

This year, the 24 hour Global Akhand Bhajan will start at 6 pm on 7th November and end at 6 pm on 8th November, 2009 and will be held at the following venues in Mumbai

Zone Wise	Area Wise
Zone 1	Utsav Hall, Badhwar Park, Wodehouse Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400 005.
Zone 2	Dharmakshetra, Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri, Mumbai 400 069.
Zone 3	Seth Dhanji Devshi Rashtriya Shala, A C Banquet Hall, Upashraya Lane, Next to Zaveriben Popatlal Hall, Near Ghatkopar Station, Ghatkopar (E), Mumbai 400 077.
Zone 4	Sai Prem, Vashi, Navi Mumbai 400 703.

The bhajan commences with the lighting of the sacred lamp - the Akhanda Jyothi - that is kept burning for 24 hours. Thus the sacred lamp will be lit in each country during the 24 hour period based on local time and by the time a Sai centre at Honolulu lights the Akhanda Jyothi, centres in the East would have completed their Akhanda Bhajan.

Before the Bhajans are completed the world would be a girdle of Akhanda Jyothis lit round the globe in Sai Units. The Akhanda Jyothi not only helps to concentrate the minds of devotees but promotes also a sense of spiritual unity and harmony among the devotees. The prayers will be for Peace in the world.

This is being done not for the sake of one individual, one nation, or one community. It is for the welfare of humanity as a whole. The Bhajans that are sung permeate the ether in the form of sound waves and fill the entire atmosphere, thereby, the whole environment gets purified." - Baba

Baba's miracle at Akhanda bhajan

Nine families started an Akhanda Bhajan Mandali in 1944, consisting mostly of our relations. We had bhajans every thursday evening regularly. In 1946 , we requested swami to attend our first annual Akhanda bhajan, which He did. Swami stayed with us for full 24 hours of the bhajans. We had originally planned the Bhajans for about 150 people with our limited means. As Bhagavan attended the function, over 500 people attended, including several distinguished devotees who came with swami. We had a problems to how to give prasadam to all of them, as we had not anticipated such a situation. We represented our problem to Swami.

Baba with his merciful love, came to the kitchen and blessed the food. after the function was over we served Pongal to over 1000 people till the evening. it never got finished. This miracle is one of the earliest experiences in our lives, which is still green in our memory. We did this annual Akhanda Bhajan for twenty five years continuously. Once or twice Baba could not attend the function, but we took into account only the years when He attended.

Bhajans becomes global

In the year 1974, we celebrated the 25th year of our Akhanda Bhajan in the golden Jubilee Hall, Lalbagh. By then our Akhanda bhajan had become very popular and ever increasing numbers of people attended the function. Nearly 10.000 people attended the 1974 celebrations. Swami, in his concluding speech, declared that in future instead of our family conducting this akhanda bhajan, the entire world should conduct the bhajan on the same day . He materialised a Navarathamala and gave it to me as a benedictory blessing to our family.

From the book Sanathana Sarathi, page 128

from the chapter " five decades at the lotus Feet" from Dr.R.S.Padmanabhan.

Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust

Bhagavan's 70 th birthday.

In Sai love, Titia de Groot-Boelens,

Holland

AKHANDA BHAJAN

An Exposition by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Importance Of Bhajans

"As a matter of fact, Bhajan is a constant exercise. It has to be as essential as breathing." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. VI. p. 238*

"Bhajans always give joy and peace."

Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. 1, p. 190

"Wherever My devotees sing, there I install myself. So sing from the heart, conscious of the layers of meaning each word has. You can have God installed in your heart." *Sai Baba*

"The Name (of God) undoubtedly brings in the grace of God. Meerabai, the queen of Rajasthan, gave up her status, riches, fortune and family, and dedicated herself to the adoration of the Lord, "Giridhara Gopala". Her husband brought a chalice of poison and she was ordered to drink it. She uttered the Name of Krishna while she drank it. It was transformed into nectar by the grace the Name invoked." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. VI. p. 217*

"Cast away ignorance; you are free, liberated from all bonds that very moment. All spiritual disciplines have this liberation as their goal. Nama-sankirtana (repetition of God's Names), too, helps you get rid of this basic ignorance." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X, p. 70*

"Measures for the elimination of egoism: the chief among these is the Bhajan." *Sai Baba. SSS, Vol. VI. p. 237*

"Let your whole life be a Bhajan. Believe that God is everywhere at all times, and derive strength, comfort and joy by singing His Glory in His presence." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. X. p. 75*

"Bhajan is a good disciplinary process by which these two (Kama and Krodha) can be kept away. Kama is the lust for physical pleasure, power, fame, wealth and scholarship. Krodha is anger, which is the result of foiled lust." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. X. p. 79*

"Bhajan (devotional singing) is more important than Bhojan (food). Prayer is more important than pining for meals. Birds, beasts, insects and worms, all feed and keep fit. Man is the crown of creation, the monarch and master of all beings in creation. If he, too, seeks only food and shelter as inferior species do, it is deplorable indeed. From the moment of waking until the moment when he lays himself down again to sleep, man is engaged in endless errands, unceasing turmoil, never-ending tangles and boundless anxiety. And what does he gain therefrom? More confusion, more mental agitation." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X, p. 79*

"You will relish the Bhajan as you make it a daily function, like eating and sleeping. You eat twice a day for the upkeep of the body. Should you not do Bhajan at least once for the upkeep of the mind? *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. X, p. 81*

"Those who sing Bhajans get what can be called 'double promotion', for they derive joy and distribute joy. Life today is filled with sorrow. It is beset with fear and despair. The only time you can forget these thoughts and strengthen yourself to meet the hard times is when you contact the source of all strength. God. You

cannot get that peace while you bend under the burden of daily life." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X. p. 81*

"Whenever an idea of hurting others or taking someone's belonging or spreading falsehood about others enters your mind, turn to God for help. Ask Him to give you strength. Repeat the Name of God or hum a Bhajan. You will find that all your bad thoughts will flee, leaving you free from evil." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X, p. 154*

"The hands should be lifted in prayer and words should come out full-throated. It is unfortunate that even those who are gifted with good voices do not sing aloud in Bhajans. Man has been endowed with a tongue to sing the praise of God. If he fails to do so, he remains indebted to God." *Sai Baba, SS. 8/96. p. 206*

"The recitation of the Names of the Lord will help to purify the atmosphere as a result of the sacred sound waves getting absorbed in the atmosphere. The power of the sound waves is evident from the way radio Waves are transmitted and received over long distances. The atmosphere that has been polluted by impure sound waves can be purified by chanting the Divine Name. Likewise, sacred thoughts, pure speech and pure actions will purify other polluted elements. There is no better purifying agent than this." *Sai Baba. SS. 4/92. p. 71*

Meaning Of Akhanda Bhajan

"Akhanda means uninterrupted, without any gap. "Akhanda-Bhajan" means that it should not be just a twenty-four hour, or even a seven-day affair. It must go on from birth to death. Bhajan (devotional song) has to start in childhood and continue onward. It must be constant companion of man, his solace and strength. Do not postpone it until old age, for it is the essential food for the mind." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. 1, 125*

"This day (4 December 1976), you have resolved to imbibe Divine Bliss by reciting the glory of God in chorus and with music, continuously for twenty-four hours. You call it Akhanda Bhajan, even though it will end after that period. Still the idea is good and programme will yield good results." *Sai Baba. SSS, Vol. X. p. 79*

"This has been named an Akhanda Bhajan, that is to say, Bhajan done without a break. But was it really an Akhanda Bhajan? It is begun at 6:30 on the evening of one day, and is closed at 6:30 on the evening of the next day. Can we call it 'unbroken Bhajan'? What is a period of 24 hours when we consider the vastness

of the universe and the eternity of time? It is just a wink, a minute part of the life of man on earth. By engaging yourselves in the recitation of the Name of God for one single day, you claim to have done Bhajan 'without a break'. Akhanda Bhajan must be as continuous as breathing itself if it is to deserve its name." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. X. p. 67*

Meaning Of Global Akhanda Bhajan

"The Akhanda Bhajan that is observed by Sai devotees all over the world for full twenty-four hours in November is an annual event of global significance. Starting from 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, the Akhanda Bhajan concludes at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. The Bhajans (spiritual songs) start with the lighting of the Akhanda Jyoti (the sacred lamp) that is kept continuously burning for 24 hours." *V.K.N, SS. 12/87, p. 341*

Special Significance Of Global Akhanda Bhajan

"This programme of Akhanda-Bhajan continuously done for 24 hours all round the world in all lands, has therefore spread the message of love through the Names of the Embodiment of Universal Love. It has saturated the atmosphere with thoughts of God and peace and joy that He showers. The Bhajans that you have done here (Prasanthi Nilayam) has affected not only this particular area and its environment, but it will transmute the entire atmosphere. Continue this attitude of devotion and humanity, of service and tolerance, the atmosphere will not be polluted by hatred." *Sai Babu, SSS. Vol. X, p. 75*

"What is significant about the global Akhanda Bhajan is that while apparently the duration of the Bhajan is identical, the time sequence varies from country to country. For instance, when Bhagavan lit the Akhanda Jyoti in the Prasanthi Mandir at precisely 6:00 p.m. on November 14, 1987, the Akhanda Bhajans had been going on for many hours in countries east of India from Japan to Singapore. This means that as the earth revolves, lamps are lit at different Sai centres according to the local time, and by the time the westernmost centre in Vancouver lights the Akhanda Jyoti, (Sai) centres in the east would have completed the Akhanda Bhajan. Before the Bhajans are completed all round the world, there would be a girdle of Akhanda Jyotis lit around the globe in Sai centres as far as Fiji in the "east" and Hawaii in the "west" *V.K.N. SS. 12/87, p. 341*

Purpose Of The Global Akhanda Bhajan

'Today we are having Akhanda Bhajans (non-stop twenty-four hour global Bhajans by Sai devotees all over the world. This is being done not for the sake of one individual, one nation, or one community. It is for the welfare of humanity as

a whole. The Bhajans that are sung permeate the ether in the form of sound waves and fill the entire atmosphere, thereby, the whole environment gets purified." *Sai Baba, SS, 11/86. p. 280*

"Today the atmosphere is polluted by unholy and vicious sounds. This results in the growth of evil thoughts and feelings, which lead to evil deeds. If the atmosphere has to be purified, it has to be filled with pure and sacred sounds." *Sai Baba, SS, 11/86, p. 281*

"Singing with intense yearning for God and enjoying the experience of adoring Him, helps to purify the atmosphere. Man is forced to breathe the air polluted by sounds that denote violence, hatred, cruelty and wickedness. Therefore, he is fast losing the high attainments that are in store for him. The vibrations of the Namasankirtans can cleanse the atmosphere and render it pure, calm and ennobling. It is with this high purpose in view that this programme of global Sankirtan was designed." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X, p. 67*

"No man can escape the influence of the pollution of the air he breathes. The sounds that we produce, with good intent or bad, spread throughout the air around us. This is our daily experience. The sounds produced by radio stations pass through the atmosphere and reach our homes when we tune in. The vibrations travel vast distances and affect the nature of those who inhale them. The atmosphere also affects the food man consumes. The pollution in the atmosphere is imbibed by the plants. The plants supply grain, the grain is the basis of the meal and the meal shapes the character and behaviour of the person who consumes it. When the environment is clean and free from evil vibrations, the food, too, is pure, and the person develops a tendency to be loving and simple. It is to ensure such an atmosphere, this Sadhana (of Akhanda Bhajan) was initiated all over the world." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X, pp. 67 & 68*

"The air, even of these villages, is polluted by vulgar film songs, by demeaning and disgusting conversation. The 24-hour long Bhajan will purify it by divine vibrations, and those who breathe. The pure air will be healthier and more upright in behaviour." *Sai Baba. SSS, Vol. X, p. 81*

"Bhajans have a place of pride in Bhagavan Baba's scheme of spiritual Sadhana. Devotional singing in groups serves not only to concentrate the minds of the devotees on the Divine but promotes also a sense of spiritual unity and harmony among devotees." *V.K.N.. SS, 12/87. p. 341*

"The prayer to the Lord to light the lamp of wisdom and love in the heart of every devotee, when it goes up from millions of devotees all over the world, must have an ennobling and unifying effect which cannot be produced by any other means." *V.K.N. SS, 12/87, p. 341*

"The Akhanda Bhajan should make devotees feel their unity with the Divine and, at the emotional level, and fill them with love for entire mankind. Bhagavan Baba's supreme role in His present advent is to unify humanity by promoting recognition of the inherent divinity present in everyone, transcending all divisions of creed, caste, language, nationality and sex. The Akhanda Bhajan is like a beacon and trumpet-call to humanity to jettison the pretty divisions of the past and rise to the heights of its divine destiny." *V.K.N.. SS, 12/87, p. 341*

Meaning Of Bhajan

"The word "Bhajan" has been derived from the Sanskrit root "Bhaj" which means to render service. Bhajan singing is indeed a mode of providing service for the audience to purify their head and heart." *Sai Baba*

Meaning Of Kirtana

"Kirtana is the word used for the recital or singing of the Name and the Glory of God." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. VI, p. 217*

"Kirtana is singing aloud the Glory of God." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X, p. 67*

"Keertanam (Kirtanam) is an individual affair. It is singing by an individual for the fulfillment of his prayers." *Sai Babu. SS, 4/92, p. 67*

Meaning Of Sankirtana/Sankeertanam

"Samyak-K-eertanam Sankeertanam (Congregational singing of Bhajans) is the best form of Bhajans. Sankeertanam aims at the well-being of the whole universe. This is also described as "Saamaajika Bhajans (community singing). This method of singing Bhajans was first initiated by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. 'Sankeertana' aims at demonstrating unity in diversity. When all the participants combine to sing in unison with one voice, it is described as "Sankeertana." *Sai Baba, SS. 4/92, pp. 67 & 68*

"San-kirtana means reciting or singing well, or aloud with joy in ecstasy." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. VI. p. 217*

"Combining one's voice, tune, feeling and rhythm to the appropriate beat of the song, the devotee should immerse himself in singing. Harmonizing the feeling with devotion and love, the sacred words of the song should be an outpouring of love towards God. That alone is devotional singing (Sankirtana)." *Sai Baba. SS, 4/92, p. 69*

"Sankirtana is the process of singing that originates in the heart, nor from the tongue. It is the expression of the joyous thrill that wells up from the heart when the Glory of God is remembered. It is the spontaneous manifestation of the inner ecstasy. No attention is paid to blame or praise that others may give. It does not seek the admiration or the appreciation of the listeners. It is sung for one's own joy, one's own satisfaction, and one's own delight. Kirtana of this supreme type alone deserves the name Sankirtana" *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. X, p. 67*

Purpose

"What is the essence of Sankirtana? Its essential purpose is to earn the love of God." *Sai Baba, SS. 4/92. p. 69*

Different Forms Of San-Kirtana

The name of the Lord has been glorified in different ways all over the world. Jayadeva was one who enjoyed always the sports (Leelas) of the Divine." *Sal Baba. SS. 4/98. p. 68*

"Hanuman was proficient in music. There was none that could excel him in singing. Even Narada Tumbura could not prevail against him." *Sai Baba. SS. 4/98. p. 69*

"We can distinguish four different forms of Naama-sankirtana: (a) Bhaava-naama-San-kirtana. (b) Guna-Naama-Sankirtana, (c) Leela-Naama-San-kirtana, and (d) sheer Naama-Sankirtana." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. VI. p. 219*

a. Bhaava-Naama-Sam-Kirtana:

"Bhaava Sankeertana is illustrated by Radha alone who expresses her different feelings towards God and identifies herself with the Divine in every mood of devotion. She expressed her devotion in five forms of Shanta (Serenity), Sakhya (friendliness, Vaatsalya (maternal love), Anuraag (affection), Madhura (sweetness). Radha and Mira were the exponents of Bhaava-Sankeertana." *Sai Baba, SS, 4/92, p. 68*

"Bhaava-Naama San-kirtana is the name given to recitals where (God's) Name is sung with one emotion, or mental attitude (Bhaava) toward the Lord.(l) It can be Madhura-Bhaava (sweet emotion) as Radha was overpowered only by that sweetness at all times and places. Her adoration of God is the supreme example of Madhura-Bhaava. (2) Then we have Vaatsalya-bhaava-sankirtana. Yashoda, the foster mother of Krishna, can be taken as the ideal for this type of Bhaava (emotion). Though she had a series of experiences of Krishna being Divine, she preferred to save him as mother and adore him as her son. (3) Then there is Saakhya-Bhaava- Sankirtana (comrade feeling), as found in Arjuna who believed in Krishna as his intimate friend and brother-in-law (for he married Krishna's sister), and confided in him as a comrade. That too is an attitude that will attach you to divinity and sublimate the tower impulses. (4) Daasya-Bhaava- (servant-master attitude) Sankirtana is another type. Serve the Lord as His faithful unquestioning servant. This is the path of Hanumana in the Ramayana. (5) The last attitude is Sat-Bhaava-(unruffled, unconcerned) Naama-Sam-kirtana, praising the Lord, whatever may happen, undeviated by ups and downs, bearing all vagaries of fortune as His play. In the Mahabharata, you will find Bhishma saturated with this attitude. He adored Krishna even when Krishna was advancing towards him to kill him." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. VI. p. 219*

"Bhava means 'attitude' (of mind). So, Bhava-Sankirtan means the adoration, in song, of God pictured and contacted under various relationships. Some may prefer to adore Him as the giver of equanimity (Santam), others as a friend, guide and guardian (Sakhya). still others as the child one loves and tends (Vatsalya) and yet others as the Lover whom one loves with sovereign love (Madhura)." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X, p. 68*

b. Leela-Naama-Sam-Kirtana:

"Another method of Naama-Sam-kirtana is to remind oneself of the various exploits and sports, the various acts of grace and compassion, which the Lord has manifested in the world, while reciting His Name. This is called Leela-Naama-Sam-Kirtana. Chaitanya and Thyagraj realised the Lord through this path." *Stii Bubu, SSS. Vol. VI, p. 219*

"This is (also) exemplified by the 'Gita Govindam' of Jayadeva.
" *Sai Bakti. SS, 4/92, p. 68*

"Leela means 'sport', therefore Leela-San-kirtana is the adoration, in song, of the various expressions of these attributes as evidenced by the accounts of sages and seers of all faiths." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X. p. 68*

c. Guna-Naama-San-Kirtana:

"Many recollect more of the majesty, the glory, the might, the mystery, the magnificence, the munificence, the love with which God has clothed Himself, while reciting His Name. This attitude is spoken of as Guna (attributes, characteristics) Nama-San-kirtana. Most of the saints gradually honoured in many lands are of this category." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. VI, p. 219*

"Guna means 'attributes' (of God) So, Guna-Naama-Sankirtana is the adoration, in song, of manifold attributes of God - omnipresence, omniscience, compassion, majesty, etc." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. X, p. 68*

"Guna-Sankeertana applies to the kind of Bhajan in which the devotee recites the auspicious qualities of the Divine, experiences oneness with the Divine, and acquires the godly qualities. Thyagaraja had recourse to this type of singing. In one of his keertanas, he exclaimed: " Oh Lord! You are beyond all words. Is it possible for even Brahma or other gods to extol your glorious exploits? I am waiting for your grace. Hearken to my entreaties. You restored life to the preceptor's son whom the Lord of Death had taken. away. You conquered the God of Love. You liberated from prison Vasudeva and Devaki. You protected Draupadi when appealed in despair. You were the guardian of Pandavas. You relieved Kuchela of his poverty. You saved 16,000 damsels from subjection." In this manner, Thyagaraja recounted the great qualities of God in his songs." *Sai Baba, SS. 2/92. p. 68*

d. Naama-Sam-Kirtana:

"Another category is denoted by seekers who attach value to the syllables and sound of the Name (of God) irrespective of the meaning thereof. When the Name is pronounced, they say, it draws the aspirant toward God and His grace, whatever may be the Bhaava (emotion), whether the Leela (sports) or Guna (attributes) is associated with the Sam-Kirtana or not. The Name (of God) has a strength, a power, a capacity to redeem, cure and save, alone and unaided, they aver." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. VI. p. 219*

"Nama means the 'Name of God'. So, Nama-Sankirtan means the adoration of God, calling upon Him by various Names, each describing His glory. His achievements, His relationship with the individual. The Names are many. or even countless. It is so in all languages. We have many groups of thousand and eight Names, which can be used for God, as the Vedas declare, has a 'thousand heads', a thousand eyes. and a thousand feet. Devotees can adore Him and

derive bliss through that adoration, filling each Name with the meaning and significance it carries." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. X. pp. 68 & 69*

"Chaitanya was the exponent of this form of Kirtana. "All Names are yours. There is nothing in this cosmos which does not bear the imprint of your Name or Form,' Chaitanya revelled in singing the Names of the Lord as signifying all that was beautiful and glorious in the universe." *Sai Baba. SS, 4/98, p. 68*

Congregational Bhajan Singing

Founder Of Community Bhajan Singing

This method of singing Bhajans was first initiated by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism." *Sai Baba, SS. 4/92, p. 67*

Importance

"Community singing sets up vibrations which will cleanse the atmosphere." *Sai Baba, SS, 2/98. p. 33*

"When all the devotees participate in the Bhajan, the vibrations that are produced will generate joy and harmony." *Sai Baba. SS. 11/86. p. 280*

"Bhajans that are sung permeate the entire ether in the form of sound waves and fill the entire atmosphere; thereby the whole environment gets purified. By breathing in this purified atmosphere, our hearts get purified." *Sai Baba*

"Bhajan has been part of our (Indian) culture, part of the Sanatana Dharma tradition. But it has survived, however, in an attenuated form, in the villages only. It has disappeared from the towns, where people have more 'exciting' ways of spending time and recuperating their spirits. But this programme of congregational Bhajan by all, must be fostered, developed and transplanted in the towns later. I am glad to note that the young men of this (Seegehalli) village and of the adjacent villages, especially those who are attending the Sri Sai College, are evincing keen interest in these Bhajans. That is indeed a promising sign fraught with great potential for the future of this country. They are cleansing their own minds and helping to cleanse the atmosphere of these villages." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. X, p. 81 (Seegehalli, 4-12-76)*

Rules For Conducting Community Bhajans

"When the chanting of the (Divine) Name is done in community singing, it should be done in a form in which the entire group can participate easily.

The tune, the rhythm, etc. should be such that all can follow the Bhajan. If the lead singer takes up a song that is not familiar to others, the response from the group will be poor. There will be no enthusiasm or genuine participation. Their minds will be distracted." *Sai Baba. SS. 11/86. p. 280*

"Reciting the Lord's name is a process of 'give and take'. Singing the Lord's name should become an exercise in mutual sharing of joy and holiness. *Sai Baba, SS. 11/86. p. 281*

"Community Bhajans should not be treated as a pastime. When thousands of persons join in singing Bhajans, they should be fully absorbed in the devotional process and the ecstasy of that experience." *Sai Baba. SS. 11/86. p. 281*

"The singing should be vibrant and soulful and not mechanical or drawling and uninspiring. It should combine feeling (Bhavava), melody (Raaga) and rhythm (Taala) *Sai Baba, SS. 11/86, p. 281*

"Songs should glorify the Name rather than describe the attributes. When attributes are praised, some may develop doubts." *Sai Baba. SS, 11/86, p. 281*

General Guidelines For Conducting Bhajans

"In the Sadhana (spiritual practice) of Nama Smarana (remembering God's Name), which I prescribe, two other complementary processes are included along the recollection of the Name and the fixation of the mind on the Name: (i) there must be purity of feeling, (ii) and dwelling on the meaning of the Name. That will ensure success." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. VI. 177.*

"When the Puja (worship) with 108 or 1008 names is progressing, do not be satisfied when the sound falls on the ear. Try to grasp the meaning too, so that you can ruminate over the glory which each name denotes." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. VII, p. 287*

"Many people do Japa (reciting God's name) and join Bhajans, but they are not aware of the meaning and value of the words they utter mechanically." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. IX, p. 167*

"Take the Name of the Lord and repeat it always. Do Bhajans with faith and enthusiasm. Let the whole city shake with devotion you put into the Name." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. 1, p. 132*

"When you sing Bhajan songs, dwell also on the meaning of the songs and the message of each Name and Form of God. Do not waste time purposelessly; let every moment be a Bhajan." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. V, p. 331*

"Discipline has to be observed in speech, sport and every kind of relationship. For instance, during Bhajans, all those singing in chorus have to maintain the same tune. Discordant singing will jar the ears. Singing Bhajans in unison is a form of discipline." *Sai Baba. SS. 7/96. p. 174*

"When the Name is repeated without concentration and without reverence, it cannot cleanse the mind. Now the Name is on the tongue, the word is in the mind and the owner of the Name is in the heart." *Sai Baba, SSS. VI, p. 165*

"Bhajans must be sung from the heart and just should not emanate from the lips." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. X. p. 140*

"Bhajan must be a felt experience. Let your heart pant for God, then Raaga (tune) and Taala (rhythm) will automatically be pleasant and correct. Sincerity will blot out all errors in Raaga and Taala." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. VIII. p. 57*

"The Bhajans, this time, were done in a ritualistic fashion. Greater attention was paid to Raaga, Taala, Laya and Shruti (the melody, the beat, the rhythm and the tone). All these are conventional qualities (Vyaavaahaarika). To elevate the Bhajans to a spiritual level what are required are true feeling and the ecstasy of devotion. The (devotional) songs should flow not from the lips but from the heart. When the songs come out of the heart they will be blissful for the ears." *Sai Baba. SS, 4/97, p. 94*

"Let melody and harmony surge up from your hearts and let all take delight in the love that you express through that (devotional) song." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X. p. 75*

"The words of a song can be expressed in a prosaic manner which has no appeal to the listener. But when they are sung melodiously, they tug at the heartstrings. (As in the song "Rama! Nannu Kaapaadu"- "Rama!" save me. Swami sang the song to demonstrate its appeal.) Such sweetness is contained in the song when it is rendered melodiously." *Sai Baba, SS, 4/92, p. 70*

"Conduct your Bhajans with a pure unsullied heart, oblivious to all worldly desires. When you chant the Lord's Name with a pure heart, you will experience the Divine." *Sai Baba, SS. 4/97. p. 94*

Crores (millions of rupees) are being spent to purify the Ganges water. Of what use is this exercise if the Ganges continues to be polluted by the discharge of drainage water into the river? First prevent the flow of filthy effluents into the Ganges. In the same manner, the evil thoughts arising in the mind should be diverted and it should be filled with pure godly thoughts by reciting the Divine Name. Everyone participating in Bhajans should sing the Name of the Lord and thereby serve to purify the atmosphere and promote the well-being of the nation." *Sai Baba. SS. 4/92. p. 71*

"Bhajans have to be sung to please the Lord, not your fans. With each Bhajan sung, the mind must be rendered purer, freer from passion, and stronger in faith." *Sai Baba. SS. 12/74. p. 297 & SSS. Vol. IX, p. 162*

"You should sing whole-heartedly with the desire to please God. God makes no distinction between a proficient musician and a beggar in the street. It is the devotion and sincerity that matters. Merge your soul in the Bhajans you sing. Spiritualize your Bhajan-singing. Then you will experience real bliss." "Once Emperor Akbar asked his court musician how he would account for the fact that a wayside beggar's music moved him more profoundly than the music of the state musician? The latter replied that while the beggar sang from his heart to please God, his music constrained by the desire to please the Emperor." *Sai Baba. SS, 4/97, p. 96*

"The hands should be lifted in prayer and the words should come out full-throated. It is unfortunate that even those who are gifted with good voices do not sing aloud in Bhajans." *Sai Baba. SS. 8/96. p. 206*

"Bhajans have to be sung and offered to God in an attitude of utter humility. They are not to be taken as exercises in an exhibition of talent and competitions for mastery of musical skill." *Sai Baba. SS, 12/74, p. 297 & SSS, Vol. IX. p. 162*

"When a man falls into a well, of what use is it if he controls his voice and his emotions and whispers quietly, 'I have fallen into this well, I have fallen into this well. I am in a great danger. Please save me.' No one will be able to hear or save him. He must shout full-throated, with all anguish he is experiencing and with extreme desire to be saved, "I HAVE FALLEN INTO THE WELL! SAVE ME! SAVE ME SOMEONE!" Then only can he hope to get succour. Similarly, when

you are caught in the coils of this world, when you have fallen into this deep well of worldly misery, shout with all your might, with all your heart that God may save you. There is no use of muttering faintly and half-heartedly. 'Save me; I am floundering in this Samsar.' When the prayer comes shrieking through the heart, help is assured." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X. p. 68*

"Some persons attending Bhajans do not move their lips at all. They may say that they are singing the songs mentally within themselves. This is not proper. If you have a devotional feeling, it should be expressed by the tongue joining in the Bhajan. Only then it can be called "Sankirtana"- singing in unison with others. You must sing the Names aloud, full-throated, as far as the voice can reach. Only then the Divine will respond in full measure and shower His grace. No one will go to the rescue of a drowning man if his cries are feeble. Only when he cries aloud at the top of his voice, the cries will be heard and people will rush to save him." *Sai Baba, SS. 4/92. p. 70*

"Attitudes of difference and distinction should not enter the hearts of devotees so far this sacred Sadhana is concerned. It would be far better for all parties if such self-important and conceited folk stay away from Bhajans rather than pollute the sacred atmosphere by spirit of rivalry and factionalism." *Sai Baba, SS, 12/74. p. 297 & SSS, Vol. IX, p. 162*

"Bhajans where you quarrel and compete, and revel in putting down others and raising yourselves, might give you satisfaction. But, let me announce here, they do not please Me at all." *Sai Baba, SS. 12/74. p. 297 & SSS. Vol. IX. p. 163*

"In singing Bhajans, there should be no spirit of competition and no caviling of others. The entire concentration should be on the Name and Form of God." *Sai Baba. SS, 3/96, p. 61*

"Remember! All are the sons and daughters of Sai Maataa (Mother). How can I tolerate when the sons and daughters quarrel among themselves into rival groups? Unless you sing Bhajans for your own joy, you cannot bring joy to others." *Sai Baba, SS. 12/74. p. 297 & SSS. Vol. DC. p. 163*

"During Bhajans the women are engaged in mutual recrimination. They quarrel over seats. Can't they experience Bhagavan wherever they are?" *Sai Baba, SS. 7/96, p. 184.*

"The office-bearers in the units of our (Sai) Organization should be ever vigilant, that this poison does not creep into the working of the units, either in Bhajans, or

in the activities of Mahila Vibhag (women wing),-or Seva Dal (human service wing of volunteers)." *Sai Baba, SS, 12/74. p. 297 & SSS. Vol. IX. p. 163*

"I am pleased only when love is the keynote, when the feeling of unity prevails, when the melody comes from a cleansed God-loving heart." *Sai Baba. SS, 12/74. p. 297 & SSS. Vol. IX. p. 163*

"I do not need Bhajans which like gramophone records reproduce songs and Naamaavalis, without any feeling or yearning while singing. Hours of shouting do not count, a moment of concentrated prayer from the heart is enough, to melt and move God." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. IV, p. 149*

"Some people affirm that the Bhajans used at the Prasanthi Nilayam alone should be sung. But God is omnipresent. He is the in-dweller in every heart. All Names are His. So you can call on Him by any Name that gives you joy." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. VI, p. 238*

"This (Sai) Organization believes that the Atma (soul) in each is the Atma in all, and the God that each worships is the God that all worship. You cannot insist that in the Bhajans, only songs on Sathya Sai should be sung. Fanaticism of that kind I very much dislike and condemn. For all Names and all Forms denote Me only. You betray your ignorance of My Truth when you stick to anyone of My Names and avoid the rest." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. VIII, p. 71*

"Do not care for what others feel about your Dhyana or Bhajan. Do not seek the approval, appreciation, admiration of others, or refrain from Dhyana because others dislike it or ridicule it. Be self-reliant, self-confident, see through your own eyes, hear through your own ears." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. X. p. 73*

"I have been observing how the Bhajans are sung. When the girls sing, the boys do not follow in chorus. When the boys sing, the girls do not respond. When both are singing the Divine Name, why should not they sing in unison? What is the reason for this narrow separatism? This should be given up." *Sai Baba. SS. 4/97. p. 96*

"When you sing Bhajans, take care that words you utter do not convey negative meanings. Here is an example. Our boys (students) sing many Hindi Bhajans, in which they often use the word 'Thu'. They sing 'Thu Rama', 'Thu Krishna', 'Thu Sai' which does not convey the respectful way of addressing the Lord. The Bhajans you sing must convey sacred meanings. You should not use any disrespectful words in Bhajans." *Sai Baba. SS, 4/2001. p. 114*

"There should not be any wrong word in Bhajans. If you sing in this way, every word that you utter would have sanctity." *Sai Baba, SS, 4/2001, p. 115*

"When the Bhajans end, you should go out in silence. When you get back to your apartments, you may discuss your private affairs. But as a rule, observe restraint in speech everywhere. It helps to conserve energy. Excessive talk affects the nerves. You are liable to forget what you have heard." *Sai Baba, SS, 8/96, p. 211*

"At the end of a Bhajan, we say 'Shanti' three times. This prayer is for peace of the body, the mind and the spirit. Without this trine peace, man cannot have real peace." *Sai Baba, SS, 11/97, p. 289*

Sing Bhajans With Full Concentration - An Episode

"Today there is no steadiness of mind in man. Some people think of their footwear when they sit for Bhajans inside. Once Ramakrishna Paramahansa was giving a discourse in a temple. Rani Rasamani, the owner of the temple, was sitting in the front row. All were listening to Ramakrishna's discourse with rapt attention. All of a sudden, Ramakrishna got up, went to Rani Rasamani and slapped on her cheek. Everyone was surprised. They thought that Ramakrishna had become mad. Ramakrishna told the public, 'O people, you may think it is a great mistake on my part to have slapped her. What for you come? You are here to listen to my teachings. Whether you practise or not, at least you should listen to what is being said. If you do not like to listen to the discourse, you better stay back at home. This Rani Rasamani is thinking of her legal disputes. Why should she come all the way to think of the court affairs?' She accepted her mistake and promised not to repeat it. In modern age, many people attend spiritual discourses and get impressed by them. But they do not put them into practice." *Sai Baba, SS. 2/99. p. 48*

Music With Bhajans

"Bhaava (feeling), Raaga (melody) and Taala (rhythm) are the essentials for proper singing. Even the name of Bharat (for India) signifies the combination of these three elements. (Bh-Ra-Ta). In every action in daily life, the combination of these three elements should be observed. This rule can be applied even to one's studies. "Bhaava", in relation to study of a subject, means understanding the subject thoroughly. "Raaga" implies cultivating love for the subject and "Taala" means expressing one's knowledge coherently and clearly." *Sai Baba. SS, 4/892, p. 69*

"Its essential purpose is to earn the love of God. Combining one's voice, tune, feeling and the rhythm to appropriate beat of the song, the devotee should immerse himself in the singing. Harmonizing the feeling with devotion and love, the sacred words of song -should be an outpouring of love towards God. That alone is devotional singing. When the song is rendered without understanding the meanings of the words and without any inner feeling or genuine love for God, it is mechanical performance." *Sai Baba. SS, 4/92. p. 69*

"Bhajans do not become effective through drums, cymbals, violins and other accessories. They cover up essential things- feelings, emotions, yearning, sincerity and faith." *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. IV. p. 148*

"Musical instruments used during Bhajans should not drown the voice of the singer and those who follow. If there is more than one instrument used, maintain a balance among instruments along with singing." *Sai Baba*

"While singing Bhajans, you should utter the Names (of God) from the depth of the heart, not concentrating on Raaga (tune) and Taala (rhythm)." *Sai Baba, SS, 6/94, p. 150*

"Realise that what matters when they (singers) sing Bhajans is not the tune or the conduct of Bhajans, but the genuineness of the feeling with which they sing Bhajans. When their hearts are pure and full of deep devotion, the Bhajans will be full of feeling and will appeal to the hearts of the listeners. What ensures from the heart is 'positive', while what comes from the mind is often negative" *Sai Baba. SS, 4/98. p. 92*

Attributes To Be Attained By Bhajan Singers

"When you do Bhajans and sing the Name of God, you should contemplate on underlying truth. The Naamaavali, 'Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare; Hare Krishna. Hare Krishna, Krishana Krishna Hare Hare' has sixteen words. Each of the sixteen signifies a virtue, which has to be cultivated along with that Bhajan. (i) He must be a Bhakta (full of devotion), (ii) a Tapo-yukta (prepared to enjoy sufferings), (iii) a Samsara-mukta (detached from worldly attractions), (iv) a Padaasakta (eager to serve the Lord), (v) a Vihitha (correct conduct), (vi) a Daana-sahita (charitable), (vii) a Yashomahita (with unsullied reputation), (viii) a Kalmasha-rahita (unblemished), (ix) a Poorna (fully content), (x) a Guna-Gana (endowed with all virtues), (xi) an Utteerna (equipped with all virtues), (xii) a Vidya-vikeerna (equipped with all fruits of learning), (xiii) a Jnana-visteerna (ripe in wisdom), (xiv) a Swaantha (self-controlled), (xv) a Sadguna-Kranta (adorned

with social traits), (xv) a Vinaya Vishranta (moved by humility), and finally (xvi) a Pada-swantha (fully dedicated to God)." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. 1, pp. 164 & 165*

Location And Time For Conducting Bhajan Sessions

"The Bhajan Mahdalis (groups), Satsahgs (spiritual meetings) and Bhakta Mandalis (devotional groups), are now established, must spread the message of Naama-smarana (remembering God's name), Bhajan and Naama-sam-kirtana at all times and in all places." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. VI, p. 42*

"Have Bhajans on as many days as you can, in your village or area. Have them in places where all can come and join, not in the homes of some people, for in homes not all may be welcome." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. VI, pp. 237*

"Bhajans are best held on Thursday evenings and Sunday evenings. But there is no unbreakable rule. for it is not the day of the week that counts. It is the heart that must be ready and eager to imbibe the joy and share it." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. VI. p. 238*"Group Bhajans must be arranged to suit the convenience of the locality and the people." *Sai Baba. SSS, Vol. VI. p. 238*

Expenses For Holding Bhajans

"Have Bhajans as simple as you can, without any competitive pomp and show. Reduce expenses to the minimum, for God cares for the inner yearnings, and not the outer trappings. Even this small unavoidable expenditure must be silently shared spontaneously by a few members of the committee, and not collected by means of a (donation) plate or Hundi pot. or a subscription or a donation list. The participants must be bound by love, affection, loyalty, one Name and Form." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. VI. p. 237*

The Magic Of Bhajans

"Remembering the Name is the panacea. When the Name is chanted as a song set to music, it delights the heart immensely. Many pundits recite the Names as verse (shalokas). They do not experience the intense yearning expressed in the stanzas. Some actors are able to pronounce the words loud and clear, but without any depth of feeling. But when the Names are sung melodiously they appeal to the hearts of the singers and the listeners. Even non-believers and agnostics nod their hearts in appreciation when they listen to devotional music. The words of a song can be expressed in a prosaic manner, which has no appeal to the listener. But when they are sung melodiously, they tug at the heartstrings. Everyone, whether he is well-versed in music or not, should listen attentively to

the singer and try to repeat the words of the song with feelings." *Sai Baba, SS. 4/92, p. 70*

"Do Bhajans and have the Name of the Lord on your lips. Do not waste even a single moment. By chanting the name of Rama, Hanuman, the monkey, became all-powerful, the embodiment of peace and the exemplar of all noble qualities. Sita was full of praise for him." *Sai Baba, SS, 12/87. p. 324*

"Kamadhenu, the wish-fulfilling heavenly cow, can be drawn and tied to a post by means of a rope. God too. can be drawn towards you by the rope (God's Name), and tied to the post (the tongue). Then His Name will be dancing upon the tongue forever, conferring the sv/eetness of His Majesty. The Name (of God) has to be sung for your own delight, to quench your own thirst, to appease your own hunger. No one eats to appease another's hunger, nor takes drugs to alleviate another's illness. So do not care for what others feel about your Dhyana or Bhajan." *Sai Baba, SSS, Vol. X, p. 73*

Bhajan Should Be A Continuous Process

"Do not think that it is enough if you just sing Bhajans when the people from the (Sai) Seva Samiti come and join you. Sing them in your minds, silently and sincerely, when you are at work, with your friends or even alone by yourself. Just as a torch in your hand shows you the way if you are walking at night in the dark, the Name of God on your tongue will guide you through the night of ignorance in your journey of life." *Sai Baba, SSS. Vol. X, p. 154*

Origin Of Akhanda-Bhajan

"Embodiment of the Pure Atman! Last November (of 1975), on the 23rd, people from all parts of the world had assembled here to celebrate the Golden Jubilee, and the office-bearers of the (Sai) Centres were here for the Second World Conference and other functions that took place. Later, they expressed their desire that they should be allotted a date before the close of the Jubilee Year, when they in their own places could celebrate the happy occasion. In order to overcome their disappointment, it was decided that in all (Sai) Centres all over the world, Bhajan (Namasamkirtan) be held for twenty-four hours, beginning at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday (yesterday, 13 November 1976), and ending at 6:30 p.m. today (14 November J 976). Therefore, in 42 countries around the globe more than 7000 centres have enthusiastically taken up this pleasant assignment. This has been named an Akhanda Bhajan, that is to say, Bhajan done without a break" *Sai Baba. SSS. Vol. X. p. 66*

"Srimati Sundaramma is one of the old devotees who has known Sri Sathya Sai Baba since he was a boy of sixteen. Her father, Seshagiri Rao, came to Sri

Sathya Sai Baba after her. Sundaramma continued the weekly Bhajan singing with great dedication and without interruption for an entire year. Her father, Seshagiri Rao, thought that they should celebrate the completion of the year of Bhajan-singing in a suitable style. Each member of the family thought of different ways to celebrate the anniversary in a befitting manner, but Seshagiri Rao's idea that was adopted: Akhanda Bhajan (unbroken Bhajans) for the one whole day and one whole night. The decision having been taken, they got down to planning the performance at their house - which songs to sing, what Prasadam to distribute and pooling of resources to obtain the ingredients of Prasadam. This was particularly tricky as, in those days, there was rationing of rice and the system had to be worked out fairly in cash and in kind.

After making all the preliminary arrangements, father and daughter went to Puttaparthi to announce their attention to Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He was very happy to hear their plans and responded startlingly, "I have come only for this reason, for the sake of my devotees. Go ahead with the Akhanda Bhajans. I will go there and be with you throughout the singing."

Sundaramma explained that, up to that moment, they had planned only a very simple celebration. But, if Sri Sathya Sai Baba was himself going to attend, then, she felt that she ought to make more elaborate arrangements. Then Sri Sathya Sai Baba said he would take charge of all the arrangements. He asked her to book a place in town and to have the Akhanda Bhajans sung there so that all those who wanted to attend could do so more conveniently. He also advised her to ask other devotees to assist in the event.

Sundaramma was in a quandary at this unexpected turn of events. To cope with an occasion, such as it was turning out to be, was a gigantic task in those days when even transportation was very difficult. She calculated that about a hundred regular devotees might turn up for the first Akhanda Bhajan and so she had Prasadam prepared for that number. However, hundreds of devotees turned up on that day. They had learned of the event by word of mouth and in dreams and visions of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sundaramma became anxious about how she would provide enough Prasadam to all.

Puja to Shirdi Sai Baba's and Sri Sathya Sai Baba's images was performed under a gaily bedecked floral canopy. Sri Sathya Sai Baba materialized a silver figurine of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba to keep beside a large bust of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba, especially made for the occasion. Then, with circular movements of hand, he produced 108 golden flowers for the Puja. After Archana (offering with Mantras) of rare flowers, Seshagiri Rao performed Paadapuja (worship of the feet) to Sri Sathya Sai Baba who lighted the Akhanda Jyoti (ever-lasting flame) at the Bhajan meeting.

Sundaramma then requested Sri Sathya Sai Baba to come into the kitchen and pronounce Akshya (limitless) blessings over the food. He looked at the cooked food and loudly said "Akshaya" thrice. Then he sprinkled water on the food and left.

Sundaramma remembers with awe how food prepared for a hundred people fed several thousands people easily, even generously. The pot containing the Prasadam simply never became empty. At last, before leaving the kitchen, Sundaramma entreated Sri Sathya Sai Baba to let the pot be empty and then it was easily emptied. 'Such was the nature of Swami's blessing that it ensured an unending stream of food,' said Sundaramma.

The event was truly remarkable. The first Akhanda Jyoti, organized by Seshagiri -Rao, has led the lighting of thousands of other Akhanda Jyotis on Akhanda Bhajan day in Sai Samithis Bhajan centres throughout the world." *Extracted from Shakuntala Balu's book "Living Divinity", First edition, 1983, pp.175-177*

Glimpses Of The Akhanda Bhajan At Prasanthi Nilayam (1994)

"The Akhanda Bhajan had special significance this year when Bhagavan lighted the Akhanda Jyoti on November 12, 1994, in the renovated Prasanthi Mandir. The Mandir wore a new attractive look with seven artistically designed and exquisitely executed domes replacing the old ones, besides the huge imposing new Mandap in front for accommodating the vast concourse of devotees waiting for Darshan. The Mandap with twenty massive ornamental pillars, covered with shining polished granite slabs and bearing a lotus-shaped bowl to carry concealed lighting, transformed the former open Darshan grounds into a spacious hall with polished black and white marble slabs for the flooring. Two wings of the hall appeared like two gigantic pianos, with a series of elephant images decorating the frieze. At night the Mandir appeared like a Fairy Land with multi-coloured illuminations setting the Mandir in bold relief and enhancing the beauty of the sacred edifice."

"The Mandap was filled with thousands of eager devotees from all over the world while the Mandir was occupied by students from three campuses of the Sai Institute. On the Akhanda Bhajan day (Saturday, 12th November), Bhagavan came to the Mandap before the Bhajans started and gave Darshan to all sections of the crowd. The Akhanda Bhajan commenced at 6:00 p.m. after Bhagavan lighted the Akhanda Jyoti (lamp) in the Mandir. After the first song on Ganesha sung by the men students, the Bhajan song, "Akhanda Jyoti Jalao" was sung by the women students. The Bhajans continued nonstop for twenty-four hours with men and women leading by turns."

"Bhagavan sat through the Bhajan for nearly two hours on Saturday. On Sunday morning, Bhagavan went round the devotees, giving Darshan, and stayed for the Bhajans for two hours. The Bhajan came to a close at 6.00 p.m. on Sunday, with the distribution of Prasadam to all the devotees with the blessings of Bhagavan. Prasadam consisted of tamarind rice and sweet rice. Bhagavan supervised the distribution of Prasadam after taking Aarati and stayed on till all were served." *Editor. SS, 12/94, p. 318*

Important Questions Concerning Bhajan

QUESTION: Years of Bhajan and Meditation have not borne fruit in me; I am where I was before. Why?

Sri Sathya Sai Baba: "How can fire be struck from a wet match-stick? Soaked in worldly desires and caught in material entanglements, how can the light of wisdom shine in your head? How can you generate the fire of Jnana" *SSS, Vol. X. p. 140*

QUESTION: The Lord told Narada that he could find Him installed wherever His glory is sung by His devotees. Does it mean that He is installed in the thousands of places where Bhajan is sung?

Sri Sathya Sai Baba: "No. The pre-condition is 'sung by devotees'. The devotees sing to please God, to acclaim His Majesty. They do not crave for exhibition, appreciation or fame, nor have they any envy or pride in their hearts. Tansen was a celebrated singer attached to the court of Emperor Akbar. He was so talented that when he sang the *Raga Meghamala*, clouds gathered thick in the sky. When he sang *Varuna*, rain fell. When he sang *Nagaswara*, serpents flocked before him. One day while Akbar was engaged in prayer, he heard a Haridasa, a wandering mendicant, singing a song which touched his heart immensely. Akbar called Tansen to his presence and asked him why he could not touch his heart so deeply. 'You have all gifts and are the most talented singer, yet Haridasa moved me as never before. Why?' Tansen said, 'Maharaj, while I sing, I look upon your face to discover whether you are pleased or not. The Dasa sings always looking at the Face of God before him, and he is happy only when God is pleased.' Bhajan must be sung from the heart and should not just emanate from the lips." *SSS. Vol. X, pp. 140 & 141*

From the book - *Festivals at Prasanthi Nilayam - An Exposition by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba - Compiled and Edited by Suresh C Bhatnagar*