guide us in carrying on the legacy of our mother. Jai Sai Ram.



SMT. MRUDULA, BANGALORE

Daughter Of

SMT. SUNANDAMMA



“Share and Care is educare.’ It is a phenomenon spread all over the world. We were fortunate to have gone through such incidents. That is Sai’s love or call it Prema Dhaara.”

Smt. C. Sucharita



SWAMI – MY GURU, GOD AND GUIDE

*“Ye poorva punyamo, Ye pooja phalamo, Jani inchinamu Eee Sai Yugamunandu,
Ye manchi poovulan preminchinamo, Thana sannidhiki cherche mammu Sri Sai Maatha.”*

“By the strength and merits of our previous births and as a result of the meritorious deeds and worship, we were chosen to be born in this Sai Yuga. By our good fortune and her divine love, Sai Matha has taken us into her fold – the Sai Fold.”

Dear members of the Sai family, Sai Ram to all. I wish to share with you all a wonderful thought expressed by a senior devotee in his address to the devotees at Prasanthi Nilayam in the divine presence way back in 1950’s: “It’s our fortune to be contemporaries of a *Yuga Avatar*.”

In our family, our elders, grandparents, uncles and aunts took to *Parthi Yatra* as they called it, with such enthusiasm and joy that as very young children we just followed them and enjoyed it too. Their “share and care” approach was just unimaginable! The entire group was called “Bangalore Group”.

What drew them to Him so much! The proximity, the conversations, the songs, the evening visits to Chitravathi riverbed, the *leelas*, *mahimas* and the interactions were so impactful and blissful that it enthused them to share this divine experience with each other. Our elders, especially women had not been formally educated but they were smart in every sense of the term. The concept of share and care was felt and experienced by them. Though very young, we could imbibe all these by just watching them.

Well, our groups’ journey to Puttaparthi called “*Parthi Yatra*” started in December 1943. It has been almost seventy-seven years and it still continues. Our youngsters living in different corners of the world continue with their “*Parthi Yatra*” even today. We strongly feel it is only due to His grace!

There was one very fascinating trait noticed in our group. That was music. Listening to and singing songs had become a deep-rooted habit in our group. A very good and timely encouragement was given to both young and old. As the number of devotees visiting from different parts of the country grew, Bhajans had a very strong influence. New songs were composed in regional languages too like Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, and Hindi and so on. The songs, set in mesmerizing *raaga* and *taala*, conveyed His divine messages too. Not only that, they motivated the youngsters to join the group.

I can recollect a few incidents during our childhood, which gently guided us in the right direction. In spite of their busy routine, our elders were very particular about their morning prayers and poojas. But I wonder why it never occurred to them to guide us, the youngsters to do the same.

Once during *Akhanda Bhajan* in the year 1949 or 1950, Swami made a statement which really made us wake up from our slumber. He casually said that He was happy with the involvement and the role the children played during the 3-day *Akhanda Bhajan* Program, though they never even thought of prayers both morning and evening throughout the year. It shook us all and the youngsters from the very next day started the Morning Prayer sessions. The parents were stunned. It was like “Arise, Awake, stop not till you reach the goal” of Swami Vivekananda. Bhagawan taught us a wonderful lesson which we were happy to learn and practice.

We would involve in several activities on our own. *Akhanda Bhajan* was held once a year for nearly 25 years in Bangalore. The elders were the pioneers I should say. Swami used to attend this 24-hour non-stop *bhajan* and our group that consisted of 6-8 families together conducted this *bhajan*. This occasion used to be a very happy and joyful function for all.

During one such *Akhanda bhajan*, the elders felt we youngsters should have lunch and take over the *bhajan* while they took a break to have their “*palaharam* – tiffin”. So, we all rushed to the dining hall and were enjoying the lunch. Suddenly the room door opened, and Swami stood at the door. We all tried to get up, but Swami said, “**Very good. Bhajan is going on there and Bhojanam here. Santhosham.**” We were shocked and at the same time felt sad too. Then and there we youngsters decided to follow our elders. What a lesson! What a way to teach! That’s our Sai Matha.

I am happy to share with you our joy – today the present generation of this group are all regularly involved in morning prayers.

Friends, this is really a boon. Swami used to say, “*Mee Anubhavam penchukondi! Vatini naluguritha panchukundi.*” [You increase your joy, at the same time, share the same with others] “Share and Care is educate.” It is a phenomenon spread all over the world. We were fortunate to have gone through such incidents. That is Sai’s love or call it *Prema Dhaara*.

I pray to Bhagawan to bless us to achieve love always and help our youngsters to get into the same stream of Sai Love. I pray to Swami to shower His Love and Grace on all.



SMT. C. SUCHARITA
BANGALORE



"She strictly followed Swami's teaching, "The goal of education should not be to just acquire theoretical knowledge but to practically apply it in your life.""

Smt. Priya Pai on Smt. Meera Pai



THE DIVINE VOYAGE!

With complete dedication to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and His mission, Smt. Meera S. Pai served in the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Karnataka for 4 decades. During this period, she served as *Sevadal* and also attended all major festivals in Prasanthi Nilayam. Her dedicated service at the canteen and the care with which she swept the sands, the pathway of Swami's *Darshan* in the hot scorching sun, convey her clear understanding of the significance of being a part of Swami's Divine mission.

After Swami started the Balvikas program in 1969, she became a Balvikas guru in the Mangalore Seva Kshetra. Her contribution to Balvikas is noteworthy. There were about 100 children who were attending her class then. Following Swami's instruction, very enthusiastically, she converted the *Bhagavad Gita Dhyana Shloka* class which she had started in 1967, to a Balvikas class in 1969. Imbibing Swami's way of teaching, she brought the essence of *Bhagavad Gita* and *Bhaja Govindam shlokas* to the forefront so that children could apply them in their daily lives. She strictly followed Swami's teaching, **"The goal of education should not be to just acquire theoretical knowledge but to practically apply it in your life."**

She used to teach all 3 groups of Balvikas students. Moreover, she was instrumental in starting Balvikas centers in all district Samithis, homes of devotees, schools, Remand homes, *Shishu vihars* etc. She encouraged housewives to become Balvikas gurus and organised several training camps to improve the quality of teaching. She also attended several State and All India Balvikas conferences and motivated other gurus to attend too. Thus, she reached out to many corners of Karnataka and proved to be a guru who was always keen to remove the darkness of ignorance. Even after she became the State Spiritual Coordinator, her passion for Balvikas stayed with her. She had many Vedic *mantras* and *stotras* at her fingertips. She was also an exceptionally good *bhajan* singer.

Due to the proximity of the family with Bhagawan, she had innumerable interviews where Swami used to ask her about the various activities in the 4 districts that she oversaw. The initial foundation that she laid for Balvikas has helped the present Balvikas gurus and children to continue with her good work.

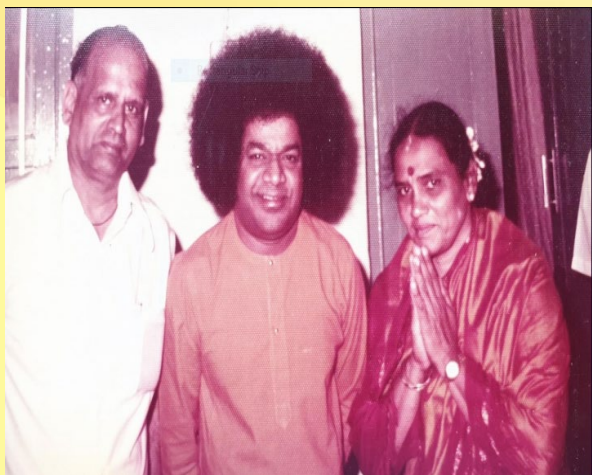
Swami advised women to be *Gruha Lakshmis* and she verily was one. Her devotion and dedication had tremendous influence on the family. Her husband Sri. M.S. Pai was the State coordinator for 4 districts. All her children are totally involved in the Sai Organization across the globe. Her son Sri. M. Padmanabha Pai is presently the State President, Karnataka North, her daughter in law Smt. Priya Pai was a Balvikas guru, a resource person and is now the State Mahila Seva Coordinator.

Her daughter Smt. Malathi Nayak was running a Sai center and is now a Balvikas guru in the U.S.A. and Dr. Geetha Kamath runs a Sai Center and also has been attending international medical camps twice a year in Prasanthi Nilayam for the last 3 decades. All her grandchildren are Balvikas alumni, active participants in Sai Seva activities and now great grandchildren are Balvikas students too.

Impact of Smt. Meera Pai on her Balvikas students

As a dedication to Smt. Meera Pai, her Balvikas student writes how she was inspired by her. She narrates her personal experience here:

"In 1969, Balvikas classes were conducted at Pandeshwar Temple by Balvikas guru Smt. Meera Pai hailing from Gandhi Nagar, Mangalore. As a Balvikas student, I would attend the classes once a week. Our guru was blessed to have many divine experiences with our beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. She would often narrate these experiences in the form of a story, which instilled devotion and faith in all the students towards Swami. Since then, she has been a role model to me in leading my life and my devotion towards Swami.



In 1996, I was a teacher working at Canara Girls High School. During that time Hepatitis disease was rampant in the environment. A girl studying in seventh standard lost her life to this deadly disease. It further claimed the lives of three girls from our school as a cure for this disease was yet to be found. My daughter, Poornima, was studying in sixth standard. As ill fate would have it, she lost consciousness one day, as she too had contracted this disease. Two months passed. One day, when I was teaching in school, our headmistress received a call from the hospital informing that my daughter was in a critical condition.

Immediately I took half a day leave and went to the hospital. I would daily go to Sai Medicals to buy medicines. I would diligently pray to Swami to cure my daughter. While my child was in her last moments, a doctor came to me and asked me to take my daughter to Manipal immediately. He spoke about a doctor named Setu Kumar who had found a cure for this disease but was yet to test it. Immediately, we carried an almost lifeless child to him as a last resort.

At night time I would stand outside the ICU praying for a miracle and in the mornings, I would go to work commuting via bus. One day, a lady doctor came to me and said, "Don't feel sad, I will take care of your daughter, you can go and attend to your other responsibilities" and walked away smiling. I was puzzled as to who could be so kind. So, I went to the said doctor and asked a host of questions such as, "Will you really take care of my child the entire night attending to all her needs patiently? Where are you from? What is your name?" To this the doctor smiled at me and answered all my questions saying her name was Sai Geeta and she was from Andhra Pradesh. She was wearing a saffron coloured dress and a white coat on top of it.

On 5th August, the doctor informed me that my daughter has gained consciousness and that she will be discharged soon. But the doctor also informed me that my child's vision was not fully recovered, and her legs were also too weak. I was extremely disappointed.

Then the kind doctor advised me to have faith and work hard, everything was going to be alright and went away. I wanted to thank the doctor in person. So, I visited the doctor's room and asked for Dr. Sai Geeta. Everyone laughed at me and said there was no one named as such and made fun of me. That is when I realized the abundant Grace and Kindness showered on me by our beloved Lord. When I was just a student I used to love and pray to Him. Since then there have been many such experiences in my life where Swami has showered immense Love and Grace.



Hence as a headmistress, I have dedicated my complete life for Swami's Balvikas children and am working diligently. My gratitude to dear Swami and my Balvikas guru, Smt. Meera Pai Madam, who instilled in me this devotion to Swami."

Thus, Smt. Meera Pai encouraged many children to discover their latent potential and orient their lives on the trajectory of human excellence. No wonder, a few moments before Smt. Meera Pai breathed her last, she looked at the entrance to her room and said, "LOOK SWAMI IS HERE!" Great merit she earned through her dedicated service!



SMT. PRIYA PAI, MANGALORE

Daughter-In-Law Of

SMT. MEERA PAI



"It was a valuable lesson for me to approach children and parents with love, and a reminder that Swami was the Doer of it all; I was just a very insignificant instrument in His hands."

Smt. Geetha Mohanram



Teacher or guru?

When Swami started the Balvikas program, my mother Mrs. Kamala Padmanabhan was blessed by Swami to lead the program as the first Karnataka State Balvikas coordinator. She traveled all over the state to start Balvikas classes and train gurus. As He did frequently in those days, Swami visited us for dinner one day in 1973. As He talked to us in our living room, He turned to my mother and asked her how she managed the Balvikas class she held in our home when she traveled. She replied that on the weekends that she traveled, the children got together and sang *bhajans* and recited *shlokas* by themselves and that I engaged the younger children with stories. Swami then turned to me and said, **"From now on, you conduct the classes as Kamalamma has to travel to start classes and train gurus."** I turned to look behind me, expecting that He was speaking to one of my older cousins, but He said, **"Where are you looking? I am talking to you."** As we stared at Him in shock, my mother said, "Swami, she is in 10th standard and just 15 years old. The children in the class are her friends." Swami said **"Telusu – I know. She has been listening to stories, reciting *shlokas* and singing *bhajans* all her life. She will teach these children and you can go and do your work without worrying about the class."** On that day, Swami blessed me greatly by allowing me to become a small tool in His *Avataric* Mission.

Thereafter, Swami took great personal interest in me, teaching me how to conduct the class. **"Life is a big drama,"** He said, **"When you play the role of a hero or the villain you have to dress and act appropriate to that role. Now that you are a guru, you must behave like a guru and forget that the children in the class are your friends. You must dress and behave with dignity and practice what you tell the children if you want them to believe you."** This was a huge responsibility especially as Swami had placed his trust in me to teach His beloved children, His *premaputras*. My class soon began to fill up, and with it, my little ego grew too. I began to feel proud at the size of my class of 45 children, while other gurus barely had 10 children in theirs. I was quite convinced that my teaching techniques were wonderful, forgetting at the immature age of 16, who the Doer really was.

Some months later when Swami blessed us again with a visit to our home, I proudly invited all my Balvikas children to have Swami's *Darshan*. I introduced "MY" children to Swami and told Him I had been teaching them for a year now. Swami sweetly blessed me saying **"Chala santosham – very happy!"** But as the days went by children started leaving for no particular reason, and my class of 45 dwindled to 6 children in about 3 months! My bloated ego took a hit. On Swami's next visit, I did not invite the children as I did not want to admit to Swami that my formerly large class was now so small.



But barely 15 minutes after His arrival, He turned to me and asked, **“Where are the children?”** I replied that they had not come.

Our Omnipresent Lord then said, **“They did not come or you did not invite them because there are only 6? Out of the six, four of them are siblings from the same family.”** As I bent my head in embarrassment, my ego wounded, He lovingly bent forward, patted my cheek, and said **“Quantity *kaadu bangaru*, quality important – It’s not the quantity but the quality that is important.”** He directed me to go personally to each house and find out why the children had stopped coming.

So, I visited each child’s home to ask about them and talk about the program. The parents were extremely happy that I had taken the trouble to visit them and to get to know them. They sent the children back to class.

It was a valuable lesson for me to approach children and parents with love, and a reminder that Swami was the Doer of it all; I was just a very insignificant instrument in His hands.

With Swami’s guidance, I graduated from college with a degree in Early Childhood Education and obtained certification as a Montessori teacher. Swami then appointed me as a trainer for the Education in Human Values (EHV) program under the leadership of Mrs. Kalyani Sundaram. After performing my marriage to my husband Mohanram in Brindavan, He told me to work in Aurobindo Memorial High School, reminding me to make sure I underlined my teaching with human values. In 1988 He directed our family, now including our twin sons, to move to the U.S.A. We were very reluctant to leave Swami, our parents and our motherland but He insisted that being away from His physical form would make us grow spiritually and practice His message better. He told me to teach kindergarten (KG) in America and promised that we would be near and dear to Him wherever we were.

My new life in a new country included the Sri Sathya Sai Center of South Bethesda. I started working as a KG teacher in a private school and taught Balvikas at the Center. As a KG teacher I tried to bring in Swami’s message of universal love into all my class activities. In September 2000, as I was preparing for a new term, the preschool teachers in the school warned me to be prepared for a particular 5-year-old who was coming to my class. They said he was terrible and was going to make my life miserable. But I was very confident in my abilities and remarked smilingly that 5 years was too short a time to become all that bad! I was sure I could handle him. My first day that term literally began with a bang. The handsome little American 5-year-old entered my class, picked up a chair and threw it across the room at another child, almost hitting him. The next few months were a nightmare with other children being hurt, infuriated parents questioning my abilities as a teacher, and my own sense of confidence being greatly shaken. I dreaded this child, did not feel any love for him and could not do my duty as a teacher lovingly.

I prayed intensely to Swami begging for His help; otherwise, I told Him, I would have to resign as my job had become a miserable experience for me. One morning, unable to face the class, I wrote my resignation letter. I mentally apologized to Swami for disobeying His command to teach and went to school with the intention of handing in my resignation after school. As my little monster arrived with his mother, he asked me quite sweetly if he looked handsome today.

I jokingly said to him that more than being handsome on the outside, he should be handsome inside. For some strange reason, this statement caught his attention and he wanted to know what being handsome inside meant. When I said it meant that he had to be nice and kind to his friends, something seemed to awaken the human values embedded deep inside him.

Throughout the day, he continued asking me if he was handsome every time; he stopped himself from hurting his little friends. By the end of the day, no one was hurt, and my resignation letter stayed in my pocket. Needless to say, Swami had helped me and due to that unprepared sentence that came out of my mouth, this child dramatically changed over the next few weeks.

That summer when I visited Parthi, Swami blessed our family with an interview and as soon as we entered the room, His first words were **“How is your handsome rowdy?”**



Thanks to Swami's Grace, my *“rowdy”* moved on and a few years later in 5th grade, he was appointed to be the playground conflict resolver for his class and received the Best Student reward. He never knew Swami, but I am sure Swami has big plans for him in this world.

In 2003, after 30 years of teaching Balvikas, I was blessed with a touching and memorable moment of joyful gratitude when Swami introduced me to a group in the interview room saying, **“This is Geetha from the U.S.A., she is a Balvikas guru.”** One of the ladies asked Swami if I was a teacher in America and He said, **“When you just teach without love you are a teacher. When you try to practice and teach with love you are a guru.”**



SMT. GEETHA MOHANRAM

U.S.A.

Diving deep into HIS Glory





"Swami laughed and asked, 'Gang? Do you know the meaning of gang?' 'No Swami.,' the children replied."

Smt. Hema Shenoy



MY LORD – MY MASTER – MY ALL

The Divine Escort

It was in 1972, that I came to Bangalore from Mumbai. This year has been a significant year in my life as it established my deep divine connection with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I got my first *Darshan* of Swami at Brindavan then. Divine memories flash across my mind and I recall all of them with deep gratitude to Bhagawan! Having lost my husband and with two small children to take care of, it seemed like the end of the world to me. Bhagawan held my hand at every step and guided me through the journey of life as my mother, guru and God protecting me like the eyelids protecting the eyes. He gave a new meaning, direction and a goal to my life and blessed me to become a Balvikas guru.

Blossoms at Brindavan

The same year on December 28th, under Swami's instruction, I started conducting Balvikas class. Since then, I have been blessed to conduct classes for many batches of students by Baba's grace. There were about 60 students in the class and we had the good fortune to take the children to Brindavan 2-3 times in a year. Swami used to interact with the children happily. On one of those occasions, Swami came directly to us and with a broad smile, He asked the children, "***Ellinda banthu ee gangu?***" [Where is this gang from?] The children shouted in a chorus, "Rajajinagar Swami..." Swami laughed and asked, "***Gang? Gang andare artha gottha...***" [Do you know the meaning of gang?] "***Illa Swami***" [No, Swami] the children replied. Then Swami explained, "***Gang helthare kallara gumpu, neevu kallaragumpa?***" [Are you thieves?] The children said "No, Swami". Then Swami told them a very important thing, "***If someone asks you who are you? You tell them, 'Naavu Sathya Sai bhaktharu.'***" [We are Sathya Sai devotees] Then He asked me to take *Padanamaskar*. In spite of being instructed by me not to get up from their places, when the children saw Swami giving *Padanamaskar* to me, they hopped like frogs from their places. Swami told them, "***Wait, sit in a line. I will come to you. Balvikas children Discipline.***" Then the compassionate Lord distributed chocolates and bananas to all the children.

Gifts of Love

Years passed with many such sweet interactions with Bhagawan. As the class strength was increasing, I told Swami about it and expressed my desire to divide the class into two groups. Swami approved of it and instructed me to take another class on Tuesdays which I still follow.

Another instance I recall is during one of the summer courses Swami permitted us to send Balvikas students for service, and from my class 14 children were selected. Swami very lovingly gave pants and shirts for the boys, and sarees for the girls to be worn on the valedictory function day. The children remember all these with gratitude even today.

The Supreme counsellor Sai

I had the good fortune of being present during Karnataka Balvikas gurus' gatherings in the Divine presence. During these occasions, we used to sit with rapt attention to pick and pocket the rare Divine gems. Once Swami told us about rights and duties. He mentioned that people demand rights but forget their duties which is very wrong. He advised us to give importance to duty first. Another instance Swami told us, **"I have given you Balvikas children, they are your *premaputras*, and they will love you."** Swami emphatically advised us about the importance of practice before preaching. He once told us to be *bodhe* guru [guide] and not *baadhe* guru.

In the gurus' conference, during the question and answer session, someone told Swami that the number of the children was decreasing, and that they were not regular in attending the class. Swami instantly said it is not the children's mistake; it is the gurus' mistake. We realised how important it is to design the Balvikas class in such a way that children feel happy to come to the class.

Master Coordinator of Events

I recollect another unforgettable incident where I could see Swami's Divine Grace and Love. This happened 1-2 years after I started taking Balvikas classes. As we were living in a rented house there were rental rules, and it was the owner's call as to how long we could stay. The owner asked us to vacate the house. Since it was a centrally located place which was convenient for children to attend, I did not want to move away. I was praying Swami to take care of this problem and allow me to continue my Balvikas. All of a sudden in a few days' time, some rent control authorities came asking for me. After their visit, I came to know that our house was put under rent control act, meaning the owner could not ask me to vacate. I had not spoken about this problem to anyone. It was verily Swami's hand at work. I conducted Balvikas in that house for 27 years.

Swami always says Balvikas children should be like street lamps showing the path and light up the roads by being truthful, disciplined and helpful! He takes care and guides us. It is up to us to look in His direction and follow Him.

Golden moments

He has been my *Apadbhandava*. How can I forget Swami's immense compassion when He graciously conducted my son's *upanayanam* and my daughter's wedding in the interview room itself as promised earlier! It is only His grace that gives me confidence to continue my journey as a Balvikas guru even after 47 years.

A heartfelt prayer to you Swami – 'Guide me to be ever grateful to you till my last breath.'



SMT. HEMA SHENOY
BANGALORE WEST



"Swami walked amidst us, talking in Tamil and also distributed watches. It was a gift and a message from the Lord that I should WATCH – my words, action, thought, character and heart!"

Smt. Priya Sivaram



ANTARANGA SAI – THE ETERNAL GUIDE

My loving pranams at the Divine lotus feet of our beloved Bhagawan. I was fortunate to be born in a family of Sai devotees. My grandparents were ardent devotees of Sri Shirdi Sai and Sri Parthi Sai. Swami cured my father of jaundice with an apple a few days before his wedding with my mother. My sisters and I grew up in a Chennai household where there were *Sai bhajans* and we were enrolled in Balvikas as soon as we turned five.

Divine blessings

My parents had taken me to Swami when I was a toddler. Swami gently placed His hand on my head and told my mother in Tamil, *"Amma, iva romba kshemama iruppa"* [Mother, she will have a blessed life] Whenever I face a challenging situation or feel low in life, recollecting His blessing gives me enormous strength from within. It reassures me that the problems that I am facing in life are a part of the blessing too and the ultimate responsibility for whatever happens in my life is Bhagawan's as He is the One who has pronounced this blessing!! The Divine guru also performed my *Aksharabhyasam*, thus starting my learning process. The slate in which the divine hands wrote 'OM', when I was two years old, is now a personal treasure.

Ethereal memories

The earliest memory of my personal experience with Swami coincides with the day Sundaram – the Divine abode in Chennai, was inaugurated by Him – January 19th, 1981.

My sister and I, along with other Balvikas students were lined up on either side of the red carpet which was Swami's path as He would alight from the car to enter Sundaram. We were given flower petals on paper plates. Our gurus had instructed us to shower the petals gently when Swami walked in, remain standing in our places and not crowd around Swami.

We heard the *nadaswaram* start playing and the tempo of the *bhajans* increased. The sound of *Veda* chanting was heard at the entrance and we realized that Swami had arrived. We were very excited and craned our necks to catch a glimpse of the bright orange robe.

Swami walked down the carpet gracefully, almost as if He were gliding and entered Sundaram. He had His captivating smile as He moved between us, glancing at the students on either side. It was ethereal, something totally Pure and Divine. We showered the flower petals welcoming Him. Later when we were pulled up by our gurus, we realised that in our excitement, instead of offering the petals at Swami's feet, some of us had actually aimed at His head and shoulders!!

Balvikas – the royal gateway to Bhagawan

Every year, when Swami visited Chennai, in addition to the events like *Nagarsankirtan*, public discourses and *Darshans*, he spent time exclusively with Balvikas students, parents and gurus watching performances and distributing prizes to students. This was a huge motivation for us to work hard to excel in Balvikas exams as *Padanamaskar* from Swami was almost guaranteed if we topped the exams. Balvikas was indeed a direct route to Bhagawan!

Prized moments

In January 1989, I was to receive the gold medal from the Divine hands for standing first in the State in Group 3 Pre-sevadal exam under the guidance of my wonderful guru from Mandavali Samithi.

The function was held at Abbotsbury and Swami started distributing the prizes. I heard my name being called out – I went and stood before Swami. There had been a mix-up in calling out the names. Another student's certificate had been given to Swami and my gold medal and certificate were yet to reach His hands. I was standing gazing transfixed at Him, wishing that moment could last forever. Finally, I received the certificate and medal from His hands after the much cherished *padanamaskar*.

Swami walked amidst us, talking in Tamil and also distributed the watches that He had brought for us. As He came near me, I just clasped His hand with both my hands and He gently slipped the watch into my hands. It was a gift and also a message from the Lord that I should **"WATCH - my words, action, thought, character and heart!"**

During my teenage years, I had a sharp tongue and many times would feel regret or guilt after saying things that hurt others. This watch was a reminder to me that I should be careful about what I spoke or did. As I took on responsibilities in life and continuously tried putting into practice 'Watching my Words', I arrived at a technique.

In a conversation, when I am in doubt as to what to say or do next, I reach out to the Swami within and watch for His guidance. He gives the response that is most apt for the situation. This is possible only when the connection with *Antaranga Sai* is strong for which I have to watch my thoughts and actions as well! Well, this seems to be a lifelong effort and Sadhana. What a profound message given by our beloved Swami in such a simple manner! Love you, Swami!



SMT. PRIYA SIVARAM
BANGALORE WEST



"All of a sudden, my brother asked me to look up! Lo and behold! We could see a flame above our head!"

Smt. Priya Sujith



BALVIKAS – BOON FROM BHAGAWAN

Loving pranams at my beloved Bhagawan's Lotus Feet! Holding Bhagawan's Divine hands and walking with Him along various roads during this life's journey is indeed blissful! This is what I have experienced since my parents admitted me in Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas class in my childhood days. Since then, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and 'Sai Ram' chanting have been my constant companions!

Balvikas – a Sadhana

To continue the journey in Balvikas, Bhagawan so compassionately has given me the golden fortune to be a Balvikas guru too. Being a Balvikas guru, I always feel Swami's expectation of me has risen much higher. As Bhagawan gives importance to **"Practice before you Preach"** theory, I have experienced that unless I practice my words, they do not have impact on the children. This has made me understand the importance of being alert to obey the voice of conscience always. So, by becoming a Balvikas guru, I am given a chance to evolve into a human being with fundamental discrimination. Every Balvikas class opens to me a new arena for learning and to go into the depths of Bhagawan's teachings. It is a sweet sadhana Bhagawan has blessed me with. The interaction with the children and participation in various activities related to Balvikas lay the foundation for many insights!

Divine tests give the Taste of Divinity

The alliterative quote of Swami, **"Test is my Taste"**, is quite catchy! Initially, I used to ask Swami, 'Why do you test me like this?' However, when I go down my memory lane, I realize that as the tests multiply, miracles also multiply!

When I was down with a neuro ailment called cervical dystonia and the doctor said I had to cope up with that, I felt hopeless! During that period, I completely relied on Omkar chanting which is one of the important lessons of Balvikas. The three dreams of Swami I had during that time boosted my self-confidence. In the first dream, I saw mother Easwaramma asking Bhagawan to go and speak to me. [Since my childhood, I have had great admiration for mother Easwaramma]. Swami immediately turned towards me and enquired about my problem. He held my left hand and told me **"Tell your father."** It was a clear indication that my father being an Ayurvedic doctor, I should go for Ayurvedic treatment. In the next dream, Swami held my right hand giving me strength to bear the difficulties I encountered during that period. In the third one, Swami said, **"Don't worry; I will take care of you."** The treatment started and within three months to the utter surprise of the doctors, my neck which was moving involuntarily came to its steady position!

The Divine Flame

Another experience I recall is when I went to Swami's school at Srisailam, Kerala, accompanied by my younger brother, to apply for the post of a teacher soon after I completed my education. The place was not familiar to us at all. We reached late but luckily as the Principal was still there, I was able to submit my application. While returning, it was pitch dark and we couldn't see anything. We had neither a torch nor a mobile with us. I was so overtaken by fear and I continuously chanted Sairam. All of a sudden, my brother asked me to look up! Lo and behold! We could see a flame above our head! Looking at the flame we walked forward forgetting all our fears and we never realized how we reached the lit-up area! Bhagawan literally proved, **"Why fear when I am here."**

His helping Hand in the hour of need

Once after returning home from a picnic with my Balvikas children, I faced some shortage of money, which I needed urgently. I was in a fix. I called out to Bhagawan intensely and within a few seconds, suddenly I spotted some money on top of the cupboard, which had been empty a few minutes ago. This amount exactly tallied with the amount of shortage; it was not more not less. Swami manifested the money as I was praying and calling out to Him. I was so deeply touched and thanked Bhagawan profusely for saving me from an embarrassment. I feel so grateful to Bhagawan for letting me experience His Omnipresence, Omniscience and Omnipotence at the same time! He also conveyed a firm message that when we undertake the task that He has given us, He will take care of the rest.

The Divine Voice

What amazes me the most is Bhagawan's eagerness to correct us! For that He works in subtle levels which are difficult to pen! My routine reading of Sathya Sai Speaks gives me clear cut instructions from Bhagawan. Sometimes, it has been in the form of admonition if I have done anything which Bhagawan does not approve of, on that particular day. There were moments when I felt something was too much for me to bear, but then the next moment I could hear the voice from within telling me, **"All for your good. So, accept it as Divine blessings."** Indeed, when I reflect upon it, I feel Swami just wants our spiritual progress and for that He will go to any extent. The only thing is to allow Him to work on us. He is always willing to weed out the bad in us!

Being with Bhagawan's children in the chariot of life with the reins in His Divine Hands is a great honour for me and every moment is like a fresh flower blooming at the dawn. No word in the world is warm enough to express my gratitude to Bhagawan for letting me continue this beautiful Divine journey with Him and His children, which to me is the biggest boon from Him!



SMT. PRIYA SUJITH
BANGALORE WEST



"He pointed towards His heart with His five fingers. Yes, He was telling me that He had heard the conversation that I had with my friend."

Smt. Indira Rao



HRUDAYAVASI SAI

I came into Swami's fold in the year 1972. After the mandatory training, I began serving as a Balvikas guru in 1976. It has been a beautiful journey for 44 years and it is extremely difficult to pen down my memories which would perhaps run into several pages. I will however relate a couple of incidents which are close to my heart.

I am in your heart

This happened in the year 1992. I was in Delhi and used to conduct Balvikas classes in Rai school. One day after class I was travelling back home with my friend in an auto. I told her that I was feeling tired and felt palpitations in my heart. I also remarked that Swami was not caring about me. However, my friend did not agree with me. She said, "Swami is always with you. This time when you go to Parthi Swami will say 'Good' to you as you are a dedicated Balvikas teacher." After I reached home, I completely forgot about the conversation in the auto.

Every year in the month of August we used to go to Puttaparthi for *Prasanthi seva*. After the *seva*, Swami used to give *Padanamaskar* to all the *sevadals* members. We completed the *seva* allotted to us and were seated in rows waiting for Swami to arrive. When Swami came near, He looked straight at me and said **"Good"**. I was truly overjoyed! I said to Him *"Swami aap mere ghar mey hain na?"* Swami so graciously replied, **"Yes I am in your house."** Then He proceeded towards the other ladies.

After covering three or four lines, He once again came back towards me. It looked as if His eyes were searching for me. He stood near me and spoke in a voice that was audible to all those who were seated near me. He said, **"I am not in your home. I am in your heart."** He pointed towards His heart with His five fingers. Yes, He was telling me that He had heard the conversation that I had with my friend in the auto so many days back. He was assuring me that I need not worry about the palpitations when He is in my heart.

He moved on and once again for the third time He came near me and blessed the plate on which I had kept a *Vibhuthi* packet and Sai peppermint. How He found me amidst the group of ladies who were all in uniform, I wondered. This is an unforgettable experience for me. I still remember the gentle fun in His eyes when He spoke to me. Yes, there was a spiritual lesson too. We vacated our house three months later. The Omniscient Lord had known that we would be moving out of our house. But there is no doubt that He continues to reside in my heart.

In the year 2000 we shifted to Bangalore. I joined the Malleswaram Samiti initially. Later I began taking Balvikas classes in Sanjay Nagar. Swami listens and He grants all our wishes. How blessed we all are to be in His fold!

All Forms are Mine

This is an incident that took place in Delhi way back in 1981. A function had been organised for the *Bhoomi Pooja* for the building of the Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar. The Bhoomi Pooja was done by Swami Himself. At the venue, a huge pandal had been erected to accommodate the devotees. In front of the stage on either side the Balvikas children were made to sit. We, the Balvikas gurus were given the duty of maintaining discipline among the children. I was made to sit along with the boys. All the children were given pictures of different deities and some *Akshata* in a bowl and they were asked to do *Archana* while chanting '*Om Sri Sai Ram*'. This was prior to Swami's arrival.

After a while we heard the *nadaswaram* being played which announced the arrival of Swami.

Suddenly a boy, who had got the picture of Jesus Christ, asked me to change his picture because he didn't want the picture of a wounded and bleeding God. As Swami had already arrived there was no way I could obtain a different picture for him. So, I pacified him by saying that he was very fortunate to get the picture of Jesus Christ because it was 'Good Friday' and that Swami would surely bless him.

Swami went around on the ladies' side blessing the devotees and girls and then went to the stage and sat on His chair. The *bhajans* had commenced and all were immersed in the bliss of having the Divine *Darshan*. I prayed to Swami that He should come towards our side and bless us.

After a while, Swami got up and started walking towards us. My friend and I who were sitting facing each other made way for Swami and He came close to where the boys were seated. As He passed by, His Divine robe gently touched our laps. We felt so blessed by this Divine gesture. Swami went close to the boys and asked them what they were doing. Then He spoke to the boy with the picture of Jesus Christ, took his bowl containing the *Akshata* and blessed him and the other boys by putting the *Akshata* on their heads and on our heads too. He returned the *Akshata* bowl to the boy, blessed him again and returned to the stage. I was overcome with joy. I felt that Swami had validated my words that it was auspicious to do the *Pooja* for Jesus. Swami had used me as an instrument to teach a simple truth to the boy.

After the function I informed the boy's mother about what had happened and gave her the *Akshata* that Swami had blessed and asked her to take it home as *prasada*. The delighted mother gave me a few grains of rice which I have preserved to this day in my Pooja room. Swami, the Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent Lord reads every single thought of ours and observes all our actions. He is no doubt, *Paramatma* Himself.



SMT. INDIRA RAO
BANGALORE NORTH



"I prayed to Swami and started cycling singles, doubles, etc. and performing different stunts. After finishing, I saw that the tyre of the front wheel had no air."

Smt. M.L. Sudha



DIVINE PROXIMITY

We are indeed blessed to have seen and moved with the Lord who incarnated in human form as Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

My Balvikas journey continues...

The journey started as a Balvikas student in Bhilai (MP), continued as a Sai student in Anantapur (AP), and then as a Balvikas guru in Mysore. Prior to joining Anantapur College I never had the *Darshan* of Swami i.e. till 1982. After entering Swami's college at Anantapur, as the first batch of students of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, I experienced Swami's Grace, Love and Blessings. It is always His Sankalpa which can pull us to the proximity of the One, who is our mother, guru and all. Once surrendered to Him, He becomes the driving force for any activity.

The Divine Propeller

I would like to share an experience at Swami's college. After a long gap Swami visited the Anantapur campus in 1983 for the annual sports meet. I was involved in the bicycle tricks for which we had many days of rigorous practice. After the band program, I picked up my bicycle and was in position. Till the first round everything went on well. As we were moving further, it was becoming increasingly difficult for me to cycle. I prayed to Swami and started cycling singles, doubles etc. and performing different stunts. After finishing, I saw that the tyre of the front wheel had no air and was probably punctured. With a flat tyre, no one can cycle, except for Swami's grace and I completed my performance successfully without any hurdle. It was truly a miracle of divine grace.

Swami gave me another golden opportunity to represent the 1985 batch and lead the troupe with a flag during the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Anantapur College at Parthi on July 29th, 2018.

Blooming Buds of Love

After graduating from Anantapur, I joined my post-graduation course at Mysore. Swami's wish made me get involved in Balvikas activities. Under the guidance of senior gurus, I started Balvikas classes and enjoyed conducting the classes at schools, villages and other places. Children are the embodiments of Swami who taught me the values and to 'Practice what you preach.' Balvikas has been the main pillar and foundation of my life. It has brought in changes not only in the children but has transformed me as well.

Dramas in the Divine Presence

Last but not the least, November 1st, 2010, was the most memorable day of my life and the day when all dreams came true. Swami blessed 56 Balvikas children who performed in the drama of Bhakta Dhruva in the Sai Kulwant Hall. Along with the children both urban and rural, we gurus too received high voltage energy and blessings. Swami's love granted me the rarest chance to perform His Arati after the program.

I was gifted with the opportunity to co-ordinate this drama when it was re-enacted at Kalamandira in Mysore with a different set of Balvikas children; rural, urban and also the deaf and dumb students of Sairanga Educational Institution. It was the occasion of Swami's Birthday Celebrations in 2015. It was also to commemorate our glorious moments with Swami and for the benefit of those who couldn't attend Parthi previously.

We are fortunate to have experienced the Avatar in all aspects. Swami has showered His bountiful blessings till now and we would definitely be receiving His grace in the same manner in future with many such wonderful opportunities.



SMT. M.L. SUDHA
MYSORE

*Nature is the best preacher. Life is the best teacher.
Fill yourself with awe and reverence at the handiwork of God,
the manifestation of His power and glory that is called the world.
This is enough instruction and enough inspiration for you.*

- BABA



*"I suddenly saw Swami walking along with me on the railway track,
His eyes were so powerful that my mind calmed down completely as
though a mute button was pressed."*

Smt. Aarthi Balaji



MOTHER FATHER TEACHER DIVINE

Sairam! – I have seen this to be the household way of wishing and greeting people in our family from my childhood, thanks to my grand uncle, Late Sri Subramanian, Perambur. He recognized Swami as an Avatar and founded one of the earliest *Sai Mandalis*. He christened it as '*Sai Geetanjali*' in the early 1953. He has composed more than 100 *Carnatic Kritis* on Swami. My grandfather Late Sri P.S. Jayaraman, served as a priest at the Sai Temple in Guindy, Chennai, for nearly two decades and subsequently my father continues to do the same.

First *Darshan* of Bhagawan

My first *Darshan* of Swami was in 1982, at the Shirdi Sai temple at Guindy, Chennai, when I was five years old. I was part of the Balvikas class conducted at the Guindy Sai temple. Thursday *Bhajans* were a regular routine in our home.

Participation in Samithi activities

I had a strong yearning for Swami, listening to the amazing stories of interaction between Swami and my grand-uncle and the interview my father received as an 18-year-old boy. As a member of the Saidapet Samithi, I observed that whenever the Samithi programs were scheduled, my other commitments like college exams and office schedules would all get rearranged somehow and I could freely participate in them. After every *bhajan* or a special 'Sai' program, I felt an elevated energy level, which was indescribable. I started yearning for a close physical interaction with Swami.

A tryst with Divinity

Around the time I joined the under graduation, I was very disappointed with the college in which I had got admission. I was very upset with Swami as I believed that He was in control of my life. Saddened by my disappointment, my father offered to change my place of study. I replied that I would ask Swami and decide. I prayed to Swami's picture in my altar, "Swami, I am going to take my father's suggestion. If you do not want me to change my college of study, you have to let me know." Swami appeared in my dream that night. He said to me in Tamil, "*Wait Pannu, Naan Varen*"["Wait! I will come."] So, I dropped the idea of changing my college of study although I hated studying in it.

Within a week after the dream, I happened to meet an 84-year-old devotee who had lived in Prasanthi Nilayam for close to 35 years, but recently moved to his current residence as per Swami's direction. He was a realized soul and I firmly believe that he was the customized guru whom Swami sent in response to my yearning of being close to Him.

After my acquaintance with him, I started having more and more vivid dreams and visions of our Swami.

Swami – The Divine Saviour

I would like to conclude with one riveting experience where I realized Swami is always with us. It is only we, due to our delusion, who are unable to recognize His Presence always. I used to commute by train to school and college for nearly fifteen years. One evening, it was darker than usual and I was on my way back home from college. The railway track I was walking on was newly laid and it had a dangerous 'S' bend. I had my head bent down, hopping from one wooden sleeper to the other. Any train driver would not have been able to see if someone was walking on the track at the bend. As I had my head bowed, I was clueless about any oncoming train.

I suddenly saw Swami walking along with me on the railway track. It was a mental sight, but details of the physical features that I saw were really vivid. To this date, that image of Swami is crystal clear in my mind's eye. His eyes were so powerful that my mind calmed down completely as though a mute button had been pressed. He hopped over a few sleepers and then suddenly got off the railway track. I instinctively followed that image of Swami and got down from the track. As I took a couple of steps, a train just zoomed past the place where I had been a few seconds ago. I just stood still. Had I not moved, I could have possibly fallen under the moving train and got hurt. Swami with all His love and grace made me so absorbed in just following Him. In the matter of those few seconds, He came, He saved, and He left.



SMT. AARTHI BALAJI
BANGALORE WEST

*Do not crave from Me trivial material objects; but crave for Me from within,
and you will be rewarded. The path of Love is the royal road that leads
mankind to Me. My grace is ever available to devotees who have steady love
and faith.*

- BABA



“ರೋಗಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಉತ್ತಮವಾದ ಆಹಾರ ಹಾಗೂ ಪ್ರೇಮಪೂರಿತ ಮಾತುಗಳು
ಅಲ್ಲದೆ ಸಮಾಜಕ್ಕೆ ಉತ್ತಮ ನರ್ಸುಗಳನ್ನು ಸಾಯಿ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿಯರಂತೆ
ರೂಪಿಸುವ ಕಾರ್ಯ ನನಗೆ ದೊರಕಿದ್ದು ಸಾಯಿ ವರದಾನವಾಗಿದೆ.”

ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಸಾಯಿ ಮೀರಾ



ದಿವ್ಯ ಸ್ಮೃತಿಗಳು

ಶ್ರೀ ಸತ್ಯಸಾಯಿ ಬಾಬಾ ಅವರ ದಿವ್ಯ ಚರಣ ಕಮಲಗಳಿಗೆ ವಂದಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಸಾಯಿಮೀರಾ, ಈ ಹೆಸರು ನಮ್ಮ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯವರೇ ಇಟ್ಟಿರುವುದು ನನ್ನ ಸೌಭಾಗ್ಯ. ಈಗ ನನಗೆ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಮೂಲಕ ಯಾವ ರೀತಿ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಪರಿವರ್ತನೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಸಾರ್ಥಕತೆ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿದೆ ಎಂಬ ಕುರಿತಾಗಿ ಬರೆಯುವ ಅವಕಾಶ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಕಲ್ಪಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ನಾನು ಆಭಾರಿ.

ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದತ್ತ ಮೊದಲ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆ

ತಂದೆ-ತಾಯಿ ಅಜ್ಜಿಯಂದಿರು ಕೂಡ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯವರ ಭಕ್ತರಾಗಿ ಅನೇಕ ದಿವ್ಯಾನುಭೂತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಪಡೆದು, ನಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಪೋಷಿಸುವುದರೊಂದಿಗೆ ನನ್ನ 6ನೇ ವಯಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಕಮಲಾ ಪದ್ಮನಾಭನ್ ಅವರು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸ ತರಗತಿಗೆ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿಯಾಗಿ ಸೇರಿಸಿದ್ದು ನನಗೆ ಪರಿವರ್ತನೆಯ ಮೊದಲ ಹಂತವಾಯಿತು.

ದಿವ್ಯ ದರ್ಶನದ ಪ್ರಭಾವ

6 ರಿಂದ 15 ವರ್ಷಗಳು ತಪ್ಪದೇ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸಕ್ಕೆ ಹೋಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದುದು ನನ್ನ ಜೀವನಶೈಲಿಯನ್ನು ಕ್ರಮಕ್ರಮೇಣ ಬದಲಾಯಿಸಿತು. ಶ್ಲೋಕ, ಭಗವದ್ಗೀತೆ, ನೀತಿ ಕಥೆಗಳು ಅಷ್ಟೇ ಅಲ್ಲದೆ, ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯವರ ದಿವ್ಯದರ್ಶನ, ಅವರ ಸಮ್ಮುಖದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನೇಕ ಬಾರಿ ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳು ಮಾಡುವ ಅವಕಾಶಗಳು, ಇವು ನಮಗೆ ಸಮಯಪ್ರಜ್ಞೆ, ಸಂಯಮ, ಶಿಸ್ತು ಸಂಯಮ ತುಂಬಿಸಿ ಬೆಳೆಸಿತು.

ಮೌಲ್ಯಗಳ ಅಡಿಪಾಯ

ಕೇವಲ ಆಹಾರ ಮಾನವರಾಗದೇ, ಆಚಾರ ಮಾನವರಾಗಲು ಮಾನವೀಯ ಮೌಲ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಅರಿತೆವು. ಇಹ ವಿದ್ಯೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ, ಆಧ್ಯಾತ್ಮಿಕ ವಿದ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ನಮ್ಮ ಚಿಕ್ಕ ಹೃದಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರೇಮಪೂರ್ವಕ ಬೀಜಗಳನ್ನು ಹಾಕಿ ಶ್ರಮಿಸಿ, ನಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಆಧ್ಯಾತ್ಮಿಕ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ಬೆಳೆಸಿದ ನಮ್ಮ ಗುರು ಕಮಲಾ ಆಂಟಿ ಅವರಿಗೆ ನಾನು ಸದಾ ಚಿರಋಣಿ. ಅವರೊಂದಿಗೆ ಗೀತಾ ಮೋಹನ್‌ರಾಮ್ ಅವರು ಕೂಡ ನಮ್ಮೊಂದಿಗೆ ಕಲಿತು, ಬೆರೆತು, ಕಲಿಸಿ, ನಲಿಸಿ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯವರ ಸಾಮಿಪ್ಯವನ್ನು ಸಂಭಾಷಣೆಯನ್ನು ಅನೇಕ ಬಾರಿ ಪ್ರತ್ಯಕ್ಷವಾಗಿ ಪಡೆಯಲು ಸಹಕರಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಇವೆಲ್ಲ ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಲಿತ ನಂತರ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸ ಗುರುವಾಗಿ, ಸಂಪನ್ಮೂಲ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯಾಗಿ ಮುಂದುವರೆಯಲು ಶ್ರೀಸತ್ಯಸಾಯಿ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ವಿದ್ಯಾ ವಿಭಾಗವು ಹಂತ ಹಂತವಾಗಿ ನಮಗೆ ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶನ ನೀಡಿದ ದಾರಿದೀಪ - ಮೈಲುಗಲ್ಲುಗಳು.

ಸಾಯಿ ಸಂಕಲ್ಪದಂತೆ ಅವರ 50ನೇ ವರ್ಷದ ಹುಟ್ಟುಹಬ್ಬದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿದ ನಾನು 75ನೇ ಹುಟ್ಟುಹಬ್ಬದ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಶ್ರೀ ಸತ್ಯಸಾಯಿ ಸೂಪರ್ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ರೋಗಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಆಹಾರ ಒದಗಿಸುವ ವಿಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಹಣೆ ನಡೆಸುವ ಒಂದು ಉತ್ತಮವಾದ ಅವಕಾಶ ಲಭಿಸಿತು.

ಪ್ರೇಮ ಪುತ್ರಿಯರು

ನಂತರ 2010 ರಿಂದ 2020 ರವರೆಗೆ ನರ್ಸಿಂಗ್ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿಯರಿಗೆ ವಾರ್ಡನ್ ಆಗಿ ಸೇವೆಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಅವಕಾಶ ದೊರೆಯಿತು. ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯವರು ನಿಮಗೆ ಪ್ರೇಮಪುತ್ರರನ್ನು ಕೊಡುತ್ತೇನೆ ಕಾಮಪುತ್ರರನ್ನಲ್ಲ ಎಂದು ಸಂದರ್ಶನದಲ್ಲಿ ಆದೇಶ ಆಶ್ವಾಸನೆ ನೀಡಿದ್ದರು. ಈಗಲೂ ನಮ್ಮ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ನಮಗೆ ನಿಸ್ವಾರ್ಥ ಪ್ರೇಮ ತೋರಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಸಾಕ್ಷಿಯಾಗಿದೆ. ರೋಗಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಉತ್ತಮವಾದ ಆಹಾರ ಹಾಗೂ ಪ್ರೇಮಪೂರಿತ ಮಾತುಗಳು ಅಲ್ಲದೆ ಸಮಾಜಕ್ಕೆ ಉತ್ತಮ ನರ್ಸುಗಳನ್ನು ಸಾಯಿ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿಯರಂತೆ ರೂಪಿಸುವ ಕಾರ್ಯ ನನಗೆ ದೊರಕಿದ್ದು ಸಾಯಿ ವರದಾನವಾಗಿದೆ.

ಹೃದಯಸ್ಥಾಯಿ ಶ್ರೀ ಸತ್ಯಸಾಯಿ

ಸತ್ಯ, ಧರ್ಮ, ಶಾಂತಿ, ಪ್ರೇಮ, ಅಹಿಂಸೆಯ ಮೂಲಕವೇ ನಾವು ಗಮ್ಯಸ್ಥಾನ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು. ನಮ್ಮ ಹೃದಯ ದೇವಮಂದಿರ. ಹೃದಯ ವಾಸಿಯಾದ ಸಾಯಿ ನಮ್ಮೊಂದಿಗೆ ಎಂದೆಂದಿಗೂ ಇರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಇದೇ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯವರು ನೀಡಿರುವ ಆಶೀರ್ವಾದ.

FAITH IS GOD... LOVE IS GOD...

SWAMI, WE LOVE YOU.



ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಸಾಯಿ ಮೀರಾ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

ಜೀವನವೆಂಬ ಗಿಡ ಹೊರಹೊಮ್ಮಿಸುವ ದಿವ್ಯ ಪುಷ್ಪಗಳ ಪರಿಮಳವೇ ಸದ್ಗುಣ ಮತ್ತು ಸೌಶೀಲ್ಯ. ಸಾಧನೆಯ ಪ್ರಥಮ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆಯನ್ನಾದರೂ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಮಾಡಿ; ಅದೇ ನಾಮಜಪ, ಪವಿತ್ರ ಗ್ರಂಥ ಪಠಣ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ. ನಿಮ್ಮ ತಾಯ್ನಾಡಿನ ಯೋಗ್ಯ ಪುತ್ರ ಪುತ್ರಿಯರಂತೆ ಬಾಳಿ ಬದುಕಿರಿ.

— ಬಾಬಾ

(ದಿವ್ಯೋಪನ್ಯಾಸ, ಹಿಂದೂಪುರ ಕಾಲೇಜು - 14.11.1965)



"Frantic efforts were made to find a teacher who could teach Biology in Kannada. Why fear when Swami is there?"

Smt. N.S. Shantamma



WALK HIS WAY, GRACE FOLLOWS

It is on behalf of my mother, Smt. Shantamma, that I am writing this. This incident dates back to the year 1995-96. It was decided by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations that a project should be taken up by the Education Wing as a part of Swami's 70th birthday celebrations, whereby free coaching was to be given to 10th standard students from economically poor backgrounds. The then District Coordinator for Balvikas, entrusted this project to be conducted in Bangalore North to my mother, Smt. Shantamma. She had just retired as a Psychology professor from the University of Agricultural Sciences. She was also a Balvikas guru.

My mother had to first identify a school, find the resource persons and then coordinate till the successful completion of the program. At every single step she discovered that there was the Invisible Hand of Swami making it all happen.

The day after she was entrusted with this work, my mother happened to meet our neighbour, Smt. Suguna Raju who was related to Swami's brother's family. My mother explained to her about this project. Suguna aunty who was a teacher at the Hebbal Government School told that this project could be conducted at her school itself. She said that children coming to her school were from poor families and it would be ideal if they could be helped. She introduced my mother to the school Headmistress, who gladly agreed to cooperate. My mother decided that only the girls of Class 10 would be involved. The first step of identifying a school was solved.

The second step was the task of finding resource persons to teach all subjects on a voluntary basis and be able to teach in Kannada medium. Once again Swami came to the rescue. Our Balvikas gurus happily agreed to teach English. A Mathematics teacher at the Poornapragna School, Sadashivnagar, who was in great demand, surprisingly agreed to teach Algebra, Geometry and Physics. A retired official from the Postal Department who was a Sai devotee, was eager to be a part of the team and volunteered to teach Arithmetic. My mother decided to teach Social Studies and Kannada. Another ardent devotee of Swami took the responsibility of supplying notebooks and other stationary materials. In the next step, a timetable was prepared, and a date was fixed for the inauguration. As is customary, the office bearers were invited to a simple inaugural function.

The night before the inauguration, my father was admitted to the hospital with a serious lung condition. My mother did not know what to do. It was too late to call and inform anyone about what had happened. She prayed to Swami for help. Can this be difficult for Swami to solve? Father had a miraculous recovery! Next morning the doctor informed us that my father could leave for home in the evening. My mother rushed to the inaugural function.

Co-incidences or Sai-incidences

Classes began. Two days into the project and a shock awaited my mother as she went to the school. She was informed that the boys were pelting stones and throwing mud at the windows because they were not included. Prayers again. Swami somehow, through the Headmaster, convinced the boys to remain calm. Problems didn't end with that. The Arithmetic teacher, who resided at Sanjaynagar informed my mother that it was difficult for him to reach Hebbal as he had no vehicle of his own and in those days autos were never available. This was an issue for all of us who stayed at Sanjaynagar. But when we walk His way, His grace automatically follows! My mother was waiting at the Hebbal bus stop, and who stopped in front of her? An empty auto with a driver who asked if she needed to be dropped home. My mother got in and the driver who said his name was Raju casually got into a conversation with her. When he came to know about the project, he was so happy. He said that he was an ex-student of the Hebbal Government School and gladly agreed to take my mother and anyone else to and from the school as long as required. Thus, our transport problem was also solved. Was it just a coincidence that his name was Raju?

Well, the project was nearing completion and my mother realised that the subject Biology had been overlooked. Frantic efforts were made to find a teacher who could teach in Kannada. No success. Again, she reached out to Swami. Why fear when Swami is there? Suddenly it occurred to her that her own daughter was a Biology subject graduate. So why look further? But her daughter had absolutely no experience in teaching Biology in Kannada. However, placing faith in Bhagawan, a Biology textbook was procured and suddenly it didn't seem so difficult for her. Thus, Biology was completed too. Another experience to prove that Sai comes with solutions!

Once the project was successfully completed, the Valedictory function was arranged. Help poured in from all sides. One person sponsored the refreshments, another gave gifts in the form of steel boxes for all the girls, someone agreed to get flowers for Swami's photo and for all the guests etc. A festive atmosphere was prevalent. The guests were our State Balvikas Co-ordinator Smt. Kamala Padmanabhan, Smt. Lakshmi Nagaraj and other dignitaries along with all the teachers. The Principal of the school was supremely pleased with Swami and His devotees.

Finally, it was decided to take the children from all over Bangalore who had been involved in such projects to Whitefield for *Darshan*. A bus was arranged, and my mother got in with all the girls at Hebbal. One girl had not come. There was no way to contact her. After waiting for a while, my mother decided to leave. Once *Darshan* was over, all the girls were made to stand in a line to go to the bus. A *sevadal* lady came looking frantically for my mother saying that Lakshmi Nagaraj aunty wanted to speak to her immediately. My mother went running and whom did she see there? The girl who had failed to get into the bus. It seemed she decided to come on her own as she had missed the bus. How can Mother Sai leave any child behind! He alone ensured her safe arrival for His *Darshan*!

After the successful completion of this project my mother was filled with gratitude to Bhagawan who scripted, directed and executed the whole event. Thus, what started out as a gift, an offering to Swami was so beautifully converted into a gift for all the gurus by Swami Himself. The Most Merciful Lord had stepped in and managed His birthday gift from the beginning till the end.



SMT. PRATIMA RAO, DAUGHTER OF SMT. N.S. SHANTAMMA
BANGALORE NORTH



*You have come from God, you are a spark of His Glory; you are
a wave of that Ocean of Bliss; you will get peace only when
you again merge in Him.*

- BABA



"We were ecstatic and gathered around Him. It felt like we were Gopalas and He was verily the Krishna among Gopalas."

Smt. Uma Sudhakār



BALVIKAS – A BLESSING FOR A LIFETIME

Om Sri Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Babaya Namah. We bow down to Bhagawan Baba who is the Divine Mother and Father to all of us. My *pranams* at the lotus feet of our beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

We are four sisters and we were all fortunate to attend Balvikas classes right from our childhood. Our parents took a lot of interest in our attending Balvikas classes and weekly *bhajans*. Our guru was a very committed teacher and we enjoyed attending her classes. In those days Balvikas children had the wonderful opportunity of interacting with Swami every year when He visited Chennai.

The Divine Guardian

In the year 1984, I was selected to play the role of Meerabai in the Balvikas rally to be performed in the Divine presence at Abbotsbury. There was rigorous practice for the programme for a couple of months as the gurus strived to make it a flawless offering to Swami. We were looking forward to the D-day. But, on the day of the programme I woke up in the morning with very high fever and body pain and found it difficult to even get out of bed. My mother was worried. My hair had to be shampooed for my role as Meerabai. Praying to Swami fervently, not wanting to let go of the precious chance, my mother kept a tablet before Swami's picture praying with all her heart, "Swami, the child has been eagerly waiting for this opportunity to perform before You and this will be a cherished memory all her life. Please give her strength and take care of Your child" and then fed me the tablet. She also gave me a shower, dressed me up as Meerabai and took me to the rally venue.

The students performed exceptionally well. Swami seemingly enjoyed the programme very much. Just as the programme got over, Swami came down from the dais and came straight to us, the students who had performed. We were ecstatic and gathered around Him. It felt like we were Gopalas and He was verily the Krishna among Gopalas. Swami then called out to the students to take a picture with Him and I got the golden chance to stand right next to Swami touching His robe in my Meerabai costume!! It was an unbelievable blessing for me and that picture with Swami is my cherished treasure that brings back these wonderful memories.

Unforeseen Blessings

Those days Balvikas children had the wonderful opportunity of receiving prizes from Swami's Divine hands and were blessed with *Padanamaskar* if they won Balvikas competitions held at the state level.

We used to put in a lot of hard work for this. In the year 1990, I was supposed to receive prizes from Swami's hands during His visit to Chennai. But unfortunately, I missed the chance as the day coincided with my 10th standard board exams. All the children who missed the opportunity similarly were taken to Puttaparthi by our kind gurus. We were told, "Swami will give you *Padanamaskar* in Prasanthi Nilayam if He wills." We were all seated for *Darshan*. Swami came near us and asked us when we were leaving for Chennai. We told Him that we were leaving the next day and He replied, "**Happy, Happy.**"

Even the next morning after Swami's *Darshan* there seemed to be no indication of Swami granting us *Padanamaskar*. We got into the bus to leave Parthi with a heavy heart. Just before the bus started, a volunteer came rushing to our bus saying that Swami was calling us back. We could not believe our good fortune! I still remember how we children and gurus ran joyfully to the mandir and sat down panting for the *Padanamaskar*. Swami glided through the rows of children blessing us and giving us *Vibhuti*. It was a blissful and a blessed moment for all of us. Swami so beautifully answered our loving prayers and sincere yearning.

Tale of Transformation

In yet another incident, Swami allayed the fear and anxiety of my friend, cured her illness and transformed her into a Sai Devotee. It was exam time during my college days and that particular day a difficult subject was scheduled. As we reached the college, we found that due to some strike the exam had been postponed. I was glad to get that grace period for study. I glanced at the Swami's ring I was wearing and thanked Swami in my mind and said, "God is great." Immediately my friend who was with me took objection and said, "If you want to say God is great, then by all means do so, but don't say that Baba is God." I felt hurt and prayed to Swami that she should understand His Glory and Greatness.

Months passed and we were in our final year of college. This friend of mine had not been attending college due to ill health and we all prayed for her recovery. When she returned to college after a few weeks, I was pleasantly surprised to see her wearing a ring with Swami's image on it. She explained to me what had happened.

From her childhood she had a hole in her heart. Few months ago, her condition had worsened and doctors had advised surgery. Her parents who believed in Swami, had placed a picture of Swami on the wall above her bed, praying for His help. One night as she lay in bed very anxious and crying, worried about her surgery, she looked at the picture of Swami and saw that the picture was shaking as though it was moving towards her. She immediately fell asleep peacefully. A few days passed and she went for a final check-up before her surgery. Her doctor was very surprised and told her that there was an improvement in her condition and that she was recovering. The surgery was not required at all. This amazing miracle brought about a huge change in her and she believed beyond doubt that it was Swami who had saved her when she had cried out for help. "I am sorry, I didn't believe in Him earlier. I know for sure now, that he is God" she concluded.

I was grateful to Swami for having healed my friend and blessed her to develop trust in His divinity. Swami reinforced my belief that He always answers our heartfelt and sincere prayers. *Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavantu!!*



SMT. UMA SUDHAKAR
BANGALORE CENTRAL



"I put my forehead on Swami's divine Mahasamadhi with tears of gratitude streaming down my eyes. I am indebted to Swami for his unconditional love and mercy!"

Smt. Sharvari Akshay Kulkarni



A FLOWER IN THE GARDEN OF SAI

My prayerful obeisance at the Divine lotus feet of my most beloved Mother Sai!!

Life gratified with gratitude

It was January of 2016 at Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam. My name was announced to receive the most precious "Excellence Award for Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas". I rose up to the thunderous applause of thousands gathered there and moved forward to receive the award. I put my forehead on Swami's Divine Mahasamadhi with tears of gratitude streaming down my eyes. I am indebted to Swami for his unconditional Love and Mercy!

My memories came gushing and took me to the start of my Balvikas journey!

Balvikas nostalgia

It all started in the year 1999 in Belgaum, Karnataka. I was a 10-year-old kid when Swami chose me as a Balvikas student. Along with Swami's blessings, it was the guidance, love, encouragement and support of our loving guru, which was responsible for a strong foundation in my life. Her love and devotion to Swami was unparalleled and she treated all her students as her "*Prema Putras*." I still remember on a rainy day we were all drenched when we reached the class. She wiped the heads of all the students with great warmth and love. She also served us all piping hot cups of *Kashaya*!!

It was indeed her motherly guidance that started moulding me from a tender age. I started practicing the Balvikas values that she taught me in daily life. I also started chanting *shlokas*, singing *bhajans*, daily spiritual diary writing, participating in *Narayana seva*, medical camps, and in *seva* activities at deaf and dumb school, orphanages, old age homes, etc. These activities helped me to develop an all-round personality.

Balvikas – My greatest strength

Along with these activities, we used to have an annual "Balvikas Day" event. Students were involved in planning, organizing and executing the program. This experience paved the way for acquiring skills like anchoring, dancing, choreography, public speaking etc. I learnt independent decision making, developed internal strength and courage to combat the troubles and turmoil life challenges one with.

Once, due to some reason, my scores were low in my college exam. The training received in Balvikas made me introspect and bounce back with good scores next time. Thus, Balvikas has shown me the right approach to confront any challenge. Since then, I have developed the conviction that testing times are only Swami's ways to make you stronger!

I was able to face the loss of near and dear ones, death of close family and friends, ups and downs in my career and many more challenges, only due to the moral education received by Swami's Grace.

I am sure that it is only due to the merits accrued in our past lives and His immense mercy, that we get an opportunity to be a Balvikas student! Swami has been guiding and guarding me always. By His Grace, I am at present doing *seva* as District Youth Coordinator. I know it is impossible to repay all the love and kindness he has showered on me!

I am trying to make a conscious effort of leading by being a good example and to bring glory to the Divine name of Swami. If at all there is another life, I wish to be a Balvikas student again; would want to relive those days yet again and bask in his Divine Grace endlessly! *Janam Janam Merey Saath Raho, Hey Sathya Sai Bhagawan!!!*



SMT. SHARVARI AKSHAY KULKARNI
BANGALORE WEST

*It's not great to give away objects, but it is indeed great to give away one's own self.
It is only when there is a close relationship and connection between the teacher and
the student that whatever is taught will take the shape of spiritual knowledge.*

- BABA

(Balvikas Conference Divine Discourse – Nov 22nd, 1975)



"In a flash, I don't know why, but I felt that this miracle was somehow connected to me taking up the role of a Balvikas Guru."

Smt. Jaya Subramanian



MY SAI EXPERIENCE

Balvikas – Shloka class?

As a child growing up in Mumbai, my parents enrolled me in Balvikas. To them, Balvikas was a *shloka* class and Swami was a good Godman. My mother was a Krishna Devotee and we would visit Guruvayur frequently. Sri Sathya Sai Baba was not an integral part of worship in our family, back then. Little did I realise that Bhagawan had already entered my life.

In all the years post my education and marriage, I had no thoughts of Baba. His presence in my life started unfolding about 8 years ago when I was in my early forties. Few years after our marriage, my husband and I, with our young daughter moved to the U.S.A., where our son was born. We returned to India after a stay of five years there. I was busy learning and training in the Montessori system of education and raising my children. Life was seemingly going on very smoothly, until a surprise turn of events took place.

The Divine sign

We were on a family vacation at Munnar. There I was shocked to discover that I had symptoms of a serious disease that my father had been afflicted with. Once back in Bangalore, I flew to Mumbai to start my treatment with the same doctor who had been treating my father. The doctor had helped my father to keep the disease under control with medications. The disease required one to take lifelong medications. The regular check-ups were painful and would test one's mental stamina. I remember that once the doctor told me to find a guru in Bangalore. His intention was that a spiritual anchor could help me tide over my emotional and mental distress. I brushed aside his suggestion as spirituality was still a far-fetched thought at that stage of my life. Had this been a Divine sign, I wonder today.

Being extremely duty conscious, I continued with my household chores and taking care of the family. I would take plenty of medicines, thrice a day. The doctor in Mumbai regularly advised me over the phone, on the medications depending on the symptoms. Thus, I was able to continue treatment with the same expert doctor in Mumbai, right from my Bangalore home.

Teaching has always been my passion. I continued to upgrade my skills by doing courses in creative teaching and counselling. However due to increasing domestic responsibilities, I had to quit my job and become a full-time mother. I used to delightfully teach my children at home and assist them with their academic and co-curricular activities.

Balvikas - Value based spiritual class

It was during this period that I came to know about Balvikas classes in the vicinity through my sister, and I enrolled my son. His guru one day asked me if I could take classes for very young children. I readily agreed as I am quite comfortable with children, especially the younger ones. Thus, with Bhagawan's grace, I got the opportunity to become a Balvikas guru. I did a lot of homework to learn the *shlokas* from the Balvikas textbook. But to my surprise, I realized that I did not have to put too much effort. For a person who had not been into chanting *shlokas* for many years, they were coming easily to me. Little did I know then that when Swami decides something, He Himself will take care of everything!

To me, Balvikas was a spiritual class and a platform to teach values to children. I was a conscious mother putting heart and soul into teaching good values to my children at home and started doing the same thing in Balvikas class. I loved telling stories and used this technique to teach the students.

My health issue too seemed to be under control, as I was on regular medication.

Illness to wellness through Compassion boundless

And then one day, it so happened that for no apparent reason the symptoms increased. I was shattered. Now what? I thought. Going to Mumbai for treatment was difficult and I did not know any other doctor who was an expert in treating this ailment. Finally, we decided to visit the Apollo Hospital in Bangalore.

I prayed and went to meet the doctor feeling very stressed that I would have to now explain my entire medical history to him. I underwent many tests as per the routine procedure. The doctor after carefully examining the reports said that it did not look as though I ever had the said disease. I was in utter disbelief! I told him that this was not possible as I have been going to Mumbai and taking treatment for the past five years. The doctor was surprised and he closely examined the X-Rays. He said that some scars can be seen but nothing much at all. When I asked him about my symptoms, he said it is something minor compared to the old ailment, and this too would require medications for life. But certainly, it was not something threatening. It took me some time to digest this fact.

In a flash, I don't know why, but I felt that this miracle was somehow connected to me taking up the role of a Balvikas guru. This was Swami's medical marvel to ensure that I could focus on His work without worrying too much about my health. I took the new medicines for a few weeks and then simply STOPPED taking the medicines. Again, I don't know what made me take such a bold step, but my inner voice was saying that I could do this. Since that date, till today I have had no symptoms of the disease.

I realized that Swami gives visiting cards to kick-start the faith in people He chooses. I am what I am because of His immense Grace. I know that He cannot be understood for He is God incarnate. My second chance at life came with a purpose. The purpose is to do His Work. It is important for me to be His instrument and work sincerely as a Balvikas guru. I have also started reading Swami's literature, listening to His discourses and His student's *satsangs*. Over the past few years, we have experienced many such gifts of Grace from Swami that have helped families of our students. All I know is that the Divine Lord's compassion is boundless! I bow down and surrender to His lotus feet with utmost humility and gratitude.



SMT. JAYA SUBRAMANIAN
BANGALORE SOUTH



"Swami looked straight at me and raised His eyebrows as if to say, 'At last you have come!' I was so overwhelmed by His compassion that I decided to put my heart and soul into serving Him."

Smt. Umadevi Mopuri



MY SAI MAA AND I

My humble pranams at the lotus feet of the indweller, *Sai Maa*.

First *Darshan* of Swami

It was way back during the years 1970-71 that Swami gave me the golden opportunity to become aware of His protective shield He had so lovingly put around me. I was in college at that time.

During the summer vacations, my father took me to Brindavan for Swami's *Darshan*. The Sai Ramesh hall had not been constructed then. The devotees would sit below a huge tree under which a canopy was put up. This used to be called Sairam Shed. An idol of lord Krishna was kept in the Sairam Shed.

My first *Darshan* of the Lord had little impact on me as my relatives had told a lot of negative things about Swami. I observed Swami speak to a few people in front of me but was upset that He had failed to notice me. I did not realize that the All Compassionate Lord had actually begun laying the foundation in my heart, to make it His abode.

Divine blessings through *bhajans*

Thirty long years went by before the Compassionate Lord once again drew me into His fold. I began to attend *Sai bhajans* after listening to a discourse given by Mata Amritanandamayi on the importance of namasmarana in *Kali Yuga*. I also participated in hospital *seva* though I was not aware of Swami's divinity yet.

The year 2000 saw a change in my perception of Swami's Divinity through an experience that happened at Koramangala in Bengaluru where I was staying. I had attended '*Deepa Pooja*' at a friend's place. After the *pooja* we were getting the place ready for *bhajans*. A lady whom I didn't know, asked me about the purpose of such *poojas*. I was rather taken aback by her blunt question. I replied that the *pooja* expresses our devotion towards God and is not done with any selfish motive.

The *bhajan* session commenced and I was in the last row. Suddenly I noticed something white in colour, like a veil floating in front of my eyes for a fraction of a second. Then I felt something fall on my head. I touched my head and my fingers came in contact with a few grains of *akshata* or sacred rice. I was astonished not knowing where it came from. I can't remember what I did with it - whether I put it into my mouth or into my purse. But I do remember that it had a beautiful aroma. This incident altogether changed my perspective towards Swami.

My journey from Sai literature to Balvikas

Thus, began my journey slowly and steadily towards the Omniscient Lord. I began to read voraciously every possible book I managed to get, about Swami; my first books being 'From Shirdi to Parthi' and 'Face to Face with God.' I began to experience Swami's grace flowing towards me and I also basked in the love showered by my Sai family. I began to take Balvikas classes unofficially at Kaikondarahalli government school.

In the year 2004 I shifted to Ganganagar, Bengaluru North, where I resumed taking Balvikas, on the advice of the then Education Coordinator.

My cherished encounter with Divinity

It was in the year 2005 during the Easwaramma day celebrations at Brindavan that I was blessed with the golden opportunity to sing *bhajans* before Swami in the Sai Ramesh Hall. I was in the last row and Swami looked straight at me and raised His eyebrows as if to say, "**At last you have come!**" I was overwhelmed by His compassion that I decided to put my heart and soul into serving Him by taking more Balvikas classes, participating in hospital *seva* and translation of books, articles, and *stotras* from Telugu to English and Kannada. By His grace, I serve as a *Vibrionics* healer too.

My utmost gratitude to Swami for making me an instrument in His Divine Mission.



SMT. UMADEVI MOPURI
BANGALORE NORTH

As a field has to be properly ploughed and prepared for sowing so as to reap a good harvest, the field of our heart has to be rendered pure and sacred through good and holy actions and spiritual discipline (sadhana) if it is to yield the fruit of Divine Wisdom.

- BABA



"As an offering to Him, we have started mass family prayer and chanting of Sai Gayatri 108 times every day. This has instilled in us enormous confidence and strength during the pandemic period."

Smt. N. Lakshmi Narasamma



MY FAMILY AT YOUR LOTUS FEET

I came into the fold of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in the year 2000 through my friend and colleague. She personally took me to Brindavan, where I had Swami's *Darshan* for the first time. That one *Darshan* by itself ushered in a lot of welcome changes in my life. I got the strength and courage to face all the difficulties that I was going through.

Sai – My inner voice

Soon, in a span of a few days I was posted to Hubli. I was a bit upset and was not ready to accept the transfer order. But in my dream, I heard a male voice asking me to accept the transfer order. This voice was none other than Baba's voice. Immediately I accepted the order and my stay at Hubli was peaceful.

I had my trip to Puttaparthi in the year 2000. Then onwards my luck changed, and I became a happy person though I was suffering from a chronic ailment. When my health deteriorated, Baba came in my dream and advised me to consume *Kashaya*. Like this, He has guided me on many occasions through dreams.

Mystifying miracle

In the case of my daughter too, there have been many instances when Swami has guided her. When she was doing her final year degree course, the question paper which she received for the subject Business Law, contained questions from both the old syllabus and the current one. This was a shock for her, as she was unaware that questions would be asked from the old syllabus too. Only when she reached home, did she realize her mistake. This made her very upset. She decided not to appear for any further papers for that academic year as she knew she wouldn't score any marks for the paper that she had attended. That evening, we prayed to Baba to solve this issue. Somehow, we convinced her to appear for the other subjects as well. To our surprise, when the results came, she had passed with distinction! Even today, how she passed remains a mystery! Swami's miracles are always unfathomable to our ordinary human minds!

Blessings by Baba

In 2002, when my daughter's marriage was fixed, I decided to offer the first invitation card to Baba at Puttaparthi. By the time we reached Puttaparthi the morning session was over. After lunch, we got ready for the evening *Darshan*. We had taken with us the *Muhurtham* attires and *Mangalsutra* to be blessed by Baba.

We were worried that Baba might take a couple of days before He blessed us. I had heard stories of people waiting for a long period and even then, wouldn't get Baba's blessing at all. But dispelling all our anxieties, during the evening *Darshan*, Baba came straight to my daughter, blessed all the items, and took the invitation card in His hands. How can we express our gratitude to this lovely God!

Even after eight years of marriage, my daughter was childless. We prayed to many Gods and visited holy places. One night Baba came in her dream and assured her that she would get a child. She conceived within three months of this dream and was blessed with a baby girl. But the second time when she conceived, for some reason, she was reluctant to continue with the pregnancy. Baba came in her dream and advised her to continue with her pregnancy and she was blessed with a baby boy.

I feel so grateful to Baba as it is only because of His Grace that our family experiences peace and prosperity. As an offering to Him, we have started mass family prayer and chanting of *Sai Gayatri* 108 times every day. This has instilled in us enormous confidence and strength during the pandemic period.



SMT. N. LAKSHMI NARASAMMA
BANGALORE CENTRAL

*You must be a Lotus, unfolding its petals when the Sun rises in the sky,
unaffected by the slush where it is born or even the water which sustains it.*

- BABA



"I got a call from a person in our apartment complex. He was a devotee of Swami and was trying to organise Balvikas in our apartment. I was totally thrilled as I felt Swami had heard my prayers."

Smt. Priya Subhashi



THANK YOU, SWAMI

I was born in a religious Palakkad Iyer family and grew up in Mumbai. Our neighbours were devotees of Swami and had regular Thursday *bhajans* in their home. It is through them that that our first exposure to the Sai fold happened.

Sweet memories of Balvikas

We were introduced to Balvikas and other activities too including *Narayana Seva*. Our gurus were very kind and would give us lovely sweets to eat and make us play games as well. Hence Balvikas class was something that I really looked forward to mainly due to the fun element. We never realised that we imbibed the values too, subconsciously. These values are close to our heart today and have moulded our personality to a large extent.

In the year 1990 our teacher planned a trip to Puttaparthi by train with all the students. We celebrated *Diwali* in Puttaparthi that year. It was a week-long trip and I remember it for all the fun that we had. Though we did not get *Padanamaskar* or *Darshan* at close quarters that we all had hoped for, it was a memorable trip.

Wedding gift of Grace

Much later, at the time of my wedding, our Sai devotee neighbour gifted me a special edition coin commemorating Swami's seventy fifth birthday minted with Swami's face on it. I was immensely happy and I knew that His blessings had come. The coin has a very special place in my heart and in our home altar now.

In the year 2003, my husband was posted in the U.S.A. and we were expecting our first child. During one of the hospital visits, the doctor who was scanning looked tense, and with a grim look mentioned that he saw something in the heart of the baby. With no family or elders with us, we were very worried and at that time, the blessed coin and *Vibhuti* were a real source of strength. We were referred to a heart specialist. On re-examination he found nothing to cause concern and it laid all our fears to rest.

Transformation from a Balvikas parent to a guru

We eventually moved back to Bangalore and I got busy with raising our two daughters. In the year 2010, we moved into a huge apartment complex with no familiar faces at all. My kids were six and three years old. In the deepest of my heart I wished that they too have the exposure to Balvikas at this impressionable age.

The very next week I got a call from a person in our apartment complex. He was a devotee of Swami and was trying to organise Balvikas in our apartment. I was thrilled as I felt Swami had heard my prayers. Due to Swami's Grace, within a week the place got finalised and we had a Balvikas guru who conducted the first session and the kids were very happy.

As my little one used to be very naughty, I actually decided to stay back and assist the class not knowing that Swami will pass on the baton to me soon. Classes started happening regularly and Thursday was the much-awaited day of the week for me and the children.

Shortly after, as the Balvikas guru had larger responsibilities, other teachers took turns but it was getting difficult to arrange for a different teacher every week. Hence the guru suggested that I conduct the classes. I took up the responsibility with prayers to Swami to inspire the weekly class content.

I have always loved being around children, as I feel being with them heals the soul. Hence as a part of my education I had done a Diploma in Early Childcare and Education, which in retrospect is Swami's way of helping me choose the right path. I could apply the skills learnt then in my Balvikas classes with Swami's 'chosen kids'. I say this because in an apartment complex with close to 300 kids, I feel only the lucky ones that Swami has chosen are able to participate. From a strength of 6 kids when we started, we now have about 30 kids due to Swami's Grace and guidance.

As we go about doing the different topics like *Bhagavad Gita* or *Bhaja Govindam*, I am also amazed at the stanzas chosen by Swami which really build a strong foundation for the children. Almost everything in the Balvikas book is a life lesson and when we introspect, in order to teach, we are also transformed. Hence, when we look at how we used to behave or react to situations earlier and how we do so now, I would say Balvikas has helped me become a better and calmer person.

I am also able to see that every time we have Balvikas, somehow the minor things which could be an obstruction to conducting the class get smoothened out and I am able to complete the class peacefully.

The Divine Hand

In 2014, my older kid tested positive for dengue. The very next day the younger one too tested positive. My older kid had to be hospitalised while the younger one was managed at home. Those were trying times and I kept praying to Swami for strength and guidance. This helped me stay mentally strong and undisturbed. Wishes poured in from all the Balvikas parents and children and it was so heart-warming to see the gesture. As Swami always says, **"You do my work and I will take care of yours"**, both kids returned to good health.

My family has been supportive of the Balvikas activities and we have witnessed His Grace in our family. I see Swami's hand in bringing so many people to my life at the right time. Through Balvikas I have also been able to meet some really amazing people who continue to inspire me every day.



SMT. PRIYA SUBHASH
BANGALORE WEST



“ಮಕ್ಕಳು ತಮ್ಮ ತಾಯಂದಿರಿಗೆ ‘ಪಾದಪೂಜೆ’ ಮಾಡಿದಾಗ ತಮಗಾದ
ಆನಂದವನ್ನು ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಮೂಲಕ ಹಂಚಿಕೊಂಡರು. ಆಗ ನನಗೆ
‘ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸ’ ಮಾಡಿದುದು ಸಾರ್ಥಕವಾಯಿತು ಎನಿಸಿತು.”

ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಹೆಚ್. ಸತ್ಯವಾಣಿ



ಪರಿವರ್ತನೆ

ನಾನು ಭಗವಾನ್ ಶ್ರೀ ಸತ್ಯಸಾಯಿ ಬಾಬಾರವರು ಆರಂಭಿಸಿದ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಮೊದಲನೇ ತಂಡದ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿ ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿಸಲು ಹೆಮ್ಮೆ ಪಡುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಅದರ ಪ್ರಭಾವದಿಂದ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಗುರುವಾಗಿ ಈಗ ‘ಶ್ರೀ ಸತ್ಯಸಾಯಿ ಸೇವಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ’ಯ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ವಿಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಂಯೋಜಕಿಯಾಗಿ ಬಳ್ಳಾರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸೇವೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇನೆ.

ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸ – ಒಂದು ದಿವ್ಯಾನುಭವ

ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ತರಗತಿಗಳನ್ನು ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವಾಗ ನಾನು ತಿಳಿದುಕೊಂಡು, ಅನುಭವಿಸಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ತಿಳಿಸುವುದು – ಇದು ಭಗವಂತನು ನನಗೆ ಕೊಟ್ಟ ಅತ್ಯಂತ ಅಮೂಲ್ಯ ಅವಕಾಶವೆಂದೇ ಭಾವಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ತರಗತಿಗಳನ್ನು ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವಾಗ ಆಗುವ ಅನುಭವವೇ ಬೇರೆ; ನಾವು ಜ್ಞಾನವನ್ನು ಬೆಳಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಜೊತೆ ಮಕ್ಕಳಾಗಿ ಇರುವಾಗ ಸಿಗುವ ಸುಖವೇ ಬೇರೆ. ಬಾಬಾ ಹೇಳಿದಂತೆ “ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ತರಗತಿಯೆಂದರೆ ವಿಷಯ ವರ್ಗಾವಣೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಅಲ್ಲ, ಪರಿವರ್ತನೆಗಾಗಿ ವಿಷಯ ಬೋಧನೆಯಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.” ಇಂತಹ ಪರಿವರ್ತನೆ ಮಕ್ಕಳಲ್ಲಿ ಆಗಿರುವುದು ಮಾತ್ರವಲ್ಲದೇ ಪಾಲಕರಲ್ಲಿ ಸಹ ಆಗಿರುವುದನ್ನು ತಮ್ಮಲ್ಲಿ ಹಂಚಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಇಚ್ಛಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ.

ಪ್ರತಿ ವರ್ಷ ಈಶ್ವರಾಂಬ ದಿನಾಚರಣೆಯ ಪ್ರಯುಕ್ತ ‘ಮಾತೃವಂದನಾ’ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮವನ್ನು ಹಮ್ಮಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತೇವೆ. ಆದರೆ ಈ ವರ್ಷ ಕರೋನ ಕಾರಣದಿಂದ ಎಲ್ಲರೂ ಸೇರಿ ಈ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಮಾಡಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಆದ ಕಾರಣ ತಮ್ಮ ತಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ತಂದೆ ತಾಯಿಗೆ ‘ಪಾದಪೂಜೆ’ ಮಾಡಲು ತಿಳಿಸಿದೆವು. ಅದರಂತೆ ಮಕ್ಕಳು ತಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾಲಕರಿಗೆ ‘ಪಾದಪೂಜೆ’ ಮಾಡಿದರು. ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ಎರಡು ಕುಟುಂಬಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕಂಡ ಪರಿವರ್ತನೆಯನ್ನು ಪದಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ವರ್ಣಿಸಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗದಷ್ಟು ಆನಂದವಾಯಿತು. ಏಕೆಂದರೆ ಮಕ್ಕಳು ತಮಗೆ ‘ಪಾದಪೂಜೆ’ ಮಾಡುವಾಗ ಅವರ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ತುಂಬಾ ಗೊಂದಲ! ಮಕ್ಕಳೂ ಕೂಡ ತಮ್ಮ ತಾಯಂದಿರಿಗೆ ತಾವೂ ‘ಪಾದಪೂಜೆ’ ಮಾಡಬೇಕೆಂದು ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ನಿರ್ಧರಿಸಿ ‘ಪಾದಪೂಜೆ’ ಮಾಡಿದಾಗ ತಮಗಾದ ಆನಂದವನ್ನು ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಮೂಲಕ ಹಂಚಿಕೊಂಡರು. ಆಗ ನನಗೆ ‘ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸ’ ಮಾಡಿದುದು ಸಾರ್ಥಕವಾಯಿತು ಎನಿಸಿತು. ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಂದ ತಾವು ಎಷ್ಟೋ ವಿಷಯಗಳನ್ನು ತಿಳಿದಿರುವುದನ್ನು ಮತ್ತು ತಮ್ಮ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ನಡವಳಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪರಿವರ್ತನೆ, ಶಿಸ್ತಿನ ಪಾಲನೆ ಇವು ಸಮಾಧಾನವನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟಿವೆ. ಅದಲ್ಲದೆ ಅವರು ದಿನನಿತ್ಯ ಮಾಡುವ ಪ್ರಾರ್ಥನೆ ಮತ್ತು ತಮಗೆ ಮನೆಕೆಲಸಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾಡುವ ಸಹಾಯ ಇವು ಸಂತೋಷ ಕೊಟ್ಟಿವೆ ಎಂದು ಪಾಲಕರು ತಿಳಿಸಿ ಧನ್ಯವಾದಗಳನ್ನು ಅರ್ಪಿಸಿದಾಗ ನಾನು ಮನದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಾಬಾರವರಿಗೆ ಧನ್ಯವಾದಗಳನ್ನು ಅರ್ಪಿಸಿದೆ. ಇಂತಹ ಎಷ್ಟೋ ಅನುಭವಗಳನ್ನು ಮತ್ತು ಆನಂದವನ್ನು ಕೊಡುತ್ತಿರುವ ಬಾಬಾರವರಿಗೆ ನಾನು ಚಿರಋಣಿ.



ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಹೆಚ್. ಸತ್ಯವಾಣಿ

ಬಳ್ಳಾರಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ



"Swami was my refuge; the only option was complete surrendering of my new-born baby at His lotus feet."

Smt. M.N. Suvarna



ANYATHA SHARANAM NAASTI TVAMEVA SHARANAM MAMA

Offering my most humble salutations at the Divine lotus feet of Swami. I have experienced Swami's infinite love throughout my life right from my birth. I would like to share one such experience where in, our ever merciful and compassionate Swami showered His Blessings on me.

Eternal Mother Sai

Becoming a mother is like a rebirth and a turning point in a woman's life. When I became a mother, I gave birth to a premature baby with multiple complications. Ours was a small town with inadequate facilities for a good treatment that was needed for the new-born. Those were the days when mobile phones were not as prevalent as today.

My husband and father were held up at a distant place and we could not even pass on a message. The doctors in our town did whatever best they could and gave up. At that time, there were riots in the whole state of Karnataka following the kidnapping of a veteran actor and hence the circumstances did not permit us to take the baby to the city to continue with the treatment.

Swami was my refuge; the only option was complete surrendering of my new-born baby at His lotus feet. I wholeheartedly prayed, "Swami, *Anyatha Sharanam Naasti Tvameva Sharanam Mama*. It's your child; you can do whatever you wish with this child".

My mother, my sister and I, with prayers to Swami, started applying *Vibhuti* in her tiny mouth every morning, noon and evening. Holding those little fingers, we used to chant *Sai Gayatri Mantra* and the *Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra*. The eternal mother stood by our side as He says, "**The Grace of God is like insurance and works without limits when needed.**" Purely by Swami's Grace, she recovered and grew up into a healthy child.

Our journey to Balvikas

To keep my child in Swami's fold, I started taking her to Balvikas classes and weekly *bhajans* at Samithi. Gradually, looking at the happiness in the faces of the little children chanting *shlokas*, I too started conducting Balvikas classes and thus my journey began as a Balvikas guru. My daughter is now a Balvikas alumna participating actively in Balvikas and *seva* activities.

Words fall short and insufficient to express my love and gratitude to Swami. Thank you, Swami, for everything You have blessed me with and the blessing you have bestowed upon us. May our love towards You grow more and more and may we always make You happy!



SMT. M.N. SUVARNA
BANGALORE WEST

Though it is hard to restrain the mind, it can be diverted. When the mind steeped in the secular world is diverted toward Divinity, it gains in moral strength. The mind steeped in the worldly matters makes you a prisoner of the world, whereas a mind steeped in God secures liberation for you.

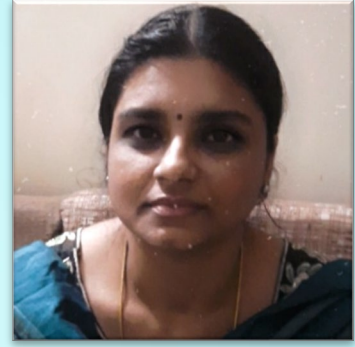
Your heart is the lock, and your mind is the key. When you turn the key to the left, it locks. But if you turn the key to the right, it unlocks. It is the turning of the key that makes the difference. Hence the mind is the cause for your liberation as well as bondage.

- BABA



"I was surprised and taken aback, as just 25 minutes back I had entrusted Swami with the responsibility of putting us on the plane without any hitches."

Smt. Gayathri Swaminathan



SARVA ANTARYAMI SAI

Swami has been my constant companion since my childhood. Swami often states we are all human beings with latent Divinity. Mentioned below is one of those times when my eyes and heart saw him through another Divine being.

Trust your higher 'Self' – Sai

In 2013 I was staying with my family in Brussels, Belgium. It had just been a few months since I had joined my husband. He had moved in a year earlier.

I had to travel to India with my young daughter. It was decided that my husband would see us off at the airport. However, the previous evening due to certain important assignments at his work, he expressed his inability to accompany us. With Swami's name on the lips I readily agreed to go by myself to the airport.

I chose to travel by the train, considering that the train station at Brussels, is located in the basement and the airport is located on the higher floors in the same premises. I felt it would be much easier to navigate through to the terminal.

After I boarded the train and settled down with my daughter, I prayed to Swami for help and entrusted him with the responsibility of putting us on to the flight. It was around a 30-minute journey to the airport.

Divinity in Disguise

A few stops later, a not so tall Afro-American middle-aged gentleman boarded the train and sat across us. After watching my 4-year daughter playing and speaking in English, he soon began to interact and play with her. After exchanging a few pleasantries, he started explaining to my daughter all about how big the plane is and other stuff. Few minutes prior to reaching the airport, the gentleman said to my daughter, "Do you know something? Uncle is going to put you and Mommy on the plane along with your baggage."

I was surprised and taken aback, as just 25 minutes back I had entrusted Swami with the responsibility of putting us on the plane without any hitches. The man then told me that he would like to help us board the plane.

I said nothing to him, as I was blank and thought it was just a fleeting remark that he had made. But then I quietly checked my wallet to see if I had some cash to pay him as a token of gratitude and service. Yes, that was how my monkey mind worked at that instance.

Just as the train pulled into the airport, he just loaded the trolley with our baggage and took us through the lifts and escalators, even before I could tell him anything. I only remember him making a fleeting remark that we were from India. He just rattled out the flight details. I had not told him the details but he said he knew well about the scheduled flights as he worked as the senior ground staff at the Brussels Airport.

By this time, he had built a good rapport with my daughter and she was having fun playing with him all the while. He took us to the Emirates Airways terminal, helping us with the boarding passes. After putting the luggage through the conveyor belt, he left in a jiffy as it was time for his shift. He said he would soon meet us on flight. I was ready with cash to pay him.

It was soon time to check-in. Just as we were checking in, we were pleased to see him on the plane. He just put our hand baggage in the overhead cabin space and just left giving a big grin to both of us even before we could tell him or ask him anything at all.

I sat in my seat mentally thanking this gentleman and Swami for sending across this generous helpful man. Just as I was making up my mind about how much I could pay the man, something fell onto my seat. I looked down to check what it was. Lo and Behold! it was a Swami's bookmark picture. There was a lady who was trying to load her hand baggage into the overhead cabin. From one of her books the bookmark had fallen down. The lady quickly picked up the bookmark and walked away to the back of the plane to her designated seat.

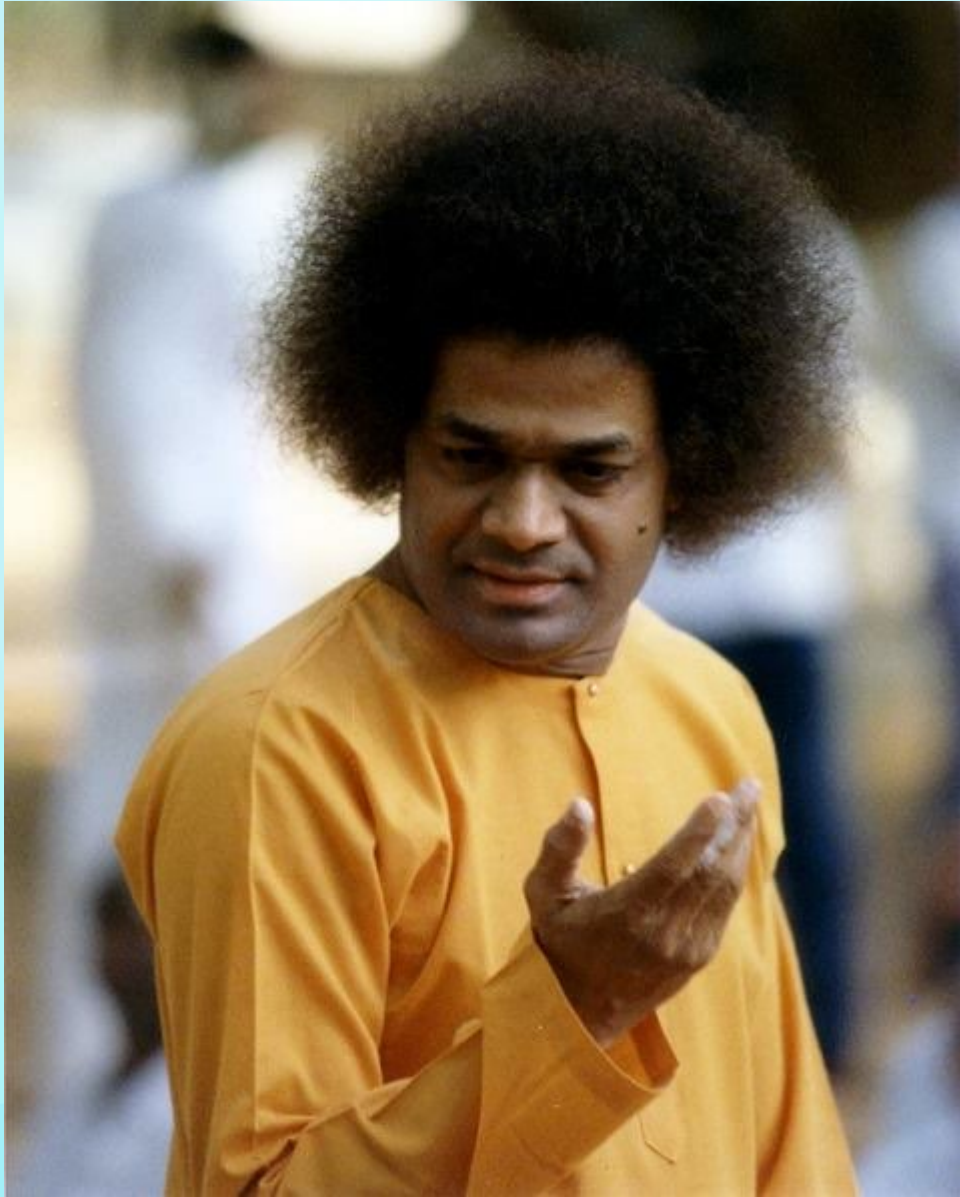
This incident echoes to me Swami's message of love and strength:

"Know that I am there where you are even before you know where you shall be, prepping it all up for you. Why fear when I am everywhere, with you, in you and around you."

Well, that just silenced my mind leaving me with a big smile, love and gratitude to our *Antaryami Sai!!* Needless to say, when I checked with flight staff about this gentleman, they said they were not aware of anyone who fitted my description.



SMT. GAYATHRI SWAMINATHAN
BANGALORE NORTH



*See with the eyes of love, Hear with the ears of love,
Work with the hands of love, Think thoughts of love,
Feel love in every nerve.*

- BABA



“ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಹತ್ತಿರದಿಂದ ಸಾಗುತ್ತ “ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಗುರುಗಳಾ?” ಎಂದು ಕೇಳಿದಾಗ ವಾಸ್ಕೋ-ಡಿ-ಗಾಮನು ಅಮೇರಿಕಾ ಕಂಡುಹಿಡಿದಾಗ ಎಷ್ಟು ಸಂತೋಷಗೊಂಡನೋ ಅಷ್ಟೇ ಸಂತೋಷ ನಮಗಾಯಿತು.”

ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಪ್ರೇರಣಾ ವಿ. ಕುಲಕರ್ಣಿ



ತೃಣದಿಂದ ಕಣದವರೆಗೆ ನನ್ನ ಪಯಣ...

ಭಗವಾನ್ ಶ್ರೀ ಸತ್ಯಸಾಯಿ ಬಾಬಾರವರ ಚರಣಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ನನ್ನ ಕೊಟಿ ಪ್ರಣಾಮಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ.

ಮಾನವನ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವ ಕ್ಷಣವು ಪರಿವರ್ತನೆ ತರುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಹೇಳಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ. ನದಿಯು ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ಹರಿಯುತ್ತಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಬೆಟ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ತಾಗಿ ತನ್ನ ಹರಿಯುವ ದಿಕ್ಕನ್ನೇ ಮರೆತುಬಿಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಅಂತೆಯೇ ಜೀವನವೂ ಒಂದು ನದಿ. ಯಾವ ಘಟನೆ ಜೀವನದ ತಿರುವನ್ನೇ ಬದಲಿಸುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಹೇಳಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ.

ಈ ಪ್ರಸ್ತಾವನೆ ನನ್ನ ಜೀವನಕ್ಕೂ ಹೋಲುತ್ತದೆ.

ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯತ್ತ ನನ್ನ ಮೊದಲ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆ

ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ಏರು ಪೇರುಗಳನ್ನು ದಾಟುತ್ತ ದಿನಗಳು ಸಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದವು. ಒಮ್ಮೆ ನಾನು ವಾಸಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಹಳ್ಳಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಯಿಭಕ್ತೆ ಗೆಳತಿಯ ಹೇಳಿಕೆಯ ಮೇರೆಗೆ ಗುಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆಯುವ ಭಜನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಾಲ್ಗೊಂಡೆ. ಏನೋ ಸಮಾಧಾನವೆನ್ನಿಸಿತು. ಮುಂದೆ ಆ ಊರಿನಿಂದ ಪುಟ್ಟಪರ್ತಿಗೆ ಸೇವೆಗೆ ಹೊರಟಿದ್ದರು. ಹೋಗುವುದೇನೋ ಒಂದು ಹೊಸ ಅನುಭವವೆಂದು ಹೋಗಿದ್ದಾಯಿತು. ಪ್ರಶಾಂತಿ ನಿಲಯದಲ್ಲೇ ಸಾಯಿ ಕುಲವಂತ ಸಭಾಂಗಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಸೇವೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಅವಕಾಶ ದೊರೆಯಿತು.

ಬೆಳಗಿನ ದರ್ಶನಕ್ಕೆ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಬರುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎಂಬುದೊಂದೆ ನನಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಜನ ಕಿಕ್ಕಿರಿದು ತುಂಬಿದ್ದರು. ಕೊಳಲಿನ ಸುಮಧುರ ನಾದವು ಕೇಳಿಬಂತು. ಎಲ್ಲರೂ “ಬಾಬಾ ಬಂದರು... ಬಾಬಾ ಬಂದರು” ಎಂದು ಗಡಿಬಿಡಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಂತೆ ಕೇಸರಿ ನಿಲುವಂಗಿ ತೊಟ್ಟು ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಆಗಮಿಸಿದರು. ಆ ಮುಂಜಾವಿನ ಹೊಂಗಿರಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಳಲಿನ ನಾದದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಕ್ಷಾತ್ ಗೋಕುಲದ ಕೃಷ್ಣನೇ ಬಂದಂತೆ ಆಭಾಸವಾಯಿತು. ನಾನೂ ಕೂಡ ಗೋಕುಲದ ಬೃಂದಾವನದಲ್ಲಿರುವಂತೆ ಭಾಸವಾಯಿತು. ಮನಸ್ಸು ಒಂದು ಕ್ಷಣ ತನ್ನನ್ನೇ ಮರೆಯಿತು. ಅದೇ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯ ಪ್ರಥಮ ದರ್ಶನ; ನನ್ನ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಆದ ಪರಿವರ್ತನಾ ಕ್ಷಣ. ಸಾಕ್ಷಾತ್ ಭಗವಂತನು ನನ್ನ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಅವತರಿಸಿದ ದಿನ.

ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಅರಿವೇ ಇಲ್ಲದ ನನಗೆ, ಮಾನವೀಯ ಮೌಲ್ಯಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ತಿಳಿಯದ ನನಗೆ, ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ತಮ್ಮ ಈ ಮಹಾನ್ ಕಾರ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಳಿಲು ಸೇವೆಯ ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟರು. ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಮೂಲಕ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯವರ ತತ್ವಗಳನ್ನು ಅರಿಯುತ್ತಾ ಜೀವನದ ಉದ್ದೇಶ ತಿಳಿಯುವಂತಾಯಿತು.

ದರ್ಶನ - ಸ್ಪರ್ಶನ

ಇನ್ನೊಂದು ಘಟನೆ ನನ್ನ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಅಚ್ಚಳಿಯದೆ ಉಳಿದಿದೆ. ಒಮ್ಮೆ ಪ್ರಶಾಂತಿ ಸೇವೆಗೆಂದು ಹೋದಾಗ ಸೇವೆ ಮುಗಿಸಿ ಬಂದವರಿಗೆ ವಿಶೇಷ ಸರದಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೂರಿಸಿ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯ ಪಾದನಮಸ್ಕಾರದ ಅವಕಾಶ ದೊರೆಯುತ್ತಿತ್ತು.

15 ದಿನಗಳ ಸೇವೆ ಮುಗಿಸಿದವರಿಗೆ ಇದೊಂದು ಹಬ್ಬವೇ ಸರಿ! ಭಗವಂತನ ದರ್ಶನ ತಾನೆ? ಅದೂ ಇಷ್ಟು ಹತ್ತಿರದಿಂದ; ಸ್ವರ್ಗದ ಬಾಗಿಲು ಮೂರೇ ಗೇಣು; ಕಣ್ಣುಗಳು ತವಕಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದವು; ಯಾರೋ ಹೇಳುತ್ತ ಬಂದರು, ಈ ಹೊತ್ತು ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ದರ್ಶನ ಇಲ್ಲವಂತೆ! ನಿರಾಶೆಯಿಂದ ನೊಂದೆವು. ಸಂಜೆ ರೈಲಿಗಾಗಿ ಕಾಯ್ದಿರಿಸಲಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಆದರೇನು? ಭಲ ಬಿಡಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಹಾಗೇ ಪಟ್ಟು ಹಿಡಿದಂತೆ ಕುಳಿತೇ ಇದ್ದೆವು. ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲೇ, “ಸ್ವಾಮಿ, ನಿರಾಶೆಗೊಳಿಸಬೇಡಿ” ಎಂದು ಬೇಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಾ ಕಣ್ಣು ಮುಚ್ಚಿಕೊಂಡು ‘ಸಾಯಿರಾಮ’ ಎಂದು ಜಪಿಸುತ್ತಾ ಕುಳಿತಿದ್ದೆವು.

ಸುಮಾರು ಒಂದು ಗಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ ಆನಂದದ ಸುದ್ದಿ ಬಂತು. ಎಲ್ಲೆಲ್ಲೂ ಗಡಿಬಿಡಿ! ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಬರುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿಯಿತು. ಸೇವಾದಳದವರು ನಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಸಾಲು ಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಕೂರಿಸಿದರು.

ಆ ದಿನ ಮರೆಯಲಿಕ್ಕೆ ಸಾಧ್ಯವೇ? ನಿಧಾನವಾಗಿ ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ಸಾಲಿನ ಬಳಿಯೂ ಸಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ಹತ್ತಿರ ಹತ್ತಿರ ಬಂದಂತೆ ನನ್ನನ್ನೇ ನಾನು ಮರೆತಿದ್ದೆ. ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯ ಆ ಮೋಹಕವಾದ ಮುಖಾರವಿಂದವನ್ನು ನೋಡಲೋ ಅಥವಾ ಪಾದ ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಲೋ? ಎಂಬ ತುಮುಲದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದೆ. ಕೂಡಲೇ ಅಂತರಾತ್ಮ ಹೇಳಿತು; ಭಗವಂತನ ಪಾದ ಸ್ಪರ್ಶಿಸುವ ಭಾಗ್ಯ ಸಿಗುವುದು ಅಪರೂಪ. ಆ ಸುಕೋಮಲ ಪಾದಗಳ ಸ್ಪರ್ಶದಿಂದ ನನ್ನ ತನು ಮನ ಪವಿತ್ರವಾಯಿತು.

ಈ ಹೃದಯಸ್ಪರ್ಶ ಅನುಭವವೇ ನಾನು ಈ ದಿನ ಕಾಣುವ ಸಾರ್ಥಕತೆಗೆ ಅಡಿಪಾಯ.

ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸ ಗುರುವಿಗೆ ಜಗದ್ಗುರುವಿನ ಮನ್ನಣೆ

ಮುಂದೆ ಶ್ರೀ ಸತ್ಯಸಾಯಿ ಸೇವಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಓರ್ವ ಕಣವಾಗಿ ಅವಕಾಶಗಳು ದೊರೆಯುತ್ತ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಗುರುವಾದೆ. “ಇರು”, “ಮಾಡು” ನಂತರ “ಹೇಳು” ಎನ್ನುವ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯ ವಚನದಂತೆ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಬೋಧನೆ ಮಾಡುವ ಮೊದಲು ಆ ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು ನಾವು ನಮ್ಮ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಳವಡಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕು. ಸ್ವಾಧ್ಯಾಯ ಮಾಡಬೇಕು. ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯ ತತ್ವಗಳ ಅರಿವಾಯಿತು. ಮೂರೂ ವರ್ಗಗಳನ್ನು ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಯಾವ ನಿಘಂಟುಗಳೂ ಕೊಡದಂತಹ ಜ್ಞಾನಧಾರೆ ದೊರೆಯಿತು. ನಂತರ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯ ಕೃಪೆಯಿಂದ ಶೈಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ವಿಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಯುತ ಕಾರ್ಯ ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸುವ ಅವಕಾಶ ದೊರೆಯಿತು. ಆದರೆ ಇಷ್ಟು ಮಾತ್ರ ಸತ್ಯ, ಆ ಭಗವಂತನ ದಯೆ, ಕೃಪೆ ಮತ್ತು ಇಚ್ಛೆ ಇರದ ಹೊರತು ನಾವು ತೃಣಕ್ಕೆ ಸಮಾನ ಎಂದು ನಾನೂ ತಿಳಿದೆ ಮತ್ತು ತಿಳಿಸಿದೆ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ಬೃಂದಾವನ ಆಶ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಜರಗುವ ಈಶ್ವರಾಂಬಾ ದಿನಾಚರಣೆಯ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಮಕ್ಕಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಬಂದಾಗ ಮೊದಲನೇ ಸಾಲಿನಲ್ಲೇ ಕುಳಿತುಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದೆ. ಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಹತ್ತಿರದಿಂದ ಸಾಗುತ್ತ “ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಗುರುಗಳಾ?” ಎಂದು ಕೇಳಿದಾಗ ವಾಸ್ಕೋ-ಡಿ-ಗಾಮನು ಅಮೇರಿಕಾ ಕಂಡುಹಿಡಿದಾಗ ಎಷ್ಟು ಸಂತೋಷಗೊಂಡನೋ ಅಷ್ಟೇ ಸಂತೋಷ ನಮಗಾಯಿತು.

ಭಗವಂತನ ಅನುಗ್ರಹವಾಯಿತು. ಆದರೆ ಅಷ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ನಿಲ್ಲಬಾರದು. ಕಲಿತಂತಹ ಸತ್ಯ, ಧರ್ಮ, ಶಾಂತಿ, ಅಹಿಂಸೆ ಈ ಮೌಲ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಪ್ರೀತಿ-ಪ್ರೇಮದಿಂದ ಎಲ್ಲರಲ್ಲೂ ಹಂಚುತ್ತಾ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆಗಳನ್ನು ಅನುಸರಿಸೋಣ. ನಾವು ಕಲಿಸಿದ ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಮಕ್ಕಳನ್ನು ಕಂಡರಂತೂ ಜೀವನವೇ ಸಾರ್ಥಕವಾದಂತೆ ತೋರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಇನ್ನೂ ಸ್ವಾಮಿಯ ಸಾನಿಧ್ಯದ ಅನೇಕ ಸವಿನೆನಪುಗಳು ಹೃದಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಡಗಿವೆ...

ಬಾಲವಿಕಾಸದ ಎಲ್ಲ ಗುರುಗಳಿಗೂ ನನ್ನ ನಮನ.



ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಪ್ರೇರಣಾ ವಿ. ಕುಲಕರ್ಣಿ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ



"The children sang the 'Narayana Manthram' song at the end of the drama. Swami asked the children to sing the song once more. Then Swami asked them to chant it always. This was the divine blessing bestowed by Lord Narayana Himself!"

Smt. Uma Chandrashekhara



DIVINE MEMORIES

By the immense Grace of Swami, I have been blessed to be a Balvikas guru and I am proud to share my experience. It is my greatest good fortune that I am a chosen instrument in Swami's mission, and I thank Swami for giving me this opportunity to serve as *Alilu seva* (Squirrel's service).

In 1972 my elder sister was blessed by Swami to start Balvikas in our house at Mysore. We sisters enthusiastically conducted Balvikas class for 2-3 hours every Sunday. My interest in Balvikas was in activities like drama, group dance, making charts, drawings, poems etc. We were conducting Balvikas classes in a Remand home as well where 30-40 children were interested in *bhajans* and stories and it brought about a great transformation. We have experienced guidance from the Divine for all cultural events.

Incredible miracle

In 1989, my second daughter was born with a genetic problem in her right hand. She underwent several treatments but to no avail. We fervently prayed to Swami for a cure. As an answer to these prayers I had a vivid dream where Swami smeared *Vibhuti* on her right hand and told me not to worry. When I took my child for a bath, there was a slight movement in her right hand, she was holding her toe. There was the divine aroma of *Vibhuti*. Swami had blessed her.

As she grew up, her right leg used to get twisted inwards. She couldn't walk, run or play games like other children. She was a Balvikas student with immense faith in Swami. One day, she insisted that she would take her medicine only with the tirtha obtained from the Abhisheka of a coin by Kannamma *ajji*. This coin had been materialised by Swami for Smt. Kannamma, a senior devotee and mother of my colleague. So, I gave her the tablet smeared in *Vibhuti* in that tirtha and left for office. When I returned home, my daughter came running towards me. I couldn't believe my eyes. Swami had granted her a new lease of life and she grew up to be a healthy girl. An unbelievable miracle indeed!

Divine Hands at work

I had the golden opportunity to serve in Sri Sathya Sai publications work. The first book I typed was *Sri Sathya Sai Anandadaayi* in English. After that, I was asked to type the Sri Sathya Sai Vahini series in Kannada, but I had never typed in Kannada. So, I hesitated. I managed to type 10 pages in Kannada on the first day.

Then I typed 20 pages the next day; finally, I could type 30 pages per hour without any difficulty!! The last book I typed was Prof. N. Kasturi's book '*Devanolida Jeeva*'. This is a miracle in itself and happened by Swami's grace only.

Instruments of the Lord

Once I had a dream wherein Swami told me to compose a song on His childhood till *Avatara Ghoshana*. I was wondering how to write a poem, as I had never done it earlier. I went to my office with these thoughts. There was not much work that day. So, I simply turned a page of "Sri Sathya Sai Speaks -1". To my utter surprise, there were 30 stanzas of 4 lines each from Swami's birth till Swami's singing of *Manasa bhajare*. I prepared the script, told other Balvikas gurus, contacted a music composer who set each stanza to a different raga and a choreographer who trained 60 children to dance for the song. Swami blessed the script at Puttaparthi. With the help of accompanists from AIR we, Balvikas gurus, sang the song. There was a stage rehearsal at Nadabrahma Sabha, where State coordinators Smt. Kamala Padmanabhan, Smt. Nallu Ganapathi and others had come to finalise the dance drama. The dance drama started with 3 *Omkars* and *Ganapathi sthuthi*. Just then the power went off and a big bunch of jasmine flowers on Swami's chair rolled down and the lights came back. We were so happy; we could feel His presence and the dance drama came out very well. From that day onwards I was eager to have a Balvikas program at Puttaparthi in His Divine presence.

Capturing Eternity in a snapshot

During 2001 Parthi Yatra, we had the golden opportunity of presenting a dance. Each district had a 10-minute presentation in the program "*Karnataka Vaibhavam*" in which 10-12 Balvikas children from Mysore district presented a folk dance on *Devi Chamundeshwari*. All the Balvikas gurus, parents, children and parents were blessed to be in the Divine presence. The children were granted a group photo with Bhagawan.

He tests, He helps, He decides.....

In 2010 our Balvikas children had once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to perform a drama, in the Divine presence. It was a great learning experience, a sort of sadhana. About 60 children including village Balvikas children were involved in the drama. The drama practice continued for about six months and each day of practice taught us valuable lessons. During the rehearsal, we realised that the whole drama had to be reorganized. We all were very tense and confused whether the drama would take place at all. As the District Education Coordinator, I was really worried and prayed to Swami, day in and day out, to give us a chance.

A few days later, one early morning, I had a dream. Swami came and stood in front of me in an auditorium and said, **"Don't worry. You bring your children for the drama program. How many gurus and children are coming? Bring them all, I will bless."** Then Swami said, **"You give a name for the drama from *Eeshavaasya Upanishad*."** I told Swami that I don't know any of these Upanishads. Swami said, **"You ask Acharya"** (He was our Balvikas master trainer. He was in the U.S at that time, so we couldn't speak to him). Swami smiled and blessed with *Abhaya Hastha*.

I woke up and immediately called the devotee who had prepared the script by translating Swami's Telugu drama to English. He said that there had been a message from Swami to the then State President - '*Sathsankalpameva Jayathe*' from *Eeshavaasya Upanishad* was to be the title for the drama.

The grand event before the Grandmaster of the Universe happened at 2:30 p.m. on November 1st, 2010. Four of the Balvikas gurus, including me, got the golden chance to perform *Arati* to Bhagawan, making the event a memorable one.

Sathsankalpameva Jayathe (Goodwill alone triumphs)

The children sang the '*Narayana Manthram*' song at the end of the drama. Swami asked the children to sing the song once more. Then Swami asked them to chant it always. This was the Divine blessing bestowed by Lord Narayana Himself to prove the efficacy of *Narayana Manthram* after six months of *Tapas* (penance) in the form of rigorous preparation for the program!



SMT. UMA CHANDRASHEKHAR
MYSORE

The first task of a spiritual aspirant is the cultivation of enthusiasm. Through that enthusiasm, any variety of Spiritual Bliss (Ananda) can be derived.

- BABA



"The gentleman asked my husband, 'Where are you from?' My husband replied, 'Bangalore, India.' The gentleman exclaimed, 'Bangalore, Sai Baba!'"

Smt. Archana Rajesh



LESS LUGGAGE MORE COMFORT

My humble *pranams* at the lotus feet of our beloved Swami. I would like to share an incident that took place in May 2006. This is one among the many incidents that has reinforced our faith in His divinity.

The Divine Helpmate

My husband and I, with our children, were travelling to Europe on a ten-day tour. Our older child was seven and the younger one was three years old. As per the schedule, we had a break of three days at Dubai. During this time, we managed to buy things to be gifted to our kith and kin. This added to our baggage, which threw a great challenge to us later, on the fourth day when we landed at London – Heathrow airport. We were startled to see that there were no trolleys to carry our luggage. I was carrying my younger child and holding the older one's hand as the airport was crowded.

My husband was struggling to manage three suitcases and we were desperately looking for help. We had to walk through the subway to reach our hotel which was right opposite the airport. Though the distance was not much, it definitely seemed challenging considering the condition we were in. I prayed to Bhagawan to help us in this helpless situation.

Suddenly, a young man came to us and asked my husband if we needed help. We were surprised by his casual appearance as we knew people there generally don't extend help to strangers. Before we could hesitantly say, "Yes," he took our luggage and started walking towards our hotel much to our relief. He seemed to be a jovial person as he had plugged in the ear phones and was dancing to the music he was obviously listening to. He walked too fast and we struggled to catch up with him. The gentleman then asked my husband, "Where are you from?" My husband replied, "Bangalore, India." The gentleman exclaimed, "Bangalore, Sai Baba!" We were truly amazed, as generally when we talk about Bangalore the foreigners identify it as Silicon Valley and other things, but this young man spoke about Swami! All this happened in a trice and we, in our desperate condition, didn't pay much attention to it at that moment.

My husband and the gentleman exchanged pleasantries and when we reached our hotel, he dropped the luggage and was off before we could thank him. We were totally overwhelmed and were sure that it was Swami who had come to our rescue.

When we reflected on this incident later, we realised that we should have kept a check on the things we bought so that our journey would be more comfortable. Our truly compassionate Bhagawan once again proved beyond doubt that He is there for us when we really need Him!!



SMT. ARCHANA RAJESH
BANGALORE CENTRAL

*Our life is like a block of ice which is melting away every moment.
Before it spends itself, devote it to the service of others.
Education in Human Values is designed to prepare everyone
for this life of dedicated service.*

- BABA



"I got a message from within "I have a job for you" as if someone was speaking from my heart. I said, 'Swami, job?'"

Smt. Soba Mopuri



MY FIRST STEP INTO BALVIKAS

Sai – My Inner Voice

It was the year 2014. I had accompanied my daughter to her school, the Primary School at Puttaparthi after her summer holidays and returned home after dropping her. I was missing her dearly. So, to get over that feeling, I started listening to *bhajans*. The more I listened to *bhajans*, the more I was longing for her and started crying. I got stuck at one particular *bhajan*, "*Mahadeva Maheshwara Sai Narayana....*". I kept listening to that *bhajan* again and again. In the second line it goes like this "*... Dukha Bhanjana Sai Narayana.*" I asked Swami, "Swami, You are Dukha Bhanjana, but why are you not relieving my pain? Here I am, crying and missing my daughter" (even though I knew that her studying in Swami's school was good for her). At that moment I got a message from within "**I have a job for you**" as if someone was speaking from my heart. I said, "Swami, job?? (perplexed) Anyway, you took away my precious job as a mother by taking my daughter to your school." I was angry with Swami.

Balvikas... the silver lining in life

Days passed by. One day evening, I took my son to Balvikas (he was in Group 1 then). One of our senior Balvikas gurus asked me to join Balvikas as a guru. I didn't know what to say. I questioned myself, "Am I qualified enough to teach?" With a lot of confusion and hesitation I joined as a teacher. All the doubts started vanishing one by one in the next few weeks with the encouragement from the other gurus. Now, each class is a valuable experience that I eagerly look forward to. This journey as a Balvikas guru is truly blessed and it is a special bonding with Swami and His children.

Many years later, one day as I was praying, Swami's message suddenly popped into my mind, "**I will give you a job.**" So, this is that precious job that I got from Swami – to teach Balvikas children. Before each and every class, I thank Swami for this beautiful and precious opportunity. How Swami works to transform each individual is different, we have to open our heart and look for HIS signs. Swami says, "**If you take one step towards me, I will take a hundred steps towards you.**" I truly feel this every moment and thank HIM from the bottom of my heart.



SMT. SOBA MOPURI

BANGALORE CENTRAL



"As we were near HAL, on the Old Bengaluru airport road, suddenly children started shouting, "Swami! Swami! Swami!" I immediately looked to my left to see Swami's car and convoy moving by my side!"

Smt. Rukmini Venugopal



SAI – THE LOVING GURU

Attuning to His Tune

Every moment we spent with Swami was a golden moment. For Balvikas gurus, Easwaramma Day celebrations on 6th of May every year gives double the energy and added bliss. In the past, we used to spend the whole day in Brindavan with our Swami and our loving Balvikas children. During one such celebration in 1999, three Balvikas gurus including myself got an opportunity to sing *bhajans* during the evening program in Bhagawan's divine presence inside the Sai Ramesh hall. The then senior stalwarts of Karnataka State Education Wing had organised a practice session for us of some of Swami's favourite *bhajans*, with the lead Brindavan *bhajan* singers. We are all aware that Swami expects good standards when we present any program in public. To make us confident, the Brindavan *bhajan* singers started training us from the month of April. Our practice went on very rigorously. As the day approached, we were all focused, but tense and anxious! The question that lingered in our minds was whether we would be given an opportunity to sing in front of Bhagawan or not. Finally, we received the message that our compassionate Lord had granted permission for us to sing.

On the appointed day we found ourselves seated in the front row of Sai Ramesh hall for the evening program, eagerly waiting for Swami to arrive. Sitting right in front of Swami and singing for Him had made us all so very excited. A signal from the inner Mandir would be given to the lead singers to start singing as Swami would come out from Trayee Brindavan. We received the signal and began to sing. It takes a few minutes for Swami to enter Sai Ramesh hall from the door on the right side of the stage and reach His resplendent throne. Swami entered the hall and walked slowly towards His seat. However, I was immersed in my singing, concentrating my gaze only on the velvet pillow below Swami's chair where His feet usually rest. While I was waiting to see my Lord's hallowed feet on the pillow, someone nudged me and I turned to look. Swami was on stage gliding towards His throne, but looking at me with a beautiful, mischievous smile.

Swami sat on the chair and accepted our offerings one by one. We sang the following three *bhajans* which were close to His heart.

- ❖ *Manasa manasa vinu gnana sadhana ganuma*
- ❖ *Sai ondan tiru naamam, ullam uligirum sonnal podum, jananam maranam magatrum*
- ❖ *Jagamulanedi natakamula nadinthuvuga, eruga galare nee leelalu evarinanu gaa*

After our presentation, Swami asked the Brindavan students to continue with a few songs. The boys started with a lovely rendition of '*Ghana Ghana sundara karuna rasa mandira*'.

The Fragrance of His Grace

After the boys' presentation, Swami signalled at them to come to Him. All of them quickly proceeded towards the dais with cheerful faces. Swami spoke with them for a few minutes and then gestured at the cameraman to take some group photos, with Himself standing in the center. The boys' faces were glowing with bliss. We gurus were simply watching all this! Then, Swami looked at us. I longingly asked, from where we were seated, "Swami, WHAT ABOUT US?" He gave an enchanting smile, and from the stage where He was standing near the Sri Krishna idol, He threw a rose towards us. The guru sitting to my right stretched forward and caught it. Again, I made my plea; "Swami, for me?" Bhagawan this time, with his immense compassion and love, threw one more rose, which came and fell directly on my lap! When I touched the flower to feel its soft petals and take in its sweet fragrance, I sensed that it conveyed His Divine Love and Grace. In the coming years, that motherly love of Swami has made me a more affectionate guru towards Balvikas children. I am so thankful to Swami for such an unforgettable, beautiful experience.

Darshan and Protection!!

For Easwaramma day celebrations at Brindavan, I used to drive down with my Balvikas children from Bhashyam Circle samithi in my car. In the year 2001, we were returning to Bhashyam Circle after a blissful morning in Brindavan. As we were near HAL, on Old airport road, suddenly children started shouting, "Swami! Swami! Swami!" I immediately looked to the left to see Swami's car and convoy moving by my side! Maybe Swami was visiting a dear devotee's house or going to Sai Darshan, but Swami's car was right next to mine! In that excitement, without realizing I turned my head, left hold of the steering wheel and forgot to drive. I automatically folded my hands in a gesture of offering Namaskar. Those days, Old Airport road used to be quite jammed with traffic. It was only Swami's Divine Grace that came to rescue His dear Balvikas children and guru, and steered the car safely those few moments to avoid an accident.

Even now when we meet on some occasions, my Balvikas alumni fondly recollect such beautiful incidents.



SMT. RUKMINI VENUGOPAL
BANGALORE WEST



“In the trials and tribulations of life, let each one of us remember that He, our Divine mother and father, will always stand by us as a pillar of strength, love, encouragement and reassurance.”

Smt. Sushma Konaje



REFLECTIONS OF A BALVIKAS GURU

As I complete 25 years of teaching Balvikas, my heart is full of loving gratitude to Swami for having given this golden opportunity to serve Him through Balvikas. It is only on account of His immense Grace, that I got the inspiration to be a Balvikas guru.

Divine Directives

Swami had told us, His Anantapur girls, that He had chosen us to be in the College to remove the “poison” from within us. Also, time and again, He would tell us to be the ideal wife, ideal mother, and ideal daughter-in-law and spread love and respect to everyone around us especially after entering a new household post marriage, and such other directives. Having shifted in 1986 from Bangalore to Mumbai, with its long distances, fast life and a bank job, but with an intense love for teaching, I became a Balvikas guru – very eager to share the values I had imbibed to some extent, as Swami’s student.

Balvikas – The learning lane

Balvikas is a *sadhana* wherein the path of learning is unending. Children with their curiosity, innocence, willingness to absorb and playful mischief are a great source of joy and a pleasure to be with. The beautiful blend of stories-*shlokas*-songs-*bhajans* in Balvikas sessions gave me a lot of satisfaction and inner peace.

The Lectures/Training/Activity sessions organized for Balvikas gurus at Dharmakshetra were enlightening. The breaks between sessions too were so pleasant and enriching as we got to listen to lovely experiences and our knowledge expansion took place. After shifting to Bangalore and connecting to Sai Gitanjali, J.P. Nagar, our Study Circles, *Veda* and *Bhajan* sessions and other meetings have been very useful and informative too.

As we mould little children to be ideal citizens of the nation by introducing the values of discipline, duty, devotion, love, patience, faith and confidence, time management, good character, honesty and truth, we the gurus, have an internal challenge to meet i.e. the harmony of our thoughts, words and deeds. We too transform from being individuals of a family into better human beings, more well equipped to overcome our foes of excessive desire, anger, greed, jealousy, ego, hatred and other negative tendencies.

Swami's *seva* mission with its free Medicare, water supply to villages, *Grama Seva*, His schools and colleges would be incomplete without the precious contribution of Balvikas, which aims at the all-round development of the child at the physical, mental and spiritual levels. We are indeed blessed to play a tiny role in the Bal Vikas movement which I am sure, as days go by, will play a significant role in the building of a strong, confident and bold Bharat!

Sai – My Spiritual Succour

I recall a memorable incident. I was one of the participants of the Summer Course organized for participants from various States of India in 1978. In the group interview given to us, Swami asked me **“Tumhara Pithaji kidhar hai?”** [Where is your father?] Having lost my father a few months earlier, I tearfully replied, **“Aapke charankamalon mein pahunchein hein, Swami.”** [He has reached Your Lotus Feet, Swami], to which Swami replied, **“Haan... maalum hai sab kuch maalum hai!”** [Yes...I know. I know everything]

How can I ever forget those loving words of Yours, Swami! In the trials and tribulations of life, let each one of us remember that He, our Divine mother and father, will always stand by us as a pillar of strength, love, encouragement and reassurance. We only need to have faith and offer our love and prayer to Him to be His worthy instruments!



SMT. SUSHMA KONAJE
BANGALORE SOUTH

*For spiritual progress kshama (forbearance) is the real basis or foundation.
Great people and countries have lost their glory, prestige, and reputation
because of the disappearance of Kshama. This virtue is best cultivated under
adverse circumstances, and one must therefore gladly welcome troubles instead
of regarding them as unwelcome.*

- BABA



*"Swami, like an indulgent father, His grace would shower
By granting us the divine touch of His feet, soft like a flower."*

Smt. Pratima Rao



THE ETERNAL GURU!

There was excitement in the air
Everyone seemed to be eager to share
The blissful moments that Swami, out of immense compassion
Had granted to people who had made Balvikas, their mission.

Write down your experiences too, my friend suggested
This made me go back in time, to when it all started
I was young and perhaps not capable of assimilating
The knowledge given to us, as part of our training.

I jumped into the fray, ill-equipped to face and win
The challenges that the days to come would bring
I had to rack my brains, try every possible route
To make the children understand, simple truths.

It was then that my training began in earnest
It wasn't just my speaking skills that were put to test
I realised that I had to first live every word I speak
Or else what I say would be brushed aside as if it was Latin and Greek

I had to first become kind and loving
I needed to cultivate the art of saving and giving
Values had to be practiced before they were preached
The levels of perfection expected, first I had to reach.

The month of May held special significance to us gurus
It would be time to seek the blessings of our *Sadguru*
Swami, like an indulgent father, His grace would shower
By granting us the divine touch of His feet, soft like a flower.

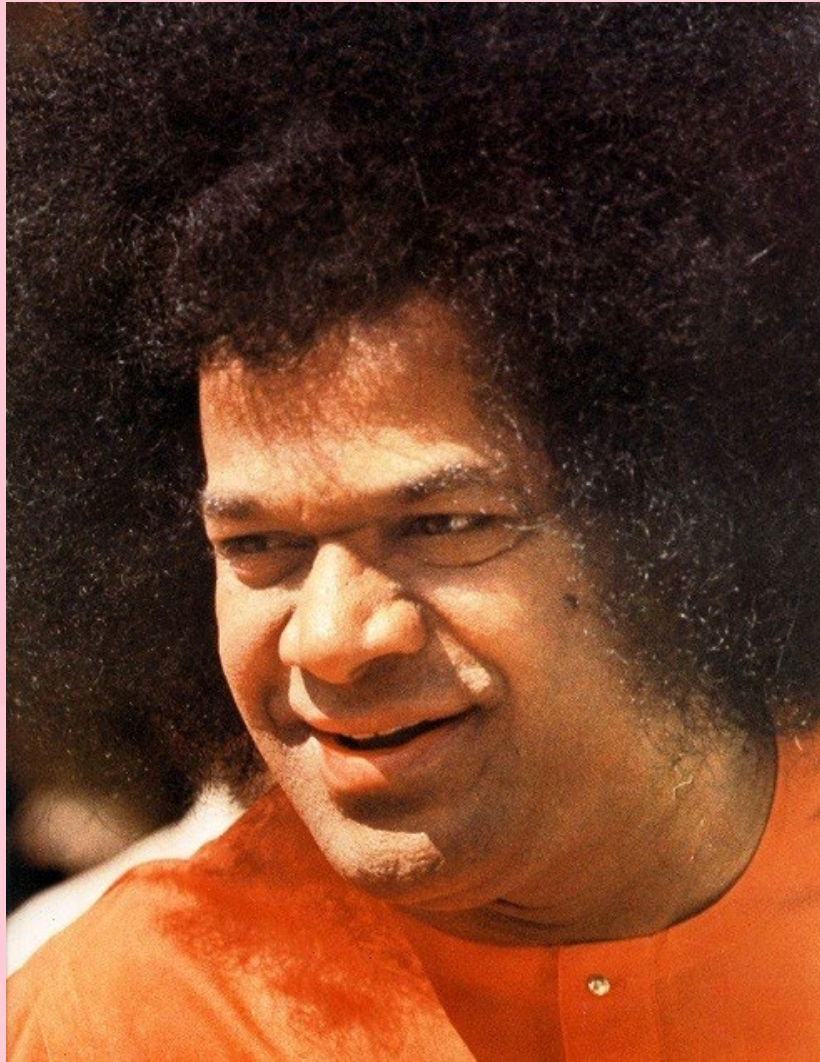
Today as I try to relive those moments
I am hit by the thought that nothing is permanent
But there is one thing that cannot change ever
I am but a Balvikas child, and Swami is my Guru forever.



SMT. PRATIMA RAO
BANGALORE NORTH

The end of Wisdom is Freedom.
The end of Culture is Perfection.
The end of Knowledge is Love.
The end of Education is Character.

- BABA



Sailing with Conviction and Courage



*"Your one look directly into my eye in that one split second
Rid me of all apprehensions and fear."*

Kum. Sharanya Krishnamurthy



TREASURED MEMORIES OF BALVIKAS – MY DIVINE ALMA MATER

Dear Swami, when I think of You each day,
All cherished moments come alive again;
When I was a little child looking at the world's way,
Your Presence and Supreme Love washed away all blemish and stain.

Through my Balvikas guru, You showered on me unparalleled affection
Before I stray away, You guided me in the right direction,
Singing *Bhajans* and holy chants of Your glory,
Brought me closer to You as I basked in the sunshine of Your story.

As days flew by, You began carving in me a statue of thee,
Sometimes You chiselled, but never left me alone;
With You by my side in each battle of my destiny,
In every choice that I made, Your infinite Grace shone.

Then came by, the year twenty 'o' nine,
Bringing with it an experience of a lifetime;
A play to be presented before You in all humility,
Was in the making; for me, a tryst with divinity;
The chronicles of the life of Bhadrachala Ramadas, an ardent devotee,
Designed to be enacted by a group of thirty – three.

My life entered a whole new blissful phase,
When You blessed me to portray Your devotee on stage.
In the year and half of practice that followed,
The zenith of devotion and love, as I explored;
Living the character of Ramadas in every rehearsal,
You filled in me the values of Your approval.

When the much anticipated day arrived –The sixth of May, twenty ten;
With a heart filled with joy and a sense of responsibility,
Waiting for your loving gaze, as a paper awaits a pen,
I sat at Your abode, with anxious thoughts about my capability.

Your one look directly into my eye in that one split second
Rid me of all apprehensions and fear;
As I became a puppet in Thy hands, enacting as Thee beckoned,
I experienced heavenly bliss as You were near.

As I recall those moments of happiness and ethereal emotion;
My mind feels light and free of all commotion,
A gentle breeze of Your presence caresses my soul,
For in You, a friend, philosopher and guide, I behold.

Overwhelmed by emotions,
As I write these lines Dearest Swami,
With gratitude of infinite proportion
In my heart, a prayer chimes;
Any amount of words cannot describe what You have given me,
A single desire encompasses my entire being –to remain in Your heart for eternity.



KUM. SHARANYA KRISHNAMURTHY
BANGALORE CENTRAL



“On the first day of the class we had a very surprising turnout of more than 30 kids. I asked them a simple question on the first day, ‘What do you want to become when you grow up?’ They said they wanted to become labourers, garage workers or maids, and this shocked us.”

Kum. Sinchana Neeragund



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Balvikas – The guide

I remember my very first Balvikas guru, her smile and her warmth but most importantly her values. She had a pretty deep impact on all her students. “Always be a streetlamp which guides others” is something she used to say quite often to all of us. Even though it has been more than ten years since she stopped teaching us, it still resonates in my ears and I have tried my best to live by it.

In the summer of 2019, a few friends of mine from Balvikas and I were volunteering in the monthly *Narayan seva* activity in the nearby Samithi (*Sai Krupa*, Bangalore). We met a bunch of kids who came there and we started talking to them for fun. Their parents were either labourers or house maids who came to *Sai Krupa* regularly. In our very first interaction with the kids, we figured that they were super smart and talented but lacked exposure and a good education. That’s when the privilege that Swami had blessed us with, struck us. So, we thought we would conduct a summer camp activity on a small scale for these kids during our vacation. On the first day of the class we had a very surprising turnout of more than 30 kids. I asked them a simple question, “What do you want to become when you grow up?” They said they wanted to become labourers, garage workers or maids and this shocked us. We realised that this issue was much bigger than what we had thought it was. So, we decided that we could not stop with the summer camp but had to think beyond it.

Aakanksha – Aspire Higher

After consulting our parents, Balvikas guru and the Samithi convenor, we decided to make the classes regular. Thus, in May 2019, I started an organisation called ‘*Aakanksha*’ with the help of my Balvikas friends and my brother who is a Swami’s student. *Aakanksha* means aspiration and that is what this project is all about. We started conducting classes for them thrice a week where academic subjects, music, art, dance etc. were taught. We did not want it to become yet another monotonous school like place. We tried it to make it as creative and enjoyable as possible. Slowly our goals became broader and broader. We became close to their families as well and tried to help them out with their personal problems and give them financial aid. My mother who is also a Balvikas guru started Balvikas classes for the kids as well. That was an extremely happy moment for us as *Aakanksha* would not exist without Balvikas. We hoped that these kids would get benefitted by the same values that we were taught in our childhood and eventually would take over from us.

Although it has not been a smooth sail with *Aakanksha*, we know that Swami was and is with us through all the steps and we definitely feel His presence. Balvikas has sown seeds of empathy, love and service in our hearts. Balvikas is a huge part of my life. It has sculpted the person that I am today and hope to be in the future.

All my gurus have helped me a lot with *Aakanksha* and to be honest, they were my inspiration to start it. Everything that was taught in Balvikas was practically demonstrated in our Samithi through all its *seva* activities. Without it, we would have never got the chance to step out and actually try and do something. I joined Balvikas when I was around six years old. For quite a few years from there, Balvikas was all about stories, games and *prasadam* for us. Then it became all about exams, programmes and certificates, but as we grew up, we realised that its true essence was always in Love and Service just as Swami has said!



KUM. SINCHANA NEERAGUND
BANGALORE WEST

Swami says, “**My Life is My Message.**” Reflection on this message has changed my outlook on life and I tend to be more loving and helpful to others. It has instilled a sense of purpose in me. Inspired and guided by my gurus, I have been involved in service activities and outreach programs. This gives me a lot of joy and fulfilment.

Kum. Sai Rachana
Bangalore Central



"As soon as that thought crossed my mind, Swami took the chain from the student's hand, unhooked it Himself and chained me to Him for life!"

Kum. Sai Shruthi Shashidhar



HIS DELAYS ARE NOT HIS DENIALS

Grace is Luck plus Effort

The year 2010 was a golden year for my family. We got a chance to witness our Swami in all His golden splendour at such proximity. The devotees from Karnataka organised a drama called *"Satsankalpameva Jayate"* as part of *Parthi Yatra*. The drama was originally penned by Swami in Telugu and is about the story of the ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu, Dhruva. It was a dance drama and auditions were held among Balvikas children for different roles. Most of the students were from Mysore, while I was from Bangalore. The practice sessions were held at Mysore.

By Swami's immense Grace, I was given the role of Dhruva, the protagonist of the play. For several months we would travel to Mysore on Saturdays for practice and travel back to Bangalore on Sunday night. During the week, the children at Mysore would practice together while I learnt my lines at Bangalore and on the weekends we would coordinate together. The rehearsals would go on non-stop both the days. I made a lot of friends during the practice.

My mother, who is a classical dancer, accompanied me to all the rehearsals on the weekends and then made me practice every day at home. She would fine tune the bits through the course of the week. Soon there was just a month left for the big day. The drama was to be performed on October 31st. The night before, we were all called to Sai Kulwant hall for a stage rehearsal. By the time the LED screen was set up, it was around midnight. They called me and gave me a lot of instructions, one of which was to not cross the yellow line. My eight-year-old brain had long shut itself off, but I nodded anyway.

Trials and Tribulations

The next day, we all waited, heavily clad in costume and makeup, behind the LED screen for Swami's arrival. We kept looking up at the lights as we knew that all the lights would be switched on the moment Swami arrived for *Darshan*. We waited with bated breath. One hour passed, two hours passed but there was no sign of the lovely black bush of hair or the soft brush of His orange robe against the ankle of His tender feet. The sound of *Aarti* echoed throughout the hall, yet there was no glow of lights.

We all trudged back with a heavy heart. I reached my room and I saw everyone in ruins. My mother was sobbing uncontrollably and was staring out the window. As an eight-year old I could not fathom the enormity of the missed opportunity. Tears streamed down my eyes as I thought about the time and effort everyone had invested in this. Soon, we heard that there was still a chance, a ray of hope left. We could wait one more day and pray for a performance.

We had to store the props and costumes in the trunk of my father's car. The professionals left since we had hired them only for a day. All the children stayed back for another day.

The next day we did not hear any news until noon. Many parents with their children decided to leave in order to reach home by night. Just after lunch we heard the good news that there may be a chance to perform that evening. My father rushed to the bus stand and was able to pick the children just in time from the bus that they had boarded to leave. By now it was late afternoon and all of us were scrambling to get ready. Gurus and parents had to dress us up and apply makeup since no one else was available. It was time to be seated at the Sai Kulwant hall. Our eyes drifted towards the giant chandeliers. Ah! if it would just light up with the glow of Swami's arrival. There was a sudden moment of absolute silence.... the lights lit up!

Momentous Moments with the Lord

Swami gave permission for the drama to be enacted. The drama commenced. It went on smoothly. As I was dancing, I forgot all about the yellow line and crossed all the other lines too, to get close to Him. After the drama ended, Swami signaled that He wanted to be with the children. We all took *Padanamaskar* and Swami graciously allowed us to have a group photo with Him. Swami motioned to me and started talking to me. Unfortunately, I could not understand anything and so I kept nodding my head as that felt like the most rational gesture at that moment. Swami went back up the ramp to the veranda and then motioned for me to come. I walked up the ramp, closer and closer towards Him. He waved His hands and created a gold chain of Lord Venkateshwara. I just stood there, crying.

The student next to Swami asked me to sit and Swami tried to put the chain over my head. I kept tugging at the chain, but it did not fit over my big head. So, Swami began to unhook the chain to wrap it around my neck. He spoke to me then and luckily this time, the student next to Swami repeated so I could understand. We spoke in Kannada and meanwhile the student was trying to unhook the chain so that I could wear it. The whole time I kept thinking, "Please let it be Swami who puts the chain on me and not the student".

The Bond of Love

As soon as that thought crossed my mind, Swami took the chain from the student's hand, unhooked it Himself and chained me to Him for life! I was overjoyed. He tapped my folded hand, blessed me on my head. I walked back to my place with the rest of the children. I couldn't wait to tell my mother as she truly deserved it. It had been her lifelong dream to perform in front of Swami. My mother was distributing *prasadam* and I looked up at her and she was beaming and tearing up at the same time. The efforts of everyone and their sacrifices had fructified. All the drama members were blessed, and we all are infinitely grateful to Him for giving us such an amazing opportunity.

Swami has been my guiding lamp who lit my life by entering in. I love you a lot Swami – I will improve myself and work hard to make myself deserving of the immense love and blessings You have showered upon me.



KUM. SAI SHRUTHI SHASHIDHAR

BANGALORE SOUTH



"He gave a broad smile as if assuring me that He would take care of me. I was amazed by His charming look and so were the others around me! Swami is pleased when we expect nothing from Him and surrender to Him with the feeling 'Thy Will be done, Oh Lord.'"

Kum. Haripriya M



SURRENDER TO HIM, HE SHALL TAKE CARE

I offer my humble salutations to my dearest Lord Bhagawan Sri Sathya Baba. Swami came to my life even before I was born. My birthday was specified by Swami, in my father's dream wherein He was sitting with a joyous face on the floor of our prayer hall and said **"September, October, November... November 19th, on Ladies Day, you will have a girl child."**

The Divine Therapy

I would like to share a beautiful interaction with Swami. When I was five years old, I was suffering from eosinophilia – a breathing problem, due to which I could neither eat anything nor sleep. As soon as I ate or slept, I coughed severely and would throw up. My parents were worried and tried all possible remedies, but nothing worked. Finally, they took me to Swami. The first time when we visited Puttaparthi, I had my first *Darshan*, from several meters away. He was just like a shining orange dot. The next time when my mother and I were seated in the patients' line, we had a lot of expectations that He would bless me and cure me. But He didn't even turn towards where I was seated and just passed by. This repeated in our subsequent visits for the next few months. My parents, though disappointed, kept praying.

On our next visit, my mother told me to chant *"Om Sri Sai Ram"* as many times as possible, not to expect anything from Him and that whether He blesses or not is His wish. I did as I was told during the evening *Darshan*. Swami came towards me; this time He stopped right in front of me, just a foot away. He threw a *Vibhuti* packet to me and I caught hold of it. Swami gave a piercing look and I could not take my eyes off Him. The volunteers had already steered Swami's chair towards the interview room but Swami signaled them to stop and He again looked at me, raised his right eyebrow. His face turned pink like the blooming of a rose and He gave a broad smile as if assuring me that He would take care of me. I was amazed by His charming look and so were the others around me! Then He turned and went away. After the *Mangalarathi*, it was dinner time. My mother feared that I would cough and throw up in the canteen. But to her utter surprise, that day, for the very first time, I did not cough even a single time. I finished my meals in just ten minutes, which otherwise would take 2-3 hours because of my breathing problem. I had a good night's sleep, after many years of sleepless nights! We happily returned home. Neither my father nor my mother could believe – By the time the *Vibhuti* in the packet was fully used up, my breathing trouble had vanished forever!

Balvikas – Bonding with Baba

I joined Balvikas class thereafter and my mother became a Balvikas guru. I had innumerable experiences of His Omniscience and Grace through many dreams and messages in Sai literature, though He had left His physical frame.

Swami appeared in my dream and materialized a heap of *Vibhuti*. He gave it to me, and I took His *Padanamaskar*. I saw His form change into my mother. This demonstrated that Sai is my Divine Mother and also that I should follow the *vedic* dictum *Mathru Devo Bhava*. By His Grace, I had the golden opportunity to chant *Veda* and follow *bhajans* in the Balvikas golden jubilee celebrations at Parthi, in the year 2018. I also took the pledge in the convocation the next year.

Swami has left an everlasting impression of His first interaction with me. I have learnt the lesson that, 'Whatever happens, happens for the good'. Troubles take us closer to God. Swami is pleased when we expect nothing from Him and surrender to Him with the feeling "Thy Will be done, Oh Lord."



KUM. HARIPRIYA M.
MYSORE

Balvikas gave me opportunities to perform in several skits and give speeches which removed my shyness and made me bold. It brought me out of my shell. At school, I would often have trouble concentrating on what we were doing and *Jyothi meditation* helped strengthen my concentration power, making it easier to pay attention and grasp concepts faster. My journey through Balvikas has strengthened my discrimination power and taught me how to withdraw from unnecessary talks. I realize that while the school education has taught me how to earn a living, Balvikas has helped me build a good character. With gratitude, I cherish the years I have spent in Balvikas and I am really thankful to Swami for letting me be a part of His wonderful education system.

Kum. Prasanthi Sai Banala

Bangalore East

“Swami’s words abated my fears and worries and reassured me. It made me understand something that I had been struggling to connect with.”

Kum. Jahnavi Sivaram



PREMA SWAROOPA SAI

My loving *pranams* at the Divine lotus feet of our beloved Bhagawan. I am blessed to be born in the fourth generation of a family of followers of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. My growing up years have been marked by visits to Puttaparthi; almost always accompanied by my cousins, grandparents and along with my mother. Even today, when we reach the arch on the highway from Bangalore to Puttaparthi before entering the main gate the calmness and comforting familiarity gives me an inexplicable feeling of warmth and home.

My treasure – His stories

I have always been a voracious reader. Some of my treasured memories of Puttaparthi visits apart from sitting for *bhajan* in Sai Kulwant Hall and eating pasta in the Western canteen, include finding an empty chair in the bookshop, armed with few children’s books about Swami’s miracles and seeing how many I could manage to read before my mother finished her shopping.

Every summer that I spent in my grandparents’ house in Chennai, I would raid my grandmothers’ bookshelf, devouring as many of Swami’s books as I could find. Since she had been a Balvikas teacher for many years, there was a huge collection and these books managed to keep me happily engaged, deeply engrossed and successfully distracted from the sweltering heat. When the lights had to be switched off or I had read too much for one day, I would rush to my grandmother and ask her to regale me with a miracle. Her stories would come from her own personal experience, family and Samithi narratives, tales from and about her Balvikas students and in more recent times WhatsApp messages from the many Samithi groups that she is a part of.

The Divine Caretaker

I am fortunate to say that my personal experience with Swami began before I was even born. In the early stages of my mother’s pregnancy, when she was praying to be blessed with a girl child, Swami appeared in her dream and said, “**It will be a girl. You will name her Jahnavi.**” My parents named me Jahnavi as Swami had directed.

As a Balvikas student, I was constantly told that Swami takes care of us at every stage of our lives and sometimes in times of stress this seemed a little difficult to accept. However, I experienced a testament to this statement that boosted my faith.

Last year, after I had written my 12th grade Board exams and had appeared for my college entrance tests, I was in a period of desperate waiting and uncertainty that follows. I was constantly worried and anxious, wondering which college and stream I would get admission into. At that point of my life, when things seemed incredibly low, Swami once again appeared in my mother's dream. This time, His message was, **"Why worry? I've kept a good seat for her."**

Sure enough, a couple of weeks later, I received the news that I had secured a good rank and admission into a reputed engineering college in Bangalore. Swami's words abated my fears and worries and reassured me. It made me understand something that I had been struggling to connect with, something that my mother is fond of repeating, "Do your best, and leave the rest to Baba."

Balvikas – My greatest asset

Balvikas was a big part of my childhood and growing up. Friday evenings were always reserved for class. One topic that made a deep impact on me was Swami's Sayings. I remember a poster on the wall of my first Balvikas classroom in my guru's house that had ten sayings. Two of those stood out for me and continue to guide me to this day – "Help Ever, Hurt Never" and "Love all, Serve all". These two were recurring sights in many places that I visited – in the canteens at Puttaparthi, inside the dining hall next to Sai Ramesh hall in Brindavan, on my grandmother's cupboard, and displayed in every Samithi event that I attended.

Love and kindness are the greatest things that we can practice and that helping, serving and compassion to everybody around me is what I must strive to make as a habit. I try to abide by these tenets in my daily life helping my grandparents whenever they need me. At school too, whenever I have noticed my friends going through difficult situations, I have felt that it is my duty to reach out to them and help in any way I can, even if they do not seek me out. This, I feel, is my way of offering gratitude to Swami for all His blessings.



KUM. JAHNAVI SIVARAM
BANGALORE WEST

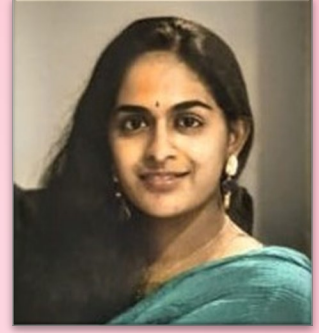
Balvikas is an experience that only some children are fortunate to have and I am blessed to be one among them. Through this we are moulded into better individuals. I will remain indebted to Swami for showering His compassion on us by giving us this gift – The Balvikas.

Kum. Vaishnavi R.S.



*"From Jatila, we learnt of faith like no other
A faith much like a child in his mother."*

Smt. Suparna S. Natesan



WRAPPED IN A BLANKET OF GRACE

At the tender age of four
My mother dropped me at the door
Of a class so special
Over the years I realized was quintessential
Of our Swami's life and teachings
In stories, prayers, activities with deep meanings.

We were carefully moulded
To face situations as life unfolded.
The first thing we learnt was to pray
At the beginning of each and every day
The power of prayer, from Kiran we learnt
A strength we held on to, even when our fingers were burnt.

From Jatila, we learnt of faith like no other
A faith much like a child in his mother.
Of his power and protection, we learnt from Prahalada
Of love and bhakti from Meera and mother Yashoda.

With gentle guidance we were taught,
To be kind and just no matter what battles we fought
For in you and me there is the same Swami
We are His children no matter where we may be.

In times so turbulent where Dharma required the sword
From Arjuna we learnt to surrender to thy Lord
A faith in protection, a strength from within
Nothing is impossible, when with Sai, you win.

As adults today, we face many a challenge
Sometimes unfathomable, things we can't change
At times so helpless we find ourselves
Closing our eyes and chanting Sai Ram

An instinct ingrained so deep
And unshaken solace when we weep.
A faith so strong that gets us across
A blanket of such Love, Grace and protection.



SMT. SUPARNA S NATESAN
BANGALORE EAST

I am deeply grateful to Bhagawan for giving us students, this wonderful programme called Balvikas which comes to us totally free and has multiple benefits. One of Swami's prominent teachings, "Love All, Serve All" has made an impression on me. I understand that through selfless service we can experience God. When you offer milk to a hungry child or a blanket to a shivering brother or sister on the pavement, you are placing a gift of God into the hands of another gift of God.

Sri S.M. Sai Darshan

Bangalore East



"Another major lesson that Balvikas taught me is the quest against discrimination, the value of inclusiveness and religious equality that Swami practised. We must pledge to ourselves, to carry forward Swami's legacy and all the values He instilled in us for generations to come."

Sri S. Arjun



THE DIVINE TOUCH

I scrolled through the news channels in my regular acts of boredom since the lockdown due to Corona pandemic, and I happened to read the headlines on a station that read – "Armenia and Azerbaijan stand-off over disputed territory." I felt the urge to observe how the phrase "War Killing" has just numbed the being inside us. This made me think of the lessons of peace and harmony both within one's self and in the world, which Swami has taught us through Balvikas. Another major lesson that Balvikas taught me is the quest against discrimination, the value of inclusiveness and religious equality that Swami practised.

Balvikas – The quintessence of life

Balvikas, Swami's noble movement that changed the lives of millions of students like me across the world, began in the year 1968. Since then, children are taught, through simple stories or simple acts of kindness, the values that we as human beings are slowly moving away from. Man leads a mundane existence of a meaningless life in the pursuit of worldly pleasure. Balvikas has taught us to serve God by serving our fellow beings for, service to mankind is service to the Divine Himself.

Sai – My guiding lamp

Balvikas always attracted me. I would regularly be told by my guru of Swami's Divine *leelas* and how we must never lose faith in Swami, for He is the compassionate divine who doesn't let His devotees sail alone in the stormy sea. Swami has always been the guiding lamp in my life. Swami through indirect sources has always assured me of His Omnipresence especially in trying times. Every time I felt hopeless while preparing for an exam, I would see the photo of Bhagawan in the Pooja room, the one where He holds His hands in *Abhayahasta* (blessing pose), assuring me that He is with me and I must not lose hope. There were times when I felt so helpless due to my inability to do some activities. I would fume, then I would get a Divine reassurance and later I would feel guilty that I had let my faith in Swami dip.

The Balvikas class was one of the few (maybe the only) classes that I ever looked forward to, mostly because of the fun activities, multi-dimensional and holistic learning approach, my humble and sweet Balvikas guru and of course, the tasty *prasad* towards the end of the class. My Saturdays or Sundays were dedicated to these amazing classes.

The Divine legacy continues through Balvikas

I owe it to Balvikas for making me what I am today, a human being with a materialistic view enriched with the values learnt there – modesty, compassion, kindness towards everyone and the wish to give happiness in someone's life through simple acts of warmth and gentleness. I cannot recount one instance of hesitation to attend these classes. When I went to help my guru teach *bhajans*, years later, I realized how much I missed these wonderful moments that had long passed. I see the new batches, full of energy and the zeal to learn. I see myself in those young kids and how I wish I was there. They too seem to enjoy the journey on the Sai trail as much as I did.

When we grow up, we start to realize that the world has so many terrible things to throw at us. But we must not be hasty. We must implement all that we learnt in Balvikas and turn these things into experiences that we can learn from. At this point we must pledge to ourselves, to carry forward Swami's legacy and all the values He instilled in us for generations to come. However, cliché this might sound, when you find no way ahead, pray to the Divine and a window if not a door, you will find. The *Sai Gayatri* that I grew up chanting is one among the many simple prayers that can be chanted when in a dilemma and I know for a fact that it will work. Swami will ease the problem for us. Hitch your wagon onto this divine engine. Let us carry forward Swami's seraphic thoughts and deeds and make the years and generations to come better with these insights. Let us join hands to transform ourselves to transform this world.



SRI S. ARJUN

BANGALORE CENTRAL

What is needed today is that we should lead a life of good quality. The fostering of sterling character and good conduct is the need of the world. Once we have greater numbers of such people of good quality, the country and the world will become prosperous and peaceful.

- BABA



"Prasanthi Nilayam, the divine abode of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba - just stepping into His Divine Abode removes all the negativity and gives a boost of energy and happiness."

Kum. Sai Sruthi Mopuri



A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE WITH SAI MAA

When I was a student at the Sri Sathya Sai Primary School at Puttaparthi, I used to feel very close to Swami and see Him in my dreams. Even during the times when I felt dull, disturbed or homesick, I could connect with Him. Prasanthi Nilayam, the divine abode of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba – just stepping into His divine abode removes all the negativity and gives a boost of energy and happiness. But after I left the Primary School in the year 2015, I somehow felt a little distant from Swami.

Birthday blessings

I had an experience in January of 2018 that changed my perspective completely. I was in the 8th grade and was selected to chant *Vedam* during one of the sessions for the Balvikas Golden Jubilee Celebrations. I was supposed to arrive at Puttaparthi on January 3rd. As it was a school working day on 3rd, we planned that I will attend the first half of school that day and then leave with my family from Bangalore to Parthi so that I could report at Prasanthi Nilayam before night.

January 4th is a special day for me, being my birthday. My friends had organized a small celebration for me on the 3rd afternoon at school. But as I had to leave for Parthi, we could not have my birthday celebration as was planned by my friends. My friends were happy for me for the opportunity that I had got and wished me good luck. I was sad that my friends had to cancel their plans because of me and continued to feel so during my journey to Parthi.

My mother kept cheering me up saying that Swami will always have a surprise for me and will not disappoint me on my birthday. On reaching Parthi, I freshened up and went to the Satsang Hall for *Vedam* practice. The slots for each person were already decided. Since I arrived late, I was told to sit in the last line. I was a bit upset. I was asking Swami, that mother told me Swami will never disappoint me and here I am somewhere far away, in the last line.

As the practice began, I too started chanting the *Medha Suktam* whole heartedly. The Sir who was judging was walking between the lines. Suddenly, he stopped beside me and told me to go and sit in the third line. I was totally taken aback with this surprise re-positioning.

After the practice session when my mother and I were walking back to our home at Parthi, I kept chanting the *Gayatri mantra* in my mind.

As we were crossing the Mandir, I heard a voice that was so soothing and divine, "*Bangaru, idi nee puttinaraju nenu icche kaanuka*" [My dear, this is the gift I wanted to give you for your birthday] I was stunned! I didn't know whom to share the experience with. I couldn't believe it myself. But the voice that rang inside me uplifted my spirits and I was in total joy. All this is *Sai Leela*!

After this experience, whenever I am disturbed, I chant the *Gayatri mantra* or think about Baba. I communicate with Him pouring out my worries and feelings. Baba Himself has said in one of His discourses that he loves talking to children! Swami always has a way to perk up one's mood and shower His Grace!

Thank You *Sai Maa*, for guiding me and being there for me always!



KUM. SAI SRUTHI MOPURI

BANGALORE CENTRAL

I got introduced to Balvikas in the year 2010 and I feel blessed to be a part of Sri Sathya Sai family. Through Balvikas, I gained a lot of confidence as I started singing *bhajans*. I am always grateful to Baba for giving me opportunities to serve Him. My first hospital service was in the year 2012 with my gurus and friends for a day. Since then my sister and I have been actively participating in the hospital service for a week.

In the year 2015, I got a golden chance to dance with my team in Sai Kulwant hall in Puttaparthi for Baba's birthday. It was a mesmerizing moment, being my first visit to Puttaparthi. In the year 2019, I got a chance to perform on the occasion of Easwaramma Day celebrations. One day at a workshop in Brindavan, I went to Sai Ramesh hall, after dinner, and there was nobody. I sat there for some time and I cannot express in words the peace that I felt there. I could hear only *Gayatri mantra* chants. It was like heavenly bliss and an experience of a lifetime!

Akhila P.

Bangalore West



*"Our faith in You stands strong like a pole
Our family committed with devotion unwavering
You have chiselled us and shaped us into what we are."*

Smt. C. Ahladini



SHARE AND CARE IS EDUCARE

Sharing and caring are enduring lessons for life

For people to follow in everyday life

Teachers and saints from all over the world have been for ages,

Teaching and preaching the same in this small world

Caste or creed definitely no bar

If you don't share or care,

You leave a bad scar

Caring and sharing depicts a positive attribute

You don't care or you don't share,

It certainly shows a bad attitude

It draws you closer to everyone

Spreading love from one person to another one

No matter how big or small, rich or poor

Spread this message door to door

Share and care with each one

You'll be someday number one

And that's what Swami said

"Share and care is Educare"

TRIBUTE TO BHAGAWAN

Dear Swami, our whole and soul
Our faith in You stands strong like a pole
Our family committed with devotion unwavering
You have chiselled us and shaped us into what we are
We have been moving ahead assurance of
“Why Fear When I am Here”
Your Divine Grace and blessings that are always near
Our ultimate goal is to reach Your Divine Feet,
Learning to be humble despite our feats
We offer our most humble *Pranaams*,
Today and always
Seeking Your blessing in all our ways
Thank You Swami.



SMT. C. AHLADINI
BANGALORE SOUTH



"I just surrendered to Swami. 'Swami, I don't know where to go and study now, please show me a way.'"

Kum. Sai Priya K.V.



NAMAMI SAI PADA PANKAJAM

Vibhuti – The wonder Drug

I can still hear the story of my birth in the background of my thoughts while I write this. My mother has narrated this to me. I was born as a premature baby and the chance of my survival was 50-50. Even when the doctor gave up on me, my mother didn't give up. She surrendered me to Swami. She used to put a pinch of *Vibhuti* in my mouth and apply it on my forehead every day. And thus, I grew up as a healthy child. I am very fortunate to have had Swami's Grace ever since my birth.

Swami – My best friend

I still remember my childhood dreams of Swami, I used to imagine Swami as my dearest friend and shared everything that happened to me in a day with Him. For instance, whenever my mother scolded me, I would complain to Swami and Swami used to console me and whenever I felt bored or I didn't get sleep I used to ask Swami to be with me. Swami too responded beautifully! And I feel I am really blessed to experience all these.

The Divine Benefactor

The days passed by. I had to be away from my parents and stay with my grandmother for my education. Life throws many challenges our way, I was no exception. One such challenging situation was when I had to face the demise of my grandmother. I was very attached to her and it took me several days to cope with her loss. After her passing away, I had to depend on my relatives for shelter. There was a lot of chaos in their place and I was unable to concentrate on my studies. I was in Class 10 and my board exams were approaching. Although the school had given us study holidays, my friend and I used to go and study in the school library. Once the Principal noticed us and strictly warned us to stay back at home and study. I had no clue what to do next and where to go to study in a calm atmosphere. I just surrendered to Swami. "Swami I don't know where to go and study now, please show me a way." As I was praying to Swami, I received a call from my mother stating that her leave had been approved by office for a month and would accompany me to our native home where I could focus on studies peacefully.

This was the day I realized the power of reverential prayers and that Swami is always with me. I just have to pray and surrender to Him. From that day onwards, however difficult the situation, I just offer everything to Him, my dear friend and He takes care of my issues. Swami keeps showering His immense Grace on me and I feel I am so blessed to be a part of the Balvikas programme which has taught me how to lead my life selflessly.

DEAR SWAMI,
You have always been there with me
Pouring out the sea,
Sea of Your infinite love
Life is no longer tough now.

Chanting your name
My heart feels warm
Your presence rests all my thoughts calm
You are the saviour of all my mischievous harm

You guide me towards the right
Your path makes my life glow bright
I promise to walk your way
Your Grace and Love is for what I pray

Life sets a unique question paper
With variety of challenges on unknown chapter
And to tackle I am ready with my answer
I SURRENDER TO YOU SWAMI.



KUM. SAI PRIYA K.V.
BANGALORE WEST

I am ever grateful to Balvikas for having moulded me into a better person and influenced me in many ways. There is only one caste, the caste of humanity is a valuable lesson that Balvikas has taught me. I was introduced to *bhajan* singing in Balvikas classes. I found that singing *bhajans* not only has a soothing effect on the mind but is also a way of expressing our devotion and love for Swami. I realized the efficacy of prayer. It is important to be grateful for all the gifts that we have received from God, we should learn to give back to society, to help the poor and the needy. This would be the ideal way to thank Swami for the blessings and Grace that He showers on us.

Kum. Diksha Vasudev
Bangalore Central



"Swami knows what's best for us and knows the right time to present His gifts to us. He is the only one who knows all about our past, present and He is the one who continues to mould our future!!"

Kum. Supriya Maheshwari



SAI – THE ALL KNOWING!!

It was my good fortune to be born into a family already devoted to Swami. My mother was an ex-student of Swami's Anantapur College and used to conduct Balvikas classes in Delhi. When I was 8 years old, we shifted to Bangalore and my aunt became my Balvikas guru. She too was an ex-student from Swami's college. Thus, Balvikas was woven into my life at an early age.

Rehearsal to Reality

My friends and I were regular students at Balvikas. We were blessed with Swami's *Darshan* in Brindavan many times during the trips that our gurus would organise for us. In 1998, during the second anniversary of Sai Gitanjali, Bangalore, we had the golden chance to present a skit in front of Swami. We were very excited, thrilled and happy at the blessed opportunity to perform in front of Swami. At the same time, we were also anxious and tense. Finally, after many rehearsals the day arrived and no words can describe the feeling of being able to stand in front of Him and speak in His presence, be it a word or a line or a dialogue.

Divine Articulation – "Congratulation"?

In May 2002, I had a rather fascinating experience. My 10th standard board exams were done. I had also completed my Group III exams of Balvikas. The Balvikas children from our center were going to Brindavan for *Darshan*, and I decided to go with them. Being one of the older girls, or you could call it Swami's wish, I was made to sit in the corner line next to the carpet on which Swami would walk. My repeated earlier experiences of sitting next to the carpet had shown me that Swami would never come that way when I was seated there. I was quite sure that this time it would be no different and the chance to see Swami from a close angle would pass by.

These thoughts had just crossed my mind when *Darshan* music began to play, signaling that Swami had left Trayee Brindavan and was walking to Sai Ramesh hall where we were all seated. Swami first walked towards the *bhajan* group singers in the first block and then spoke to a few people, took letters, and gave *Vibhuti* to devotees. He then continued to walk to our side. While I watched Him, my only prayer was – 'Swami could you please walk in front of me?' These thoughts were just forming and not even over, when Swami decided this time to shower His Grace and Love. Swami walked straight to where we were seated. Not able to believe my luck, I sat there surprised and thrilled with folded hands. Swami came and stood right in front of me and asked, **"Where do you come from?"** In my innocence I replied "Bangalore, Swami"!

He then went on to ask, **“Which class?”** Being confused about what to say as I had given my 10th exam but was awaiting results, I said, “11th Swami” trusting Him to give me a pass in the exams! Then Swami asked, **“End of Education?”** I heard it as **“Congratulations...”!!** and I was wondering, ‘Why Swami was saying Congratulations...?’ Is it because He knew I had passed my 10th class? Or is it because I had got through my admission for 11th class in Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School, Prasanthi Nilayam? I had tried earlier to join the school several times and had applied again that year as well but had not yet been selected.

So, while I had these thoughts running in my head, Swami once again said, **“End of Education?”** I just smiled with folded hands; and yet again heard it as **“Congratulations!!”** My Balvikas guru next to me nudged me to answer, but with tears in eyes and folded hands, I just said, what do I answer to “Congratulations”?

I sat there, staring at Swami and totally overwhelmed conversing at such close quarters with Bhagawan but unable to figure out the context. When Swami walked away from us, the Balvikas guru sitting next to me chided me for not being able to answer Swami’s question. I didn’t quite understand what she was saying as all that I heard was the word ‘Congratulations’. I looked perplexed, when my guru explained that Swami had asked me ‘End of Education?’ and I should have given the answer as ‘character’. But I reiterated that I heard Swami saying ‘Congratulations’ and that too, three times! Post-*Darshan* multiple people asked me the same question and my reply remained - “Congratulations” - was what I heard.

Promotion to Paradise!!

Within a month, in June 2002, I got my 10th results and I had scored distinction. The echo of the ‘Congratulations’ reverberated in my mind. I had also received a response from Puttaparthi to write the entrance exam for admission to 11th class. On the day of the exam, by 3:30 p.m. results were announced for two batches by the Principal. My name had not been called. I was upset and my mother was equally dejected.

Suddenly, the Principal called us inside her office. She went on to say that I had been selected. I was the last candidate selected by the Lord from the hundreds who had appeared for the entrance exam. We were thrilled. His words, ‘Congratulations’ once again resonated in my mind. I had to join school immediately as classes had already begun.

Who would have imagined that from listening to “The end of education is...” as ‘Congratulations’ in a *Darshan* line, I would soon enter the hallowed portals of Swami’s School in Prasanthi Nilayam and become Swami’s school student!! My hearing his ‘Congratulations’ in Brindavan was an indication of what was in store for me. An indication of Him knowing and planning all of my future. Swami knows what’s best for us and knows the right time to present His gifts to us. He is the only one who knows all about our past, present and He is the one who continues to mould our future!!



KUM. SUPRIYA MAHESHWARI

BANGALORE SOUTH



"I have not been influenced by any distraction and constantly have a question buzzing in my mind, 'Will Swami like this?'"

Kum. Sabhya Santosh



PARAMA GURU SAI

My humble *pranams* at the lotus feet of our beloved Bhagawan.

Testing times

I remember my mother telling us that if we behaved very well throughout the week, she would take us to our Balvikas classes! We would be in the best of our behaviors, not wanting to miss a single Balvikas class.

We thoroughly enjoyed attending the classes as our loving gurus suffused us with lots of love. They made a lot of effort to kindle our interests in *Itihaasas*, essence of *puranas*, different religions of the world and many such topics. Our gurus narrated the mythological stories in a nectarine flow, just as a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down the throat. The stories have got imprinted in our minds. We were taught many *shlokas*. They also ensured that we understood the meaning of the *shloka* by narrating a related story for every *shloka*. We were lost in their sweet voice and their words played magic in our heads, installing firm faith in Swami and most importantly, in ourselves.

The right approach to Life

This also equipped us, young kids with courage, self-confidence and determination in the journey of life. The gurus imparted moral values in our lives in a contemporary way, which we could imbibe easily. This has not only helped us at the individual level but also has made us capable of guiding our peers when they face a dilemma or have to take a decision.

Back then while sitting in our classes we had no idea as to what big an impact our Balvikas classes had on our lives. Today as a young adult I am able to make a complete sense of everything our gurus said. I realize that they were preparing us for this stage of life with too many attractions within our reach that could put us off track. These are nothing but distractions which block us in achieving the purpose of life.

I can proudly say that I have not been influenced by any such distraction and constantly have a question buzzing in my mind “Will Swami like this?” I can confidently say that Balvikas classes have brought in this frame of mind to focus on my goals.

I take this opportunity to thank all my gurus for being nothing less than extended forms of Swami for us, having helped us lead a respectful and a disciplined life.



KUM. SABHYA SANTOSH
BANGALORE CENTRAL

The Balvikas movement started by Swami brings out the values and skills latent in a person and helps him realize the Divinity within. I am thankful to my gurus for imparting the human values. The mythological stories about Markandeya and Dhruva made a deep impact in my mind. In the final year of Group 3 of Balvikas, *shlokas* from *Bhagavad Gita* were taught in a way that proved to me that it was much applicable in life. I completed my Balvikas course successfully and attended the convocation ceremony in Puttaparthi. I am thankful to Bhagawan for having given me the opportunity to be a Balvikas student.

Sri Neelesh N.P.

Bangalore West



"I went to change the date in Swami's calendar and I saw the quote, 'Do your best and let Sai do the rest.' It felt like a sign!! After all, Swami is omnipresent, I'm sure He heard my prayers."

Kum. Vaishnavi Narayanan



BALVIKAS – A PATHWAY TO MY INWARD JOURNEY

Ecstatic memories

My journey as a Balvikas student began as a tiny tot. One of the very first lessons taught as a part of the Balvikas syllabus was introduction to various religions and the drawing of the Sai Emblem. I recollect various stories that were told to me, including the birth of Christ and tales from the life of Prophet Mohammed. I remember being ecstatic when I learnt about Zoroastrianism as it was completely new to me! Through Balvikas I was able to absorb the value of unity in diversity at an incredibly young age. The current scenario in our country has made me realise that religious tolerance should really be a moral imperative and I am glad that this was instilled into me as a child.

As a teenager, I lacked patience but Balvikas taught me to be mindful of the things that were making me impatient. I learnt the practice of 'Silent Sitting'. Silent Sitting was a fun activity during Balvikas, as back then it was mostly trying to not open my eyes and giggle! But only as an adult, I was able to understand the true value and importance of Silent Sitting. This helped me to start my inward journey; I was able to judge my good and bad during silent sitting. It also improved my capacity to accept intolerance, delay and trouble.

God's timings are perfect

Yet another important life lesson taught to me in Balvikas was, "Trust in the timing of the Lord". A very special friendship of mine, all of a sudden went through turmoil. I was unable to cope with the situation and tried very hard to revive the bond, but the more I tried, the more I failed. Just when I wanted to give up, that very morning, I went to change the date in Swami's calendar and I saw the quote, "Do your best and let Sai do the rest."

Let me share with you, I never change the date sheet in the calendar at home, it is mostly done by my parents. So that day, when I read the quote, it felt like a sign! After all, Swami is Omnipresent, I'm sure He heard my prayers. So, I decided to be patient and leave it up to Him to carve a path to restoring my friendship. Believe me that friendship in no time turned out to be much stronger. At the end of the day, I was made to realise that Swami has the perfect timing. It is never early, never late, but we need patience and a strong faith. And this most certainly is worth the wait!

Penning down this article, I would like to emphasise on how I developed an inclination towards good thoughts, good words and good deeds. When I reflect on my Balvikas days, I recollect, how I went to Balvikas as a bud and over the years, the teachings have nurtured my spiritual soul and helped me bloom.



KUM. VAISHNAVI NARAYANAN
BANGALORE CENTRAL

My entry into Balvikas happened when I was in Class 8. I met people whose words inspired me. The life stories of great leaders and saints were very appealing. I was motivated when I heard about how they had reacted to difficult situations. The project work in the final year of Balvikas, took me to a village on the outskirts of Bangalore. I had to conduct a survey there and suggest possible solutions to address their problems. This was the first time I saw village life hands-on and met people who were ready to help me though I was a stranger. This project helped me in many ways. I learnt to stay happy with what I have and understood the importance of conserving our resources. This was a precious opportunity that gave me something beyond and more valuable than mere bookish knowledge. Balvikas is one debt I'll never be able to repay. Thank you, our beloved Baba.

Sri Vanshvir Shah

Bangalore West

“Swami sat throughout the drama and at the end, all of us got Swami's Padanamaskar.”

Kum. Gayatri



SWAMI'S IMPACT ON MY LIFE

Sai the Sovereign Master

Growing up, Balvikas has been an integral part of my life. It has taught me so many things that I still remember and practice. Swami has always showered his choicest blessings upon us by being a teacher, a friend walking alongside through all the ups and downs of our lives. In addition, the most amazing virtues I have learnt are *seva* (service) and discipline. Another attribute Swami taught me, which I am still trying to master, is patience.

Testing times

In my school days, I was always into cultural activities such as singing, drama and dance. Being the daughter of a person who would get transferred from one place to the other often, it became a task to carve a niche for myself wherever I went. Once in a few years I had to say goodbye to my previous schools and that meant goodbye to the recognition I had earned there and striving for it at my new school. I struggled like this quite a bit when the cultural celebrations were at peak in my new school.

Thanks to Balvikas, I had quite some experience in singing and drama in both of which I was keen to participate. However, since I was a new girl, none of the teachers or seniors wanted to take me and rightly so. They had a safe bet with the ones they were familiar with and had worked to carry the torch forward in the annual cultural event. Even though I knew this, it felt bad that I couldn't be a part of it. It was then that my newly learnt virtue had to be put in practice. Hence, true to my dear teacher I continued to do my best in all aspects of schooling, kept training in singing and dancing and patiently waited for an opportunity to show up.

Balvikas bonanza

We had an activity within our class where we had to present a traditional art form that belonged to our birthplace. Since it was a school with students from various ethnic backgrounds under the same roof, this activity was to teach us “Unity in Diversity”. So, I thanked Swami for presenting me with this amazing opportunity to be able to showcase what I could bring to the plate and also do something I love. My happiness knew no bounds. I was able to sing a traditional song. The teacher was quite impressed with my talent and I felt happy that I finally succeeded in creating an impact that would allow them to consider me for future programs.

The Divine Director

There was another incident when Swami taught me to be patient when I was a part of the drama Bhakta Dhruva penned by Swami Himself, which we were to portray in His divine presence. The entire episode of this dance-drama was a testimony to my patience. However, looking back, this one incident stands out the most.

This was in October 2010, just a few months before Swami left his mortal coil, although, back then, none of us had any idea about it. I got to play the role of the villainous Suruchi, who banishes young Dhruva to the forest. The whole crew practiced day in and day out to put up a great show for nearly six months before the D-day. So, on Oct 31st, 2010, we were supposed to perform the drama in front of Swami at Prasanthi Nilayam. Unfortunately, Swami did not come out for *Darshan* that day. About 60 of us were disheartened and everyone burst into tears because all the efforts went in vain. Surprisingly, we students had not lost our hope. We still felt Swami would show up the following day and would not let our efforts go in vain. The following night at the dormitory, we had a mass prayer by the whole group including our parents and our coordinators. We were all patient, all very hopeful. The next day too, we all got ready to perform.

Blissful moments - Everlasting memories:

Just as we hoped for, the next day, Swami did come and interact with us. Not an exaggeration, we performed our best in front of Him. Swami sat throughout the drama and at the end, all of us got Swami's *Padanamaskar*. It was an opportunity of a lifetime. And the girl who portrayed Dhruva got a gold chain manifested from Swami's hands and we were so lucky to witness that materialisation. The day we performed (Nov 1st, 2010) also happened to be *Kannada Rajyotsava*, which was a special day for us since most of us were from Mysore. There couldn't be anything more special than the drama we performed that day. Time and again, in His unique way, Swami taught me that patience always pays.



KUM. GAYATRI

MYSORE

The Lord will be watching with a thousand eyes the least activity of man to discover any slight trace of selfless love sweetening it.

- BABA



*"Thou Art my Lord,
Who guides me in the alley of life
Helping me fly over the boulder like impediments"*

Kum. Bharati Ramanan



THOU ART MY LORD

Thou art my Lord,
Whose Grace is ceaseless
Whose arms are ever outstretched
for all the downtrodden and the tyrannized.

Thou art my Lord,
Who is like the warmth of the Sun
On a foggy, freezing dawn
That kisses the dewdrops aloft the leaves.

Thou art my Lord,
Who guides me on the alleyway of life
Helping me fly over the boulder like impediments
With the wings of faith and devotion.

Thou art my Lord,
Who fills me with limitless ecstasy
Gliding through the waters of time
Like an orange Flamingo amidst the white swans.

Thou art my Lord,
Who sows the seeds of love and compassion
When my untouched heart
Receives You in all willingness.

Thou art my Lord,
Whose footprints leave behind a trail
Helping the mortals find their way
Through the dark woods of ego and selfishness.

Thou art my Lord,
Who pushes in the air of unsullied love
Who guides my jittery fingers
To give out musical notes of black and white.

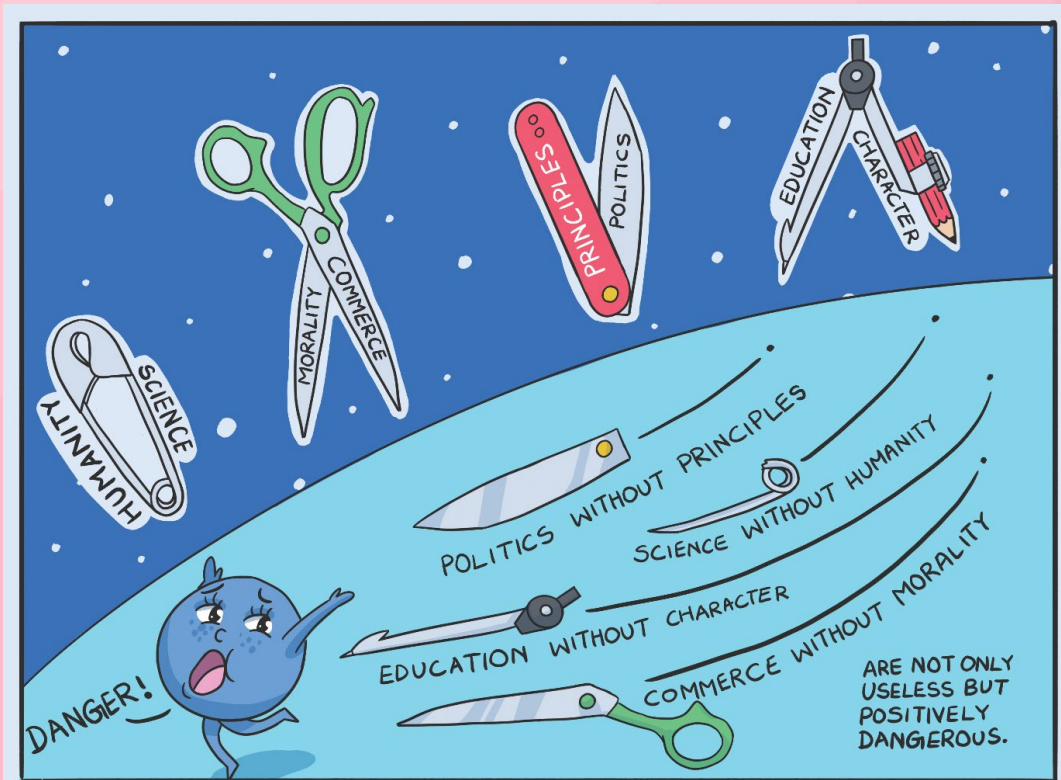
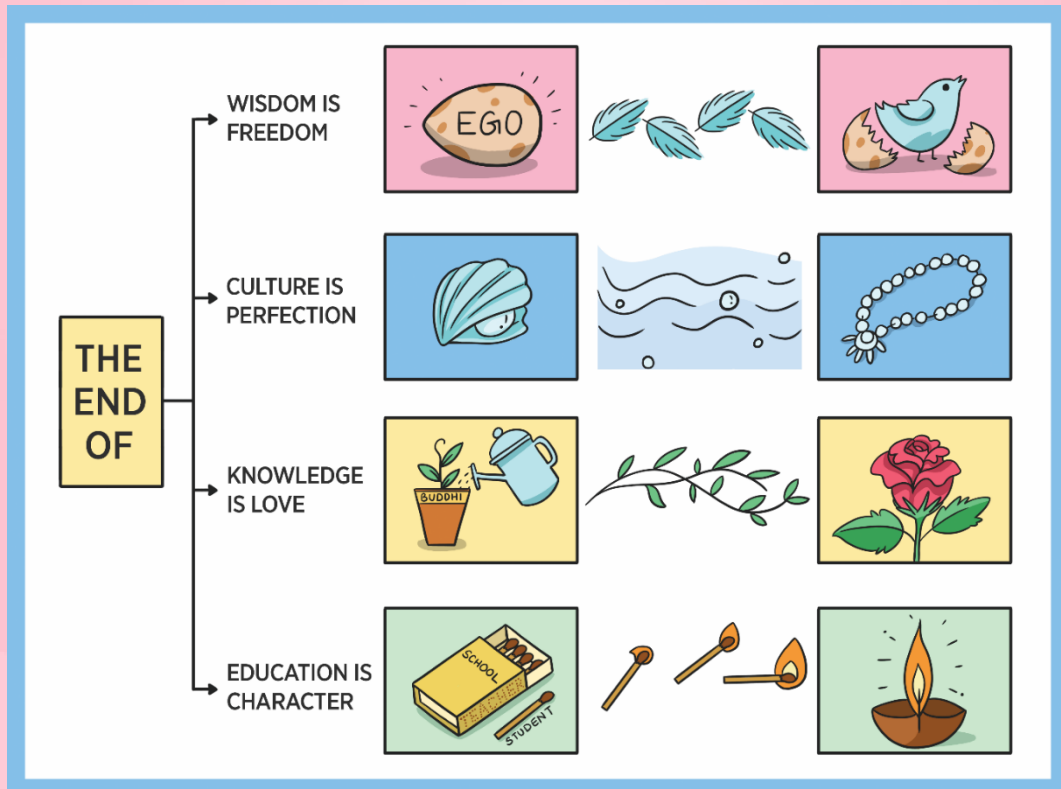
Thou art my Lord,
Whose lap is ever widening
As that of a mother's
Waiting to caress her child away to glory.

Thou art my Lord,
Who is found in my eyes and heart
Though they fail to capture Your beauty
And fathom Your ever – encompassing Divinity.



KUM. BHARATI RAMANAN
BANGALORE CENTRAL

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SWAMI'S SAYINGS



SMT. INDIRA RAO
BANGALORE NORTH

Kum. Sinchana Neeragund
Bangalore West

Inspired by her Balvikas gurus and the service activities taken up by the Samithi, Sinchana started conducting classes for underprivileged kids in the slums of her neighbourhood. A simple initiative started as a summer project picked up momentum leading to the formation of **Aakanksha**, a team of volunteers who conduct classes in their spare time to impart wholesome education to the kids.



Kum. Sai Janani
Bangalore South

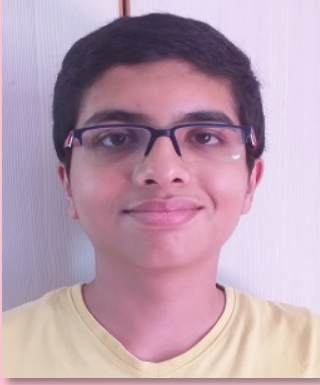


Sai Janani, an accomplished singer, took part in singing for the Bangalore Peace Project, an initiative undertaken by the World Peace Flame and Imbroglia Productions to propagate worldwide peace in 2015. She has won the First prize in International Music Vocal Solo and in Group Performance in Geet Sangeet, a singing competition hosted by Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts in partnership with the Times of India in 2017.

Kum. Skandashree Bali
Bangalore South

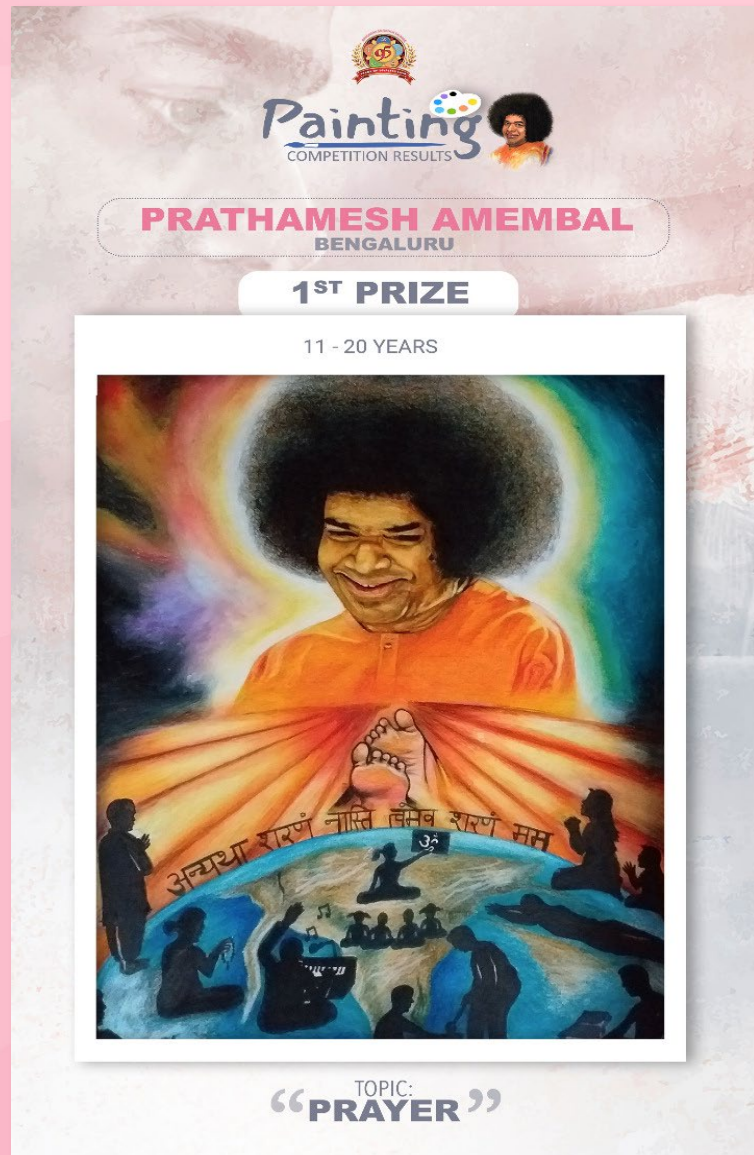
Skandashree is the recipient of the coveted PRMoment 30Under30 Award, 2019, which recognizes the Top 30 Marketing professionals of the country. She has several breakthrough campaigns to her credit, and her articles have been published by leading Media Organizations such as PRMoment, New Indian Express and Deccan Herald.





Sri Prathamesh Amembal
Bangalore Central

Master Prathamesh is passionate about art at his tender age of 16 years. He has won the 1st prize in the painting competition held by Sri Sathya Sai Media Center, Prasanthi Nilayam. This prize-winning artwork is titled "Prayer is the Spirit speaking Truth to Truth". The beautiful cover page of this booklet is also an artwork by him titled "You can hear the footsteps of God when Silence reigns the Mind"





Sri Erra Vivasvat Gurudutt
Bangalore East

Gurudutt, a regular participant in Hospital service, had read through the instructions of a fire extinguisher in SSSIHMS while doing service there. When a fire erupted in his apartment in Kundalahalli, he acted with courage and presence of mind by operating the fire extinguisher to quell the fire, and thereby averted a major calamity.



Sri Vishwas K. M.
Bangalore North

Vishwas has the distinction of getting 2nd rank at all-India level in the Central Armed Police Forces exam held by UPSC in 2018. He is now serving our motherland being part of the Sashastra Seema Bal, a border patrol organization deployed along India's border with Nepal and Bhutan.



Kum. Chythra Shyamnandan
Mysore

Chythra is an avid classical dancer training under the tutelage of Guru Kripa Phadke and team. She had the privilege of being part of the team that performed Bharatanatyam dance at the Mysore Palace as part of the prestigious Dasara celebrations in 2019.



Kum. Sai Shruthi Shashidhar
Bangalore South

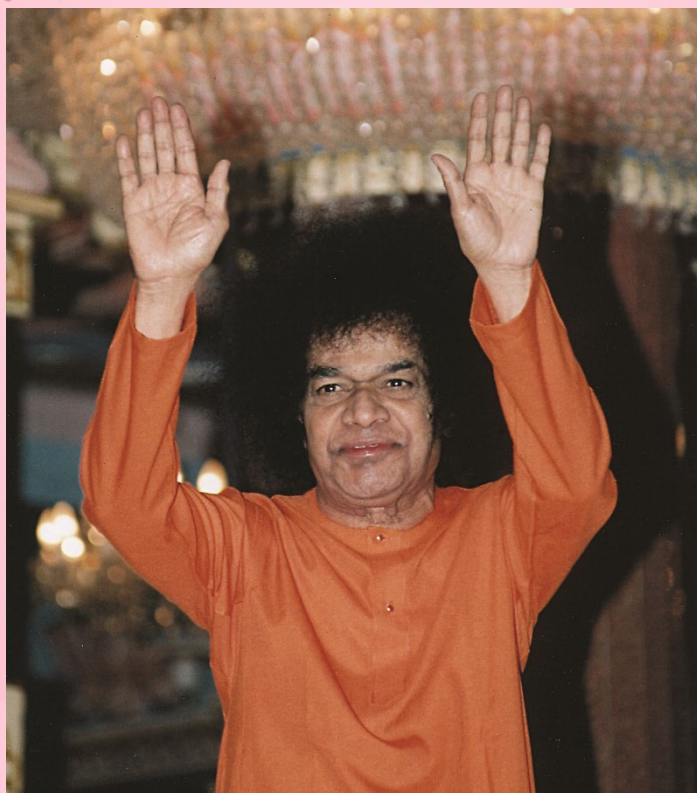
Sai Shruthi has given solo Bharatanatyam performances in the prestigious "Chiguru" program held by Dept. of Kannada and Culture, Govt. of Karnataka, at a young age of 12 years. She has choreographed several dances for Balvikas programs as part of Parthi Yatra, Easwaramma Day celebrations etc.



Smt. Akshatha Sheregar
Bangalore West

Akshatha, a highly active and brilliant Balvikas alumna from Bangalore West, works in Sony Entertainment in Bombay. She has received the Powerhouse Award for achieving the target for Godrej company, successful presentation in consumer products and glorifying her company in high profile business. This has been awarded for her diligent contributions during the COVID period.

No one is born Achiever, It's all in the Attitude



The inspiration for this compendium of articles and poems "SRI SAI DEEPTI PRABHA" is our Divine Guru Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Our heartfelt gratitude to our Beloved Lord for giving us this golden opportunity on the sacred occasion of His 95th Birthday Celebrations.

Our loving Sairams to our Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas alumnus, Pratamesh for his innovative artwork on the cover page and Satwik Yajman for beautifully designing the back page. We acknowledge the contribution of Ravichandan for the apt title 'Sri Sai Deepti Prabha'.

We also appreciate the effort and commitment of Sri Sathya Sai Balvikas gurus who dealt with the contents, and the technical support from the members of IT team for bringing out this beautiful garland of articles and poems to offer at the Divine Lotus Feet.

Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya



‘Transforming Self to Transform the World’

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations
Education Wing, Karnataka (South)

