

Bhagavata Vahini

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Parikshit continued his wailing of protest. "Even ogres and barbarians respect their womenfolk. Among them, if one woman is thus insulted, they avenge it as if the entire tribe is ill-treated. When such is the case, the elders of the Clan, the emperor, their preceptors, sages and learned men, were all present there and watching in open assembly, this atrocious act; did the intelligence of those high placed witnesses suddenly disintegrate? Were their eyes suddenly blinded by some dire disease? Did they feed on grass that their taste became so beastly? Did they forget in their animality the honour of the race? And the elders! Their sense of discrimination deserted them and they must have looked pathetic caricatures of themselves."

Vyasa interrupted this tirade against those elders who sat quiet during those awful moments; he said, "Son! Parikshit! Do not jump to conclusions and confusion. No one of the elders in that assembly was in favour of the wicked behaviour of Duryodhana, Dussasana and others; they warned them of the consequences of their iniquity; what could they do if those foul men perpetrate sin? When Dussasana was dragging Draupadi by the hair, right into the royal hall which was filled with courtiers and others, the agony of Vidura, Bhishma and Drona was beyond control. Words are inadequate instruments to describe it. Tears flowed in streams down their cheeks. They could not lift their faces and cast their eyes upon the abominable gang.

There was another reason, too. Sparks flew from the angry eyes of Draupadi when she was so tortured and, if they had fallen on any one in the Hall he would have been reduced to ashes! Luckily, she was looking only at your eldest grandfather, Dharmaraja; his fortitude and equanimity were imprinted on her mind; so, the assembled men were saved from destruction. Or else, Duryodhana, Dussasana and the rest of that foul brood would not have survived at all.

"The face of Dharmaraja, so full of equanimity, and such transforming effect. Your grandfathers, Bhima, Arjuna Nakula and Sahadeva were watching that race, while their hearts were being torn by Draupadi's struggles; but as they watched, their tempers cooled. Dharmaraja's unruffled face saved every one from cataclysm that day; else, all would have been consumed in the fire of anger, making the battle of Kurukshetra superfluous.

Nothing can happen unless God wills it so, isn't it? How can any one override the Will of Lord Krishna? She wailed that no one of her masters rose to save her, though she called upon them and reminded them of their prowess and valour. Just then, the thought of Krishna, the saviour, flashed like lightning, and filled her drooping heart with courage. "O Shyamasundara!" she cried out, 'this is not an insult dealt to me. Nor is it an infamous injury dealt to the Pandavas. It is an insult, an injury, dealt on you. You are our all. We depend on you for everything. Is it then just that you should now tolerate this cruel injury being perpetrated on our honour? We have dedicated our hearts to you. Listen! I have dedicated myself to you. Perhaps, you are not content with what we have so far offered at your feet. Let your will prevail.' Thus, she surrendered fully and unreservedly, to the Lord.

"At this, the Guardian of the Forlorn, the Saviour of those who surrender, the Lord, took upon Himself the burden of rescuing her from distress; He moved in silent and unseen, and blessed

her, unnoticed. And, wonder of wonders, the sari which the human ogres were attempting to remove in order to disgrace her was rendered endless; every one, including the tormentors, were stunned at the demonstration of Krishna's Grace and Draupadi's devotion. Good men and wise realised that Sathya and Dharma can never come to harm. The tears of joy that rolled from their eyes gave proof of the exaltation they experienced. The wicked Dussasana fell down, exhausted and humiliated. Draupadi did not suffer the least dishonour. All the dishonour fell to the lot of the Kauravas, and the Pandavas were unaffected.

Can God permit the just and moral Pandavas to suffer humiliation? The harm that the Kauravas planned to inflict on the Pandavas recoiled on them only. This was the direct consequence of the Grace that Lord Krishna showered on your grandfathers and grandmother and of the devotion and faith they had reposed in Lord Krishna.

“Intending to declare to the world the intense devotion of the Pandavas and its efficacy, and also to hold them up as examples for the Kali Age that was to come, the Lord contrived this thrilling drama; there is nothing more in this than that purpose of the Lord. You may be subjected to calumny, insult and dishonour; you may be plunged in poverty or pain; but, the person who has surrendered to the Will of God will welcome each of these gladly and bear it with equanimity. The Lord will never give up His children; those devoted to God have to be patient and calm, under the most poignant provocations. The fact is the pious and the God-fearing are those who are visited by travails and troubles: in order to teach mankind these great truths, Krishna enacted this drama, with the Pandavas as the cast. Every incident in their lives is but a scene in His Play.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Treasure Under Your Feet

All acts must be done as offerings to Him, dedicated to Him, prompted planned executed and blessed by Him. The smarana of the Name will help this Sadhana. The Name has to be repeated with the heart yearning for the Named. It should not be like a tape-recorder reeling off the names or a gramophone plate that has stuck, repeating the same note. Know that this life is for realising Him, not for winning petty triumphs. Your ideal, your determination and your activity, all three must be directed to the same consummation, the attainment of supreme Bliss. The Name will, make all activity as welcome as worship; it will add sweetness to worship itself; it will concretise the Named. It will confer the Wisdom that reveals the Truth.

The sweetness of the Name is appreciated most by those who walk the path of Bhakti. Once Jnanadev and Santhadev happened to go together through a dense forest; they were both overcome by severe thirst but, could not discover any source of water, except a deep ruined well, with water far too deep and the sides overgrown with bush and briar. Jnanadev assumed the form of a bird, flew in and slaked his thirst. Santhadev, who was a great Bhakta, yearned for Grace from the Lord whom He called agonisingly by Name; the Lord heard the prayer. The waters of

the well rose and over, flowed, to the place where the Bhakta was; he could slake his thirst and move on.

The magnet cannot draw to itself a bit of iron that is covered with rust and dust. You cannot yearn for God when your mind is laden with the rust of material desires and when the dust of sensual craving sits heavy on it. Clear the rust, know the glory of God, and repeat His Name, in the silence of the heart. Any one of the Names which denote Him can be selected. Do not listen to people who canvass for one particular Name and cavil at others. Do not be misguided by people who make pompous polysyllabic formulae and recommend them as superior to other simpler Names. Vasudeva, Krishna, Gopala, Gopivallabha, Govinda, Giridhari.... all these indicate the Lord who is known to most as Krishna. But, Meera was affected most by one Name: Giridhari. That gave her inexhaustible joy, more than any other name. There is no superior or inferior grade of Names, so far as God is concerned. You must have noticed that I do not recommend any One Name, for adoption by you, no, I do not insist on the Sai Name, either of this body or the previous body All Names are the names of Sai Baba; they are all Mine.

This is the greatness of the Sanathana Dharma...this insistence on the One-ness behind all the apparent Multiplicity. The Atma that it declares to be the basic Truth does not contradict the doctrines of any faith. God is unlimited by space or time. He is undefinable by names or forms. He owns all names and will respond to any one of them. Picture Him in any form while meditating on Him; He assumes that form, while conferring Grace. It is because India stresses these characteristics of the Highest Principle that she has been for centuries the Beacon of Spiritual Light and Hope.

Now, we find anxiety fear faction hate and vengeance stalking across all countries. Neighbours hate each other; members of the same family hate each other and fight among themselves. Villages are torn by factions, and they fight among themselves. Nations are arming wildly and breeding hatred among themselves. Man has reduced himself to the status of a wild beast. No two minds are willing to co-operate in common tasks. The spark that arises in the individual mind has spread a world-wide conflagration of hate and greed. This has to be scotched, in the Individual, the family, the village, the city, the nation-in fact, wherever it raises its head. Sathya Dharma Santhi and Prema can put out this fire. Man is suffering, because he is not aware of the treasure he has in himself. Like a beggar ignorant of the millions hidden under the floor of his hovel, he is suffering dire misery.

From Discourse by Baba

The Interview

How many, many victims of pain and sorrow!
How many, many destitute and sick, at thy door!
From far off lands they come, for the "interview"
Thousands are the seekers; Thou art One.
I see around Thee an ocean of worn-out humanity,

An ocean driven by storm; surging waves of Karma pangs;
Each person strives to cast his burden of woe on Thee'
And receive, in return, Thy Sympathy, Mercy, Grace.
Assuaging pain is Thy Nature, Thy Task;
Thy heart is the Himalaya of Love,
On Thy lips are drops of Amrita, Thy eyes reveal
The secret of sharing sorrows with man,
Thy humanity is so vast, so great.

Thou art Krishna, Avatar again, beyond the reach of intellect
Whoe'er Thou art, loved One, Isn't it Thy right
To have some rest? Thou like a lotus sweet
Dost bear that heavy load of heart-aches placed on Thee
Thou art the balm for the wounds of life. One glimpse of Thee
And all frustration flees from me.

I don't complain, I desire not; I yearn for Thee alone
Thee and Thy Darshan . . .no encroachment on Thy time.
Thy time is so precious, so well worth-while;
I am of no worth at all, of little value I.
From afar I catch a glimpse of Thee—its Paradise.
The sweetest Bliss, the highest honour, the richest wealth;
Darshan! Darshan! Deeper than the Interview,
I am filled with joy; I'm drunk with happiness.
—Bang Tahira Sayeed

Cutting the Continuous Chain

The seeds of past actions remain imbedded in the sub-conscious mind and at the opportune moment, they sprout on the conscious plane and indulge in full play, in their respective spheres. This is a never-ending process, continuing from one birth to another, shaping man and his destiny in accordance with the law of cause and effect. This is the only logical reason for transmigration. If we exist in eternity, we have existed in the past, too, through eternity. Then, why do we not remember the past? None of us remember many incidents that we witness in our dreams or what has happened in childhood. But, we know that we existed during those periods also. We dare not deny our existence during the dream and during our own childhood.

The same is the case with our previous lives also. We lived such lives, though we have no recollection how and where. We do not remember the past, because the brain, we had then, has been fragmented and replaced. The present brain is the result and the sum-total of our impressions acquired in the past; memory is the function of the intellect, not of the Atma or the Soul.

We are born, since we have not yet passed through all the sum of experiences. There is some balance still, which has to be acquired to complete the course. When we get convinced that our true nature is Atma, we have completed the course and passed. The method and capacity to acquire this knowledge differs from man to man? this shows that each has come with his own fund of knowledge and his own skill to acquire further knowledge. This theory of Karma does not lay the blame for our weakness on any one else, a common human fallacy.

We are not quick to recognise our faults; we throw the blame on others or on Fate or God, or on some Force we do not know how to identify. We forget that we are the architects of our fate, and fortunes. The Infinite Mercy of God is open to all. How we can benefit by it is entirely our own task. When we find ourselves suffering or in grief, we have to blame ourselves only and repent for our faults, deciding to lead better lives and surrender to the Divine Will. Our philosophy does not posit a Satan who leads man astray; man alone is responsible for the path he takes.

Know that thou art He; that faith will remodel your whole life; you will no more grovel in darkness. Many a test will be prescribed by Him in order to find out whether that faith is strong in us. We must welcome each such test; for, as Baba says, they help us to strive up to a standard and to reveal our level of attainments. Baba says, "On the foundation of this Faith, erect the pillars of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. Upon these, raise the mansion of your life and be free from the cycle of birth and death."

K. V. Ramachandran

As He Wills

I have selected you from among the assembled in order to shape you into Sevaks or volunteers during the Birthday Festival that begins tomorrow. I have spoken many times before, about the discipline that I would like you to submit yourselves to. You can examine yourselves and decide how far you have succeeded in observing those rules of conduct.

The world today is torn by factions and fear and it is imperative that the good are assured of peace and the general level of living is raised to a higher moral standard by the propagation of Dharma. People must become proficient in Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema and Ahimsa, weapons that can overwhelm the passions that have turned the human heart into a den of wickedness. This chance to become a Sevak here is but the first step in training for the proper mastery of those weapons.

Do not imagine that this is a temporary responsibility, which you shoulder today and lay down in a few days. This is a form of worship into which you are initiated so that your hearts may be cleansed, and God reflected therein. This training as a volunteer will lead you on to seek the bliss of Atmananda and the Light of Reality. It will induce you to search for your own inner truth, your swa-swarupa. All the acts you perform must be directed towards one end: Drawing down on you the Grace of God. All the provisions stocked in the store-room in your house are there to meet one purpose: appease your hunger. So too all Karma is for attaining God.

But, caught in the darkness of Ajnana, man mistakes the purpose. He imagines that he can be happy, if he caters to his senses; this is only self-deception. The ego is not the cause of this; the real culprit is the darkness produced by ignorance of the goal of life. Believe that God resides in every one as the Atma, which illumines his senses and his vision. Then, the darkness will disappear and Light will prevail. Learning the process of getting fixed in that faith is the genuine education. The others are lamps that have no flame, that cannot dispel darkness. They may be designated so, but, that name is a misnomer.

When you call yourself a Sevak, offering service to another, have also reverence in your mind, that the person whom you serve is the Lord Himself in that form. This attitude is very helpful, for the Sadhaka. Manava-seva is Madhava-seva; the service of man is service of God. But, when? When you feel in the depth of your heart that the person whom you serve is a wave of the same sea from which you derive your individuality, your taste, your name and form. I have called you in today and I am naming you as 'volunteers' in order to give you an opportunity to practise this Sadhana of Madhava-seva through Manava-seva.

Do not therefore take this as a new authority conferred on you, or as a burden landed on your shoulders. Acceptance of the Will of God has its own advantage; it yields rich fruits. Hanuman did not become conceited when Rama selected him for the crucial southward search and when Rama gave into his custody the Ring to be given to Sita (assuring him in the process that he would certainly succeed in discovering her); nor was he affected by fear, at the tremendous responsibility that was heaped on him. He just accepted what was given; he was neither happy. nor unhappy He felt that Rama, the Lord, knows all and so his duty was only to obey.

You must cultivate the same attitude towards My commands and instructions. Be convinced that if you obey them strictly, you will attain victory. One evening, Krishna took Arjuna far out of Dwaraka City, and while they were alone together, He pointed at a bird flying over their heads and asked him, "Arjuna! Isn't that a dove?" Arjuna agreed; he said it *was* a dove. Suddenly, Krishna turned towards him and said, "No. It is a crow." Arjuna concurred and said, "I am sorry it certainly *is* a crow." Immediately, Krishna asked him, "A crow! No, it must be a kite." Is it not so?" Arjuna promptly agreed, "Yea. It is a kite." At this, Krishna smiled and asked Arjuna, "Are you in your senses? What exactly do you see? Why do you say, of the same bird, it is a dove, it must be a crow, and it is a kite? Arjuna said, "Who am I to dispute your statement? You can make it a crow, even if it is not one, or, change it into a kite. I have found that the safest thing is to agree with you, in full faith. I know of no other course." It was only after this test for unflinching faith that Krishna assured Himself of the credentials of Arjuna to receive the Gita advice.

The inquiry about the identity of that bird was a test. God tests man so; you must welcome tests. Tests are only for giving you greater Grace. They are not to be treated as punishments. It promotes your confidence. You enter a house and decide to live there, only after you are assured that the foundation is secure, is it not? When your faith is fixed, your life too will flow in peace.

All who come to Prasanthi Nilayam are your kith and kin, remember. Respect them serve them with that attitude. To have such attitude, you must have deep patience. Praise or blame,

appreciation or criticism you must bear all with fortitude. Never yield to anger or dispiritedness. The command is pre-eminent; have your mind fixed on that. The rest is but incidental. The Dharmasastras lay down that women, the sick, those who are burdened with loads, and the aged have to be helped and given first preference. Even if the sick man is a decrepit low-born man, the Emperor has to give him the right of way and allow him to be served first; else, he invites punishment from the Gods. The aged have accumulated much more experience than you; they are filled with sweetness, like ripe fruits. The wise men or Jnanis have also to be served and revered. What is the sweetness, in these? It is the quality of Santham, of being unruffled at the ups and downs of life.

The asceticism that you have to adopt is just this: Obey the Ajna, the order of the Lord. You have no need to fast and torture the body: can you kill the snake by beating the mound, which has it in its hole? Can torment teach you the truth? Control thoughts; divert feelings; canalise the currents of the impulses. The pendulum will stop its swing only when you stop winding the clock with its key. Stop winding; then the pendulum will remain at one point; the mind will remain at the Feet of God.

Wishes can never win peace: a wish is a tiny seed from out of which a huge tree emanates, the tree in its turn scatters a crore of seeds, which sprout into crores of trees. Fry the seed and it will not sprout again. When wishes multiply quick and fast, concentration is impossible; when water is poured on a height, it flows along the inclines, down into the hollows. Concentration is the reverse process: rolling a rock uphill. This requires un-intermittent effort, unbroken attention, and ceaseless striving. Allow confidence to slacken but a moment—the rock will come rolling down.

You have another great responsibility, too. This land, Bharat, has to guide others in self-less service, in the development of an attitude of detached devotion to duty. From ancient times, India is famous as the land of dedicated Karma, of holy living and thinking, of incessant subduing of the harmful passions surging in the mind, of the tireless pursuit of the goal of Peace. But, latterly, Indians too have been infected by the diseases prevalent in other parts of the world; they have started spurning holy company, sacred books and spiritual discipline. This is a tragedy; once again, the ancient modes of life have to be revived; the ancient attitudes have to be appreciated and adopted. That faith in the imperishable Atman (which is the reality of both the individual and the Universe) has once again to vitalise activities.

Being Sevaks and volunteers, you must adhere to Truth, first and foremost. Whatever be the temptation, do not slide away from Truth. In fact, after wearing this badge as the sign of your dedication to service, you must not deviate from Sathya Dharma Santhi and Prema. When a man takes up the role of Harischandra on the stage, he has to adhere to Truth so long at least as he is on the stage. So also so long as you wear this badge, stick to these four qualities. Then, when you find how happy you feel, how well you are able to move with your fellow beings, you will yourself appreciate the path and stick to it. It is not only during a Navaratri or a Sivaratri or a Deepavali Festival, not only at Prasanthi Nilayam for a few days—but, always and everywhere, you must stick to these virtues. Each one of you will then be a centre of inspiration in your villages. Factions and fear will cease; all will be like brothers and sisters, through your silent influence and example.

These badges must curb your conceit, not fan them into harmful pride. They are not symbols of authority; they are but pointers indicating that the wearer is a trustworthy friend, an efficient worker, a smiling kinsman, a devoted guide, an inspiration. Most of the people who come here are in distress, physical or mental. As mentioned in the Gita, "Anithyam asukham lokam imam praapya bhajaswa maam": "Having come to this world, which is transitory and full of travail, worship Me, pray to Me." So they come seeking peace, joy and courage, hope vitality and confidence. They must be welcomed with reverence and sympathy, love and consideration. Try to know what type of behaviour, which line of conduct, which attitude of service will please Me; then, follow that type, that line, that attitude. Then, your service too will be fruitful. I do not like people smoking and so, give up smoking; I do not like harsh language, loud noise, wild behaviour, demeaning conversation on low topics-so, avoid them. I like sweet soft low talk; so, practise that. Do not push or drag; do not just order about! Tell every one the reason why certain rules and disciplines have been laid down; try to convince and win the co operation of people. Here, every thing is part of Sadhana and so, each little act of self-control helps advancement. Don't rash forward yourselves, into vantage positions near the dais; wherever you are you can win Grace, doing the duty allotted to you. By neglecting the duty and rushing forward, be warned that you are only denying yourself the Grace. I see all things everywhere; so, there is no need for you to push and rash to catch My eye.

The Lord values the mental attitude behind each act. Yad bhaavam, thad bhavathi—what you feel, that you become. Transmute every act into an item of Puja, of worship; then, derive maximum joy. Sai is in every being; so, do not slight any. Revere and serve all, to the best of your ability. When some one calls out for water to slake his thirst and you offer him a cup, feel that you are offering it to Me; then, the act purifies you more and cleanses you. Do not feel proud or superior when you serve. It is not the man in need that you serve; you are serving God, that is in you and him.

Karma is the flower and Jnana is the fruit. The flower becomes the fruit, in the fullness of time. Only, one has to guard it and keep it free from pests. Charcoal is wood that has undergone but a part of the baptism of fire; let it undergo that baptism to the full; it becomes white, light ash that flies with the wind into the four quarters. The purification of mind from the passions have to be taken up through the fire of Jnana until success is gained. In Sadhana, there is no half-way house, no resting place.

Your installation on the throne of Atma-realisation, as the monarch of your own inner consciousness, is the consummation of Sadhana of life itself. One can sacrifice everything for the sublime success. The Pandavas gave up the empire for which they struggled long and sacrificed four million lives on the battlefield, so that they may get enthroned as such monarch. They sought the peace of the Himalayas in the later phase of their life. Only by "giving up" can that status be won. The Upanishads say that immortality can be achieved, not by sacred acts, nor by virtuous progeny, nor by accumulated wealth, but only by "giving up", Tyaga. You have to give up all attachment to food and recreation, to I and Mine when you yearn for the Lord.

A picture printed on paper cannot be peeled off it; it becomes inherent in it. The Lord's name and form must be so imprinted on your heart. You wear the badge with this portrait on your chest; the original of the portrait must be worn on the heart, imprinted on the heart.

The Gopis had done that. Prahlada too had achieved it. That is the reason why he did not wail or protest, when he was subjected to torture and torment; he saw, he heard, he felt, he knew only Narayana, the Lord. Try to develop that deep faith and devotion.

One other point: In this Prasanthi Nilayam, you should see that Prasanthi is preserved. Emphasise this step in Sadhana before all. In the silence alone can the Voice of God be heard, Serve the thousands who are arriving here, in this spirit and with these objects in view; that is the way to obey the Will, the Ajna. The Ajna is the boat that will take you across the Sea of Change, into the Eternal and the Absolute.

From Baba's Discourse
22-11-1967

The I Disease

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai has said, "The Buddha saw one sick man, one old man, one corpse and one Sanyasin; that was enough for him to leave his palace and seek the cure." We see several such and witness terrible misery all around. But, yet, we do not seek the reason or the remedy. The cause for our apathy is the I disease. This Sai Avatar has come to cure us of this I disease.

The I is a disease; so, it is not the real nature of man. There is, of course, a real I, which is God's Energy, activating us. That I does not require any cure. It is ever free and happy. Bhagavan's prescription is to cure the false I or Ego, which is also the existing Mind. This false I exists because of the impressions of the past and of the effect of Prakriti on our minds. Bhagavan's Teachings are directed to our mind and our intellect. He instructs the mind and the intellect to give up their association with the Ego and merge in the true I, or Atma.

The mind is nothing but a stream of thoughts, that passes over the consciousness. Of all these thoughts, the first and the most harmful is the wrong thought: "I am this body." This gives rise to further attachment; when anything happens to the beings or things associated with the I in this manner, the Ego feels happy or unhappy, the mind gets agitated, angry or envious or proud. All the misery and misunderstanding that we witness today are due to this disease of I and Mine. It makes man forget that everything is His, all are He, that it is His Leela, His Will.

Bhagavan's prescription to root this I out is Dhyanam, Namasmarana, Bhajan, Satsang. For us to take up any of these seriously, faith in God is essential. Due to the enormous increase in material progress we have lost faith in God, and the real I or Atma. To develop faith He is prompting us forward by miracles. He says that we treat ourselves like watches, ready made. We feel that watches have existed by themselves; we never Seek the maker of watches. We feel we are ready made human beings; we do not bother about the Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer, God.

Baba cures diseases of the body, so that we can concentrate on following His prescription which will cure this I disease. He grants mental courage and confidence, for the same purpose.

Let us get rid, each one of us, of this dire disease. Let us pray that Bhagavan gill cure the I disease on a mass scale and make the world u happier place to live in.

G. N. ACHARYA.

Through Sunlight, you see the Sun
Through Moonlight, you see the Moon
Through Prema-light, you see Me: Baba
—Baba

Kripa Vahini

From Trichinopoly in Tamilnad where Baba inaugurated the Anniversary Celebrations of the All India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha (Trichinopoly Branch), Baba left for Budalur in Tanjore District to grant Darshan to the thousands assembled at the Sathya Sai Nagar there. He was present at the Sathya Sai Vihar Temple Hall during the Bhajan Sessions. Baba arrived at Palghat in Kerala at noon on 19th December. Even as He was proceeding to Devi Vilas on College Road where He stayed, He inaugurated the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti (Palghat) at the Vijnana Ramaneeyam Hall. At Devi Vilas, Baba held conversation with Swami Chinmayananda who had come from Coimbatore to meet Him. The Foundation Stone for the Prayer Hall at Alathur village was blessed by Him at Palghat.

Bhagavan left Palghat at 5 P.M. for Trichur where a large gathering of devotees had assembled to pay homage to him. Hundreds of families all around Trichur have accepted Him as their guru guide and God and they lined the roadside with flowers and Arathi to get the coveted Darshan.

Baba reached Ernakulam at 10 P.M. Hon'ble Justice V Balakrishna Eradi and a huge gathering of Bhaktas received Him with joy and gratitude. On the 20th Dec., the First Conference of the Office Bearers of the many Sathya Sai Organisations in Kerala, called by the Federation of such Organisations, was held in the second floor of the magnificent Pylee Pillai Mansions. About a 100 delegates were present. Justice Eradi spoke of the unique love and grace which Baba showered upon all who looked up to Him. He exhorted every one to so model his life that he may deserve that love and that grace. Bhagavan declared that the Conference in Kerala was the First of a series of State Conferences, preparatory to the World Conference to be held in early May, 68, at the Dharmakshetra, Bombay City. "Behind these efforts to confirm and consolidate, to bring together and inspire, to organise and co-ordinate activities and programmes, you must recognise the basic purpose—discovering the Divinity latent in man. Institutions and organisations started in My Name should not seek statistical glory or competitive publicity. They should seek chances to serve, to revere, to uplift and to spread joy and peace. Learn to respect all

who are on the Godward journey; develop patience and tolerance. Sugar sweetens every dish; love sanctifies every act. God energises every being. Feel this and be at peace, Baba said."

Baba said that it was necessary to light the sacred lamp in every heart, in these dark desperate days and every individual or group of persons must cultivate deeper faith and greater enthusiasm. He advised them to select for each District one person who will lead them in this pioneering process of expansion and consolidation. The names of Dr. K. Bhaskaran Nair (Trivandrum Dt.) Sri. S. S. Naidu (Quilon Dt.) Sri. A. Narayana Iyengar (Kottayam Dt.) Dr. R. Kesavan Nair (Alleppey Dt) Justice V B Eradi (Ernakulam Dt) Sri. K. K. Unni (Trichur Dt) Sri. Unni Nair (Palghat Dt) Dr. P. B. Menon (Calicuty Dt) and Sri. Manilal Jamnadas (Cannanore Dt) were suggested and approved. Baba also approved the unanimous proposal of all the delegates and the District President that justice Eradi must be the State President, with over-all functions of guidance and supervision.

The evening session of the Conference was devoted to the consideration of suggestions from delegates about the expansion of the work. Delegates asked for guide-lines of work, especially among students and children and regarding Study Circles and Seva Dals. Bhagavan wanted that all should give up particularist and divisive tendencies and learn work together. God is the centre from which to Grace radiates in all directions. Live a life of dedication; that will give joy and peace; you will also be an example to the children. Children are moulded by the home, the school the society and by the company they fall into. They follow the elders into evil ways. He called upon the delegates to revive the evening Namajapam which was once prevalent in every home. Baba advised the lady members to instill the Namajapam habit among children; he wanted them to form and lead groups of women, to carry consolation courage and hope among the sick, the poor and the distressed, Baba inaugurated the Bhajan Mandir constructed and donated by Sri. T. Krishna Nair, in T. D. Road, for the use of the Bhaktas of Ernakulam.

On the evening of 20th Dec, the Federation had arranged a Bhajan Sessions at the Durbar Hall grounds, a function which was attended by more than a hundred thousand people. The grounds were splendidly illuminated and the people sat in reverential silence, when Baba walked along the passages, among the men and women, so that they may receive His Darshan. The unprecedented gathering was acclaimed by all as unique in the history of Ernakulam. Baba sat in the tastefully decorated dais and flooded the hearts of all with Divine Joy, when He sang a few Bhajan songs.

Baba left that night for Trippunittura. He was taken along miles of flower-strewn road, through thick throngs of happy faces; fire works announced the arrival; classical Nadaswaram, Clarinet, Panchavadyam etc mingled with Bhajan music from a thousand throats welcomed Him in flood lit splendour. Baba chided the host for this extravagant display of devotion. He said, "I seek only the illumination of Intelligence, the Music of ecstasy, the Flowers of Sat-karma".

On the morning of the 21st December, Baba addressed a mammoth gathering from the Porch of the bungalow of His Christian Devotee, Elias, and his wife Dr. Sarah. Hon'ble Sri Wellington, of the Peasants and Labourers Party, who is the Health Minister in the United Front Cabinet of Kerala presided. The Minister said, "I must acknowledge the miracles that I saw with my own eyes a few minutes ago. Baba created by a wave of His Hand an image of Jesus Christ for a Christian photographer, and Vibhuti for a Hindu cameraman. His universal love and majesty are

evident; His simplicity and sweetness are really captivating. I pray that He may bless Kerala and shower His Grace on this land. The devotion of this Christian couple towards Him is unlimited; I am very happy I could see Him and hear Him and be with Him. I do hope I will get further opportunities of meeting Him." Bhagavan proceeded with Sri Wellington to the Sathya Sai Mandir built and donated by Elias; He was preceded by sacred music; received with Poorna kumbham and Vedic Chants and the vast gathering acclaimed with one voice, "Jai Sri Sathya Sai Bhagavan". It was a moment of unforgettable thrill. Baba then drove to the Government Hospital where Elias and his wife Dr Sarah are donating a Sathya Sai Baba Children's Ward of 20 beds. Baba had the Foundation Stone, well and truly placed after blessing it and placing on it a Sacred Symbol in Silver which He created by a wave of His Divine Hand. Baba left for Ernakulam about 1 P. M. At the moment of departure, He accosted a Police Constable (who, according to the Matrubhoomi, the popular Malayalam daily newspaper, was so mindful of his duties that he had even foregone food for two days) on duty at the site and, told him, "I am very pleased with your work. What do you want from Me?" The newspaper reports that the constable was so overwhelmed with joy that he could not reply, even when Baba repeated the question twice. At this Baba created for him a medallion of gold, with the inscription, "Why fear when I am here?" and moved off. The paper adds that the constable was carried in procession by the policemen, to the Station where they feted him on his good luck.

At Ernakulam, Baba addressed a huge gathering of the members of the families of devotees from all over Kerala, at the Town Hall. The occasion for this meeting was the First Anniversary of the Federation of Sathya Sai Organisations in Kerala. Baba said that He desired to partake of the Prema of devotees and allow them too partake His Prema. He reminded them that life was one continuous Sadhana to realise the Reality. It was the most precious chance given to man.

Baba left Ernakulam at 5 P.M. on the 21st and reached Alleppey, 39 miles away, to be welcomed by a huge gathering of devotee engaged in Bhajan. At about 9 P. M. word came over the telephone that a gathering of more than thirty thousand eager devotees was awaiting His arrival and clamouring for His Darshan at Aryasala, Trivandrum, 96 miles away; they were reluctant to disperse until they had the coveted Darshan. So, Baba motored to that city and reached Aryasala at 1-30 A. M. Bhajan continued with enormous enthusiasm even until that hour and, Baba who is Mercy and Love personified, slaked their thirst to the fill.

Baba stayed at the Vellayambalam Palace where too, hundreds of people waited to receive Him. On the 22nd Dec., Baba proceeded beyond the Karamanai river to a suburb of the City and laid the Foundation Stone for a Homeopathic Hospital and a Free Allopathic Dispensary, run by the Seva Samiti.

The Maharaja of Travancore arrived at the Vellayambalam Palace and paid reverential homage to Baba. Baba gave Darshan to the thousands who gathered in the lawns of the Palace and sang Bhajan songs; He blessed a number of sic children and other patients that were brought t the Palace.

Hon'ble Sri Wellington invited Baba to his house and there Baba met a few of his colleagues: and talked to them on spiritual problems and disciplines. Leaving Trivandrum about 5 P.M.,

Baba reached Madurai via Shencottah and Tenkasi and after a short while spent with devotees, He drove on to Madras, which He reached at 8 A.M. on the 23rd Dec.

On the 24th Dec at 9-30 A.M. the Conference of the Office Bearers of Sathya Sai Organisations in Madras State began in the picturesque Abbotsbury Hall which was most beautifully decorated for the occasion by the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti. The sessions began after Vedaparayanam and Prayer Songs by the famous vocalist singer Sri Soundararajan. Major Rayaningar, the Chairman, spoke of the Free Medical Service Scheme that the Madras Samiti had ventured upon and described in general terms the purpose of the Conference. Baba laid stress on the fact that Sathya Sai Organisations have no meaning, unless members gave up petty bickerings and power politics that mar most organisations everywhere. He wanted them all to concentrate on spiritual Sadhana and try to serve others only after they have served themselves best by this means. Rules and Regulations are like the fence that protects the crop; if no crop is grown, the fence is a costly waste. He said that the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha was essentially a Sabha of scholarly Pundits who dedicate themselves for the dissemination of the precious learning of which they are the custodians. He declared that He cared only for quality and not for quantity. As in Kerala, He required the delegates to select one person for each District as President in order to organise and supervise Sathya Sai Organisations there. He approved the nomination of Sri. P. V. Rayaningar (Madras Dt), Sri. R. Srinivasa Pillai (Chinglepet Dt), Sri O R S Murthy (North Arcot Dt.), Capt. Murugaiyan (Tanjore Dt) Dr. V. K. Ranganathan (Trichinopoly Dt), Sri. T. P Vadivelu (Nilgiris) Dr. T. N. Gajendra Rao (Dharmapuri Dt), Sri A Kandaswamy (Comibatore Dt), Sri. S. Hariharan, (Tinnevelly Dt) Sri. M. Narayana Swami (South Arcot) and Sri. V. Sukumaran (Kanyakumari Dt). Sri. Ambalavanan was selected as the President for Pondicherry State. Sri. P. V. Rayaningar was selected by all as the President for the State of Madras. At the evening Sessions, Baba indicated the general lines on which the organisations have to work. He spoke of service programmes among women, Seva Dal for Youth, study circles in schools Bhajan groups among boys and girls, and prabhath singing of Bhajan songs along the streets of the villages. He blessed all to work in harmony and peace, for promotion of individual and social uplift. Cooperate with all spiritual institutions but, keep your individuality untarnished, He advised.

On the 25th, Baba gave Darshan at the Sai Baba Temple, Guindy, the temple where He had installed the Sai Baba idol, 20 years ago! Baba was kind enough to give a discourse in which He called upon all to develop detachment, combined with devotion to one's highest duty, namely, the duty to realise the Self. On the 26th Baba gave Darshan at the Sathya Sai Nivas Perambur, to thousands of devotees. On the 28th, Baba visited Chittoor and Booragamanda. At the latter place, He addressed the Sri Venkatesvara Jnana Prabodha Sangham. He spoke of the precious gems of knowledge and experience which the ancient sages had treasured in the Upanishads and the Gita.

Editor

Sri Sathya Sat Satsang Samachar

- Dec: 6: Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh): Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Namasankritan at Dattatreya Temple.
10: Masulipatam (Krishna Dt) Sathya Sai Bhakta Sangham: Installation of Portraits.

- 14: Mandapeta (E. Godavari) Sathya Sai Divya Jnana Mandali: Opening of Sathya Sai Library.
- 16-29: Baba's Programme in Tamilnad, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.
- 17: Puttur (S.Kanara Dt): Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali: Anniversary Celebrations
- 20-21: Rajahmundry (E. Godavary Dt):Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Discourses: Bramachari Atmanand
- 26: Kothapetha (E. Godavari Dt) Inauguration of Sathya Sai Vedanthagranthamala.
- 28: Bhadravathi:(Mysore State): Inauguration of Sathya Sai Seva Samiti. Secunderabad (Andhra Pradesh) Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Namasankirtan: Sri Avodhoothendra Sarasawati Swamiji.
- 30: Brindavan (Whitefield): Conference of Office-Bearers of Sathya Sai Organisers in Mysore State. Dr. V. K. Gokak presiding: Baba's Discourse.
- 31: Bangalore:(Mysore State): Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha: Speeches: Dr. Gokak, Prof. G. P. Rajarathnam; Hon'ble Speaker B. V. Baliga.
- 1968 Jan 4: Gowribidnur (Kolar Dt): Inauguration by Baba of Free Eye Treatment Camp conducted by Dr. Modi Baba's Discourse. Baba returned to Prasanthi Nilayam
- 7: Chingleput (Tamilnad): Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Anniversary Celebrations: President: Hon'ble Justice N. Krishnaswamy Reddy; Speakers: Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan, M Dorairajan.
- 11: Prasanthi Nilayam: Vaikuntha Ekadasi.

Supremacy

There He is - - -
 Found in man-like Charm,
 Known by instant sight,
 The Giver of Bliss Supreme.
 There He is, where Thou cease to be
 And nothing exists of earthly fuss and mess.
 Here no words of praise are heard
 Immersed are they in Him.

The Indescribable and the Beyond Life
 Where past and present and future
 In indelible form, ever remains
 On the canvas, which is nothing else
 But He, the Eternal;
 Beyond the misleading Dance of Life,
 In His own Beginningless and Endless
 Supremacy, so full of His own Miracle
 Which restores, soothes, and heals the scarred.

—K. Venugopal Rao
 Bombay

Bhagavata Vahini

21

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

“Draupadi was overwhelmed with amazement when she experienced the Grace of Krishna who granted the boon of clothing to protect her honour; she shed profuse tears of gratitude and exclaimed in ecstasy; 'Krishna! Krishna!' with such a rush of feeling and zeal that those present in the audience hall were struck with fear. The shining splendour of her face made them suspect that she must be the veritable Goddess (Shakti) who energises the Universe.

Meanwhile, Krishna manifested Himself in concrete Form before your grandmother, Draupadi and said, 'Sister! Why are you troubled in mind? I have taken birth with the express purpose of destroying these evil men blinded by pride. I shall see that the glory and fame of the Pandavas are held high for the admiration of this world for generations to come. Console yourself.'

At this, she fell at the Lord's Feet, washing it with her tears darkened by the collyrium in her eyes; the tresses of her long thick hair, unloosened by wicked hands, fell over His Feet and covered them. She rolled on the ground round the Feet.

Her furious contentment and her angry excitement steeped the assembly of courtier' and warriors in astonishment. Krishna raised her up and placing His hand upon her head, He blessed her. 'Rise! Tie the hair into a knot. Await patiently the events that will happen in the days ahead. Go, join your companions in the inner apartments,' He implored her. Hearing these words, Draupadi started like a serpent that has raised its hood. Her eyes shone through the veil of hair that covered her face; her glances were like flashes of lightning among the clouds.

She stood in the centre of the assembly and turning on Krishna, she said in deliberate tones, 'Krishna! Cloth that gets torn can only be stitched; the rents cannot be mended otherwise. A virtuous bride can be given away only once. Curdled milk cannot be restored to its primal purity. The tusks of the elephant can never be withdrawn into the mouth, from out of which they came. Draupadi's tresses have been loosened, by the foul hands of these evil men. They can never be knotted again, as formerly, to mark the happiness of a wife.' At this, every one sat silent with bent head, overcome with the shame of the insult to the queen.

But, Krishna broke the silence. 'Then when do you dress your hair as of old? Sister! These loose tresses make you really frightening.' At this the heroic queen roared like a lioness, "Lord! Pray listen! The filthy rascal who dared touch this hair, hold it in his foul hand and drag me into this Hall must have his head broken into bits and his corpse gnawed by foxes and dogs; his wife must be widowed; she must unloosen her tresses and wail in unquenchable grief; that day, I shall dress this hair into a knot; and not till then.' Hearing this imprecation, the elders in the Hall were alarmed at its terrible consequences. They covered their ears so as not to hear more; they pleaded, 'Pardon' 'Peace' 'Quieten yourself', for they knew how calamitous was the curse of a woman of virtue. The heart of Dhritarashtra, the old blind father of the wicked gang that insulted her, very nearly burst with fear; his sons tried to put on brave faces but, within them, they were struck down by a tornado of panic. A wave of dread swept over the assembly, for, they knew that her words must come true, the wrong must be avenged by the punishment she has pronounced.

To reinforce this apprehension, Krishna too said, "O Draupadi! May it happen as you have said. I shall destroy these wicked men who caused so much sorrow to your husbands. The words you spoke now must come true, for you have not tainted your tongue with falsehood, even in fun, since the moment of birth. Your voice is the voice of Truth; Truth will triumph, in spite of everything.'

This was the assurance given to your grandmother by the Lord; the Kauravas were destroyed and the righteousness of the Pandavas vindicated, before the world. Where Dharma is, there the Lord is; where the Lord is, there victory is: this holy axiom was taught to the world by the Lord through this tragedy.

Did you notice? How great were your grandfathers to deserve this continuous shower of Grace from Lord Krishna! Their adherence to Dharma, their unwavering allegiance to Truth, these won for them that Grace. Though one can perform costly and elaborate Yajnas and Yagas, if he but adheres to the path of Dharma and Truth, he can cross the ocean of change and grief, and reach the shore of liberation. Or else, when the terror-striking sage Durvasa went into the forest to 'burn' your grandfathers into ashes, as planned by Duryodhana and his gang, how could they be rescued? Poor Durvasa had to learn that the Grace of God is more effective than the earnings of years of asceticism and denials. He who was sent to destroy, departed with deep admiration for his intended victims.

When Vyasa was thus proudly declaiming about the devotion of the Pandavas to the Lord, Parikshit raised his head in wonder; he asked, "What did you say? Did Durvasa suffer defeat at the hands of my grandfather? Ah, how fortunate I am that I was born in the dynasty that has proved itself superior even to that great sage! Tell me, Master, how did it happen? Why did Durvasa go to them and what was the result?"

"Listen, O Maharaja," Vyasa continued, "your grandfathers, exiled into the jungle, were able to spend their days happily there, with their fame for hospitality unimpaired, through the Grace of Lord Krishna. They felt that the jungle was more filled with joy than Hastinapur from where they were exiled. The hearts of the great will be so full of divine content and equanimity that they will not be affected by the ups and downs of fortune. A fragrant flower will please one with its captivating scent, whether it is held in the left hand or in the right; so too, whether in the sky or in the forest, village or city, on the heights or in the valley, the great will be equally happy. They know no change, as your grandfathers demonstrated in their lives.

When the good are happy and living in peace, the bad cannot tolerate it; they develop intense headache. The bad have to contemplate the loss and hardships that the good undergo, in order to be happy! The loss suffered by the good is the gain of evil minds. The sweetness of the cuckoo is bitter to the ear of the crow; similarly, the un-molested happy life of the Pandavas gave misery and pain to the Kauravas in the capital.

"But, what more could they do? They had heaped on them as much grief as they could; they had cast on them all the abuses they could. Finally, they drove them out of the kingdom itself. They sent them into the forests on empty stomachs.

Empty stomachs! Yes. That is what they imagined. But, the truth was different. For, their frames were saturated and filled with Lord Krishna. To fight against such God-filled bodies is only to engage in a hopeless fray. That is why the Kauravas took from them their material possessions and sent the bodies safe from the kingdom. After the game of dice, all properties and possessions were taken away. The Kauravas tried their worst to create dissensions among the brothers and spread heinous scandals, affecting one or the other. But, the brothers respected Truth and stuck to Truth and so, nothing could separate them. The fact that nothing could make a dent on the happiness of the Pandavas consumed the Kauravas like forest fire.

“At the moment of despair, Durvasa who was the very incarnation of rage came into Hastinapur, with ten thousand disciples, determined to spend the four-month retreat in the royal city. The Kauravas knew very well the ascetic powers of Durvasa, as well as his weaknesses and vagaries. So, they invited him to the palace and lavished their hospitality on him and his followers, during the four months of his stay. They planned to utilise that sage for their wicked stratagem and so, they showed extraordinary enthusiasm to provide for every want of his and of every one of his huge entourage. They ensured that Durvasa had no cause to be disappointed or dejected or discontented. For four months, they served him with fanatic zeal. When the sage flew into fits of rage, they hung their heads and with folded hands, put up with all the fire poured on them. Thus, the holy visitor was mollified and won over.

“One day, when Durvasa was resting after a delicious meal, Duryodhana approached his bed and sat reverentially on one side. The sage spoke to him thus: ‘O King, your service has pleased me much. Ask from me any boon, no matter how valuable or how hard, I shall grant it.’

Duryodhana was ready with the boon he wanted from Durvasa. He was glad the time had come for asking. He exhibited great humility when he prayed that it may be granted. 'Master! That you are pleased by our service is itself as valuable as a million boons. That expression of appreciation is enough for me. What do I need in riches or fame? Even if I acquire sovereignty over the three worlds, I can find no joy in that authority. I am grieving that, when I could serve you for four months at a stretch, my brothers, the Pandavas were not with me here. Let them too save themselves by rendering this unique service; that is my desire. Please proceed to their resort also, with all your disciples and give them too this chance. My elder brother, Dharmaraja is such a staunch follower of Dharma that in spite of our protests and prayers, he chose to go into the forest rather than break his word. I hear that even there he is rendering magnificent hospitality to millions of guests and visitors. He can serve you with more luxurious banquets and festive dinners there. If you have a mind to shower your pleasing Grace on me, I shall request you for just one favour: when you go to the Pandavas, go after Draupadi has eaten her meal!' With these words, Duryodhana fell at Durvasa's feet, to propitiate him more. The sage understood the stratagem; he burst into laughter.

Precious Time

We have no time to stand and stare

At Baba's glory in the world laid bare;
We have no time to sit and turn
Eye and ear, both outward, in;
We have no food to share with our own kin
This human frame, equipped with brain and brawn
With mind and sense which swing and sway
Whichever way you turn, *right* towards the sound,
Or *left* towards the things that are better let
With love, which we cramp and cabin tight
With mercy, which We seldom use, sympathise we smother
This human frame, this shrine of God,
We carry like an animated corpse from womb to to
We do not see the spark Divine,
The God within, that sees thro eye
And listens thro the ear
The God who prompts, provides, protects,
And, when He comes before our eyes, to warn and warm
We are not bees that drink the drops of honeyed taste
We are but toads and frogs that spurn the lotus in their midst.
But, the lotus blooms; the lotus shines
Opening its petals to the Sun.
The lotus is the heart of man, and Baba is the Sun
That warms the life within
Each man and bird and beast
Each tree and blade of grass.

Taraka

Suffering in Life

Look around you and you will see everywhere the spectre of suffering. Try to understand it, and, more often than not, it will baffle you. How, you will argue, can God, the infinitely merciful, tolerate suffering in the world!

And yet, there is no life without it. It is as inescapable as the rose with the thorns or the body with its corruption. It winds itself into life projecting its image in the most unlikely places. Science seeks to root it out, but its success is only partial.

For suffering is not God's doing. It is the effect of our, sin. And the sooner we realise this fact, the better it will be for all of us. For just as a car will not work if there is something wrong with the engine, so suffering will not disappear until sine the cause of it, is removed from our experience.

You may ask: Could. not God have prevented man from sinning? The answer would be yes. But at what price? At the price of reducing us to sub-humans with no option but to do the bidding of

the creator. Surely such a conception would do God no justice! It is because God loves us and loves us intensely that there is sin in this world. For God would not think of man as anything less than Himself. And if God was free, then man too must be free. And because man has freedom and can choose to do what he desires, man can sin in the same way as he can rise to heights of heroism and merit. God is little to blame in this as the teacher who does not give beforehand to the children in her class the questions that will be asked at the examination. He is as little to blame as the mother who coaxes her child to walk even if he risks falling down, or the father who sends his son out into the world even though he foresees him falling into evil company. It is because God loves us that He has run the risk of our sinning.

And if then, in spite of God, man continues to sin, it is not surprising that suffering is present everywhere and at all times. For man essentially is one family, and, for better or worse, influences others, as others influence him. And so a man might be sinless and yet suffer because of this solidarity with others. He is born into a family, grows in society, depends for his entire development on others. And when he sins, it is often well nigh impossible to say how far the implications of his sins will travel, as it is often impossible to pinpoint the origin of the disorder caused- by famines wars or earthquakes.

There is a mysterious communion between man and man and between man and matter—and for every sin that appears in the world, there is somewhere a new suffering making itself felt.

Do not for moment entertain the thought, that God needs suffering or desires it in any form. He wants it wiped out, but He knows that this will only happen when sin is wiped out too. And therefore, while we should lay the axe at the root of suffering and destroy sin in our own lives, we must also endeavour to sublimate suffering wherever we find it. For there is often little that a man can do. But rather than steel the person for the worst, as the stoics would, could we not make suffering acceptable so that he who suffers, suffers with the thought that his pain can be enriched and made a meritorious action pleasing to God? To anaesthetize oneself to suffering is selfish. Become insensitive to your sufferings today and you will become insensitive to the sufferings tomorrow.

For if every sin brings with it a new suffering, every suffering, patiently and lovingly borne, will in turn bring about a new love, a new charity that will counteract the spread of sin. Here it has a redeeming action! It becomes creative and therefore an object of love to God.

Everything that takes place on this earth is purposive and has a meaning. Suffering by itself would be meaningless except for the love of God which gives it its inner purpose.

So the next time you have a headache, do not yell out; the next time you are passed over in your office for promotion, do not take it out on your family; the next time you fail your tests, do not despair.

Use the suffering that each of these actions entails to remind you that you can utilise this suffering to help yourself and-others

And where you can, you must help towards the eradication of suffering. Today, perhaps more than ever in history, the inequality between man and man has spawned hunger, sickness and misery. Once again it is sin: the egoism of man, his pride and negligence that have been the ruin of others. To this you have to bend your will. You may be able and trained to alleviate physical suffering. Your talents may place you in a position to bring justice and peace to nations or communities. Your work and research may help benefit mankind. Suffering may lessen by your joining a union or resorting to strikes. If, in all sincerity, you can say you are helping to remove misery where you find it, then go ahead—you are doing the right thing.

If you prune a tree merely to cut its branches off, if you sow a seed only to see it die, if you punish a child merely for the pleasure of it, you are mentally unbalanced. Pruning, planting and punishing all look to new growth and development as their ultimate aim. Asceticism is meaningless without a positive purpose. It must involve a richer harvest.

Suffering should be a continual reminder to man that he is a sinner. Suffering generously borne for others should be a continual reminder that he is a brother among brothers, a son under God.

The next time you stiffer then, neither; make a self discipline of it, a display of heroic endurance to win the applause of others, nor let it remain an intolerable burden which saddens your; journey through life. Let it open you up to a new love, make you sensitive to the lives of others, and more conscious of your responsibilities towards God

Poona

M. Mascarenha

Baba's Grace

Baba's Glory is in every sphere;
All things whisper 'Baba is here'.
Then why fear, fret and suffer
When, to help us, amidst us He is here?

He has come to give us and not to take;
So let us empty our hearts of greed and hate,
To enable Him to pour therein Amrit Divine
To kindle in us Jnana of unrivalled shine.

So let us flock to Him
To offer at His Sublime Lotus Feet,
The cherished fragrance of untainted heart,
A heart fully blossomed on our part.

O! Baba how shall I say, what I have to say? How shall I speak the word which sums up all the words; that are spoken? How shall I speak that, for which the moon and the stars and the running

waters and the Universe itself subsist to speak? If it could be spoken, then there would be need for all these.

One may print the records of Baba's speeches but the most important part of His utterance, the subtle and silent flavour of spirituality which emanates from Him can never be printed or reported. One cannot forget His wonderful smile pregnant with immensity of love, wisdom, peace bliss and His Majestic looks with sparkling eyes. In His presence one feels security and inner peace. The beautiful sparkling radiations which emanate from Him are penetrating. His personality defy description.

Baba's ways are mysterious and beyond human comprehension. No one can understand Him, unless He reveals Himself. Born beyond Ma.. He descended into the Material and has come to be the interpreter of ourselves to ourselves. Mysterious are His ways of blessing His erring children and He draws nearer to Him erring mortals who with their bent backs scratch and scramble for ash heaps, for salvation.

I was such a child of His. Years ago when the splendour of His grace descended upon me, became overwhelmingly conscious of the disclosure within me of a region transcending in some see the ordinary bonds of personality, in the light which my own idiosyncrasies of character, defe.. accomplishments, limitations or what not, appear of no importance whatsoever—an absolute freedom from mortality accompanied by indescribable charm and joy. Regarding the exact nature of this mood, all I can say is that when Baba touched the inner sanctuary of my heart, all at once, as it were, out of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself faded away and dissolved into the boundless being, and this not a confused state, but clearest of the clearest, surest of the surest, that, one is these objects and the things and persons that one perceives and one is the whole Universe—a sense in which sight, touch and hearing, were all used into identity and utterly beyond the thought—region of the brain, where death was an almost laughable impossibility and a voice within cried “Soham” “Soham” “Soham”. All this experience of knowing the identity lasted a very short time, when again the individuality consciousness descended.

Baba takes His human form wherever He likes. In 1965 December at Madras, my wife incessantly implored Him to come to Calcutta. At last He consented and said "Achha", "Achha", “Achha”, three times with the gesture of His hand. At Calcutta my wife is conducting Satsang for ladies for the last 15 years. It so happened one summer mid-day when she was conducting her Sat-Sang as usual on Friday, she got a strong burning sensation on the sole of her feet inside the room. Thereupon she told the ladies sitting close by to bring quickly cold water and a wash basin to wash her feet which were burning. Upon saying so, she looked straight out at the terrace to her utter surprise she sees Baba standing on the hot terrace in the midday Sun. She stood up and with a blessing gesture of His hand He disappeared. On another occasion, Baba came in the Sat-Sang room and stood beside the chair of my wife; noticing this, she stood up, and after blessing her, He disappeared. Third time again He came and likewise disappeared. Thus He fulfilled His, thrice-repeated-promise to come to Calcutta!

Dear readers, we are very lucky to be born at this time, i.e. this Age, an Age for which the ancient Rishis implored Him that they be born again on this Earth, when He will take up human

form in Kali Yuga. We are more lucky to be drawn closer to Him, and to converse with Him. His Splendour and Immensity He is not disclosing, for we mortals would not be able to withstand it. Even Moses fell senseless at Mt. Sinai by seeing only a very infinitesimal spark of His splendour.

O! Baba, in this spiritual path our minds have taken us only to the stage of prayer, we pray to thee for the fulfillment of our needs. If we do not ask for You, then for whom should we ask? If we do not say to You, then whom shall we address? There is no other Merciful and benign Giver than you. We cannot boast beyond our limited capacities. As children often do quarrel with their mothers, so we will also quarrel with you, O! Benign Mother. Today you make us beg, we beg from you. Tomorrow if you won't make us beg, we will keep mum. We do ask from you for worldly possessions and favours; we at the same time do request and implore for Thy Hand of Mercy and Grace to be over us and that you may grant us the power to abide by thy will. We also pray that the distinction between pain and pleasure should vanish and we be even minded in pelf and poverty and that we should consider all Universe as Thy Play and witnessing as such, may pass our days at Thy Sublime Lotus Feet and may see Thy Benign Hand everywhere.

Calcutta

S. D. Khera

India's Gift to the World

We hear a lot about what different nations are donating to India, but little about India's precious gift to the world.

Many years ago that great lover of the Sanathana Dharma, Dr. Annie Besant said, in a lecture on Hinduism, that to understand it we must realise that the basis of India's spiritual heritage was given out long ago by illumined guides of the people—rishis, sages, avatars. These were occultists whom the invisible worlds—both psychic and spiritual—were a matter of knowledge, not just speculation, but exact, sure knowledge.

This spiritual lore, known as the Vedas was *heard*. That is, it was heard by ears perfectly tuned to the Divine Voice within. And, as all know, for long ages the Vedas were not written, but learned by ear, and handed down orally in the Sanskrit tongue.

The mantric effect of the sound is said to be as important as the meaning of the words. For this reason, there are still a few schools in India—like the one at Prasanthi Nilayam where boys are learning the Vedas by heart... learning to sing, as of old, these pregnant, mysterious, cosmic songs.

Briefly, in essence, what doctrine, what philosophy of life do these great scriptures teach? It might be stated as follows: Before the Universe came into being, there was THAT, which is called Parabrahman, or the Supreme Brahman. THAT - - - - - cannot be described. No

human faculty can comprehend the unmanifest Absolute lying beyond this phenomenal world, which, we know through our senses.

The universe began with Brahman manifesting Himself. The Upanishads say: "When He is manifest, all is manifested after Him; by His manifestation all this becomes manifest." It is sometimes described as an act of sacrifice—a process of Self-limitation. Part of the Infinite Brahman must be limited, sacrificed, circumscribed, in order to create the finite universe, as we know it.

Yet, though everything comes forth from Brahman, It—the whole—is still there beyond. Everything comes forth from Brahman, It—the Whole—is still there beyond everything, while at the same time It is here in everything—permeating the physical and mental universe. It, the only permanent Reality, lies beneath the veil of impermanent things. The Upanishads say that Brahman is hidden in the universe, as fire is hidden in wood, before the fire-sticks are rubbed together.

The ancient Aryan Wisdom teaches that the manifestation of the Supreme Spirit as matter, comes about slowly with the emergence of the different classes of forms—the mineral, the vegetable, the animal, and man. Then within man the degree of spirit or consciousness continues to increase as he evolves through the great cycle of births and deaths. This wheel of reincarnation turns through three levels—three worlds.

It takes a man from the earth, via the gateway of death, into a world of finer, subtler matter. Here he works out the results of part of his earthly lessons. Then he rises to a world of even finer matter, where he digests the fruits of other earth experiences. From this, the highest of the three worlds, he returns again to the lowest—the earth.

And so it goes on and on in a continuous cycle of cause-and-effect. The cycle can be likened to a great wheel driven by a blind-folded ass who walks around and around—as one sees in countries of the East. The blind-folded ass may be said to represent blind desire and attachment to earthly things. It is this that keeps the Karmic wheel turning.

Eventually, however, man learns wisdom from the inexorable, relentless law of cause-and-effect. He learns that selfish desire brings sorrow—and slowly his attachment to earthly things fades out. Then his sights become set on the great Reality, beyond the three worlds. And so he is freed from the wheel of births and deaths. The Vedas say: "When all desires, dwelling in the heart have been abandoned then the mortal becomes immortal." He merges into the All-embracing, Divine Consciousness.

Hinduism provides food for the human soul at all levels of evolution. For some there are strict rules of conduct and daily rituals. These rules were laid down by the Great Ones who understood their purpose. Though the people who perform them may not always know why, nevertheless the performance creates right relations within and between man's visible and invisible environments. It creates harmony between the life on earth and that of the psychic planes, which ever interpenetrate the earth. Thus the best conditions are maintained for the progress and evolution of those who follow the correct rituals.

Furthermore, an understanding of the hidden side of life is helped by the Puranas. These teach spiritual truths through enlightening, illuminating stories. Gradually, in this way, many minds are prepared for an understanding of the more philosophic part of the Vedas, the Upanishads.

Though different systems of Indian philosophy have been evolved from the Vedic studies these are not antagonistic, but really supplementary—or complementary—to one another. They present different intellectual approaches to the spiritual wisdom. No single rationalisation could possibly express this wisdom. No purely mental analysis could embrace it. So the more intellectual appraisals there are, the closer man is likely to come to the whole Divine Wisdom. Each philosophic treatment is like a window through which some of the light can shine.

That is why Hinduism allows great freedom of thought and metaphysics, why it is the most tolerant religion—why at its best it accepts all other religions and takes them into its wide motherly embrace.

On the other hand—as I recall the late C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer saying in a beautiful lecture—Hinduism has no elasticity and freedom in matters of custom, conduct and ritual. There the religion is strict and precise. The right things must be done in the right way at the right time to get the right results. The great rishis, who understood the occult truths, laid down the rules. It's up to the people, who don't perhaps have such understanding, to accept the guidance—and to follow it.

In principle this may be quite sound, but in practice it can, and often *does*, lead to undesirable results—to rigid conservatism, for example, and to customs that have been turned to evil through the greed and ignorance of man. As Tennyson wrote, “The old order changeth yielding place to new, and God fulfills himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

But to gain the finest benefits from the study of a religion it is better to dwell on its positive side—on the eternal Truths, unspoiled by the hand of human ignorance and selfishness. A proper examination of these, within the Sanathana Dharma gives a valuable clue to a fuller understanding of other religions and of the one Universal Religion that underlies them all.

And this great world-fountain of spiritual splendour has not dried up. How well, all Baba devotees know that today, as of old, it is pouring forth in a new and vital stream! To the givers of bread from abroad, what greater boon and blessing could mother India return than this? What greater gifts could she offer to all mankind which was never able to live by bread alone!

(Adapted from a radio talk by the writer for broadcast in America.)

Howard Murphet

His Touch that Purifies

This early morning, long before His other Bright Light appeared over the horizon, this devotee with the heart filled with Ananda, received a beautiful Lesson from Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Sharing it with you is a joy.

In the midst of dhyana Babaji let me "see" Him on one of His frequent visits to Hospitals. The scene was the waiting room. Actually it was a widened hallway with new patients sitting on each side. Silently and dejectedly they sat awaiting their turn to be seen by the doctors.

Babaji who did not appear to be visible to the patients, walked in front of each and touched their hands. I asked Him why He did that.

"These patients come for treatment. They know of only one kind. The kind that can be seen. A wound healing! A limb mending! A disease being routed! My touch also heals. Most times it is not 'felt' by the patient engrossed in body pain. Into that body I pour purity. It is a 'charge' that cannot be seen. It can only be 'felt' by one who has risen above mortal fears, one who has commenced to realise himself or herself from bodily demands motivated by a dis-eased mind". Baba kindly explained.

"You said, Swamiji that you pour purity into their bodies. Tell me more of this ingredient to better health", yearningly I asked.

"Charles, you know well the story of pouring 'clean' water, that is water freed of impurities into the vessel containing muddy water. In time the water in the vessel is all 'clean'. And so with the body—the vessel—I pour purity in to skim off the debris which will, given the chance, rise to the 'surface'." Baba softly answered.

"Swamiji, are there other ways to take in your purifying power?" I again asked.

"Your eyes can gather this treasure at every turn. Your recognition of purity in others brings into yourself a like amount of the purity you see." He answered.

"How else can one gather up this treasure Swamiji?" again I asked.

"There are many 'ways' to load your chariot with Me, more than I could hope you to learn in one lifetime, Charles. Seeing purity in all actions of others is wonderful to experience. But even more is *knowing* that all actions, regardless of their kind, contain elements of purity. Even actions that are foul and bitter and full of suffering". He patiently replied.

"You mean Swamiji that one writhing in pain, even self-inflicted is purifying himself?" I enquired.

"Yes Charles, but such a one while striving for the goal of final purification, of the world, knows no other way to reach the clouded goal. He endures mortal pain. No matter how many times such a seeker takes this Path to Me he will fail if he destroys his body, his vessel, he merely rids himself of the one means of travelling towards Me.

"Now the one who strives hard to rid himself of impurities by pouring 'clean' water into his vessel will begin to 'feel' different—uplifted. He feels released from the draw of earthly things and desires. By continually practising walking along the pure Path he will enjoy Santhi and in time his round of births and deaths will cease victoriously. He will, too, find that even the balance of time using a human vessel will be filled with ananda. He too will not even want 'time' ever to pass swiftly for he also has great joy here on earth. In fact such a one has attained immortality upon earth." Swamiji continued.

"You have often told about the Crossing of the Ocean...can you tell how long such a 'voyage' takes?" I asked Him.

"When the vessel is on course and you have acknowledged Me as the Master, the crossing can come in a flash, for 'time' is a man-made expression which is not relative to My creation. That which I created in a flash—all the Universes—can be completed instantly. For where do you 'travel' to? You are already there, is it not!" patiently He explained.

"All too often, though, a Soul seasoned by many journeys in the 'body vessel' almost reaches the other side but runs aground in the midst of the great calm. The vessel runs aground on unseen reefs. Just a little more Guidance and vigilance would have brought the vessel safely to the shoreline.

"Once your sails are filled with the breeze, don't waver on the course, even when a peaceful island is located on the horizon. I will be your wind, your sails and your rudder as long as you need Me. One touch of My Hand, Charles, purifies the 'sailor' and strengthens him!" Babaji sweetly concluded.

Los Angeles

Charles Penn

Have no Fear

It is our firm belief that God is Omniscient Omnipresent and Omnipotent. On all these standards, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is indeed God Incarnation.

Bhagavan went to school only for a short period and people who taught him were ordinary then. Still He is all knowing. He can converse with anybody in any language, He can quote from our Scriptures, Upanishads and Bhagavata Gita. He can correct learned pandits and erudite scholars. How did He come to learn all these if He is not omniscient?

Bhaktas in London, California, South Africa and a host of other places feel His presence simultaneously. One Sadhu of Vijayapuram in Tanjore District was so ill that he could not go to Puttaparthi. Bhagavan appeared before him and gave him solace. While at Kodai Bhagavan was able to prevent a devotee at Bhopal shooting himself. How was this possible if He is not Omnipresent?

His Bhaktas see Him work miracles beyond the reach of all imagination. Once an invalid who was unable to walk and even stand was carried to Bhagavan's presence. He simply touched the patient. What a wonder! The patient was fully cured as if by magic and he was able to walk at once. Many are the blessings and gifts given to those who win His grace. His darshan itself is enough to heal physical and mental ills. He not Omnipotent?

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is therefore an Avatar of the Lord, come into this World in human form. He transcends all forms and formlessness. When He, is in form, He is visible. We can touch Him, feel Him and be aware of His presence. Among the wise He is the wisest, among the holy He is the holiest, and among the pure He is the purest. He is the guru of gurus, the Vid of Vedas, the Goal of man, the supreme power and God in all manifestation. His tasks are four-fold Dushtasikshana, Dharmasthapana, Sishtarakshana and Lokanugraha. He has come to destroy Asanthi, Akrama, Adharma, Anyaya and Anachara. His method is not to meet out destruction or death to the wicked as Lord Krishna did to Kamsa or Lord Rama did to Ravana. According to Bhagavan wickedness is so rampant today that almost everybody is guilty. If killing is the only remedy the whole of humanity may have to be destroyed. That therefore is not Bhagavan's way. He has come to reform the world, to revive dharma, to uphold the right and to rectify the wrong by wise counsel, sweet suggestion and affectionate command. Upadesh is the keynote of his method. Warning, advising, guiding, admonishing, encouraging, helping and exhorting in his sweet and compulsive manner, He plants virtues where vices grow wild, installs health of body where thorns of envy, greed and ego are virulent and sows in every heart the seed, of Sathyam, Dharmam, Santhi and Prema. He is Panchamurti—the very embodiment of Sathyam the Truth, Dharmam the Charity, Santhi the Peace, Prema the Love and Anandam the Happiness. He desires everyone to practise these noble qualities.

From time immemorial our land has been famous for up holding Veda Sastras, Puranas and Ithihasas as the very basis of life and as the very proof of justice and righteousness. But as a result of changing times, the clouds of modern civilization imported from abroad have shadowed our ancient glory and disabled us from distinguishing between Sathya and Mithya. They undermine the very roots of our customs and manners and create in our people a desire for a Way of life totally unsuitable to the genius and greatness of our country. The victims of these unwelcoming changes are essentially young men and women, though sometimes even elderly people are no exception. We are facing a grave crisis which is trying to engulf the whole land in a whirlpool of chaos and confusion. Bhagavan has come into the world at this juncture to save us from the calamity. We are indeed very fortunate.

The remedy to this disease is namasmarana enunciated by Bhagavan and observance of the four cardinal principles of Sathyam, Dharmam, Santhi and Prema. This is quite easy in the case of grown up people who have unshakable faith in Bhagavan. But the real problem is a younger generation—our children, the tender minds who are to be in charge of the destinies of our nation tomorrow. They have not learnt to emulate their elders. Their heroes are not saints or sages parents or teachers but time-servers and prize seekers. They look up to these destroyers of human values for inspiration and encouragement. They are not in a mood to accept Vedantic ideals for healthy growth along the path of virtue. The persistent efforts to canalize their attention into beneficial activities by means of advice and appeal, direction and restriction and precept and

practice are of no avail. Only Bhagavan can give a turn to the distortion and save the future generation. We have no fear when He is with us.

Tanjore.

Captain T. Murugaiyan

The Heritage of Man

When, while one played cricket, the ball streaked towards the boundary in a perfectly timed shot, one felt elated but was conscious that this was not the purpose of life. When one achieved a prize at school, or stood in the professional collage at the top in the University Examinations, one was happy but felt that this also was not the purpose of life. When one made his way in the world married, had a family, one was again happy and grateful but felt at the same time that this was not the ultimate goal of life. When one met Bhagavan one immediately felt "Yes this is the purpose of life." Life has been called sleeping in plants, dreaming in animals and awake in man. The body of man is the tabernacle of God and man, amongst all of Creation, is endowed with the intellect to recognise his Divine Birthright and claim the empire of liberation to which he is heir. This is essentially the same as the Christian doctrine of "the Christ in you" or the Buddhist doctrine of the "Buddha-mind" which is to be realised in oneself, or the Zoroastrian concept of "the Divine Flame within", which is part and parcel of the Eternal Universal Flame, or the Hindu concept of Atman which is the same as Brahman which is omnipresent and the substratum, and which when it is spoken of as dwelling in any particular form is called Atman; or the Sufi idea of the "wine bearer" (the Teacher), serving "excellent wine" (True wisdom) in his "tavern" (the school) and create "intoxication" (realisation) so that the Beloved (God) appears unveiled and separation, is now discarded as a delusion.

In these days of strife and strain, of confusion and degradation, of disunity and narrow mentality how is man to rise above the bonds of "Maya" and lay claim to his spiritual birthright?

"To know Him, to cling to Him, to merge in His immeasurable splendour—that is the highest goal of man". To achieve this goal a Guru is necessary. Who is the Guru? The word is derived from the root "Gri" that is to "utter". The Guru is who "utters", who vibrates the "Name". The Guru also means one who is the "Light in darkness." The Guru with his vibration of the "word" purifies, illuminates and leads the disciples through darkness into Light—leads him on to the Ultimate Realisation.

In the case of the Perfect Guru, a curious paradox arises. The perfect Guru is in constant conscious identity with the Self. He is the formless self and that Self is within all of us. He appears outwardly only "to guide" us. Though he instructs He does not call Himself the Guru knowing that Guru and disciple are mere conventions born of Maya. For Him there is no duality. The Guru, who is the Self incarnate is both within and without. Without, He creates conditions to drive us inwards; within, He prepares the interior to fix us at the centre.

Such a "Guru" is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who in His infinite mercy and Grace has taken pity on man floundering in the mire of delusion, and is guiding him in the right path until he realises the Self within.

Dr. Keki Mistry

The Incredible Sai

Whether thou be far or near,
To His loving heart all are dear,
He is no stranger, why dost thou fear?
He knows all!

Whether it be prayers sincerely said,
Or it be tears, woefully shed,
Or show of envy or hatred,
He sees all!

Whether it be recitations of his glory
A display of bombastic oratory
Or whispered giggles at an obscene story,
He hears all!

He is within, without, behind, before
As in samsara you plunge more and more,
His is the only hand that will cast you ashore
He helps all!

If only you shed your `I' and `mine'
And open the doors of your inner shrine,
You will awaken to this Truth Divine
"He is Thou! Thou art He!"

They illusions will fade; thy senses dry
He is ever-willing to rush at thy slightest cry
Seek and thou shall find in thy heart
He does lie!
This Incredible Sai !!

S. Udayavar

The Premaswarupa Avatar

Love and Peace are the commandments of God. Peace is a by-product of Love. When hatred disturbs equilibrium and breeds fanaticism, it tends to dry up the springs of Love and Peace. When such conditions take place in the World, God manifests Himself in Human form at His Own Will to restore and re-establish Love and Peace.

When Bhagavan manifests Himself in human form He does so at His own will, chooses His own time to come to this earth with some particular Mission for re-establishing Truth, Dharma, Peace and Love and to uphold Righteousness. As Goswami Tulsidas has said "Thab thab dhaari Prabhu vividhaSareera, Hari kripa nidhi sajjana peera".

Bhagavan's Avatar (the Avatar in Human form) acts himself according to the principles and Motto which he preaches as enunciated in the Dasama-skandha (Xth Canto) of Shrimad Bhagavata.

Bhagavan Sai Baba of Shirdi has already been acknowledged as an Avatar by the modern writers who have written on the 'Theory of Avatars'. The Avatar of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is an incarnation of Bhagavan Sai Baba of Shirdi as He Himself has declared.

I have my own personal experience about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba being God in human form, which I would like to share with the reader—Bhaktas. In this connection I would mention only one recent incident.

I have a family astrologer from Nepal. Goddess Saraswati has blessed him with such gift of exceptional quality that he remembers by heart about 15,000 slokas of Bhrigu Samhita. He had forecasted several events of Bhagavan's Grace on Me. But the one forecast he made recently is very significant, and I would cite it here. In the month of October last, when this Nepali Astrologer was returning to Nepal, he came to see me. I requested him to forecast some outstanding event in my life that may occur in the near future. After consulting my horoscope and making some calculations he made the forecast and noted it down in my Panchangam (Almanac), against the late 4th November 1967. There he had written that between 4th and 6th November, I shall be having "Pratyaksha Deva Darsana" (having Deva darshan in reality). It so happened that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba came to Bombay on 3rd Nov. 1967, He graced me accepting Puja in my flat at Usha Kiran Building on 4th November. He also Graced the Session of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha on the same day, and I continued to get the privilege of His Darshan on both the 5th - 6th November.

Bhagavan's Mission in the Present Avatar as He has declared is to spread the Gospel Truth, Dharma, Love and Peace. According to this Mission He is Premswarupa as the following incident that took place in Bombay will bear out. A certain highly cultured Vedantic Philosopher had been delivering discourses on Gita, in one of the localities of North Bombay. During the course of these discourses, the Vedantic Philosopher, knowingly or unknowingly (I personally believe it was done unknowingly) made certain references about Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. These references were not liked by the audience, majority of whom were Bhagavan's Bhaktas. They objected to these references and started abusing the speaker and disturbed the meeting. Amongst the audience there were Bhaktas at whose homes Bhagavan's 'Leelas' were there. From

the day following this incident which was an act of retaliating hatred on the part of these Bhaktas, the Grace of Bhagavan in the form of continuous flow of 'Vibhuti' from Bhagavan's photos ceased to flow. For the first one or two days these Bhaktas did not notice the change. But, subsequently, they found that the flow of Vibhuti had stopped. This set them thinking, and then they realised that Bhagavan has shown resentment to them for their wrong action of hatred and abuse which they had practiced, contrary to Bhagavan's Motto of Peace and Love. They then sat cross-legged before Bhagavan's photo in their Homes and took solemn vows not to cause or practise hatred and abuse against anybody in future, and implored Bhagavan to restore His Grace on them. Their prayers were answered, and the vibhuti once again started flowing. This one incident is sufficient to prove that Bhagavan in His present Avatar is Premaswarupa.

Avatars when they come into this world in Human form (Manifestations) do not harbor any ill-will or hatred towards even enemies. As an illustration I may cite an Incident as recorded in the Ramayana. We are told that in the battle that took place in Lanka, many Rakshasas were brought down by the armies of Rama to his camp, and when Vibhishana called out their names for identification, Bhagavan Ramchandra, in His supreme kindness sent them all to Vaikuntha, says Goswami Tulsidas.

To be near Bhagavan it is essential for us to lead a life wedded to Truth, Dharma, Love and Peace. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba will come to reside in our hearts, if only we practise in our day to day life, the paths of Sathyam (Truth) Dharma, Prema and Shanti (Peace)

Bombay

J. P. Maroo

*A stick floats on the waves of the Sea;
So does a swimmer.
It is the swimmer that the Sea loves to bear
For he has sensed its depths.*

Words of BABA

Faith

We are living in an era of turmoil when humanity is beset by all that which diverts it from God. Rank materialism is asserting its deadly philosophy upon one and all. "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die". "Since we cannot see God there is, therefore, no God." "God is dead!" "Our astronauts have orbited the earth high up in the sky, yet they did not see God there or any of the angels!" "Soon our rockets will probe the universe and we shall come to know all that is to be known about life and creation!" Words such as these are echoing all over the world today. The old and the young repeat them like parrots. Even those who should know better, make no effort to do so. There seems to be a desire not to know, or an inhibition against advocating the existence, of a Power which controls the Universe.

Pride has come into the hearts of men, a conceit born out of the triumphs of science. Men feel that now at last, they have become masters of Nature, apparently their sole aim of life! But it is only mastery of sorts over the external, because people are still largely slaves to their internal enemies of lust, anger, greed, worldly attachments, arrogance and envy. In the minds of men today religion, scriptures, belief in the Almighty, prayers and worship are all relegated to the scrap heap, these being looked upon as ancient superstition or ancient bigotry.

At such a juncture of world history, when the future is murky and befogged with the doubts and disbeliefs of today and when there is so much spiritual darkness, a ray of hope shines forth, to illumine the souls of those who aspire for eternal bliss. The Lord, in His Mercy, is with us again, to His word to come to earth whenever unrighteousness begins to overpower righteousness. He is with us again, incarnated in the human form which tool; birth at Puttaparthi forty two years ago, to guide, solace and liberate. Though He is ever-present everywhere, immanent in every atom of creation, few can realise this or live with it as a reality which faces us during every moment of existence. There are not many who can attain so high. Most of us struggle in the lower depths of sense gratification, perhaps aspiring to emerge higher into the purer world of the Spirit, yet forever slipping back into the maw of worldly enticements. To raise us higher out of all such entanglements, to liberate the sincere seeker; and to restore the ascendancy of Right over Might is the task of this Avatar, a mission proclaimed with Divine authority, by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself.

Yet, it is paradoxical that many among those who can understand or accept the concept of the Avatar, that is, the possibility of God incarnation on earth in human form cannot now understand or accept His latest Appearance. They may, honestly study the scriptures, even worship His Previous Incarnations or revere His Messengers of Past ages. They believe in the word of God as spoken through the scriptures upon which they have been brought up, but not that He may also speak through the words of another faith, or that there is a unity of spirit underlying all diversity. They will take on absolute trust what they read in "their own scriptures." They will carry out all ritualistic practices enjoined therein (even if they do not understand the real significance of what they are doing) on the basis of their faith that long long ago God appeared in human form, or sent His messenger among their forbears, to punish the wicked and establish the rule of Righteousness. If they would care to examine, the Avatar today is bringing the same message that He had brought to erring humanity of the past, although His earth body is different, so also the language. But they will believe only in the spoken words of the past ages, uttered through the medium of a mortal human body they have never seen, talked to or heard from. They will disbelieve the testimony of their own senses or reason, or of those of His devotees living today. Is it not strange how faith can induce belief or disbelief without even the basis of personal experience?

Yes, faith is powerful. But it should be born out of awareness, not blindness. Nothing is as enlightening as personal experience and faith based on such sure foundations is an instrument with which the seeker accelerates his progress towards the goal of Liberation. Faith not only helps our spiritual progress, it also harnesses latent abilities or powers with which to meet the ordeal of life and heal the wounds. An instrument, however, is always a two edged weapon: it can help or harm, create or destroy. Thus, faith that is based on reason, tolerance and a sincerity of purpose to know the truth—that is, based upon humility.... works real wonders with the

devotee and his spiritual practice. It matters not what form his worship takes.... it is the attitude and earnestness that count.... because, like the many different paths reaching the summit of the mountain, God also can be approached in many different ways. But, that "faith" which is blind to reason, virtue or tolerance and subject to pride or conceit, becomes a potent instrument of self-deception and eventual self-injury.

During His Appearance at Shirdi, Baba had said: "If any of these (the nine forms of worship) is faithfully followed, Lord Hari will be pleased and manifest Himself in the home of the devotee. All the Sadhana, viz. Japa (Vocal-worship) Tapa (Penance), Yoga (Practice) and studying the scriptures and expounding them are quite useless unless they are accompanied by Bhakti i.e., devotion. Knowledge of the Vedas, or fame As a great Jnani and mere formal (Worship) Bhajan are of no avail. What is wanted is Loving Devotion.....". It is on the bedrock of faith that the foundations of true and loving devotion can be laid.

As the devotees of Sathya Sai Baba will know from their own experience, His miraculous manifestations in their own homes are remarkable indeed! They replace doubt with faith, hope and strength to persevere in the practice of spiritual disciplines and even against odds. It is some thing so wonderful that all should know of it. It is doubtful if an Avatar or Messenger of God has ever before been so liberal in granting His Boons so profusely to so many in so tangible or material a form.

Yes, such is the power of faith. It is said that "Faith moves mountains." Bhagavan today is making these words come true for our sake. The Vibhuti and the talismans, rosaries, photographs (sometimes still wet and dripping, "straight from Sai Studios" as Baba laughingly jokes sweets, Prasad and anything else He creates casually so by a wave of His hand for presentation to His devotees, are not evanescent, immaterial things that evaporate in time, nor are they products of imagination, hypnotism or hallucination. They are as solid and material as any other object made up of the elements, and, as durable. The only difference is that Baba's gifts are instantly created when He so Wills.... but what a wonderful difference is this! So also, the Prasad which, He creates by the wave of that Hand, is as material as any other food you might take; but how much more delicious and fragrant the Prasad, the Amrita (nectar) or the Teertha (holy water) which Baba gives Himself, or allows to materialise in the homes of His devotees, who are blessed by Him.

And then there are many other kinds of miracles which continually "happen" in the presence of Baba, or even away from His physical form in remarkable ways, are incidents which could fill a book of wonder.

The miracles of "apparent" coincidences are also legion, where unexpected boons are granted to the deserving or their wishes fulfilled. All this and more, is done by Baba with so much informal grace and charm—by mere act of will on His Part—that to be a witness of such manifestations at Divine Power (Shakti) cannot but induce a feeling of awe, reverence and humility.

But, faith of an inverse nature is also Powerful enough to deny or decry such manifestations of Shakti. Such denials are engendered in ignorance and not out of personal experience or test. People will deny because they do not understand that miracles form part of the nature

That (Shakti) which is miraculous in Itself.

Some will deny because they are instructed accordingly by others; or perhaps because they cannot be troubled to readjust their dearly cherished beliefs of a life-time (which is not necessarily harmful, provided they do not attempt to over-turn the beliefs of others). Some feel that to concede the existence of such Shakti on earth would amount to disownment of "their own religion" which must be "preserved" against all such "influences". It is difficult to understand why such a fear should exist in their minds because, that which is Truth, is unshakeable. Moreover, Baba has clearly expressed over and over again, that "all Faiths are facets of the One Truth". He has also added that in this Kali Yuga (the spiritually dark age), the recitation of the Lord's name (japam) may be done with any Name that is dearest to the individual. In this connection Baba has said: "In the Treta Yuga, it was Sita-Rama; in the Dwapara Yuga it was Radhe-shyam. Now, it is Sarva-nama"!

Then why this fear to accept what exists? Is it because faith is really lacking and denial buttresses faltering beliefs? Is it because pride in what one is, or has, makes tolerance for him a sin? Regrettably, it appears to be so. How unfortunate it is that a reverse order of faith—or, rather, a negating attitude which is not open to reason or a sincere quest for truth—converts itself into bigotry and intolerance, even fanaticism so that it prevents the Grace of God from reaching those who are also in great need of it.

The world is in need of a spiritual unity and not of further sub-divisions and compartmentalization. Any endeavour to reconcile the apparent differences existing in systems of religious thought—differences which are only external in their applications to our daily life, and not in their inner content—and to fuse or blend into an integrated whole the religious philosophies of the world, while yet maintaining the distinctiveness of approach or expression, should be welcomed and not avoided or abhorred. Syncretism is apparently a sin to those who hold the latter view. In their fervour to "preserve" what they consider "their own" they would impose it also upon others. In this manner have factions multiplied all over the world and divided human beings into rival antagonistic faiths, communities, creeds and groups. In the cacophony of the dispute as to who is superior, God has been entirely forgotten.

It is at such a time that Baba reminds us of the need for faith, faith in ourselves and in our glorious human destiny. We are deluded into thinking that we are creatures of some freak or accidental combination of atoms and molecules obeying only mechanistic laws in relation to other such freak combinations. We are deluded into identifying our Self with the body and its quixotic dramas. We feel that we are free, when really we are not.... who, for instance, can prevent an accident, or death of the body. Yet, in that which we are really free, we consider ourselves hopelessly imprisoned. We are not the limitation of the body, but that which is eternal, omniscient and omnipotent. We are free to opt for the attainment of that state. We may realise this in an intellectual capacity but to realise it as an actuality as a Becoming, is the true destiny of our life, the "miracle" we may be individually and personally privileged to experience through the Grace Bhagavan.

Human destiny is nothing else but a Realising of the eternal Self. Through the limitations of human life, we have to acquire knowledge of that which has no limits. Through the gaining of

that knowledge we re-discover, as it were, that we are none other than That itself. And that is Self-Realisation, our destiny.

With regard to human destiny, Baba has said...."You have some freedom of action. A cow, tied by a rope to a tree can roam around with that length as radius and eat the grass growing within that space. Even a question paper given at the examination asks you to answer 'any six questions'. You must use the intelligence and imagination you have been allotted, to the best purpose; then the Giver will be pleased to give more".

Faith is the instrument which we must discover for ourselves. Baba, in His Mercy, is giving us many opportunities to do so. God does not need our faith. He exists and His Will prevails irrespective of our disbelief in Him. It is we who need to have faith in Him.

A little analysis will soon reveal how puny is man in the presence of the Almighty. A personal calamity or a catastrophe of Nature sends him scurrying for safety wherever he thinks he can find it. It is only then that the Hand of God is seen. But, having faith in His dispensations, each of us can face our allotted parts in the drama of life with fortitude and calmness, secure in the knowledge that our salvation is assured by Him. We must employ the intelligence, with which we have been endowed, to develop this faith, so that we may use it as a key for our Deliverance.

We must develop the faith to win that Grace. Each year, during the auspicious Maha Shivaratri at Prasanthi Nilayam, Baba blesses the many thousands who gather there with the privilege of witnessing the unique miracle of the Lingodbhavam. During this holy night He manifests from within Himself the representation of the creative Force which is the very substance of the Universe, the basis of all Creation—a microcosm of the Cosmos. It is Divinity itself which is manifesting, blessing and assuring us all, that we need only have true faith in Him to reach our Destination, which is nothing less than supreme, eternal Bliss.

Pestonjee Pocha

Sanathana Sarathi

*In Dharmakshetra... Kurukshetra
Arjuna had a Sarathi!
He was such a master Sarathi
That He won the war for him!
He held the reins of all the horses
He helped his arrows to find their prey
He gave him courage, opened his eyes
And made him a little wise.*

*He saved him many a time from wrong
He taught him statecraft, soul-craft both.
He blessed him on the battlefield*

*With a Vision, where he found
That He was no mere charioteer—
That He was horse and wheel and whip
Source and stream and sea
Dinosaur, daffodil, flea.*

*We all are Arjunas today
Willing to wound, afraid to strike,
Grasping a doubt and calling it Faith
Eager to reap, unwilling to bend
Blowing big trumpets before the fray—
God on our lips, greed in our hearts.
In Dharmakshetra, Jagat-kshetra
We all do need a Sarathi,
To teach us and train us the Gita way
And, make us fit to see Him so.*

*We all do need a Sarathi.
We haven't far to go
He is here before us, now,
With His lovely welcome smile.
The same who led to victory
Many a doubting warrior
On many a famous battlefield
Where I did fight with he
And we fell foul of they.*

*He knows each nut and bolt and spring
He knows each inch of road.
The tiniest blemish He spots and checks
No crack can escape His instant care
No leak, no streak, no squeak.*

*He knows the speed which we can stand
He knows when the breakdown comes and why
He is the Goal which you must reach.
Choose Him (He has chosen you already now)
And seat Him securely in the heart of hearts
And, the road is smooth, the weather fine.*

*There are no ups and downs
It is all so cool—an easy drive
You have only to trust Him
And keep your self mum
You can sing your way along
And when you come to journey's end*

You find you are not you, but, He!

Install Him in your heart

Sathya Sai Sarathi

This Sanathana Sarathi.

N. Kasturi

Bharat! Awake! Arise!

Bharat! Awake! Arise! For Bhagavan Baba has come to raise you to your unique position and regain for you your lost glory. The whole world seems to be in doldrums. Unrest and frustration, insecurity and fear, hostility and hatred are rampant and run riot everywhere. Not only nations and peoples, but even ideals and institutions are up in arms against each other and only might and violence are in the air. Sanity and wisdom have disappeared and the law of the jungle has descended upon us. Mighty armaments of war are piling up and the pastime of many people is to plot to kill and destroy.

In Bharat too, a thousand tongues of flame spit out fire and brimstone. Words of vicious poison rend the air calling out for dissension and discord, hate and greed. Storms and tempests howl and roar across the fair face of our ancient land and the music of the Vedas melts away before the war cries of crass materialism.

Verily we have witnessed the doings of a dark age. In moments of such grave crisis and deadly peril, when Dharma disappears and God is given the go-by, Avatars have appeared in our holy land to redeem the fallen man. Resplendent through the golden pages of our long history, Divine Avatars, holy Rishis and great Acharyas, mighty men and master minds have illumined and enlightened the path of men from generation to generation. And when an Avatar appears marks the end of a dark era, and the beginning of an enlightened age.

And so Bhagavan Baba born in divine consciousness has come, in whose presence we feel we are in a plane where our ordinary faculties stand dumbfounded in all humility. Bhagavan Manifests Himself in the Universe so that the individual souls may through His Grace obtain salvation through union with Him and thus be delivered for ever from the bondage of the cycle of births and deaths. He has come to remove the encrustation that seems to blur and darken the image through Maya, of the entire humanity and reestablish Sanathana Dharma—the eternal culture of our Punya Bhoomi through which alone the divinisation of the whole of mankind is possible. Nay—In His Scheme may come even an actual cosmic salvation for the whole universe. Did not a great Sage once say "Eka Muktau Sarva Mukti" and in His mighty cosmic scheme of an evolutionary progression it is His dispensation that Hindus should again be in the responsible position of enlightening the world on the problems of human existence and the purpose of life.

The nations of the west are moving towards Bharat for spiritual help and guidance. At this crucial and vital juncture, it should be a sad irony of fate if Bharat were to throw away her

spiritual heritage and take up the hollow embellishments of a material civilization which even the west has started to discard.

And what is Bhagavan Baba's message to a grief stricken and frustrated world! Again to Dharma, He calls all and sundry. To realise the purpose of life should be our goal and an earnest attempt at this self-realisation is the Dharma of Man, He says. The goal is the attainment of the Supreme which has been described as that "by attaining which nothing further is to be attained." Blessed indeed are the various groups of devout men and women all over the world determined to spread the Path of Dharma. A Dharma Kshetra is springing up in His Holy name, entry to which run on the twin wheels of righteous life in thought, word and correct Sadhana.

May each one transform his kshetra into a real Dharma Kshetra by pursuing this path of Dharma. May all Nations converge in this Brahma Bhoomi to feel and realise the unity of mankind as true Bharatiyas. Yes. Let us all be true Bharatiyas—Bha plus rati—one who revels in his self-efluence. BHARAT! AWAKE! ARISE! OM Sri Sai Ram.

Capt. T. Balakrishna Meenan

Steps in Sadhana

Hinduism recognises several ways that are open to the Sadhaka. Baba says that in the modern age under the conditions in which we live, the large majority can progress towards salvation through Bhakti, as the other ways involve rigorous discipline beyond the capacity of most of us. Worship is a means of educating the emotions and Bhakti can be developed by constant Bhajan, Japam, and Namasmarana. In the Nama Sadhana, there is not even a trace of such distinction. Hindus, Christians and Muslims might differ on various points, but they are all one, in the glorification of the Name of God. All of them take the name of the One Lord, though the language through which the name is expressed is different. Each one recites, repeats and remembers the Name as formed in his own tongue. Each one turns with his fingers the rosary appropriate to his religion. But for everyone there is nothing so fruitful, so universal or so holy among spiritual disciplines as these: japam, Dhyanam and smaranam. The fruition of Bhakti is the attitude of complete surrender to the will of God and accepting everything that comes as his Grace.

However Bhakti itself will not take us far, unless our daily lives are disciplined by Sathyam (Truth), Dharmam (Duty), Santhi (Peace) and Prema (Love). Sathyam is Truth but is used in a wider sense. "Truth is not something that is modified by time or space or Guna. It must be the same forever, unaffected or unchanged. Then alone is it Truth. It should not be proved false by some subsequent event or knowledge." "Sathya, (Truth) must be treated as life-giving as breathing itself. Just as a body that has no breath is useless and begins to rot and stink within a few minutes; similarly life without Truth is useless and becomes the stinking abode of strife and grief." Truth is the all-protecting God. The Lord who is Sathya-swarupa grants his Darshan to those of Truthful Speech and Loving Heart.

"Dharma is a body of principles that are fundamental to social stability and individual progress. There are various branches of Dharma-Kartavya, Varana Dharma, Ashram Dharma, etc, but the aim of all is to help man stage by stage towards liberation and from the chain of birth and death." One common definition of Dharma is that it is the adherence to the rule: "Do unto others what you wish them to do unto you; do not do unto others what you do not wish them to do unto you. Do not have a double standard. Treat all as your own self.... The treatment you wish others to render to you yourself is the measure of your duty to them."

Santhi is not merely the absence of anger and agitation. It is a positive quality. "Santhi embellishes every act; it softens the hardest core of man; it takes you to the footstool of the Lord and wins for you the vision of God. It knows no distinction; it is a force that establishes equality. It is the honey of Prema in the enchanting flower of life". "The quality of Santhi denotes the capacity to bear success and failure, joy and misery, defeat and victory, with perfect equanimity." This attitude of mind is explained in Saiva Siddhanta and results from a complete surrender to the will of God. This is the pre-requisite of Nishkamy Karma or action without desire of its fruits.

"Prema is the quality of Sarvasamanata of not only Ahimsa but also of the duty of love because every being is a part of Divinity, as much a spark as you yourself. "An important difference between Indian Religious concepts of Love and Western philosophical concepts that the Indian concept is not restricted to human beings, but covers all living beings.

As an aid to the development of Prema (Love) Baba recommends two mental exercises "(1) Consider always the faults of others, however big, to be insignificant and negligible. Consider your faults however insignificant or negligible be big and feel repentant. By those means you avoid developing bigger faults and defects and you acquire qualities of brotherliness and forbearance (2) Whatever you do with yourself or with others do it remembering that God is Omnipotent. He sees and hears and knows everything. Whatever you speak remember that God hears every word. Do discriminate between the true and the false and speak only the truth; whatever you do, discriminate between the right and the wrong and do only the right."

If the above mentioned four qualities are cultivated and practised by each for himself, "there will be no envy between man and man; selfish greed will cease; the interest of others will be respected; and world peace can be stabilised".

Conduct guided by these four precepts will lead to Nishkama karma and will not add to our stock of Karmik debts. But we have to face the consequences of our previous Karma. "Of course, when grief overtakes you and pain has you in its grip, the Lord does not announce the exact sin for which that particular experience is the punishment. You are left to deduce in a general way that every experience is lesson and every loss is a gain. "The purpose is to improve the individual and other considerations are secondary. We are also told that the Grace of God can save us from Our previous Karma. There appears to be an element of contradiction between the Law of Karma as you sow, so you reap, and the doctrine of Grace which saves you from your Karma. How and when does Grace intervene? Can it wipe out large accumulation of Karma, will, have considerably diminished by the Sadhana going through the effects in normal way. In other words, spiritual development cannot co-exist with a mountain of accumulated karma. The other

part of the explanation is given by Baba thus: "When a severe pain torments you, the doctors gives you a morphine injection and you do not feel the pain, though it is there in the body. Grace is like morphine the pain is not felt though you go through it! Or Grace takes away the malignity of the Karma which you have to undergo. You know that there are dated drugs, which are declared ineffective after a certain date. Well, The effect of Karma is declared null, though the account is there and has to be rendered." In other words, events will occur in accordance with the law of Karma, but the individual will not feel pain or sorrow as a result of these events. We have seen earlier that pain and sorrow are caused by connecting external events with the Ego. When illumination granted by Grace eliminates the Ego, joy and sorrow get eliminated automatically.

Colombo

C. Balesinham

Avatars

"The Bhagavata Gita declares, in clear and ringing tones, "Whenever there is decline of Dharma, and the rise of Adharma, I shall embody Myself. For the protection of Dharma, and for the destruction of Adharma, I shall appear in every Age."

The Lord manifests Himself in human form solely for the above Divine purpose. What the Gita has stated is ETERNALLY true, and holds good for all Ages, including the present Kali Yuga as well.

A revealing point to be noted in this connection is that the Avatars of God, as well as Maha Purushas or Mahatmas, commonly manifest themselves in the sacred land of Bharat. The reason, as Sri Bhagavan Sathya Sai Himself has stated, is that Bharat is the Punya Bhoomi, the Karma Bhoomi, and the Tapo Bhoomi. It is in fact the pulsating heart of the World, and the growth of Divinity in Man has to be traced to the roots of Spirituality nurtured in the soil of Bharat, by the Divine Rishis of Old.

Many are the Avatars and Maha Purushas, our blessed land has seen through the Ages. To name only a few, Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, the Compassionate Buddha, Sankara, Lord Gauranga, Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Shirdi Baba and now Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, are the names that flash through our mind, as we peep down the vista of Time.

What is the common factor, or link between God, the Avatar Purusha, the Mahatamas, and Man? It is the fact that the Jivatman that we find in Man is nothing but an infinitesimal spark of the selfsame effulgence, the Paramatman. God is the boundless ocean of Satchidananda, of which each of us represents the minute drop of spray, that tossed into the air by the restless waves, glistens for a second in the sunlight, ere it falls into the lap of the ocean again. This tiny droplet of water, a microscopic part of the infinite ocean lives as an entity for a fleeting second, and sinks down again, to merge with the ocean.

What then is an avatar Purusha? To extend the analogue further, we can compare the Avatar to a towering and majestic iceberg. The waters of the ocean are fluid, and essentially have no concrete form. The Avatar, on the other hand is like a colossal iceberg, a pure and dazzling crystalline mass of solids, and which, in comparison to the infinitesimal droplet, the Jivatman, appears to be Infinity itself. And what is it, that brings the iceberg into existence? It is the freezing cold, of which we, living in an equatorial climate, can have no conception, The phenomenon of the birth of an Avatar is brought about by the congealing power of the love and earnest longing welling out of the hearts of great Siddha Purushas, Maha Yogis, and of the pure in heart for the birth of the Lord in the World as Man, so that He can again save Mankind from its own fatal follies.

What are the outstanding traits that distinguish the Avatar from the rest of Mankind? There are many such, like the innumerable facets of a gleaming gem. We, of limited knowledge can only think of a few.

One cardinal fact that we have to remember is that the Avatar Purusha is not compelled by Karma to take birth in the world, but comes down of His own volition. We, Jivatmas, are small, worthless gems, caked and heavily laden with the dirt of our acquired Karma, which, through the Law of Karmic gravity, forces us to return again and again to the world. But with the Avatar, the case is different. The brilliance of the gem is visible at all times and places, because of its spotless, heavenly purity. Its effulgence is intense and overpowering. It may be, that to a Jivatma heavily enshrouded by the dark veil of Tamas, the luminosity may appear to be radiated by a piece of worthless glass. But, to a person who has dealt for a lifetime in diamonds, to a Yogi, the gem would appear priceless, and the Yogi, and also lesser persons, pure in heart, would instinctively bow down reverentially to the Avatar, and exclaim, "Thou Art He."

The avatar is like a magnet. We can lay a piece of lead next to a powerful magnet, and this piece of lead will lie there inert, totally unaware of the invisible pull of the magnet. But if we should pass the magnet over a heap of steel needles, they will come to life, and jump up, irresistibly drawn towards the magnet. The pure in heart are like the needles, they are of their own nature and composition, drawn towards the Avatar, the living embodiments of the Divine.

The Avatar is a living example of Truth. Where noble thoughts, words and deeds coincide, there is Truth. It is only when the sight of the archer, the shaft of the arrow, and the distant target are all the three in the same line of vision, it is only then, that the winged arrow will go and hit the centre of the target. The Avatar is the infallible Divine marksman. His target is Truth.

The Avatar is always a perfect embodiment of Dharma. When we think of Dharma, we conjure up in our minds the vision of Sri Rama. A perfect son, in whose mind, the promise given by his father to Kaikeyi in a moment of weakness, weighed more than a great kingdom and all the comforts that great riches could confer. A devoted husband, yet one, who was prepared to send his chaste wife to the forest rather than have a slur cast at the King by a lowly washerman. He held Dharma and honour above personal considerations.

Then again, think of the Dharma preached to Arjuna by Sri Krishna on the field of Kurukshetra. How to live, and if need be, to die like a true Kshatriya, in the protection of Dharma, and in the

destruction of Adharma. Dharma has to be honoured, even at the sacrifice of kith and kin. Every act and duty has to be performed as a sacrifice unto the Lord, with no desire for the fruits thereof, and with perfect dependence upon the Lord.

The Avatar is again, an embodiment of Shanti. Take for example, the life of the Buddha. Brought up in a regal atmosphere away from all sight of misery, unhappiness and death, yet, his heart yearned for something, which the sensory world could not give. His ever powering desire for Shanti finally broke its bounds, and the great prince turned his face away from his devoted and beautiful wife and his dazzling son, and embraced the life of a mendicant. His quest for the ultimate reality finally brought him Shanti, and thus showed the Path to the millions of those who believe in the teachings of the Compassionate Buddha.

Yet again, the Avatar is an embodiment of Prema. Prema of the highest order, Prema for the Prematman, and Prema for the mass of Jivatmas, the myriads or, reflections of the Paramatma on the screen of Maya. Lord Gauranga was a perfect example of Prema. His Prema for the Feet of God was so infectious that during the course of his tour of India, he spread this benign contagion of Divine Prema, through the length and breadth of Bharat. By mere touch he was able to send human beings into ecstasies of Divine love, nay even those whom he had touched, could, by their own touch send thousands of others reeling about inebriated with the love of God.

Thus an Avatar is the perfect embodiment of the four cardinal virtues of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, and Prema. Bhagavan Sri Sathya is the repository of all the four virtues. It is difficult for anyone to say which particular trait appears more prominent in Him. If we should try to define which are the predominant traits of the present Avatar, we would be landing ourselves in the position of the four blind men, who, after touching different parts of the anatomy of an elephant, such as the legs, the trunk, the tail, and the ears, tried each of them to define what the elephant was like. Each of them was partly right but all of them were wrong in the totality of their concept. With the limited understanding of the sense of touch, they could not comprehend the elephant as a whole.

In like manner, we on account of the limitations of our senses, are unable to comprehend even a fraction of the greatness of the Avatar. Even to those, who have advanced along the path only a fraction of His glory has become visible.

To the Jnani, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai appears as the blazing effulgence of purity and truth.

To the Karma Yogi, He appears as a vast repository of Dharma.

To the introspective recluse or hermit, He appears as a veritable refuge of Shanti.

But to some like me, Bhagavan appears to be a boundless, iridescent ocean of Love, Prema Sagar. I humbly pray, that it may someday fall to my lot, to swim a long long way out into this Prema Sagar to the point of no return, so that it may never be necessary for me to return there from to the shore of Prakriti again. Salutations at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan.

The Eye Camp

Baba in the Ward for 500

I saw Him move along the lanes
Of blinded men, bandaged eyes
Tended soft and sweet by loving hands.
They heard the rustle of His silken gown,
They stretched their hands to touch His Feet
They knew it was He, all the five hundred,
For who could scatter love so plenty there?

I saw Him move along the lanes
Of dark dismal pain lit up by hope,
Waiting for the moment when they can open
The damaged eye, to light,
To colour, to glorious day.
They strained their ears,
To catch His silver voice,
So cool, comforting, balm to bandaged hearts
What does He say?
How soon can we see Him well?

How soon to see the Flag
Which flies when He unfurls;
How soon to watch the stream of holy ash,
That flows from Siva's hands
On Sivaratri day!

Can we, they wondered, see with open eye
The Lingam that grows in Him
For joy of man?

I saw Him move along the lanes
Of dawning hope, of slowly blooming ecstasy.
I saw Him, on light and lovely feet,
Glide like the God He is, among the beds
Where, muttering in the mind, His Name
The silent sightless lie.

I saw Him raining Peace,
I saw Him showering Grace,
I saw the faces shining on the floor
When they drink it in!
I saw the nascent sparkle in the eyes,
(Both sound and wound)
When they pictured Him
In their Inner Eye, and saw Him
As their Inner 'I'.

N. Kasturi

The Netrotsavam

Padmabhushan Dr. M. C. Modi, the famous ophthalmologist, is the President of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations in the Chitaldrug Dt, Mysore. In his twenty-five year long endeavour to eradicate blindness in this country, by means of a mobile eye hospital, Dr Modi, though aware that he is but an instrument in the 'hands of Baba;' had his first chance to conduct his Free Eye Treatment Camp at the Prasanthi Nilayam, in the Holy presence, only now, between 5th and 15th February. He was quite happy at the chance and he and his party were so elated at the arrangements that instead of the 200 operative cases they had proposed, they took on 511. Of these, 440 were cataract extraction and the rest were squint correction, optical-iridectomy, needling, pterygium transplantation, extirpation of lachrymal sac, glaucoma and removal of foreign bodies. Of the 511 patients, 483 came from the Anantapur Dt. alone. Dr Modi examined 3770 cases in all during the camp and issued free medicines to 670. The patients, and their attendants were fed by the Prasanthi Nilayam itself. Saris for the women patients dhotis and towels for the men, were given on the concluding day of the Camp. Above 300 volunteers led by the Kumararaja of Sandur served the patients with enthusiastic devotion. American devotees, Nilayam residents, the students of the Vedasastra Pathashala devotees from all the states of India, students of the Zilla Parishad High school, Kothacheruvu, doctors like Dr Choodasama of jamnagar, Dr S. S. Sinha of Ranchi, and many others did tireless service, for the inpatients. Dr. Modi said that the Auditorium with its 400 beds was the "biggest eye hospital in the world today"! Baba, the Surgeon of Surgeons as Dr. Modi addressed Him, was present along the lines of the ailing when the doctor examined them, at the benches when the operative cases were prepared, at the operation theatre, in the huge halls where they were put to bed, by the side of the patients when they were given food or drink, or when they were dressed each day; He filled the volunteers with joy; He gave the doctors and the party of assistants, the nurses who were sent for the Camp from the Government Hospital at Hindupur, faith and strength to stand the ordeal of vigilant attention.

Dr. Modi's mastery and skill in surgery, and the care with which the volunteers and assistants dealt with the operated cases later, and above all the love and compassion of Baba enabled Dr Modi to declare on 12 Feb at the meeting of the discharged patients. "This camp was a unique one; no organisation so far had made such perfect arrangements! It was so fine that I wished I could become a patient myself to bask under the Grace of Bhagavan. The volunteers served gladly and efficiently Rajas and Ranis, American men and women, officers and their wives,

students from high schools and Pathashalas did a magnificent job, serving the simple rural folk. The surgery and the post operative treatment under the benign presence of Baba have been so efficient that we have in this camp 100 percent success. Most of these patients are unwilling to leave and go to their homes. I too am unwilling to leave this Presence", Dr Modi said. Baba asked them to be grateful to the doctor and for the sight they have regained and to utilize for good and socially useful purposes. "You were not sick people who came to the Eye treatment camp; you were kith and kin, come here to give these people the chance to serve you; now, you are going from your own Mother to places where you have to work and live. Be happy and contented, with the name of God on your tongue and the Form of God in your eye", Baba advised.

The 10 day-Camp was a Festival of Seva, a training camp in social service, a revelation of Baba's compassion and maternal love, and of the skill and efficiency of His instrument, Dr Modi and his team of medical assistants. As Dr Choodasama, eminent Eye Surgeon and President of the Jamnagar Sathya Sai Seva Samithi said, "Baba has us one way of Seva and we shall, with His blessings, serve those who suffer".

Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

January 11: Prasanthi Nilayam Vaikuntha Ekadasi Discourse by Baba.

12: Prasanthi Nilayam Speeches: Dr S. Bhagavantham Mme. Indra Devi of Tecate, Mexico., Discourse by Baba

13: Prasanthi Nilayam: Speech: Sri T. A. Ramanatha Reddy. Discourse by Baba

14: Prasanthi Nilayam: Uttarayana Day: Speeches: Dr Damayanthi Doongaji, M.A., Ph.D., L.B. and D. R. Naidu, M. A., L. T. Discourse by Baba.

Inauguration of Dhyanam Classes for Foreign Sadhakas and Nilayam Inmates

21 Wagaldhara (Bulsar ht) Inauguration of Sathya Sai Niketan: Hon'ble Gordhandas Chokawala, Minister for Education, Gujarat.

23-24-25: Discourses by Indra Devi of Tecate, Mexico on Baba at Sathya Sai Seva Samathi of Palghat Trichur and Ernakulam: Talks on Baba.

25 Secunderabad: Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Speech: Sri Raghuveer Rao, Sub-Editor, Andhra Bhoomi

27 Kothur (Kolar Gold Fields) Installation of Image: Sathya Sai Bhajan Samaj: Speech: Sri Rupa Naik, I A S

February 3: Guindy: (Madras) Sri Sathya Sai Mandali: 20 Anniversary of Installation of Sai Baba Image by Baba

11: Koduvayur (Palghat) Sathya Sai Seva Samajam: 1st Anniversary; Speeches: Major P. S. Menon and P. A. Menon, A.I.A.

Bhagavata Vahini

22

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Durvasa, however, accepted the prayer of Duryodhana! He started towards the forest, saying "Right! I shall do so". In this prayer, there was no want of deeper purpose. It was this: One morning at sunrise, when the Pandavas were worshipping the Sun, He took pity on their condition and out of His immeasurable Grace bestowed on them a Vessel, whose contents will remain undiminished, however much they are used up. It was called A-kshaya-patra. Draupadi as the dutiful wife, used to take her food only after the Five Brothers had taken theirs. Until she finishes her meal, the Vessel will be full of food, however many may partake of it. When she has finished and cleaned the vessel it can give no more. Thus once every day, the vessel was pouring plenty, until she has eaten her meal. Prior to that, she could feed thousands, even millions, from out of that Vessel. But, once she has taken her food out of it, it loses that power for the day. That is to say, there must be some part or particle of balance food in it so that it could be multiplied a million fold and used. That was its peculiar glory. When Duryodhana requested Durvasa to approach the Pandavas and demand hospitality, *after* Draupadi had taken her food, he had this special handicap in mind.

When the short-tempered Sage seeks food and the Pandavas are unable to satisfy him and his huge retinue, he was certain to invoke a terrible curse in the throes of his hunger; that would destroy the brothers for ever. The knotty problem of living with them will be solved and the Kaurvas can rule the realm in peace. That was the evil intent of Duryodhana. But, the Pandavas looked for support, not to something or someone outside them, but, to the Lord within them. What can the curse of a sage, however mighty, do to such? When the all-protecting Lord is, on their side, what can the wiles of evil-minded men do to harm them? Their conspiracies will fail ignominiously. The wicked Kauravas did not realize that when they plan in one direction, the Lord plans in another.

Durvasa appeared before the Pandavas with ten thousand disciples, just when Draupadi was resting, after her food and after cleaning the sacred Vessel, conversing with her lords. Dharmaja saw sage coming towards the leaf-thatched hut where they spent their days. He rose quickly, welcomed him enthusiastically washed his feet, offered flowers in worship, and fell prostrate before him. He declared, "I have realised my highest ambition in life; this is indeed a day of supreme luck." He shed tears of joy and stood with folded hands. His brothers and Draupadi stood by his side, after their prostrations, with heads bent in reverential homage.

Durvasa, who was visibly affected by the exhaustion of the long journey, spoke with evident exasperation, "We are going to the river for bath and noon rituals; have food ready for me and my ten thousand followers, when we return." They moved on fast, to the river, after this announcement.

When these words fell on his ears, Dharmaja felt a shock; his heart very nearly stopped. He consulted Draupadi and discovered that the vessel had been cleaned nicely and kept aside. They all sank in thought, fearing what might happen to them. "Ten thousand; to be fed! O, God! What

has this day in store for us?" they lamented, lost in grief. For Draupadi, the ideal housewife, the chance to entertain guests with food was a welcome gift, but, at this late hour, when so many had to be fed so soon, in the jungle where no provisions were available she became desperate. "The guest who has landed on us is the celebrated Durvasa, whose attainments and capabilities are known all over the world. By a mere thought, he can turn those who anger him into ashes! Alas, what terrible calamity awaits my lords!" she wondered and shivered in fear.

She could not decide on any plan to feed the horde that had descended on them. Who else could help her out than the Lord, the saviour of the good, Krishna. "O, Gopala ! Save my lords; guard us from the destruction threatening us; show us some means of satisfying these ascetics and this sage." She called upon Krishna, with tears streaming from her eyes, and with anguish gnawing at her heart. She pleaded yearningly with the Lord. Whatever may be in store for her, she did not mind; but, she prayed that her husbands be saved and her "married status" maintained unharmed, her mangalyam retained intact. She wept aloud, in irrepressible grief. The Pandava brothers heard the wail; their agony was doubled at this; they too prayed to Krishna, their only refuge, O, Nandanandana, you rescued us from calamity after calamity designed by the Kauravas. You guarded us as the eyelids guard the eye. Why have you plunged us in this awful distress today? Pardon our sins and faults; save us from this dire peril; help us to satisfy the sage and his huge retinue.

The prayers of the Pandavas and the tears of Draupadi softened the heart of Krishna, at Mathura, and moved Him from there. Footfalls were heard; the Pandavas whose heads were bent with anxiety about what might happen to them when Durvasa returns from the river, raised their eyes and saw Krishna entering their hut, scattering the brightness of His smile, His yellow robes trailing along the ground. They exclaimed, "Krishna ! Krishna!" and ran towards the Lord. Draupadi heard that voice and hurried out of the inner apartment; she surmised it must be some sign of the Grace of God that might be showered on them. But when she saw Krishna, she hastened to fall at His feet and wash them with her tears. "Save me, save my mangalyam, satisfy the sage and his followers." Krishna, the consummate Director of this Universe-drama, appeared unconcerned with their anxieties, but, immersed only in His own hunger! He said, "Draupadi! This is strange. I am hungry. First, appease *My* hunger and then, you can ask *Me* what you need. Give *Me*, immediately, some little food!" and put out His palm, as if He could not wait,

Draupadi said, "O Lord! This is not the occasion for fun; this is testing time for us. Save us, do not laugh at our plight." She wiped the flow of her tears on her cheeks with the border of her sari. She prayed with both hands extended in supplication. Krishna lifted up her head with His hand, and said in soft assuring tones, "Child! Tears collect in the eyes of women at the slightest provocation, for the smallest cause. But, can *My* hunger be appeased by tears? Can tears carry out any task? Well, that does not matter. Tell *Me* now why you are in tears. Let *Me* listen and derive joy!" Krishna was in a sarcastic mood, evidently. Draupadi replied, "Gopala! You are the second supplicant at our door today. If we do not give you what you ask, you will not curse us and bring destruction on us. But, the other supplicant is waiting with ten thousand followers to appease his hunger by eating all of us! We are all about to be reduced to ashes; where can we get even a grain in this forest? How can I appease the hunger of so many people, at such short notice, in this desolate place." She explained the reason for the gloom that had overtaken them.

Gopala laughed aloud. "Ten thousand guests have come, you say. But, I do not see a single one here! I can only laugh at your words. You are throwing away the child on your hip to fondle the children who are afar. First, give Me enough for My hunger; then, you can think of satisfying the people who are faraway." Krishna was adamant that He should be attended to, first; He acted the part of a hungry person so perfectly. Draupadi had to explain her predicament. "Lord, The Vessel had a variety of dishes; they were all served and finished; I took my food last. I have now cleaned the sacred vessel gifted by the Sun and kept it aside. How can I get food from it now? How can I appease Your hunger? You are our only refuge. If You, who know everything, cause us so much suffering, what shall we say of others?" Draupadi wept again.

Gopala said, "Well, bring here the Vessel which contained the food." Even if I get from it a particle of some eatable, I shall be content." So, she went in and brought the vessel and placed it in the hands of Krishna. Gopala passed His fingers carefully inside the vessel, seeking some particle that might have escaped the scraping and washing. He found in the `neck' of the vessel the fraction of a leaf. So, He asked, "Draupadi! You seem to have had a leaf dish for lunch today!

(To be continued)

The Vast Unknown

I am an executive in an American business organisation; I have a doctoral degree from a major university. So, I am the kind of materialistic, over-educated person who would be considered most likely to give abrupt dismissal to talk about a living Avatar. But, regardless of the materialistic background and the skeptical mood of my enquiry here at Prasanthi Nilayam, I find now present in myself, a feeling and an attitude, unexpected and surprising to me in the extreme.

I do not know how to describe this in a way that would make sense to another westerner. But, somehow, my feeling is that I am as a young son in the household of a wise father and a loving mother, in whom I have unreserved trust. How this could be, when I am a grown man and when I have known Sri Sathya Sai Baba for only a few days, I really cannot explain. Nevertheless, there it is; that is the attitude and the feeling, and, there does not seem to be any worry for me, whether I can make intellectual sense out of it or not.

I have been affected intellectually also, of course. The combination of sweetness and strength in Swami's smile, his fascinating personality that only a poet could adequately picture in "words, irresistibly attract the attention of the observer. The most amazing acts of creation, accomplished so easily, in a casual and almost playful manner strike shattering blows at the stiffness of one's mind. The almost incredible personal experiences of Swami's devotees draw the portrait of an unique and beautiful human being, with attributes extending beyond anything we have ever conceived of, as belonging to man.

It seems to me impossible for a limited intelligence to comprehend the full reality of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as he really and truly is. He belongs to, or perhaps is in himself, the vast unknown. But, such comprehension is not essential; our inability to comprehend that vastness does not matter, for, his teaching is sufficient to challenge the full capacity of men and women

from the most humble to the most exalted. Swami says that God is Love, that God is the subtle essence of life and that each human being has the strength to realize God's Love as his own essence, if he chooses to.

My wife says that if the word 'son' includes 'daughter', then this statement is her own statement also. Therefore, we sign jointly as

Jack and Magdalena Hislop
Los Angeles

Dedication to Seva

“Reflect on the lesson that Krishna teaches you. Though He was omnipotent, He served as the charioteer of Arjuna, during the battle of Kurukshetra, without any trace of pride. Do the service of your fellowmen, with devotion, and love and with no attachment to the fruits thereof,” said Baba when He inaugurated the First Conference of the Office Bearers of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations in Andhra Pradesh. At 8 P. M. on the 22nd Feb. 68 Baba had the representatives who had arrived at the Prasanthi Nilayam assembled in the Prayer Hall; He introduced them to each other and spoke generally about the Programme of the Conference and their role in it.

The Conference began at 9 A. M. on the 23rd, in the Prayer Hall of the Nilayam, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Himself, with the recital of the Vedas. Baba pointed out that many organisations run in the name of religion and Dharma care more for publicity and pomp, personal aggrandizement and profit, rather than promoting the cause of morality and faith. The efforts of Sathya Sai Organisations must be concentrated in the single aim of helping every one to realise the Reality; that means, if a person has no enthusiasm for Sadhana and is not engaged sincerely in to, he has no place as office-bearer in this organisation. Act and advise. Practise and preach. How can you attempt to do Seva to others, unless you have acquired the elementary equipment, viz. the ability to see that Sai is in them also?"

Baba also wanted that those who came forward to serve others, who are unaware of the joy of Namasmarana or Sankirtan or spiritual studies must themselves be sincere in Bhajan and scriptural studies. They must be conscious of the importance of time and of the fact that all nature is but the manifestation of His Might and Magnificence. Baba said that the seeds of faith and devotion are latent in every being and one has only to provide the prompting so that they may sprout. In this respect. Baba pointed out that other States are much more advanced than Andhra State. It is your chance now to make the Andhra to an Ananda State, by forming and fostering organisations which will generate lasting Ananda", Baba said.

"Do not believe that these organisations are for publishing My name or Glory or for helping some one else. They are for your own service, so that you can live usefully and realise the Lord as the Indweller of all. Whatever work you do with devotion and dedication, with no eye on the benefits or losses consequent on it, is the service of God. Those who offer their lives for others become immortal, for, they have no ego left in them. Hanuman who could haul mountains on his

shoulders was, so devoid of ego that when he was asked who he was, at Lanka, he announced himself as `the servant of Rama!' only.

Baba wanted that though only those organisations, bearing the name, Sri Sathya Sai, will be affiliated to the present organisation, each unit must develop contacts with all kindred organisations and co-operate with them in a spirit of brotherhood, without any trace of fanaticism. Baba then explained the reasons which are behind the restrictions on age limit, and on members of the same family being office-bearers in the same unit, and on the office bearers of Sathya Sa Organisations being office-bearers in any other religious organisation. He wanted that the lawyers and doctors who are members of the Seva Samitis and other organisations must devote some time to the service of the poor who need legal and medical help. Work must also be expanded among students of schools and colleges. Separate organisations can be started for spreading the message among, women especially, among the poorer sections of the population, He said. Baba wanted that in each village, the unit must arrange Bhajan along the streets in the early dawn.

In the evening sessions, the names of District Presidents, who will be in over-all charge of all Sathya Sai Organisations in each district, Guiding counseling and fostering all units in the area, were announced and they were blessed by Bhagavan. The names so announced are: Sri, Nidamarthi Sathyanarayana (East Godavari Dt). Dr. Kommareddi Bhaskara Rao (West Godavari Dt), Sri. K. Sivaramakrishnayya (Krishna Dt), Sri. Bolisetty Sitharamiah (Guntur Dt), Sri. Vakati Sanjiva Chettv (Nellore Dt), Sri. T. Chidambariah (Anantapur Dt), Sri. D. R. Naidu (Srikakulam Dt), Sri. E. V. S. Desikachari (Hyderabad City) and Dr. A. Krishna Rao (Kurnool Dt). All correspondence regarding units and their activities have to be routed through the District Presidents to Prasanthi Nilayam, so that the units will have the benefit of the guidance of a person who knows the local problems and situations.

At 9 A.M. on the 24th, Baba met the representatives of each District separately in the Prayer Hall and listened to the prayers they placed before Him. He advised them how to carry on the weekly Bhajan, and the daily Namasankirtan during the Brahmamuhurtam along the streets of the villages, hour to organise the study circles and the seva dals and how to engage in and encourage those who engage in, Sadhana. He posed for group photographs with the delegates from each District thus blessing them with happy mementoes of the bliss gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam.

The delegates attended Mahasivaratri on the 6th and left for their homes, full of joy at the Love and Wisdom which Baba had endowed them with.

Let me soar to thee!

Thou art the essence of Love, O Lord;
I felt Thy Touch of Love; and the desert of my heart
Is now a lake of lotus blooms for Thee.

I felt the fragrant breath of Love in my soul

And, my blinded eyes turned within.
I saw a world of joy and love
A world made wise by Thy wisdom, a world of the Real.

Then, did I know what Love hath made of me,
Hath willed that I should be.
O Bestower of Love, Thou art in my heart
But, unknown till now,
Till by a touch of pain and misery
I struggled; and my hand brushed
Against Thy orange robe, Thy lotus Feet;
Thrilled and amazed, I looked into Thine eyes
And knew that Thou art, hast been,
Ever must be
In my heart, as Love. I know
Thy Love is ever flowing into me,
My hand ever receiving Thy Grace.

Let me have it, O Lord, for ever,
Quaff of its nectar, till I burst with joy
And my life is molten gold.
Mounted on Love's white wings let me rise
And soar to Thee. O' Clothe me in Thy Truth, sublime!
Let me abide in its shade, till the end of Time

V. Sathasivam, Colombo

The Siva Principle

“Mahasivaratri is a day dedicated for the establishment of the Siva Principle in the heart of man. Man is equipped with all the endowments necessary to know and enjoy his innate Divinity, the Siva which is his real nature. But through ignorance and egoism, he adopts the path of hate and malice and foregoes his heritage. Only the sages have known the sacredness of human existence because, man alone can become aware of the merging of the individual with the universal, the Jivatma with the Paramatma, and derive lasting joy thereby. This is the Sivam, the highest bliss, the supremest Joy. People pay lip service to these sages, but, hesitate to follow their footsteps. The significance of this Day consists in the acquisition of this Siva-tattwa.” said Baba, in His Discourse, on 26th February, prior to the hoisting of the Prasanthi Flag on the Nilayam. At least 20 thousand people were present before the Nilayam on that most auspicious occasion.

"The meaning embodied in the Prasanthi Flag is also this", Baba said. Destroy evil impulses; develop love; practise Yoga or the mastery of the mind; then, the lotus of the heart will bloom and illumination will be vouchsafed—that is the message the Flag announces. The desire to

understand and utilise objects in nature is the consequence of Rajoguna; the attempts made by man to fulfill those desires are prompted by Tamoguna; the knowledge gained of the nature of these objects is the result of Satwaguna. The crystal clarity of the Satwaguna reveals that objects are illusory, because they are neither existent nor non-existent, neither false nor true. The Universe is the effect and so, it is of the nature of Cause, which is God. God is Bliss, Raso Vai Sah; hence, the objective; world is able to give the shadow of joy, when Love enters the mind. God is Premaswarupa, Sathyaswarupa, and Jnanaswarupa. So man who is but a spark of divinity encased in the name and form of a human being is also Premaswarupa, Sathyaswarupa and Jnanaswarupa. That Prema is Sivam, and no other. Know that you are Sivam: that is the message of 'Sivaratri', Baba reminded all.

The hoisting of the Flag, which is but the symbol of the dedication that each one has to make at the Feet of the Lord, was effected amidst acclamation and prayer at 8 A. M. during Bhajan Baba granted Darshan at the Auditorium and, performed the Abhishekam of His Previous Body, Sai Baba of Shirdi, with Akhanda-vibhuti, the unending stream of Holy Ash. He created a sphatika linga by a wave of the hand and placed it on the head of the silver image of Sai Baba before the ceremonial began.

Thousands sat throughout noon in the hot sun before the Santhi Vedika in order to secure sitting accommodation in positions from which they could witness the emergence from Baba of the Linga during the auspicious moment at night. Baba arrived at the Vedika at 6 P. M., amidst the hearty Jais that rose from 20000 throats. Sri Ramasaran of the Ramanamakshetra, and Sri. Hanumantha Rao, both of Guntur, spoke on the efficacy of Namasmarana and of Bhakti. Baba began His Discourse with a song lamenting the fact that man ignores the passage of time and the continuous relentless diminution of his span of life. Pursuing the will o' the wisp of sensual pleasures, man has no inclination to investigate and inform himself of the reality of the objective universe around him. Truth and charity survive today only in the dictionary as words; patience and fortitude have become as ineffective as lamps in the distance that have no wick or oil. The only means of crossing the sea of unrest and anxiety is the Name j of God, which must be the constant source of consolation and courage.

Science has brought about terror and panic among men. Like the huntsman who cannot recall the arrows once it has been released, the scientist too is helpless to prevent the destruction, he has devised and made easy. It is indeed pathetic that man still believes that science is praiseworthy and relies on it to win peace and happiness. Many may laugh at this gathering here, dwelling on spiritual and super-scientific matters, when the world outside is engaged with atom and hydrogen bombs! But, you should be happy that, at least here, we can contemplate on the fundamental needs of man, that are mentioned by the sages and for which methods of fulfillment have been discovered and described in the Sanathana Dharma. You do not become a Hindu, if you are born in Hindustan, or if you get entangled in rituals castes and communities. To be enticed by science into an exaggerated worship of external nature is to injure the reputation of India and the basis of Indian culture. Westerners are dreading the consequences of their scientific progress and are coming to India, attracted by the lessons available here for earning equanimity and calm, while Indians are planning to make this country the replica of the state they are dreading!

God is the nearest and dearest friend and guide for man. He is the richest possession one can acquire. He is present everywhere. He can be won by the constant contemplation of His Name, which summarises His Glory. But, yet, we discard the wealth; we deny the friend. We can get God as soon as we give up the clamour for sense pleasure and dive into our inner depths, where He is the Life of our life. Have self-confidence and self-knowledge that is the secret of success.

Turning to the Lingodbhava muhurtam that was approaching, Baba said that it was the unique feature of Sivaratri. The Linga is really the symbol of God; Lin means that in which all beings merge; ga means that to which all beings go. The supreme majesty in Swami is manifesting today as Lingodbhava, since it is Sivaratri. But, you must care more for the benefit that you can derive from the advent of the Avatar. Avatar means 'descent'; God descends as man, to restore Dharma. Many people say that He comes to save and guard His devotees, to propagate the Vedas etc. But, Dharma itself will save and guard those who follow it. The other tasks are all subsidiary. Though in human form, the actions of the Avatar will be epoch-making and astounding", said Baba.

After concluding His discourse, Baba sang a few Namavalis, which the entire gathering repeated in chorus. When the first signs of the emergence of the Linga became clear, the gathering spontaneously sang in one voice, 'Lingodbhavakara,' lingeswara Parthisvara maam Pahi Prabho, and, within about ten minutes, two sphatika lingas, about 3 inches long and 2 inches broad came through His mouth, one after the other, bright and resplendent. Then the vast gathering who saw the manifestation of Siva-tattwa inherent in Baba was divinely delighted. The Bhajan continued throughout the night, for, the purpose of the Festival is to saturate the mind with God and eliminate it altogether by that process.

On the 27th, at 7 A. M., before the Maha-mangalarati, which concluded the Festival, Baba spoke on the need to spend all one's life in the contemplation of the Siva Principle. The vigil that was observed the previous night is a reminder of the vigilance essential for spiritual progress. The fast that was prescribed for Sivaratri was not a mere prescription about the food; the word 'upavasa'; meaning "living near", that is to say, "living in closeness to God". What was required of you on Sivaratri was that you should live close to God, in constant remembrance of His Glory and His Presence", Baba said. Baba also elaborated on Dhyana, "which is as important as dhanya, if not more".

Within seconds after the emergence, Baba sang in His heavenly voice a new song on the Lingas, which electrified the assemblage and revealed the supreme sacredness of what it had witnessed. He sang:

Sree Gangaa Gowri Linga
Mandaaraa maala Linga
Sree rhaamaa Jyothi Linga
Sivalingaa Mangalaanga

After the discourse and the Arathi, Baba blessed every one of the thousands who were present with Prasadam. That evening, Baba filled the minds of every devotee with inexpressible joy when He sat in the floral joola and gave Darsan for over an hour. Thus ended this year's

Mahasivaratri Festival as an inspiration and a thrill for years and years in the heads and hearts of every one who had the good fortune to be present.

Sai Seva Samitis

136 devotees, office-bearers of Sathya Sai Organisations from all parts of Mysore State stood in the Divine Presence on 30th December, '67 in the arched bower in front of Brindavan, Whitefield, singing in chorus, prayer songs to the Krishna installed there and the Sai Krishna standing by its side. Dr. V. K. Gokak welcomed the gathering at the meeting inside the shamiana, as the President of the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bangalore, which was started with Baba's Blessings that very morning. This is indeed a miracle that Baba has become the spring and source of a great big moral upheaval and revival in the whole world. We have here some representatives from kindred Samitis in America. Baba has said often, Sathya is My Prachara, Dharma is My Achara, Santhi is My Swabhava, and Prema is My Swarupa. So, we who take His Name know how we have to train ourselves and conduct ourselves. Propagate Truth, Practise morality—that is His command. We practise for our own uplift; we propagate for our own happiness. Everyone of us has to cultivate the Santhi which is His nature and the Prema which is His reality", he said.

Baba pointed out that the times are out of joint. It has become the sign of 'culture' to deny God, to decry holy places, to laugh at elders and saints, and to sling mud against the goad. You have to counteract this tendency with the help of the basic principles of Sanathana Dharma, which are yet latent in the hearts of Indians. Instill the faith in the God that is immanent in all. Treat all with unstinted love. That is the message of Sanathana Dharma, which has been neglected for long. Sathya Sai Organisations must be built on genuine 'practice' of what they teach. I do not want any one to advise another on something which he does not practise in his own life. We have too many organisations already, which teach by precept, not by example. The time to celebrate the birth of a son is when he earns fame as a good socially serviceable, honest, virtuous individual. I am not glad that you have started Samitis etc. I will be satisfied only when the Sangha you have started realises the fact that Sangha means all the members, all the people of your place, the entire country, the world, the Universe. Expand your love, your service and realise the truth of "Vaasudeva sarvam idam", All this is verily: God".

"Do not attach value to Dhanam, money; attach value to character. Do not make yourself responsible for the running of any religious organisation that collects money and deals with money as part of its policy. That is why we have the rule that no office bearer here should be an office bearer elsewhere. Karnataka is a fertile land; the land yields gold here! But, see how much land is allowed to lie waste. How much land is used to grow inferior crops. In the spiritual field it is the same: hate and pride are grown; love and detachment are neglected. I will be content if even one Organisation works according to these directions; I am not enamoured of numbers." Baba said: "Do not go to the people with hands stretched for alms; go to them to give, to shower on them love and sympathy, example and precept based on experience. Do not compete with

others in pomp and display; be frugal and simple. It is not enough if you have two meetings a month or one Bhajan a week; you must engage in Sadhana, you must take up active service. Do not compete for offices and authority. Earn the authority to win Grace from Me, that is enough", Baba assured. Then, He required the delegates to inform Him whom they would choose as the Presidents of the Districts to guide and counsel the Organisations there. The following were named and Bhagavan announced the names and blessed each person as he stood up: Dr. V. K. Gokak (Bangalore City) Vijayapura Sankarappa (Bangalore Rural) P. Ramachandra Setty (Mysore City) Chamarajanagar V. Krishnaswamy (Mysore Rural) C. J. Muckannappa (Tumkur Dt) Dr. M. C. Modi (Chitaldrug Dt)" H. M. Sivaram (Shimoga Dt) Y. Rupla Naik, I. A. S. (Chikmagalur Dt) Dr B. N. Subbarao (Hassan Dt) Sri Puttuswamy (Mandya Dt) K P Mukundal Prabhu (South Kanara Dt) V. N. Achraya (North Kanara Dt) Sri Karlekar (Belgaum Dt). The District Presidents desired that Dr. Gokak be the State President for Mysore and Baba blessed him with the words, "He is devoted to the country and its culture; he has built up spiritual strength by his contact with Maharshis."

"In this state as well as in some other states, we have many who proclaim that I have come upon them, that I have sent a messenger through them, that I have nominated them to act on My behalf. Some people have started announcing that I am writing answers to questions on white dust and that I am giving them vibhuti, prasadam and images from pictures. Some like this are not true, there are many examples of cheating and so, all are condemned as false. The District Presidents must first put an end to this practice. When I am available personally to answer your questions, why sit round a sheet of dust? Should not those who talk about such things warn them and stop such things? Falsehoods only promote disbelief, Baba said.

Dr Gokak in his speech thanking the delegates and offering homage to Bhagavan, said, "This Avatar is the Avatar of Love, Love as wide as the Universe. I remember what Baba once said about the Master-Disciple relationship. It is a fable like a fable of Buddha, a classic by itself. The disciple had a 1000 rupees, all in paise, which was a cartload indeed. He went to the Master, with it. He examined each paisa, to find out whether it was genuine and good; then he gave him in return, one Thousand Rupee Note. Paise are the worries anxieties, the wishes desires; the Notes the simple command, Love Me.

My Payer to Baba is, take all my paise and give me that Note. I shall be the bulb, but He must flow Through me as the current, to illumine me and shed light. How can we thank Baba for taking upon Himself the agony of the whole world? We can thank Him only by fashioning ourselves the way He directs, as straight simple sincere Sadhakas, members of the world-wide Sathya Sai family"

Spark of Divine Will

The angler uses a rod, at the end of which he ties a line: with a float and the float keeps a hook attached to a worm attractively near the moving fish. The fish is drawn towards the worm and it gets caught in the hook, when the angler aware of the catch draws it on to dry ground, where it

dies unable to breathe the heavy air. The body is the rod, the inert material the yearning, the feeling the earnestness is the line; intelligence is the float; discrimination is the hook; the knowledge of the Atma is the worm; Paramatma is caught by this process by the clever angler. The float informs the angler that the fish has swallowed the worm, hook and all. That is to say, reason is the indicator of the coming realisation.

The experiencer of the Ananda the Shanti and the Prema is the inner i; that i is the reflection of the real I, the Atma. When the senses are silent and out of action, that I can be seen, in all its glory. All the disciplines prescribed by the Bhakti, the Karma and the Jnana margas are intended to curb and conquer the senses, which drag one's attention, attitudes, impulses and intelligence outside oneself. As a matter of fact, awareness of the truth of nature is enough to conquer the senses. Who will cater to one's deadliest foes, when one knows they are foes?

By analysing the nature of the senses, which are very inadequate instruments for telling us the truth about things, we can easily discard them and their influence over our activities. By watching the vagaries of the mind, we can quickly realise that it is just a fabric woven by the warp and woof of desires. Give up desire and the mind disappears. Give up the consciousness that you are the body, with all its impediments; you are free and happy.

You are free to the extent that you can refrain from bad actions and endeavour to do good, at least, feel sorry when you are forced by circumstance to do bad things and feel happy when you have the chance to do good. Do not attribute partiality to God, when you suffer. When the rains fall, fallow land throws up thorn plants, and plants that yield edible seeds and fruits. So too, when the rain of Grace is showered, you must see that only beneficial plants grow. Be established in your thought and reason, that this life is transient, that this body is but a temporary abode that the basic 'you' is but a traveller from one body to another, until the goal is reached. That is the real Prajnana, which removes Ajnana.

This path will become clear to man, through reading some scripture, in a flash; or, through some statement made by a Guru who has seen the Truth. Man is now wasting his time, in entangling himself more and more in the complications of doubt. He doubts whether the Formless can take Form, whether the Form can ever lose the form and become the formless. The Saguna and the Nirguna are like the two feet, used in walking. When one is on the ground, the other is in the air. Both are not experienceable at the same time. So, too, doubts about image-worship haunt the half-educated, as if man can ever conceive of the supra-mind without some image or picture or concrete idea.

See in every particle of nature, the spark of Divine Will. *Thena vinaa thnam api na chalathi*; without His willing it, no blade of grass can wave in the wind. See in every man the God who is in you; without Him as the Will behind your will, as the Eye behind your eye, as the I behind your i, no thought word or deed is ever possible. Just as a silver idol of God is all silver, whether the part represented is the hair or the dress or the lotus in the Hand; so too, whether the article is stone or stump, man or beast, it is all Divine Stuff. Do not see anything except God in the world around you. The Universe is the body of God. *Sarvam vishnu mayam jagath; vaasudeva sarvam idam.*

Fire of Faith

Baba, I pass thro' the Fire of Faith;
My body is burnt to ashes,
My life is glowing with the Fire of Faith
I have no wants or wishes.
Baba, this fire of putrefaction
Is burning in every heart;
But, the people feel the smoke
Of flesh and blood, on fire.
Baba, thou art the fire of Perfection,

I follow Thee like camphor to flame,
In Thy effulgence and divine direction.
Why should I seek wealth or fame?
Baba, I am one with Thee for ever;
Take me and melt me in Thy Fire
O, Fire! How cool and refreshing ever!
My joy is limitless; O, my Bliss is sure!

Late Dr. K. Vaidyanathan

Sri Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

- Jan; 20: Rajahmundry (E. G. Dt): Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha: Ramayana Lectures: Sri. T. Venkatacharyulu of Vijayavada.
- 22: Vijayavada (Krishna Dt): First Anniver. sary Celebrations: Sathya Sai Seva Sarnithi Kadi
- 25: (N. Gujerat): Inauguration of Study Circle by Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali. Jayanagar (Bangalore): Inauguration of Sathya Sai Mahila Satsang
- 26: Tambaram (Madras): Anniversary Cele orations, Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali, Ulsoor (Bangalore): Sathya Sai Bhakta Samaj: Speeches: Sri Chhotubhai Desai and Dr. V. K. Gokak Budalur (Tanjore Dt); Sathya Sai Vihar: Foundation Day Celebrations.
- 27-31: Palghat (Kerala) Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Bhagavatham Discourses: Sri. Unni Nambudiripad of Guruvayoor.
- 28: Pangidigudem (W. Godavari Dt): Inauguration of Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali Nilambur (Kerala): Anniversary Celebrations: Sathya Sai Prema Sangha.
- 29: Amalapuram (E. G. D t): Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha: Discourse: Sri Chiranthanandaswamiji

- 30: Kampalr (East Africa): Inauguration: Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti and the Sathya Sai Mahila Satsang
- 31: Peddapuram (E. G. Dt). Sathya Sai Bhajan Samajam: Inauguration of Sathya; Sai Seva Dal
- Feb 1: Kunissery (Kerala) Inauguration: Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali: Speeches: Dr. K. Padmanabhan Nair, Sri C S Krishna Iyer, B. Sc., B.T
- 3: Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh) Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Anniversary Celebrations.
- 5: Sathyavada (Guntur Dt): Inauguration: Sathya Sai Satsang: Discourse: Br: Ramsaran. Prasanthi Nilayam: Inauguration of Free Eye Treatment Camp by Dr. Modi.
8. Navsari (Gujarat): Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Speech: Dr, Bharucha: "Love and God".
- 8-10: Madras: Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Lectures by Indra Devi of Mexico, on Yoga and Meditation
- 11: Halga (N. Kanara Dt): Sri Sathya Sai Seva Mandali: Installation of Idol of Shirdi Sai Baba
- 12: Prasanthi Nilayam: Valedictory Festival: Eye Treatment Camp: Discourse by Baba
- 18: Chengipatti (Madras State): Mahatma Gandhi Tuberculosis Sanatorium: Sri Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali: Anniversary Celebration: Speech: Prof: Kamalpathy of Trichy. Sanapalli Lanka (E. G. Dt) Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha: Discourse: Br. Edida Sathyanarayana
- 23-24: Prasanthi Nilayam: Conference of Office Bearers of Sathya Sai Organisations do Andhra Pradesh
- 26: Prasanthi Nilayam: Mahasivaratri
- 27: Prasanthi Nilayam: Jhoola Utsavam
- March 6: Prasanthi Nilayam: Baba left for Hyderabad, and Bombay, via Anantapur.

Bhagavata Vahini

23

Sathya Sai Baba

Draupadi was surprised that Krishna was able to discover a fractional leaf in the vessel she had scrubbed clean. 'This must be your miracle; whatever work I do, I do efficiently. I could not have scrubbed it so shabbily, she laughed. When she approached Krishna to see the leaf Krishna showed it to her, saying, 'Look! I got this from your vessel. This thing is enough to appease, not only My hunger, but the hunger of all beings in the Universe.' Then He put it on His tongue with the end of His finger and swallowing exclaimed. 'Ah! How nice! My hunger is gone!'

“At that very moment, Durvasa on the river bank and his ten thousand disciples felt their stomachs overfull with food. Their hunger too was gone; they experienced supreme happiness, free from the pangs of hunger they suffered a minute previously. They communicated their wonder to each other in gestures and then, in words. 'Our stomachs are too full already, there is no space in them for even an additional grain of rice! Dharmaraja will be waiting for us there with a heavy banquet of extra delicious dishes and he will insist on our doing full justice to his hospitality. But where have we the space for the feast he has prepared? We are indeed in a terrible fix!' they said. Some one then remembered the incident when their master, Durvasa, cursed Ambarisha and suffered discomfiture at the hands of the very victim of his curse, through the intercession of Krishna.

“They reported their condition and their surmise to Durvasa. The sage who became aware of the Grace that was won by Dharmaraja blessed him profusely; he left the place, with his disciples, by another route avoiding the residence of the Pandava brothers.

But, Krishna had commissioned Bhima to proceed to the river and bring the sage and his retinue quickly for lunch. As Bhima saw them getting away through another route, he walked quicker but the disciples, afraid of his intentions, ran into the jungle to save themselves! Bhima confronted Durvasa and told him, 'Master! My elder brother ordered me to meet you and bring you, for, lunch is ready for all of you.' Durvasa pleaded inability. 'Bhima! We cannot eat even the fraction of a mouthful. We are full to bursting point. We are not displeased at all with you. I bless you that you may attain every happiness. I shall come to you when you are ruling the world as undisputed sovereigns and I shall then receive your hospitality. Those who sent me to you with sinful motives, they will meet with total destruction.' Wishing the Pandavas the best of luck, Durvasa left, with all his followers.

“Did you notice, Parikshit, the devotion and sense of surrender of your grandfathers had nothing to equal them; so, too, the Grace that Krishna showered upon them was unexcelled.” When Vyasa was revealing these incidents to show Parikshit the steady faith of the Pandavas and the Grace of Krishna, Parikshit listened intently, with awe and reverence, wonder and anxiety, alternately affecting his mind. When the dilemma of the Pandavas was described, Parikshit was agitated; when some impending calamity was described, he shed tears of sympathy; when success was described, he shed tears of joy.

Vyasa continued: "O King, your grandfathers were ready to renounce everything to God, if the need arose; they were prepared also to fight with God, if the need arose; for they were only observing Kshatriya Dharma when they fought so. You must have heard the story of your grandfather fighting against Siva and winning from Him the Divine weapon of Pasupata Astra." At this, the King suddenly raised his head and asked, "Master! What did you say? Did my grandfather wage battle against Siva? I have not heard about it so far. Tell me all about it; Satisfy my thirst to know about it." Parikshit fell at Vyasa's Feet, importuning him to narrate the story.

Vyasa cleared his throat. "Son! How many stories have I to narrate to you? The relationship between the Pandavas and the Gods needs for its full elaboration not hours, not even months, but years! Still, since you implore I shall tell as many as possible, within the time available. Listen, O King! The Pandavas were living in the forest. One day, Dharmaraja was overcome with anxiety. He felt that the wicked cousins, the Kauravas, may not allow him to rest in peace even after the period of exile is over. It was very doubtful if they would give them their share of the empire. Dharmaraja was afraid that war was inevitable and that the great bowmen of the age, Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Ashwatthama would then range themselves on the side of the Kaurava hordes. He apprehended that the Pandavas might not be able to overcome such a galaxy of strength. He feared that the war might end in defeat and that the Pandavas might have to spend their years in the jungle itself. Seeing him in the depth of woe, Arjuna approached him and craved for his blessings and permission to go forth and win, by asceticism, weapons from the Gods to defeat the foe. Dharmaraja directed him to proceed, and please the Gods, and win through their Grace, weapons to win the war.

"Arjuna went into the Gandhamadana area, which was inaccessible even to the most enterprising ascetic and did Tapas (ascetic practices), to propitiate Indra, the Sovereign of the Gods. Heaven was amazed at the rigours of that Tapas and his steady persistence. So, Indra appeared before him, saying, 'Son! I am pleased by your Tapas. But, if your desire is to be fulfilled, first win the Grace of Siva; thereafter, I shall take you to heaven and arm you with all weapons heaven can confer.'

"In accordance with Indra's advice, Arjuna sat meditating on Siva in order to win His Grace. Meanwhile, Siva resolved upon a drama of his own I shall tell you what it was: A huge wild boar, ferociously enraged, ran across the place where Arjuna was observing penance; he saw it, and, though during the penance one had to desist from injuring any living being, he hastily took up his bow and arrows when the boar was about to fall upon him. Just at that moment, a Bhil of the forest, also armed with bow and arrows appeared with his wife before Arjuna! Arjuna was amazed that a woman was accompanying the Bhil in that forest where no person could safely move about. But, when he observed more closely, he found a huge retinue behind the Bhil, consisting of men and women of fierce appearance yelling and shouting in strange ways. Arjuna was perplexed and astonished.

The person who first appeared, the huntsman with the fierce face and the red glowing eyes, spoke to Arjuna: 'You, there! Who are you? Why have you come to this place? You shall not live, if you shoot an arrow against that boar, even by mistake, be warned. I have pursued it and made it run thither; what right have you to take up your bow and arrow against it? These words that he spoke entered Arjuna's heart like a sheaf of arrows. He felt terribly hurt; for, a common

hunter had insulted him. The fellow does not know my name or fame; or else he would not have challenged me' he said to himself; he raised his bow and shot an arrow at the boar; that very moment, the Bhil too shot an arrow at it.

The boar rolled on the ground, dead. The hunter was in the throes of anger; he showered abuses on Arjuna; 'You, there. You do not know the rules of hunting. When I have set my eyes on it, pursued it and selected it as the prey for my arrows, how dare you aim your arrow at it? You are a greedy barbarian.' His eyes were casting sparks, so uncontrollable was his rage. Arjuna too was enraged. He shouted back, 'Shut up, you scoundrel. Or else, I will dispatch you to the Domain of Death. Save yourself by stopping your wagging tongue. Get back the way you came.'

"The Bhil stood up to that threat; he did not quail. 'Whoever you are, I am not afraid; you may have three hundred and thirty crores of gods on your side, but I shall not yield. Take care; you are an interloper. Who gave you permission to enter here? Who are you to order me out? This forest is ours; you are a thief who has sneaked in; and you have the audacity to ask us to get away!' he replied.

At this, Arjuna guessed that he was no ordinary hunter. He spoke in a calmer tone. 'The forest is the property of all; you have come to hunt; I have come to do penance to please Siva. I shot that boar only to save myself from its rage.' The hunter, however, was not softened. 'I don't care whom you adore, whom you desire to please. Accept the wrong that you have done. Why did you shoot the animal I was stalking? Accept and apologise, make amends,' he insisted. Arjuna lost all patience. This fellow's life, too, is to end like that of the boar, he told himself. He is not to be cured by soft words, he felt.

"So, he selected a sharp arrow placing it on the bow, shot it at him. It hit him; but, like a thorn on rock, it fell the ground, bent by the impact! So, the astonished Arjuna had to shoot a crescent-headed arrow which would sever his head. But, this was brushed aside by the hunter with his left hand, like a blade of grass.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

*Mark well that the great God strikes his fire,
In hidden places, humble and drier
Than a broken, sun-baked thistle stem—
Puttapparthi and Bethlehem,
And hearts denuded of all desire.*

H. Murphet

The Outer and Inner Eye

During the last ten days, we had a Festival here, the Netrotsavam, the Festival of regaining Vision. The service that Dr Modi is doing is indeed meritorious. The Netra is the Sutra for living; it is the most important of the senses. His dedicatory spirit is equal to the highest asceticism. He is witnessing now, before him, these 500 people who are able to see more clearly and that must be giving him great joy. He has not coveted the fruits of his Karma and so, he has been blessed. The message of the Avatar can be expressed in one sentence: "His Life is His Message". Observe how I act; that is My Message. Dr Modi is the District President of Sathya Sai Organisations in the Chithradurga District, Mysore State. He feels always that he is but an instrument in Swami's hands and so, Swami's Blessings are with him. I am glad to hear that in this camp, Dr Modi had cent per cent success. The devotees, who served the patients all these days, have done their work with great care and fear; they took it as a sacred chance to tend their brothers and sisters, their elders and kinsmen. Without serving as a kimkara (Servant) no person can hope to evolve into Sankara (the Divine). You cannot become a worthy Nayaka without undergoing the training as a Sevaka. Moreover, you have served these days, not these naras (humans), but, the Narayana (God) immanent in them.

You have recovered your vision. Now, do not be led away into the byways of envy malice and hate. Be happy when you see others prosperous and joyful; be sympathetic and helpful, when you find others suffering or in pain. Go to their succour, to the extent possible, within your means. See only their grief and sorrow; don't see the caste or community to which they may belong. These tea days, it was illness that brought you all together, irrespective of nativity, economic status, social status or language, Illness and Faith in Swami. Try to see the Anandaswarupi, God who is the embodiment of beauty and Love. The child seeks to look at the face of the mother, when it opens its eyes first after birth; you are indeed fortunate that when the bandages were removed, you were able to see Swami! Surdas, who was blind, had a vision of Krishna and he was supremely content with that. He asked, what further use can one have with the eyes after that? I will advise you all to have the picture of God, the Form that you like most, on the wall of your residence Bow before it, once a day at least, before the day's work begins; and, once when it is over. For having lived in this holy atmosphere for ten days, you must learn at least this discipline. You have been listening all these days to the Bhajans here. Recite the Name of God at least once a day; you will find that this gives you great joy and peace.

You were here these days not as inpatients, but, as kith and kin, near dear, blood relations. Today, clothed in new garments, with smiles on your faces and brightness in your eyes, you are akin to brides and grooms. The residents of this Prasanthi Nilayam are feeling the pain of parting from you. This is My Message to you, when you leave, Clarify your inner eye also. Dr Modi said that he too is a patient, for he has come to get his inner vision improved. You can get a clearer inner vision by dwelling on the Name of God and picturing before your mind's eye, the Form of God that pleases you most.

From Baba's Discourse
(12-2-68)

The Second Dose?

On Guru Poornima Day, there was a big gathering of devotees, from all parts of India at the Prasanthi Nilayam, a gathering of at least a few thousands. I had no chance all these years of receiving from Baba's Hands the sanctifying Amrith that He distributes on holy festivals. So I was anxious to be present and to receive it. The devotees had arranged themselves in rows along the verandah and porch and the open spaces opposite the Nilayam expecting Baba to come through there and give the nectar that thrills the soul.

A few minutes before the arrival of Baba, a volunteer asked us, under directions, to go into the Prayer Hall and sit in lines there; for, Baba will enter the Hall and give Amrith there also. Only two or three of us responded and went into the Hall. The rest remained where they were. Meanwhile, Baba started distributing the nectar to the people on the verandah and those who received it came into the Prayer Hall, for it was nearing Bhajan time. The volunteers did not allow us to move out of the Hall to where Baba was; the rule is that no one should disturb others by getting up in the middle and walking towards the door. I prayed to Baba to take pity on me.

After about an hour, Baba entered the Prayer Hall. Seeing a few devotees like me who had not received the Amrith, He summoned for the vessel, and graciously distributed it to those few. He came near me; I was overjoyed that my prayers had been answered; but, to my surprise, He said that I had already received it at His Hands! I could not understand Him. I begged Him to bless me with the Amrith He had in His hand, saying I had not received it. With a smile and a look full of mercy, He said, "All right! Have your second dose!" and poured into my palm a spoonful of the nectar.

After the Bhajan, I returned to my room, with mixed feelings, and sat before the portrait of Baba in my prayer room. To my great astonishment, I saw drops of Amrith, trickling down from that photograph. Baba had given me the first dose of Amrith in my room, in answer to my prayers. What He gave me in the Prayer Hall was the second dose!

O, Sarvajna, Sarvasaktha, Sarvantharyami, Deenadayapara! I surrender at Thy Feet.

K. R. K. Brat

Home and Hearth

In the supreme reverence to Lord Sathya Sai
Who shines like the Sun from azure Sky,
With power indescribable and Boundless Glory,
Which instantly all my despair can bury,
And brighten my life, from bondage set me free;
The torch of righteousness, He alone does carry
To the misguided; no doubt, He's the beacon light
To the down-trodden, perennial source of might.
To the poor, He is wealth; to the sick, full health;
To the sad, He is mirth; to homeless, home and hearth.

Un-noticed, He comes; unseen; He cures;
Always towards virtue, mankind allures.

—C. P. Srivastava
Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh

Noblest Deeds in the Eyes of Baba

What is in a name, that which we call a rose, by any other name will smell as sweet. All names are His. It makes no difference by whatever name we may call Baba.

What is the noblest deed in the eyes of Baba? To return good for evil: To abide by His will: Not to tell lies: To love Him. Just imagine that when our heads and hearts are filled with His thoughts, it is natural that our attachments to everything else will fade away. The result will be that there will be no heartbreaking separations. So we will never consider any imaginary object or transitory existence to be real. Our minds will, therefore, acquire strength and stability. We shall be able to see realities of life in their true perspective without internal attachment to them; heart-breaking separations will automatically cease.

Life in the world is nothing but play and entertainment. The world is only a drama and we are all actors in it. In a drama the *gains and losses are all unreal*. Every actor in a play must naturally accept his share of gains and losses as a part of the play. But having once known it to be a part of the play, he keeps himself detached from the effects of these gains and losses. 'The actor in the play knows that both gains and losses are temporary exhibitions on the stage, and his real purpose is to please his MASTER with his acting. If we begin to look upon these losses and gains as real and consequently start crying seriously, or getting elated unduly; and if we decline further to play the part allotted to us with due attention, the result will be that the MASTER will be displeased, and may use other forms of compulsion to make us play our part properly.

All gains and losses are imaginary because the inner meaning of this drama is something quite different. Human life or death is like putting on or taking off of theatrical dresses. Our relations are not real: our attachments are merely imaginary: the gains and losses here are meaningless. Surrounded by these thoughts, our minds can live and act in the same surroundings, without being affected by painful incidents and without excessive exultation, in a state of balance or poise. When we strive to discharge our duties thinking that this is in obedience to the will of God, we shall be mentally free from the results thereof. Then our mind will acquire purity and stability. This does not mean that after knowing the real character of the world to be merely a stage drama, we are free to spoil our part in it. On the contrary, just as an actor performs his part with zeal and energy, we should continue to play our part in this life and should at the same time remain unaffected by the gains or losses of life, free from the fear of death, just as all good actors remain unaffected by the pre-arranged incidents in a play.

There is only one Reality in this world, and, the rest is all illusion or play. This thought gives us unlimited peace of mind. Pride or egoism is the greatest enemy of man for another reason also i.e. through it, man establishes a world of his own, apart from that Reality. For example, when a man says, "I am learned"; "I am powerful"; "I am descended from a great family"; then with these thoughts he separates himself from that Reality, because we are either Atma (Soul) or nothing at all. If we are Atma, then we existed before any qualities appeared, consequently we are; distinct, from these attributes. These attributes or qualities will, by subsequent association with us generate in us feelings of pride or egoism, which are all perishable, and are far away from the essence of Atma: If we are "nothing", then to whom do these qualities or attributes belong.

Secondly, it is not proper for us to brag of our greatness in the presence of a very great personality. On the other hand, if we acknowledge our qualities to be gifts of God, and then own these qualities as our own a thousand times, and even if we go so far to say that we are made up of these qualities, there is no real harm done, because in the affirmation of these qualities, there is negation at the very core one's heart.

In the Divine Court of Baba, the most acceptable action is doing good to one who has done evil unto you, for returning good for good constitutes no real merit. This merely is an exchange on equal terms. But to return good for evil is the starting point of spiritual life. When we learn to love Baba's men for His sake, by suppressing our wounded feelings, Baba will love us all the more. Be learning to abide by His will, tranquility of mind is attained. We feel pain when something that we like goes away from us, or the thing we like is not gained, or when something we dislike stays on with us. When the all-pervading Reality—Baba and the desire to abide by His will permeates through our head and heart, the very moment, we will be released from all pains and troubles, for then there will remain no 'likes,' or 'dislikes', acquisitions or relinquishments, because there is no individual will left in us. Then apparent poverty or misery or destitution and want will not exist for us and we will be ever happy under all circumstances because there is no 'opposition' left in us for anything.

Someone asked a Faqir (one who indulges in keeping fast more frequently, contentment and meditation) "Are you happy". He replied, "How can I be unhappy when the entire Universe is functioning in accordance with my will". The questioner felt annoyed at this answer and asked him again, "You were born only a few years ago, whereas the entire Universe is functioning since eternity, then how can it be working in accordance with your will?" The Faqir replied "Why then, under whose command is the Universe functioning?" The reply came promptly "In accordance with the will of God". The Faqir then explained, "I abide by His will; His will is therefore my will; the entire creation is functioning in accordance with His Commands and my will is one with His will, that is how the whole creation is working in accordance with my will." The questioner marvelled at this explanation and said "This is a wonderfully *simple way for a drop of water to become an ocean*. There is no attempt here to force His will on our wishes; but we should try to work in accordance with His wishes, when our mental opposition disappears by these thoughts, then the ocean of peace and bliss will flow within us.

By refusing to tell lies, purity of tongue and purity of mind is gained. We should feel grateful for the innumerable kindnesses of Baba and should gain mastery over egoistic feelings.

In truth all praise belongs to that Great Source of Light, and to all those names and forms also, through whom He manifests Himself, becomes worth of respects to the same extent. Just as a bubble is never separated from water, in the same manner these personalities (prophets, saints, seers) are also internally connected with that one Great Source of Light. We shall endeavour to see the virtues and greatness of the founders and prophets of others so that the sphere of our love may be widened. In truth all praise belongs to Baba, from whom alone, all this life emanates and exhibits itself. Dispersion is death and Unity is life, Dislike is thorn, Love is flower. Separation is darkness, Union is light. Therefore, we should refuse to see small differences in religion, arising from difference in the place of birth, the need of the time, and surrounding circumstance. By thinking of our essential unity in God, we should enjoy spiritual exultation. Just as a common thread passes through all the beads in a rosary, we find that Baba and His love is common to all religions. All desire Him, some try to reach Him in one way, others in another way. All lines from the circumference reach the same centre. We should try to pursue our journey on one path and should feel happy in seeing others also proceeding on their own path. The result will be that our sphere of spiritual life will become universal, and an ocean of love and divine intoxication will naturally flow in our minds. Human bloodshed resulting from petty quarrels will disappear. Gita also teaches us that—

(Gita VII 21-22)

(21) "Yo-yo yam-yam tanum bhakthah Sraddhaya 'rcitum icchati tasya-tasya
'calam sraddham tameva vidadhamy aham."

Whatever form any devotee with faith wishes to worship, I make that faith of his steady.

(22) Sa taya sraddhaya yuktas tasya 'radhanam ihate labhate ca tatah kaman
mayai 'va vihitan hi tan.

Endowed with that faith, he seeks the worship of such a one and from him he obtains his desires, the benefits, being decreed by ME alone.

Therefore, on seeing a temple we should picture Rama and Krishna, on seeing a mosque we should think of Khuda, on seeing a church we will imagine God, in front of Gurudwara the presence of the Almighty. It is my prayer that Baba may infuse real love in all men for each other, so that all may be threaded like bead; in one large rosary of love; and the time that: is lost in quarrelling, debating, may be utilised in remembering the Creator and in furthering the material prosperity of His children. Thus we should realise that God exists, and this world is His creation, and that we all are brothers and sisters. Realising this principle, we should spend our time in peace and joy, loving all Baba's creation.

S. D. Khera
Calcutta

Speck and Spot

The World is Thy Footstool; O, Lord! who has come
Yourself in my image, to draw me to Thy school!
Thy star-studded crown of hair! Thy feet that press
Their purifying print on every groaning chest!
Thy Voice that warns, awakes, and leads the faltering steps!

Thy smile—to all impoverished by grief—a treasure-chest;
It pours cool sunshine into the crevices of care;
It makes all the buds of hope to bloom
And merge their fragrance in gloom-filled air
Those Eyes, Pools of Perfect Love! Whirling Splendour,
Shedding Grace, yearning to be yearned!

How can I turn my eyes away from these? They hold me so!
So sweet, the rays they send into my afflicted heart;
So soft, the touch of the look they lay on my wounds;
So motherly, their call; so kingly, their command.

You are behind each passing cloud; beneath each rolling wave;
Under each fallen leaf and rising wing;
Within the dew-decked rose, the armoured thorn
Inside the violin bow, and swirl of Milky Way!

O, Sathya Sai, do cure my eye; let me see far and deep
Into the truth of things, and thoughts—
And find Thee, Thy Glory, and Thy Grace
In every speck of Time and spot of Space.

—Janakicharan Das

The Quenched Thirst

The twin cities Hyderabad and Secunderabad, thirsted long for His Darshan and for the showers of His Gracious Discourses. That thirst was quenched in March. On the 7th March, Baba granted Darshan at Vidyanagar, during the Bhajan Sessions conducted by the Bhaktas. On the 9th, at the Community Hall in Vigyanapuri, a twelve-hour continuous Bhajan was inaugurated with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Baba Himself. Early in the morning on the 10th, Baba gave Darshan again at the Hall, when devotees could offer Arati to Him and fill their eyes with; His Divine Form. That evening, Baba attended the Bhajan at Sriniket and delighted the hundreds who attended, by His Divine Discourse.

On the 11th, Baba left by plane for Bombay where He visited the Dharmakshetra under construction, met Seva Dal volunteers, and conferred with the members of the Reception

Committee of the World Conference of Sathya Sai Sangams and Sadhakas. He returned to Hyderabad, on the 14th, and that very evening, He gave Darshan during Bhajan at Vidyanagar; He as visited the Panjgutta Officers Colony and inaugurated a Bala Bhajan Mandali there. On the 15th, Baba went to Domalaguda, and at the meeting, filled to overflow by thousands of eager devotees, He established the Bhajan Mandali there. Hon'ble Sri P V Narasinga Rao, Minister, Andhra Government, presided and Prof. D. Venkatavadhani spoke on the occasion. Baba in His Divine Discourse described the need for feeding the spiritual hunger of man by appropriate and beneficial Sadhana.

On the 16th March, Baba was accorded a grand reception at the Homeopathic Medical College, Hyderabad, at a Public Meeting, which was presided over by Hon'ble Sri. Thota Ramaswamy, Minister for Panchayat Raj. Hon'ble Sri. T V. Raghavulu, Minister for Education, spoke on the occasion. Baba said that the greatest illness affecting man and society today is anxiety and worry and these can be cured only by spiritual Sadhana, along proper lines. Later, Baba inaugurated Bhajan Mandalis at Aliyabad and Vidyanagar centres from where the message of Namasmarana will reach the hearts of thousands.

On the 17th, the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Secunderabad, had arranged a Public Meeting in the spacious grounds of the Mahboob College; about 50,000 citizens thronged to benefit by the chance and Baba thrilled and inspired them by His inimitably simple and sweet exposition of the path to God realisation. Baba also inaugurated that day the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal, and told them of the need to see the Sai one reveres in the heart of every one else.

On the 18th, March, Baba laid the Foundation Stone for the Sathya Sai Nilayam of Hyderabad, at East Amberpet. There was a huge gathering present to witness the simple ceremony, and to have the Darsan of Bhagavan. Sri. V. K. Rao, I. C. S., the President, Akhila Bharat Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, (Hyderabad Branch) and Sri. E. V. S. Desikachari, President of Sathya Sai Organisations, Hyderabad, spoke on the occasion felicitating the citizens of the twin cities of their' good luck. That evening, Baba gave instructions to more than 300 Seva Dal members about Dhyana, which He said was an essential Sadhana for all Sevaks. On the 19th, March, a Public Meeting was held on the site for the Nilayam• Prof D. Venkatavadhani spoke on Bhagavata Mahima and Baba in His Discourse took up the same theme and dwelt on the inner purity that Bhaktimarga demands.

On the 20th, Baba left for Bangalore. On Yugadi Day, 29th March, the devotees of the two cities, pooled their efforts and were able to offer New Year Lunch to more than 3000 ill-fed or under-fed brothers and sisters. Baba graciously sent a loving Message for the workers, which we are permitted to publish for the edification and enthusiastic study of our readers.

"Ye Embodiments of Prema! May the New Year bring you experiences and thoughts, which will carry you forward smoothly along the path of devotion. During the unending course of Time we have had countless recurrences of the year named Plavanga! And, countless repetitions of the year named Keelaka! Today, again, another Plavanga has set and another Keelaka has risen! Keelaka means a prop; so, search for the prop of life, seek it until you become aware of it, concentrate on its acquisition, and see that you do not give up your hold. That is the resolution you must take today.

Believing that God is in every human being as his innermost reality, love Him, serve Him, adore Him and visualise Him as the only Truth. With that vision, serve the poor, the sorrowing and the distressed; that service will make your existence worthwhile. Food is Divine; give it to them, with the Name of God on your lips and in their ears and hearts, and its taste will be all the sweeter. The Earth revolves restlessly; century follows century into the limbo; years displace years; the straight body bends with age. But, there is no perceptible yearning to do good and to serve others sincerely and with love. Sadhana is done but, there is no sweetness in the fruit. Remember that in this wide wide world, one can acquire the most precious things by paying a price or by sacrificing some more valuable thing; but, you cannot acquire, by whatever means, time that is once lost! So, saturate every moment of time, when you have it present with you, with holy purifying acts. Make the years of life allotted to you, useful and worthwhile.

Engage yourselves in your several duties, in mutual love and co-operation, with the ideal ever before the mental eye. May you win health prosperity and peace of mind, undisturbed. May your devotion and steadiness increase. May you soon become the repositories of My Grace, Affection, Mercy and Love.

—Baba

For all who yearn for His Grace, this 'Message' is a Precious Gift, a garland of Gems from the Treasury of His Love.

Returning to Brindavan, on 20th, Baba left for Nellore on the 23rd. On the 24th, He inaugurated the Ati-Rudra Yaga arranged by the Raja of Venkatagiri, for the peace and welfare of Humanity. On the 25th, Baba blessed the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti of the Town, which was established under His Divine Guidance and gave the members of the Samiti invaluable advice and inspiration. On the 26th, 27th, and 28th, the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha (Venkatagiri Branch) had arranged for discourses by Pandits Br. Sri. Varanasi Subrahmanya Sastry, Vavilala Venkateswara Sastry, and Remilla Suryaprakasa Sastry. The Raja of Venkatagiri spoke on the final day, offering his grateful homage to Baba for granting the tens of thousands of people who attended every day, His Darshan and His nectarine Discourses. On New Year Day, 29th March, the Samiti inaugurated the Nagara Sankeerthan Programme, the singing of songs in praise of God by a choral party which moves along the street in, the early hours of the day. That evening Baba gave Darshan at a mammoth gathering of devotees. He gave away prizes to six students from the High Schools who had won the awards at an Essay Competition based on 'The stories of Baba'. Vidwan D Thirumalacharlu thrilled the audience by his sincere touching exposition of Baba's Glory.

Br. Sri Deepala Pichayya Sastry spoke on the overwhelming mercy of Baba which is showered every moment by Him on the distressed as well as on those anxious to progress towards spiritual self-realisation. Baba exhorted the gathering to deepen their efforts towards self-purification and self-realisation. He said that Keelaka, the name by which the New Year is known, means a prop, or column. So, He wanted that every one should resolve that the New Year must be transformed into a prop for spiritual advancement. Just as the anger of the maid Manthara and the lust of the ogress Surpanakha caused the exile and the war which form the key incidents of the Ramayana, in each man's Life, the sparks of anger and lust cause destruction and defeat. So, one has to be

vigilant that Krodha and Kama do not survive alive in the mind. The only means of destroying all traces of these is the acquisition of correct knowledge of the evanescence of objective pleasure and the immanence of all-powerful God. God is in you, all the time, pressing for attention. You ignore him through your ignorance. Open the door; the sunlight waiting outside it, eager to warm your room and to illumine it, will gladly enter it. If you keep the door closed, you cannot blame the Sun and say that it is partial and prejudiced. God too is never in the least prejudiced and partial. The fault is in you, that you keep your eyes closed and complain that you have been rendered blind.

A person afflicted with malaria will refuse even sweet eatables, because his tongue pronounces them bitter. The fault is in his tongue and the buds of taste which are its components. A person afflicted with sensual greed and suffering from egoism and envy will refuse to revere Rama or Krishna or Sai because his eye can never, see Splendour or Majesty or Divinity. Cure yourself of the illness that has demeaned your nature; then, you can appreciate things of the spirit, ideals of Sadhana and Avatars of God-head. Know your own worth; appreciate your own dignity and destiny; do not degrade yourself into a digger into the dustbins. There is the story of a shepherd boy who got a big diamond from the fields; he thought it was a shining bit of glass and tied it round the neck of a goat. The diamond, according to the story, broke into fragments out of sheer shock and shame that no one recognised its worth. Know your worth; live as befits your noble mission. That is My Message for the Keelaka Year" said Baba, while blessing that vast gathering at Venkatagiri.

On the 30th March, Baba returned to Brindavanam, near Bangalore.

In olden times, groups of devotees went in the early dawn along the streets of every village and town, singing the glory of God to the tune of drums and cymbals, awakening the sleepers, filling the atmosphere with the fragrance of Divinity, calling upon all Nature to adore the Creator and pray to Him for strength solace and sustenance. I direct all to revive this movement with joy and faith.

BABA

Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

March 7: to 11: Hyderabad: Baba gave Darshan at Bhajan Sessions.
9: Kothapeta (E. Godavari Dt): Inauguration of Nagarsankirtan
12, 13: Baba at Bombay (by Sathya Sai Seva Samiti)
14-20: Baba at Hyderabad.
15: Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali Inauguration at Airport Quarters
20: Baba reached Brindavan
21: Navsari (Gujarat): Bhajan at Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, by Surat Seva Samiti Members
23: Baba at Nellore.
: Kalisipudi (Guntur Dt) Inauguration of Sathya Sai Seva Samiti

- 24: Venkatagiri Town (Nellore Dt) Inauguration of Athirudrayaga, by Baba. Neyveli (S. Arcot. Dt): Inauguration of town Premises by the Sathya Sai Seva Samajam
- 26, 27, 28, Venkatagiri Town: Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, Discourse by Pundits and Divine Discourses by Baba.
- 26: Doddipatla (E. Godavari Dt): Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha: Discourses.
- 29: Ugadi Celebrations; Baba at Venkatagiri: Discourses: Br: D. Thirumalacharlu, Br. D. Pichayya Sastry: Divine Discourse by Baba
- 30: Tellicherry (Kerala) 4th Anniversary Celebration of the Sathya Sai Bhajan Sangham
- : Navasari: (Gujarat): Inauguration of Sathya Sai Mahila Satsangam: Dr. Damayanthi Doongaji, M. A., Ph. D.
- 31: Ootacamund: (Nilgiris): Inauguration of Sathya Sai Study Circle: President: Sri. S. Mohana Rao; Speakers: Prof. Arangaswamy, Prof Nesamoni and Sri. Nachimuthu.
- : Quilandy (Kerala.): 1st Anniversary Celebrations: Sathya Sai Seva Sangham: Laksharchana; Discourses: President: Justice V. Balakrishna Eradi.
- : Mulki (S. Kanara Dt): Inauguration of Sathya Sai Seva Sangham
- : Sampara (E Godavari Dt): 31 March to 7th April: Ramanavami Celebrations; Sathya Sai Bhakta Mandali.
- April 2: Bangalore: Inauguration of the Nethaji Industrial and Cultural Institute, by Baba. President: Hon'ble Sri Abdul Gaffoor Dy. Minister, Government of Mysore.

Bhagavata Vahini

24

At last, Arjuna let go the unending shower of arrows from his ever-full shoulder-bag. This too had no effect; Arjuna became desperate like a man robbed of all his possessions and deprived of all means of resistance. He stood helpless and filled with rage. He was like a bird with clipped wings, a tiger whose teeth had been pulled out and claws cut, a ship without sails and rudder.

He made an effort to beat the huntsman with the bow itself; it broke into fragments at the impact. Startled at this, Arjuna decided to use his fists, for they were the only weapons left. Girding up his loins, he fell upon the Bhil, and wrestled furiously, for sheer victory. The huntsman welcomed this new move with a hearty laugh. They struggled to overpower each other with such terrific holds and blows that it appeared as if two mountains were in mortal conflict; the birds of the forest were so frightened at the unusual din that they flew in terror far up into the sky. The animal denizens of the jungle stood and stared, sensing some great calamity that hovered over them. The earth shook, unable to bear the burden of the encounter.

Despite everything, the Bhil was evincing no trace of exhaustion; he was laughing in absolute unconcern; he was as active as when the fight first began. Arjuna, however, was bathed in perspiration; he was gasping for breath his fist was jammed and bleeding! The Bhil was unhurt and not in the least affected! Besides, when the Bhil once caught Arjuna in a light hold, Arjuna vomited blood! At this, the Bhil burst into a cruel laugh, and exulted before his consort with a meaning look, 'Did you notice that?'

Arjuna reeled and was in great confusion. He lost his moorings. He whispered to himself, "Krishna! Why have you humiliated me thus? Ah, is this too a scene in your drama? Truly, this Bhil is no ordinary mortal. Perhaps, you yourself have come in this Form to trample on my pride. Alas! To be over whelmed by a forest-dwelling huntsman! No, this is your stratagem, your play. This Bhil is no ordinary fellow. Save me, for, I believe this is you yourself."

When he said this and turned to the couple in front of him, he saw there, not the Bhil and his wife but Siva and His consort, Gowri. They were blessing him with a captivating smile; their hand was raised, with the palm towards him in the Abhaya pose, assuring him that he had no reason to fear.

Arjuna was overcome with delight. He ran towards them, exclaiming, 'O Sankara! Mother Gowri!' and fell at their Feet. He prayed that they should pardon him for his rashness and ignorance. Gowri and Sankara, who are the embodiments of Grace, lifted him by the shoulders lovingly and stroked his head affectionately. 'Son,' they said, 'You have attained the fruition of your life; you did your duty as you were bound to do. That is not wrong, at all. Now, take this; here is the sign of Our Grace'—and he got from the Hand of Siva Himself the Divine Pashupata Astra.

O, Maharaja! How can I extol the prowess of your grandfather who combated with Siva, armed with the invincible Trident. The source of that courage and daring lay in the Grace that Lord Krishna showered on him. Your grandfathers never thought of even the slightest activity without

His specific order. Indeed in the Mahabharata battle, His Grace was bestowed unasked, every moment in ample measure. The depth of Love that prompted that Grace was known only to them; others cannot gauge it. When Vyasa was remembering this, he shed tears of joy at the good fortune of the Pandava Brothers. And not he alone.

The person who listened, namely, Parikshit was even more overcome with admiration and thankfulness. He was shedding tears of joy; his lips quivered with emotion; his voice was broken by excitement. He could not contain himself. He exclaimed. "Ah, how fortunate I am, that I am born in this lineage! How brave, how devoted, how redoubtable were my forefathers! And, imagine my luck, that I am able to hear their glories from the lips of divine sages like you! Oh, I am indeed thrice blessed. When I listen to the exploits of my grandfathers and the glories of the Lord Krishna, I can never say I have heard enough. I long to hear more.

Pray tell me how the Lord saved and guarded my grandfathers in battle. It will be some source of contentment for my hunger, some quench for my thirst."

When the King prayed like this, Vyasa said "O, King! The Pandavas, as agreed upon, lived through the twelve years of exile in the forest and also completed one full year of 'life in incognito.' When at last, they revealed themselves (on the occasion of the Rape of Kine from the Viraat domain by the wicked Kauravas) Duryodhana, the eldest of the cruel clan, that monster of guile, swore that the full year had not elapsed and that the Pandavas had broken their contract; so, he said, they were bound by the penal clause, a further twelve-year exile and a further one-year-of-incognito life! He was adamant in that conclusion.

"The elders, Bhishma and others, asserted that the Pandavas *had* scrupulously fulfilled the terms of the contract; the Pandavas had not disclosed their place of stay during the entire year; they had stayed in exile for full twelve years. But, the Kauravas did not accept the patent truth. They prepared the path for their own downfall and destruction! They listened to none, they gave ear to no counsel. They swore that the battlefield alone can settle the issue.

"What can any one do, in the face of that royal decree? So, both parties engaged themselves in preparing for war—the King endowed with sovereign sway, Duryodhana; and the claimants in exile, the Pandavas! But, Truth and Justice allied themselves with the exiles and so, a few kings who were motivated by moral principles joined them. The others in very large numbers, sided the ruling monarch, and so, the Kauravas were able to command eleven akshauhinis while the Pandavas could collect just seven only (An akshauhini consists of 109350 foot-soldiers, 65610 horses and horsemen, 21870 elephants and elephant warriors, and 21870 chariots and their human equipment).

"Listen! The chariot of Arjuna had Lord Krishna, the Gopivallabha, as its charioteer. Not only that He became the charioteer of the destiny of the Pandavas. The Pandavas had, therefore, no weak spot in their armour; He was all the strength they needed. But, yet, in the grand drama of the Lord, the role of Arjuna took a sudden unexpected turn which astounded all.

(To be Continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

I and Eye

God is the object, man is the reflection, nature is the mirror. When the mirror is taken away, the object alone is; the reflection has no more validity. That is why Sadhana is devised to help man to overcome the illusion of Nature.

There are two I's, one single-lettered and the other, three-lettered, I and Eye. To see the Eye, a material mirror is needed; to see the I, the mirror in the heart is needed. When that mirror is polished and free from blemish, the I in you is seen as the I in all and Love overflows from you to all. The eye sees, the nose smells, the ear hears the hand lifts, the feet bear... but the same red blood flows through all of them. So too, the same Atmic current activates all the multifarious beings in the Universe. Resolve on this holy Sivaratri to visualise the Siva, who is the Inner Power of all. With each breath, you are averring, "Soham", I am He; not only you, every being avers it. It is a fact which you have ignored so long. Believe it now. When you watch your breath, and meditate on that grand truth, slowly the I and the He will merge and there will no more be two, for, Soham will become transformed into Om, the Primal sound, Pranava, which the Vedas proclaim as the symbol of the Nirakara Parabrahman. That Om is the Swaswarupa, the Reality behind all this 'relative un-reality'.

This is the genuine Sadhana, the final lap in the progress of the seeker. But, there are many preliminary laps, each one of which requires much stamina and steadfastness. For example, I would advise you to dwell always on one Name of God, one personification of one of His innumerable attributes of Glory. Then there is the expansion, of your love, the removal of hate and envy from your mental composition, seeing the God whom you adore, in every other person as intently as you see Him in yourself. Then, you become the embodiment of Love, and so, of Peace and Joy.

From a Discourse By Baba

The Wave and the Sea

When omnipotent God takes name and form in order to protect the devotees and to establish Dharma, we call God as an Avatari. Bhagavan Baba has said in His discourse that God in His incarnation is neither different nor diminished just as solidified ghee and liquid ghee are not at all different. When God concretises Himself, He that He is an Avatari or God. There is absolutely nothing wrong or vainglorious if an Avatari says that He is an Avatari. If a man says that "I am a man", it is very natural and true. It is therefore pointless to argue, as some do, that if, an Avatari calls Himself as an Avatari, it amounts to egoism or self-consciousness, God is Truth. His nature is Truth. If God by His mysterious power of Maya, incarnates to safeguard Dharma and declares the truth of Himself, it is only natural to say so. In Bhagavad-Gita, Lord Sri Krishna frequently makes it clear to Arjuna that omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, and the cause of, every manifestation or creation. Nobody can say that Lord Krishna's declaration of His truth amounts to egoism. Miracles or leelas are very natural to the Incarnation of God. It is the nature

of the sun to shine and to shed light. It is natural for the clouds to rain. Similarly, it is natural for an Avatari to show Mahima or miracles. Lord Krishna did not acquire powers by yogic practices or austerities or by any other means. Nor can we say that He had attained Ashta Siddhis (8 major powers). In fact, all the powers that a yogi acquires or that may come to an Atma Jnani are the grace of Lord Krishna or God only. Hence He is praised as *Yogeeswara Krishna*.

Lord Krishna and Lord Rama were not born as a result of their countless past Karmas or actions, Avatari is not a bound soul, which is all grace and love, out of compassion takes a human form, and this birth of God is not the result of past merit or demerit. An Avatari's sarira or body is Leela-Sareera. God takes birth willingly by His Atma maya. His body is chinmaya i.e., spiritual and not Mrnmaya i.e., material. His Janma and Karma are *Divine*. In 4th canto and 9th stanza of the Gita, Lord says, "Arjuna, my birth and activities are divine." From the beginning of incarnation, Avatari is no subject to any gunas. The purpose of an Avatari clearly given in the Gita. Hence an Avatari is God Himself in all His power and glory.

It is really strange that an Avatari passes as a miracle man in the view of certain insufficiently informed and inexperienced Swamis and so-called pundits. He is criticized, as He declares the truth that He is an avatari. Nobody can dismiss the astounding miracles of Lord Krishna, as figmentation of mind. Incidentally, I would like to say that miracles of God in this incarnation Sri Sathya Sai, are, in some respects, more astonishing than His Dwapara-yuga incarnation of Sri Krishna.

Bhagavad-Gita is one of the triple texts i.e., Prasthanatraya. All Acharyas of different schools of thought have shaped their doctrines on the basis of this world-renowned Scripture, i.e. Gita. Who is its author? He is the same Krishna who performed countless miracles. It is the same Krishna, who is realized in *meditation* by yogis. Divine leelas of Incarnations cannot be measured by any. Miracles are natural to an incarnation or an Avatari. They cannot be equated with the miracles of Siddha Purusha or a yogi. We cannot say that crow's egg and cuckoo's eggs are one and the same. It is in fact very difficult to recognise an Avatari. To demarcate an Avatari from other categories of Siddha, Yogi and Jnani is extremely difficult. An Avatari Himself has to declare about His Truth. Lord Krishna says that "Na me viduhu suraganah Prabhavam na maharshayah Ahamadirhi devanam maharsheenam cha sarvasah". (10th 2nd) "Neither gods nor great sages know the secret of my birth. (i.e. My appearance in human form out of mere sport.); for I am the prime cause in all respects of gods as well as of the great seers." Avatari therefore has to reveal the fact Himself that He is an Avatari. God when He takes incarnation does not suffer any limitation on account of name and form. We extol Jnani, who has merged his individuality in God, as formless Brahman, even though he has a name and a form. Then does God, who assumes a name and a form by His inscrutable maya, and who is never subject to birth death and ignorance, suffer limitation of name and form?

An Avatari, being eternally of the nature of Satchidananda performs miracles without being at all affected by egoism and its offshoots. He does not suffer any limitation or imperfection when He performs miracles. His *swarupa* is *Nityananda*. His *swabhava* is *Mahima* or *leela*. It is the nature of an Avatari to show miracles. An Avatari is God. He is therefore infinite power. An Avtari alone, since He is omnipotent, can show miracles endlessly incessantly and effortlessly, without the least diminution in His power and without the least touch of egoism. The nature of

the fire is to burn. The burning power of fire does not affect the nature of fire. Fire does not suffer in any way by showing its nature of burning and giving light. Similarly, an Avatari remains in His Swarupa, while He shows miracles or leelas, since it is His Swabhava or nature to do so.

Any Mahatma, who has acquired powers cannot show miracles incessantly, and endlessly. When a Yogi or a Siddha Purusha shows powers, he loses his power to that extent. He loses His siddhis completely very soon. Moreover, in the case of such a Yogi or Siddha miracles increase his egoism. A man of some miracles does not possess divine qualities like peace, purity, unitary knowledge, equality, absolute detachment egolessness etc. Moreover a Yogi acquires powers by long and hard austerities. He must make some Sadhana or other to acquire them. An Avatari performs miracles quite naturally and effortlessly. He need not acquire powers. He is infinite Power Himself. It is in fact He who gives powers or siddhi, to Yogis and Siddhis. No Siddha or Yogi can be omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. Omnipotence Omnipresence and omniscience are the characteristics of an Avatari only.

Miracles, in fact, cannot be separated from the lives of great men. Sankara, Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharshi and others have shown miracles. Incarnation is a historical fact. The unchallengeable statements in Gita about Avatar and its need cannot be wiped out. We mortals, for lack of shastric or scriptural knowledge and purity of heart and devotion cannot realize the actions of an Avatari.

In Puttaparthi, omnipotent God, who assured Arjuna that He would incarnate in every age, for the establishing Dharma, has again incarnated in the name of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Those who have good fortune, will go there and experience the Truth that He is an Avatari. It has become a disgrace with some devotees of certain saints and sages to criticize our Lord Sri Sai, as a miracle man, without seeing Him. Two outstanding devotees of Maharshi Ramana, Viz. Swami Abhedananda and Swami Amritananda have experienced that Bhagavan Sri Sai Baba is an incarnation of perfect omnipotent God. Some so called devotees form pet theories and judge even an incarnation as a miracle man for Siddha. At the time of Lord Krishna majority of men did not realize that Krishna was omnipotent God. Such men exist even now, when omnipotent God has incarnated in the form of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Bhagavan Sri Sai Baba says that miracles are the waves on the ocean of His mercy. Waves are not separate from the ocean. Similarly, leelas are not separate from Him. He even says that miracles are secondary, though it is natural to Him. Bhagavan Sri Sai say, "Do not try to measure my Divinity through my miracles. You will utterly fail if you do so. Try to act upon My advice and you will attain eternal bliss or Moksha". If one has seen Him and experienced His matchless affection and mercy, His divine grace, His infinite knowledge and wisdom, His discourses, His inscrutable divine power, and if one watches His perfect detachment, His peaceful and blissful face, one will realize that He is omnipotent God. Any one who criticises our merciful Lord Sri Sai, is greatly mistaken. It is ignorance of facts and events that sometimes land us into a ditch of sin.

The statements of Sankara, "The world is an illusion." and "The individual soul is not different from Supreme soul" have been carried to the extreme and have been misinterpreted by some of

the followers of Advaitic teaching. Advaita does not mean negation of Avatar. It is said that Ieeswaranugrhadeva pumsamadvaitavasana". We get Advaitic realization by the grace of God only. Great Sankara says in his Vishnu shatpadi stotra "Though duality is gone, oh! Lord, I am yours but you are not mine. The waves belong to the sea, but sea does not belong to the waves".

R. G. Hegde Janamane, Sirsi

The Most Astonishing Miracle

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is now phenomenal institution rather than a matchless personality. It is impossible to deal, even meagerly with any single facet of His supreme versatility. In fact, it is in vain to attempt to assess what is elusive, enigmatic and unknowable. A humble tribute, such as the present effort, only sets forth in broad outline salient points, more in an explorative than in an empirical manner.

Several persons, out of ignorance, prejudice or presumption, look upon Baba as a miracle monger and base His title to fame upon the countless wonders He performs. They blab or believe that His supernal powers are the outcome of magic or hypnotism. Let them hug this illusions and stew in their own juice. However, an old devotee of Bhagavan, a fortunate recipient of His blessing, once told the writer of this article that the greatest miracle that Baba does is to provide the inner guidance to a person and to thoroughly transform his character, habits and life. The change He brings about, all-embracing in nature, is silent, steady and sustained, and does not usually call for the footlight or the bouquets. Yet it is really breathtaking, though not spectacular and is effective, complete and fundamental. In this role as the Pilot from within, Bhagavan "plays" His most astonishing "miracle".

To make him. the Guide and Guardian *sharanagati* (submission without any reserve) is absolutely essential. Self-surrender postulates the complete negation of the ego, the monstrous issue of misleading *maya*. The devotee must know the relative position of himself and of his 'mentor'. He must have full and implicit faith in the Guide and sincere and unwavering reliance upon His wisdom and regard for His charge, not only during the novitiate but throughout. As in feudal hierarchy service is to come from below and protection from above. There should be no demand or desire, either material or spiritual, for God knows what is good or necessary for His ward. No selfish motive is to be entertained, except perhaps the pardonable general longing for liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Possibly even this last vestige of 'clinging' to the self is to be given up; for it implies a lingering doubt in God's solicitude for the devotee and also in His omniscience. A unique prayer says:

Bhagawan! Bhoota-bhavesa
na jaane hitam aatmanah!
Twameva sanchintya vibho
hitam me karthum arhasi.

(Lord, master of what has happened and what is to be, I know not what is good for me. You alone think well and do me what is beneficial).

An earnest and systematic attitude of humility and self-abnegation has to be sedulously cultivated. Mere bhakti will not do; Bhagavan has stressed the need for *shraddha*, *nishtha*, and *jnana*. On the basis of faith the other qualities have to be securely 'built'—close attention to word and deed and scrupulous performance of work; and Ultimately Truth will flash across; the prepared and purified mind. Work has to be done with a sense of dedication and not with regard to reward or emolument.

Gradually a golden (yet adamant) bond will be forged between the individual and the universal. The devotee will come to realise his relative position in the baffling scheme of creation and will know that he is only a tool to carry out the inscrutable Divine purpose. He will outlive the idle curiosity of his (earlier) spiritual infancy, the fussy hankering after the riddle of the world. He will acquire self-confidence, strength, vigour and courage to face with equanimity the pulling puzzles of life, the din and bustle of the struggle for existence. Untouched by any dual polarizations, he will be more or less a witness, and though a participant, not a partisan.

One matter has always to be kept in view and should on no account be relaxed or compromised. The devotee should not be vindictive towards any one who may have done him an ill turn and should not think of paying off an old score. Anger, envy and malice are evils and they sharply cut both ways. In every object there is God's presence in some measure, according to the law of evolution. The above qualities—they are indeed vices—imply a perfunctorily negative attitude which is not only morally imperfect but positively injurious and will harmfully tell upon the person concerned, bringing out real trouble and retarding progress. There are examples of great saints forced to take birth again, often in a lower form, because of some unworthy action they did chance or by choice. Such instances signify need for caution and vigilance not only in the early stages of *sadhana* but for the whole span of life. The elephant for all its bulk may slip; even the tallest tree seldom touches the heavens... Baba has clinched this question in an unanswerable manner:- "Whom do you hate? I am in every person. Even your so-called enemy enshrines Me within". The Gita refers to this all-pervasive nature of God:-

Yachaapi sarva bhootaanaam
Beejam tadaham Arjuna!

(Arjuna! I am the seed of all living things, whatever they may be)

Matthah parataram naanyat
Kinchidasti Dhananjaya.
Mayi sarvamidam protam
Sootre mani ganaaiva.

(Dhananjaya! nothing exists apart from Me. All are strung in Me like beads by a thread).

When a person realises his indwelling spirit, it is just like his deciphering his permanent address. The identity has to be experienced. God is ever watchful without being known or seen. He is

behind the side-curtain, directing the play on the stage, and nothing escapes His Argus eyes. Even a blade of grass does not grow without His will. Step by step, the relation between the two, the ineffable Voice within and the wadding Wight outside becomes close and personal, an attachment severally described in devotional literature (such as the Narada Bhakti Sutras). God reveals His infinite mercy (let it be mentioned in passing that none, however wicked, is to be damned for ever, to burn in the quenchless flames of hell) and redeems and sustains him here and hereafter. There are four types of such 'good souls', according to the Gita:

Aarto jijnasurartharathi,
jnani cha, Bharatharshabha

(He who suffers, he who seeks to know, he who aspires for some object, and he who knows the reality). A devotee is par excellence unique, and God has a special, human regard for him. Their attachment is permeated by the rapture of love and is suffused by its fragrance. (It is said to be mainly of six different kinds which need not be glanced at here).

It is obvious that punishment is the privilege of God: "Vengeance is Mine", the Bible says. Similarly, to forgive is Diving. Man naturally errs, and God exercises His grace in different ways. He guides the seeker (novice) along the right path, even helping him over the stile, cutting short a circuitous road, a journey in a longer or a lower plane. He also pardons a *bona fide* mistake, a margin of defect or draw-back.

But God indulges in *leelas* of a peculiar type when He bestows His compassion upon His devotee often both before and after. The Divine Child is indeed self-willed and He plays the whole gamut of pranks. They are sometimes of the nature of, tests to accelerate the devotee's advance and to intensify His faith. Yet they constitute an ordeal of fire, and such a 'baptism' is only the shadow of His protective, outstretched hands. There is no cleansing without suffering; sorrow is the harbinger of the morrow breaking in at the end of the night of the soul. Only it should be attuned to the chain of the spirit, and not of the flesh.

In the inner consciousness, the devotee will know that God is everything and he will not stray away after mundane glory, however glittering, alluring or meretricious. He will echo:

"Thwameva maata cha pits thwameva
Thwameva bandhuscha sakha thwameva
Thwameva vidya dravinam thwameva
Thwameva sarvam mama Deva-Deva"

(You are verily my mother, my father, my kith and kin, my friend, my learning, my wealth, indeed my every thing! Oh! Sovereign God).

He can even take some liberties with his Ishthadeva. The distance between them is annihilated. For him the sight does not flicker any more, the Peace does not fade away. He becomes a jeevan-mukta (one liberated even in life in the gross body). To attain to this state, constant unremitting effort is indispensable; mere wishful thinking will not do. In His innumerable discourses Bhagavan has inimitably dwelt on this absorbing theme.

God is as much in need of man as man is in need of God. While people seek God, God goes in search of a devotee. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is said to have cried out in agony for His devotees. He even sought out Narendranath (the future Swami Vivekananda) in Calcutta when the latter delayed or demurred in going to Dakshineswar. Sri Sathya Sai Bhagavan left His home to devote Himself entirely to His *bhaktas*. The Divine quest for man is the subject of "The Hound of Heaven", a mystic poem by Francis Thompson, in an unusually strange, but none-the-less factual and convincing, symbolism. Erratic, arrogant or stupid, man vainly strives towards his Divine Seeker. He tries the different objects of the manifest world like a bee flitting among flowers but they disappoint him and do not give him lasting rest or refuge—Nature, women, children, fine arts, sensuous pleasures, and the like. Finally the relentless chase ends in man's surrender to God. Who captures his quarry at a significant moment and resolves all his whims, trials, and troubles and restores him to favour. This pursuit of the human by the Divine is little known or appreciated; yet it is real. So, long as we are immersed in petty problems, we have no time or turn for this tremendous drama. But none can escape. If we hearken to Bhagavan's exhortations and put into practice any of His advice or admonition, we are indeed blessed.

May Sri Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba guide us and vouchsafe to us His beatific Grace.

Prof: P. G. Narayanan

Concord

The mud-slingers and the flame-throwers
Speak no word that feeds, heals and builds;
They serve not the people by whom they swear.
They breed their greed and shame
And leave horror behind. . . Fight they do.
For zero gain; their tongues are parched;
Pauperized they stare, midst the ruined roof
Pulled down by men who know not what is what.

Listen they don't to the God, within
Who whispers caution, care and comradeship
Listen they don't, to the God who has come
In patent public Divinity.

I want not this, I hate the other
Is the refrain of bankrupt minds,
Which know no means of inner peace.

O, He has rendered us richer far,
Old bones vital, all alive!
The music risen loftier shall sing His praise
Learn to make the greater harmony.

Honour those, who seek it not!
Pray that the chain may earn the link
To hold the song of life, unbroken
In one vast Concord of human hearts.

K. venugopala Rao, Bombay

Dharma

Dharma is the balance between the extremes, the opposites; it is the steady middle path, the golden mean. It is the centre of gravity of the universe; every act of Dharma contributes for Universal balance and harmony. Dharmic principles are true for all times, eternal, impersonal. Hence, it is Sanathana, anadi and apourusheya.

Dharma integrates science and religion; intellect and intuition; individual and society; masculine and feminine. It integrates life in all its aspects: physical, vital, mental, moral, aesthetic, intellectual, and spiritual, into a coordinated harmony. So, it evolves an, integrated personality, tuned to spiritual adventure and progress. It cognises the ladder of spiritual evolution set in the Pancha-kosas: Annamaya, Pranamaya Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya. It cognises also the four fundamental values, of life, the Purusharthas, Artha Kama Dharma and Moksha. It integrates secular creeds and spiritual aspirations, the paths of Pravritti and Nivritti and individual family professional national human and universal life. It lays down the spirit of Yajna as the keynote of living, since all life is but a sacrifice the impersonal Cosmic Cause. Dharma is the Religion of Religions, the Super-science.

I

The great Sankaracharya had, it is said, a pupil, who was ever busy in various odds and ends of service to the Master, to the extent of ignoring the lessons which others attended and benefitted from. The lessons were inspiring and revealing but he was drawn more towards service than scholarship. He never worried the master with questions and conundrums as the others did. One morning when the rest had gone out of the hermitage on some mission or other, this pupil too was busy with his usual chore. Acharya happened to call out, "Who is there, in the Ashram?" and the pupil answered, "I". Immediately, the Master said, "I? If you love that I, expand it to fill the entire Universe. If you do not love that I starve it so that it is destroyed." That was the teaching received, as a reward for all the Seva.

If you feel and experience that the Universe ruled by the Lord then, the ego, I and 'mine' will be subdued and submerged. When He lays down the plan, and executes it as He wills, who am I? what is mine?". . . that is the path of the subjugation of the I. See in every shake of leaf or birth of star, His Will. Know that He prompts each thought, each impulse, each gust of passion or emotion. This is the obverse of the teaching that the Acharya gave.

Baba has written, "If you cultivate the expansive thought that all is yours, you will have no grief". That is the 'reverse' of the same coin. This is the path of Jnana, that Baba consistently emphasizes. Baba advises us to develop the consciousness that 'all are mine'; man extends his identity to his sons and daughters, his lands and houses, his status and reputation and when he loves these, he is only loving Himself. Identify yourself with the whole Creation, said Acharya Sankara. Bhagavan Baba elaborates the process of attaining this stage, for the sake of the common man for whose sake He has come.

That which prompts and persists in the flower and the fire, in wind and water, in sun and moon, in man and beast prompts you too; so just as a drop of water when it falls into the ocean becomes the Ocean, fall and become, merge and earn, the heritage of vastness. This is the exhortation of Baba. The I in you is the same as the I in your friend or enemy, in yonder bird or tree. See all as the reflection of your I. When you feel you are the fundamental basic I, the universal all-pervasive I, how can grief and joy, which are the result of duality affect you? asks Baba. There is no other, to cause you grief or to confer joy. Your I has become the eternal universal absolute I. That is the consummation to which Baba is drawing us, by His love, wisdom and power.

Krishnamurthi, Secunderabad

Dharmakshetra

From far-flung coasts, welcome
Wafted by winds of Grace
From distant dots of space, we come
Led by the music of Thy Name!

Life seeks LIFE; SAI welcomes us
In Dharmakshetra Divine;
Therein is abiding rest; and peace
And love and joy, free and full.

We, panting pilgrims, know the Throne
From where our Mother beckons us;
We have left the noisy banquet halls,
The hollow haggard nursery dolls.

We steam, we fly, we speed a fast
Cast aside the burden of the past;
We're doves on ocean's open roof
Winging t'wards the sheltering mast;
Bombay-ward we come, from bomb-scarred lands

And lands where skin hates skin
They see not the soul that dwells within,
Their hearts have not heard Him yet.

From prayer halls and shrines, we co
Fragrant with incense pure;
From hutments and hermitage, we come
Pregnant with mystic truth.

Amidst the din and dirge of gloom
His Foot-fall leads us on;
The blissful buds of wisdom bloom
When His Grace is showered anon.

O, comp and sing Hosanna
In Dharmakshetra Divine
Sai, supreme Guide, is there
We hear His beckoning Voice.

Who can stay, when Sai calls
And cling to mud and mirth?
Who can stray, when Baba calls
And slide into birth and death?

Taraka Saran

Bhagavata Vahini

25

“When the Lord commanded Arjuna to examine, from the chariot which He kept stationary between the two armies ranged for battle, the enemy leaders whom he had to encounter, Arjuna allowed his eyes to spot out in a flash the heroes eager to meet him in contest; tears flowed immediately from his eyes! He crumbled with despondency and disinclination. It was a scene that filled spectators with shame.

But, note that your grandfather was not afflicted or affected with fear or cowardice. He saw before him Bhishma, the reverend grandparent who loved to keep him on his lap and who caressed him as his own child; he saw his respected teacher, Drona, from whom he had learnt archery from A to Z; so, his heart lamented, 'Alas! Has this too to be endured by me, this bloody warfare with these great elders, persons whom I ought really to worship with tender lovely flowers? How can I shoot arrows at them? Have I to wound the very feet which I must really place reverentially on my head, when I dutifully prostrate before them?'

The sentiment that overpowered him was really this emotion of 'adoration'. It was this that rendered him despondent, and not any other weakening emotion.

The feelings 'I' and 'Mine' grew so intense in him that he turned to Krishna and said, 'Krishna, set the chariot back towards Hastinapur, I wish to go away from all this;' Krishna laughed in derision, and commented with scarcely concealed scorn, 'My dear brother-in-law, evidently you seem to be scared of fighting; well, I shall take you back to Hastinapur, and bring instead, your consort, Draupadi; she has no fear. Come, we shall return. I did not realise you are such a coward; or else, I would not have accepted this position as charioteer for you. It is a gross error of judgment on my part.'

“While Krishna was saying thus and many other harsh statements besides, Arjuna retorted: 'Do you think that I, who fought with God Siva and won the Pashupata weapon from Him will quail before these common mortals? It is a sense of reverence and mercy that makes me desist from killing these kinsmen. It is not fear that holds me back.' Arjuna spoke for long, arguing on the lines of 'I' and 'Mine', but, Krishna did not appreciate his arguments. He explained to him the basic principles of all activity and morality and made him take up the arms he had laid down; He induced him to follow the dictates of the moral and social obligations of the Kshatriya caste to which he belonged.

“When in the midst of battle, the Kaurava warriors all in one gang rained arrows simultaneously on Arjuna, Krishna saved him from the shower, as He had done earlier when He lifted the Govardhan Hill to save the villagers of Gokula and the cattle from the floods of hail rained on them by the angry God Indra. He drew all weapons on Himself and rescued Arjuna, seated behind him in the chariot, from the deadly onslaught. Blood flowed from the wounds on His body, but, nevertheless, He held it against the shower of fiery arrows let loose by the enemy. His aim was that Arjuna must be preserved from harm. He intended also to reduce the might and pride of the wicked opponent and heighten the glory and reputation of Arjuna.

He held no weapon Himself; but, He brought about the annihilation of the enemies and proclaimed before the World the magnificence of the path of Dharma, which the Pandava brothers adhered to. Often during the battle, your grandfather was pained at the role that Krishna had taken on Himself. "Alas, that we are using You for this insignificant purpose; You whom we ought to install in the Lotus of the Heart, we are seating you on the charioteer's plank! We have reduced you to the status of a servant! We have devalued the Lord so meanly; alas, that we are reduced to such straits!" he used to lament within himself.

“More distressing than all was another painful act that Arjuna had performe to do, off and on. Whenever he had to do that act, poor Arjuna was overcome with unbearable remorse." Saying this, Vyasa held his head down, as if he wished to desist from mentioning it. This aroused the curiosity of Parikshit even more and he appealed; "Master! What exactly was that inevitable harm he had to do, in spite of its sacrilege?"

At this, he said, "O King, in the thick of battle, when the master has to give an indication to the man who acts as he charioteer which way to turn, he cannot hope to be heard, if he calls out, right or left. The din will be too loud and confusing. So, while totally immersed in the wild excitement of coming to grips with the enemy, he has to prod the charioteer's brows with the right or left toe of his feet; he keeps the toes always in touch with the sides of the brow, for this purpose. His plank is on a deeper level. If the chariot is to be driven straight, both toes have to be pressed with equal force. That was the convention.

Since such pressure had to be applied with heavily shod feet, both sides of the brow of the Lord daily showed marks of scrape. Arjuna cursed himself for sheer shame; he hated the very idea of war and prayed that the wicked game ceased that very moment. He used to be terribly upset with agony, that he had to touch with his feet the Head that sages and saints adored.

The palms of Krishna, soft and tender like lotus petals, developed boils all over, since they had to hold the reins tight and since the steeds strained their hardest, when they were restrained or controlled. The Lord forsook food and sleep, performed services both high and low and kept ready both horses and chariot in perfect trim. He also went on various other sundry errands, which were fundamental to victory. He bathed the horses in the river, attended to their wounds and applied balm to cure them, (why go on with the entire list?). He acted as a menial in the household of your grandfathers! He never assumed the role of the Universal Sovereign that is His real nature and status. "And didn't Lord Krishna Himself assure your grand fathers: Be devoted to Me and receive power from Me. To the extent to which you enthusiastically intensify and quicken up this process of give and take, to that extent you will be successful and happy. Deliver all your anxieties, troubles, travails and desires to Me and in return receive joy, peace and strength of mind from Me. During this Advent, only spiritual aspirants and righteous persons are relations, friends and recipients of My Grace That was the measure of His affection for those devoted to Him," said Vyasa, the Sage to the King.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

"When a large tidal wave comes, all the brooks become full to the brim, without any effort on their part; so, when the Avatar comes, a tidal wave of spirituality floods the World and fills every heart." These words of Swami Vivekananda are being illustrated by the awakening and the awareness about Divinity that are flooding the land as a result of the Sathya Sai Avatar.

S. P. Ghosh, Calcutta

Lead Kindly Light!

On the 12th, May, the sacred Vaisakh Poornima Day, at 9-30 A. M., Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba entered the "Sathya Deepa", in the "Dharmakshetra" Campus which is the centre of His Task in Maharashtra as well as the International Centre of His Mission. Amidst the grateful acclamations of thousands of devotees from all the states of India and many from foreign lands, Baba opened the Entrance Door, installed with the sacred Symbols of all the faiths which have sustained man through the ages and gave Darshan on the terrace, to the vast assembly that had gathered. The students of the "Bala Vihar" classes conducted by the Seva Samiti in the schools of Bombay recited Vedic hymns, volunteers blew the sacred Conch, and Sri A. K. C. Natarajan from Trichinopoly in South India played rapturous music on the Clarinet, when Baba unfurled the Prasanthi Flag and it rose and fluttered triumphantly on Dharmakshetra. Sathya Deepa, as Bhagavan has named the divine structure, is an architectural gem, designed by devotion and executed with loving care, by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bombay. It is placed on a hill that commands a magnificent view, with vast spaces at its foot for thousands to gather. It has all round it a lovely moat filled with water, on which float lotuses and lilies. Its prayer hall has sculptured friezes on the wall, of the Five Elements on one side and the five principles of living, Sathya Dharma Santhi Prema and Ahimsa on the other. The central frieze on which all minds are led to concentrate is a Jyoti, a Flame, in response to man's eternal prayer, Tamaso maa jyotir gamaya, From Darkness, lead me on to Light. Behind the prayer hill, a flight of marble steps is built through a cylindrical pillar. This pillar holds aloft an 18 petalled lotus which encloses the living rooms for Bhagavan. A lovely dome will soon rise over the centre of this lotus and complete what will be a unique Residence of God, in the First City of India, its very Gateway for the World. Quarters for Guests, Kuteerams for Sadhakas, Meditation Cells, a bigger Prayer Hall, the Dharmakshetra Press, these will soon make the Dharmakshetra Campus silently busy with fructifying activities, laid down by Bhagavan for the revitalising of mankind.

The land where the Dharmakshetra stands was secured in September, 1967; the Foundation Stone was laid by Bhagavan on November 3; the first trowel of concrete was laid on the ground on Jan: 26, 1968. The completely furnished Dharmakshetra, with its complementary Guest Quarters, was ready in the first week of May for Inauguration! No wonder, Bombay saw in the Dharmakshetra, one more astounding miracle of Bhagavan unfolding before their very eyes in all its Divine charm, filling the atmosphere with its refreshing fragrance.

At the Public Meeting held that evening to celebrate the Inauguration, for which more than 50,000 citizens of Bombay gathered at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Campus at Versova, Bombay, Sri. Indulal H Shah, the Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bombay said, "This is the beginning of the Golden Era in the spiritual history of India. This is a concrete and urgent Call for the intensification and expansion of Sadhana, for the realisation of the infinite Divine potentiality that lies undiscovered and undeveloped in each of us." Sri. P. K. Sawant, Minister for Agriculture in the Government of Maharashtra, and President of the Sri Sathya Sai Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, Bombay, said, "The Dharmakshetra will be a beacon of light in these distressing days, a pillar of hope in the enveloping gloom; in the atmosphere of fear and terror, it will be a source of strength and courage; to those despairing of the future of themselves and of the culture of India, it will be a reassuring reminder of the great heritage of which they are all the heirs." He said, "We were fortunate to have this Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Maharashtra at Shirdi, during the latter half of the last century and for some years in the beginning of this century. We have the same privilege and pleasure now, for, the Dharmakshetra will be His abode in Bombay, in Maharashtra." Sri. Page, Chairman of the Maharashtra Legislative Council and a member of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, said, "I have sat at the Feet of Bhagavan as a Jijnasu, and asked Him a number of questions on Sadhana and spiritual knowledge: I have gained 100 percent intellectual conviction through His answers and I admire Him to an extent that no one of you can claim to do. By His Gracious Message on Gudi Padua Day, 1966, Baba has captured the loyalty of Maharashtra and entered into the heart of Bombay. A thrill of joy comes upon Bombay, whenever the City hears that Baba is coming, because this City has a sore thirst for spiritual experience and joy and Baba grants both Peace and Strength. I shall place at His Feet the need of the hour: "Make this vast multitude God-minded; lead them God-ward; weed out the mess that is fast overwhelming the World."

In His Divine Discourse, Baba said, "It might appear rather ridiculous, in these days of atom bombs, to build spiritual centres but, I declare that it is the great good fortune of Bombay, to have the Dharmakshetra established herein. Living is mistaken to be a process of bondage to inert matter, and to the pursuit of material pleasures. But, the years allotted should be used for the achievement of Moksha or Liberation. Very few know this; very few realise that they are in bondage; they live unconcerned, through joy and grief, with no effort to escape this dual wheel." He said that every one's heart is a Dharmakshetra; it is a Kurukshetra, too. For, Kuru means—"to do"; kshetra means—a field. The word indicates a field of activity, a region where man can, by the nature of his acts, save himself or, on the contrary, ruin himself. If he makes it a Dharmakshetra, he is saved; if an A-dharma-kshetra, he is ruined. This is what the Gita teaches in the very first verse, said Baba. "In the Kurukshetra which is also the Dharmakshetra, what are "my people" (maamakaah) and the "pure people" (Pandavas; Pandu, means, fair) doing?—is the question propounded in that sloka. By "my people" is meant, those who are affected by egoism and selfishness, the Tamasic and Rajasic natures; by the "fair people" is meant, those who are activated by the Satwic principle. The battle between these two for supremacy is the fight in which all beings are engaged. Those who are steadily fixed in the Satwic nature, are able to win, through the Grace of God, which is ever upon them. This is the lesson of the Gita." He said that the Seva Samiti, Bombay was able to win the Grace of God through their own devotion and dedication, and to establish in their City the Dharmakshetra, from where the splendour of Sanathana Dharma will spread all over the world.

Baba took up residence in Sathya Deep on the 12th and from then on, it became a busy centre of spiritual activity. Meetings of the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti were held there, in the Divine presence of Baba. Baba called together the devotees who have gained the privilege of constructing kuteerams therein and blessed them with wholesome advice. Thousands of delegates who gathered in Bombay from far and near for the World Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations on 16, 17 and 18 May came into Dharmakshetra and were filled with delight at its simple symbolic grandeur.

On the 13th May, about 65 students undergoing a special course of spiritual training in the Prasanthi Vihar (Youth Camp) had the chance to visit the Dharmakshetra and sitting at His Feet, listen to a Divine Discourse of Baba, on the first steps in Sadhana. On the 14th, Baba spoke to more than a hundred members of the "Lions Club" of Bombay City on their motto, "Service". Every day, for more than a week, He met, at Dharmakshetra, the delegates who had come from the West and Far East, (from the U. S. A. Mexico, the United Kingdom, Holland, Norway, France, Hong Kong, Australia) for long hours and discoursed with them on the fundamentals of spiritual wisdom and the means of bringing them into individual experience.

The Deputy Prime Minister of India, Sri. Morarji Desai had a long talk with Baba at Dharmakshetra; Kulapati Sri. K. M. Munshi, Founder of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan came to the Dharmakshetra and listened to the Discourse of Baba. On the 18th May, Baba lighted at the Dharmakshetra "a perpetual lamp", response to the prayers of Sri. Indra Devi in of Mexico, known as the "First Lady of Yoga" in the West. Her Crusade for Light in Darkness has been graciously reinforced by the Grace of Baba, who has systematised a simple process of Meditation on the Light as a means of filling oneself with purity and wisdom, as well as filling the outer world with truth and love. From this Sathya Sai Jyothi, at Sathya Deepa, Dharmakshetra, the Light will be carried to the farthest shores and the Flames of those lamps will be the illuminators of countless hearts that meditate on them.

On the 21st May, about 30 representatives of the Press in Bombay City gathered at Dharmakshetra and Baba very graciously answered their eager questionings and vouchsafed His Message, As the "Times of India" representative wrote, "Baba said that newspapers should stress the essential unity of Indian culture and way of life and that they should not play up the differences, for, such differences were a passing phase, from which India would emerge all the stronger. Referring to the unrest among students, He said there was nothing wrong with them; they had 'hearts of gold'. What the country needed was 'better parents and teachers'. Asked about miracles, Baba said that they were not meant for pradarshan (exhibition); they were only for nidarshan (a pointer to God's powers implied in the triumph of mind over matter)".

Baba called upon the Press to uphold the fair name of India and the greatness of its spiritual heritage; He asked them not to indulge in either flattery or scandal of personalities, who wield only temporary authority, but, He wanted them to utilise their resources for spreading love and co-operation among the people. He advised them that they should not inflame the emotions of youth, but, should use every chance to calm them and convey to them constructive ideas of service and self-help." Small groups of doctors, lawyers, administrators and others had the

fortune of getting Darshan of Baba at Dharmakshetra and also of listening to His profoundly roving and transforming discourses.

On the 22nd May, the large band of volunteers and Seva Dal members who had done service during the World Conference and at the Public Gatherings were called in, at the Dharmakshetra to the Divine Presence of Baba, to receive His Blessings. Baba spoke to them on the training that a Sevak should receive, and told them that Seva itself is the highest Sadhana. On the 22nd and on the 23rd May, when Bhajan Sessions were held at Dharmakshetra, more than 70, 000 eager Bhaktas from Bombay filled the open spaces at the foot of the Dharmakshetra heights. Every face was a bright little wave on that ocean of devotion, glinting with the light of joy at the Darshan of the Lord. Baba moved among the people and chose for special attention those among them who were ill. He sat on a mount, overlooking the vast multitude, and calling for a microphone to be installed before Him, enthralled the thousands of yearning hearts by Bhajans which He sang, to fill the devotees with Divine Bliss.

The Dharmakshetra is not a structure of cement and steel; it is a Gall, a Challenge, an invitation, an inspiration; like the Prasanthi Nilayam it arouses the yearning for Reality, for Liberation. That is the lesson which Baba instilled into the thousands who saw Him and heard Him there for more than two weeks

(Ed.)

The World Conference

Thursday, 16th, May, garlands of fresh Flowers hung across the main entrance of the Conference Hall of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, at Versova, Bombay. The campus was full of the fragrance of love, devotion and self-less service. Every room in the hostels and schools around was busy with delegates who were preparing to present themselves before the divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, at the Inaugural Session of the World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations. As they streamed quietly in, they found in the elegantly festooned Hall, kith and kin from far-off lands, sharing their loyalty to the Avatar of the Age. Behind the Dais, they saw murals of Lord Chaitanya lost in divine ecstasy while chanting the Names of God replete with His Glory and of Saint Thyagaraja immersed in the ocean of Bliss while He sang of the might and majesty of God. The sacred Chair for Bhagavan was placed against another mural, depicting the Jyoti which all beings, caught in Tamas, yearn for. Portraits of Baba, as Sai Baba of Shirdi and as Sathya Sai Baba beamed on the vast gathering in loving beneficence.

Bhagavan entered the Hall at 9A. M., showering His benign smile on the happy sea of faces. Vedasaamraat Brahmasri Kameswara Ghanapati, the Principal of the Sri Sathya Sai Vedasastra Pathashala, Prasanthi Nilayam, rendered the holiness of the atmosphere more patent by his recital of the Invocatory Vedic hymns. Hon'ble Sri. P. K. Sawant, Minister for Agriculture, Maharashtra Government, Former Chairman, Shirdi Samsthan Trust, and President of the Reception Committee of the World Conference welcomed the delegates from India and foreign lands. He said, "We are really fortunate, for we have the privilege of having Baba again in

Maharashtra, in this manifestation also." He declared that the whole world will benefit by the decisions which this Conference takes under the Divine Guidance of Bhagavan. The Secretary of the Reception Committee, Sri. Indulal H Shah then gave an outline of the programme of the Conference, for the three days it will be in sessions.

Bhagavan then called upon some delegates to summarise, for the information of the gathering the activities of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations in their States. Justice V Balakrishna Eradi of the Kerala High Court, who is the State President of Sathya Sai Organisations in Kerala, spoke of the Federation that they have succeeded in establishing and of the mutual co-operation between the units that this Federation has been able to stabilise. Major R P V Rayanagar, the State President for the Madras State spoke of the need for strict enforcement of the directives from Baba about activities and organisation. He related the efforts made at Madras to canalise medical help rendered by members of the Samiti, so that the poor receive all the service they need. Sri. V. K. Rao, I. C. S. described the work being done in Andhra Pradesh for the propagation of the Vedas and Sastras and the popularisation of Namasankirtan.

Dr. V. K. Gokak, Vice Chancellor, University of Bangalore, President of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Mysore State, said that Mysore had the unique benefit of continuous contact with Baba from even 1947 and the impact of the Avatar had transmuted thousands in Karnataka. Dr. Chudasama of Jamnagar related the role of Study Circles in spreading among the people the Message of Bhagavan; he also described how the people of his State encouraged the study of Telugu, so that they could grasp it better, from the original writings. The Rani of Jind (Punjab) Mrs. Khasalkar (Bihar,) Sri. D. P. Shukla I A S (Retd.) from (Uttar Pradesh.) Sri. Som Dutt Khera (West Bengal,) G. Rama Rao (Orissa) Sri. Murthy (M. P) and Dr. S. Bhagavantham (Delhi) summarised for the benefit of the delegates the work of the units in their States.

Charles Penn of Los Angeles, U. S. A. (familiar to readers of Sanathana Sarathi through his articles containing the teachings he receives across the oceans, direct from Baba) said, "I have no speech ready; I have no title to speak. Please listen to Baba speaking through me." Then, he allowed the gathering to share a lesson he received from Baba on two worms, one the silkworm which used all its food to pour forth the golden thread that it wove all round itself, so that it could meditate in peace and ultimately break through the Maya as a resplendent butterfly; and another the larva that rose above the waters with wings, but, spent its time drinking blood and infecting those who gave it that food with the deadly malaria. He exhorted all to grasp the chance of Baba's Love and to seize avidly every chance of filling oneself with joy and passing on that joy to others. "We look to India for spiritual guidance; we pray that Baba will come to us; we know that when He is with us, He will be with you too", he said.

Howard Murphet from Australia said, "Australia needs His Love, His Light. When I go back, I wish to start a Sathya Sai Baba Centre to translate His teachings into action through the right Karma." He described the great joy and spiritual excitement that he found active in every bus and every train that brought the delegates to the Conference, making them resound to the chantings of the Glory of God. "The atmosphere is something to be remembered for ever", he confessed. Tideman Johanessen from Norway said, "Even before I met Baba, He was with me"; he related how Baba miraculously led him from Shirdi to Bombay to His Presence in 1966. He emphasised that in Scandinavia, where dogma has very nearly scotched genuine spiritual yearning, the

radiation of Baba's teachings is urgently needed. Dr. C. G. Patel from Kampala, East Africa, Dr. Nallainathan from Ceylon, (We are all children groping in the dark; make us see! He pleaded) and Indra Devi from Mexico also spoke on the role of Sathya Sai Organisations in their countries. "The students of American Universities are eager to have the Darshan of Bhagavan and to imbibe His message of Sathya Dharma Santhi and Prema. When I speak about Bhagavan to the students of Santa Barbara and Berkeley, they do not disperse after the talk; they want Bhagavan; they are hungry for Him".

Bhagavan then nominated the following delegates to be the Convenors of Committees, consisting of workers from the various States, which were entrusted with the task of preparing Reports embodying their recommendations:

- (1) Sri E. V. S. Desikachari of Hyderabad as Convenor of the Committee for Namasmarana and Nagarsankirtan.
- (2) Sri. D. P. Shukla I A S (Retd), Lucknow, as Convenor of the Committee for considering the role of Pathashalas in the Sathya Sai Organisations.
- (3) Dr. K. Bhaskaran Nair, D.Sc. Director of Collegiate Education, Kerala as the Convenor of the Committee on the spread of Moral Education and spiritual activities among students.
- (4) Dr. S. Ramakrishna, M. Sc., Ph. D. of Hyderabad as Convenor of the Committee on the Formation of Sathya Sai Seva Dal.
- (5) Sri. Kamala Sarathy as Convenor for the Committee for Mahila Vibhag of Sathya Sai Seva Samitis.
- (6) Justice V. Balakrishna Eradi as the Convenor of the Committee for the Co-ordination of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations at all levels.
- (7) Mr. Howard Murphet as Convenor of the Committee to suggest how Centres in Foreign lands can keep in touch with Prasanthi Nilayam and other Sathya Sai Seva Units in India. The Committees were to present their conclusions before the Open Sessions of the Conference on the 17th afternoon.

The Public Meeting in connection with the Inauguration of the World Conference was held at the Vidya Bhavan Campus at 6 P-M that day. A mammoth gathering of over 75,000 people filled the decorated pandal to overflow sat entranced by the Bhajan songs sung by the Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandalis of Bombay. Baba moved among the gathering, granting Darshan to all. Sri Morarji Desai, the Deputy Prime Minister of India, who had come from New Delhi to inaugurate the World Conference was welcomed by Hon'ble Sri P. K. Sawant. He said, "Morarji Bhai has unflinching faith in God and the fortitude born out of a strong moral calibre. Bombay is proud and happy to play the host to this Conference, the first of its type, held to propagate the message of Love, Peace and Service, that is to say, the message of Sanathana Dharma, which Bhagavan has come to revive. Though Bombay is in the throes of a highly individualised and industrialised life, it has also many institutions and leaders who guide the citizens along the path of spiritual effort, Yoga and Philosophy. The long line of exalted saints which began with Jnaneswar, Ramadas and Tukaram has been continued in Shirdi Sai Baba Gajanan Maharaj and Nithyanandaswami. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is achieving a silent spiritual revolution in this land, transforming thousands of lives and leading them Godward. Baba loves order, discipline, silence, humility and dedicated work. He has established in Bombay, the Dharmakshetra, as the nerve centre of His Mission". Sri Morarji said that he was happy to see so many thousands eager to know about the Dharma which, they have to practise, from Sri Sathya

Sai Baba. This Conference is being, held at a critical time in the history of our country and of the world and so it has a, special significance. Man must develop faith in himself and in others; he must work with detachment and sympathy for the betterment of society. The spirit of surrendering all acts at, the feet of God, after doing them as best as one can, regardless of the fruit one can reap from it—that is the lesson of the Gita, that is the path of true Dharma. Man manaa bhava, madbhaktho, madyaji maam namaskuru. That is the spirit of dedication, the Gita teaches."

Baba thrilled the vast gathering when He addressed them in Sanskrit, describing Bombay as the Nabhi of Bharatbhumi and Bharatmata as being bedecked with the jewels of Bhakti Jnana and Vairagya. He declared that He had decided to speak for some time in Sanskrit, which is the main spring from which all languages drew inspiration and light. He then spoke of the great scriptures of India which expounded Dharma or the aims and limits of human activity, in order to reveal clearly to man his own innate Divinity. "God can be realised only through Prema, which must flow towards all beings; it is the product of Fortitude and Equanimity. No man can claim to be free from others; he is born in society, he grows up in society and he merges in society. If the body is the temple in which the individual is installed, the country is the temple of the collective will and the Universe of God. The Dharma laid down for the control and uplift of man has to be put into practice, as the Deputy Prime Minister emphasised. If only that is done, the country will be prosperous and happy. The ultimate aim of Dharma is to make man's mind pure so that he may recognise the One, and ignore the illusion of Many."

"God who is Truth and Love can be seen only through Truth and Love; many who set out to discover and declare Him had to bear torture and insult, but they did not quail. Muhammad, who proclaimed the Nirguna aspect of God had to flee from Mecca; Jesus who preached Universal Love and the Sanctity of Service had to suffer on the Cross. Harischandra who stuck to the path of Truth had to suffer terrible agonies in exile. Sanathana Dharma which embodies all aspects of spiritual effort and ensures success to all aspirants whatever their stage of achievement or whatever their equipment is the Mother of all Faiths.

Many among the critics in the West have been astounded at the prophecies and discoveries made by Hindus, merely through the help of Mantras or sacred formulae. 5043 years ago, astrologers of this land announced that the foreigners from beyond the sea will leave the land for good between the years Nanda and Ananda! They had predicted the Ashtagrhakoota that created terror a few years ago; it has been discovered that the correct recital of the Gayatri mantra produces beneficial etheric waves in the atmosphere whereas incorrect recitals distort and damage the benefits!

One of the major subjects that this conference is concerned with is, Namasmarana and Namasankirtan, for, that is the one Panacea for all the ills of man, in this Kali age. The name Rama is the indicator of the Atma, the Real Reality of man; for, Rama means, that which gives joy and what else can give that supreme immeasurable joy as the Atma? That is the reason why the Atma is referred to as Atmarama. The sage Prachethas is reputed to have composed a great scripture of 100 crores of verses, which was shared equally by the three worlds, each world being given 33 crores 33 lakhs 33 thousand 333 verses by no less a person than Easwara Himself. One verse remained; it had 32 letters and when each world was allotted 10 each, 2 letters remained

over! These were considered by the Lord to be so valuable that He wanted all the three worlds to have them. They were Ra and ma, making up the sacred sound Rama. Rama is numerologically the number 7, and it is as valuable as Soham. Ra is Tatt and Ma is Twam; Aa that intervenes is Asi. So, in itself, Rama has the same Potency as Tattwamasi. The recital of the Name will purify and strengthen, and lead to ultimate realisation too, as happened in the case of Thyagaraja.

Concluding, Baba, declared that the vast Assembly had the unique privilege of being at the Triveni Teertham, the occasion being the Confluence of Three Holy Streams, the Ganga of atma-vidya, the Yamuna of the World Conference and the Saraswati of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan where the gathering was being held. He blessed all, that they may succeed in their Sadhanas and realise the Truth.

Baba sang a few Bhajan songs and conveyed to the deepest recesses of the heart of every single person who heard Him and repeated the Bhajans after Him, the nectar of Divine Bliss which His Divine Voice communicated.

That night, the Reception Committee had arranged a Programme of Devotional Music by some celebrated musicians of Maharashtra for the Delegates.

On the 17th May, at 12 noon, the Conveners of the Seven Committees presented their Reports to the Conference. At 4 P. M., when the Reports were taken up for consideration, a few delegates expressed their comments thereon. Then, Dr. Gokak addressed the Conference on "The Avatarhood of Baba." "His Avatarhood is the anchor of our faith. This particular marvel of a Human Being representing God is a staggering doctrine of our Faith. To imprison God inside a human body baffles the imagination, but, we have met here to affirm the authority of consciousness over matter, of subject over object, of the seer over the seen, of the transcendental over the temporary". He quoted Baba as declaring that, while most humans have the five senses, mind, intelligence, consciousness and ego, they who have risen to the status of the Divine Will have the five powers of Creation Preservation Dissolution Annihilation and Grace; but, only the Divine that has assumed human form can have the two Majesties, the Mercy that responds to any Name, the Grace that adopts the Form which the aspirant seeks to realise. He characterised the Divine Qualities of Baba that he had noted: Viveka, Vichitra, Vinoda, Vairagya and above all, Maitri (Wisdom Wonder Playfulness Detachment and Overflowing Sympathy) Dr. Nagappa Alva, former Health Minister, Mysore State and now, President, Mysore State Congress Committee spoke on the immeasurable Grace, the unfathomable Wisdom and the incredible Miracles of Baba.

Baba advised the Gathering not to attach too much value to the rules and regulations about which many members were concerned, but, to pay attention to the way of life that the rules wanted to ensure. The fence is for the crap, not for itself. The rules lay down qualifications and limits; a doctor can practise only if he has attained a certain recognised standard. A lawyer can plead in Court only after he has won a certain degree. "A guide for others in spiritual effort, such as you, must have a minimum set of qualifications and you must be an example and a source of encouragement for those whom you propose to lead. The Seva Organisations that are represented here by you must bear this in mind-that each one of you must himself practise what you tell others to adopt. For example, Namasmarana", He said.

"Meera refers to Nama as Namaratna, the Gem. It is only when one knows the value of a thing that one will guard it and use it with care and respect. Namasmarana is the cause as well as the effect of Bhakti, Love of God. This love takes many forms of expression, like Santha Dasya Madhura etc. The Name too may be descriptive or merely symbolic. There should not be any conflict between Names, for all are facets of the same Glory, the same Splendour. The Chakra or Wheel of Time in the Hand of Vishnu is the same as the Trishul or the Three-pronged Spear (Past Present and Future) of Time. The Conch as well as Flute both represent the principle of Melody and Nada. Hara has the same meaning as Hari (He who destroys ignorance).

This World Conference is unique, for no such Conference was ever held during the life-time of any Avatar. Rama had imperial authority and so, He won the adoration of the land through that means also. Krishna too had similar sources of authority. But, consider this: In this Age of atheism and cynical disregard of morals, Swami has entered the hearts of people of all lands through the power of Divine Love, Divine Equanimity and Divine Detachment.

Since devotees from all lands and all faiths are here now, I shall make this announcement about My real Nature: You can call on Me by any Name, for, I am Sarvadevataswarupa; I am the One who is known by many Names, the Embodiment of the Glory of all Forms and Names by which man has adored God. Reference was made here about miracles Do not attach much importance to them, they are but natural consequences of Divinity. Adore, rather, My Prema and try to cultivate it, yourself. To this Form and with this Name, you will soon see the whole world offering loyal adoration. Since I am moving among you, talking and walking as men do, you are led to believe that I am human; but, you will be made aware of My Divinity any moment; you must be waiting for that moment, in readiness for the Illumination. Your minds are now swinging like pendulums, between certainty and doubt. In this Kaliyuga, this Sathya Sai Swarupam is the Paratattwa, the Divine Principle. I have come to re-establish Sanathana Dharma and revitalise it to its ancient Glory. This is the Sai Sankalpa. It will be done and very soon. I have come to uphold Sathya and to demolish untruth and shower Ananda on all.

This Sanathana Dharma is now being sold to the West, purchased by those who have heard of its efficacy! It is a disgrace that it is so bought and sold. I shall be going to those countries, and slaking their thirst. At this Conference itself, I have received invitations from two Universities with tens of thousands of students. The Sathya Sai Seva Samitis of Africa are ready with all arrangements, for My visit.

Therefore, use the chance of My Immediate Presence with you, to learn all about the means of deriving Ananda and sharing Ananda. You are indeed very fortunate, for, to be saved, you need not go through the Processes of Japa and Dhyana; you need only act according to My advice, My directions".

The vast gathering hung on every word of this soul-stirring Announcement. Every one was profoundly conscious of the Divine Splendour that filled the atmosphere as Baba uttered these historic sentences. When they rose and returned to their quarters, the delegates felt like crusaders for Sathya Sai Jyoti in the darkness that is enveloping the world. Truly, a great Day in the History of Man. That night, the children of the Sathya Sai Bala Vihar enacted, in the Presence of

Baba, a musical play, "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram", on the early life of Baba, which was greatly appreciated by all.

On the 18th, Baba met the Delegates from each State separately for some time and gave them His Guidance on the problems of each area. Then, at the Conference Sessions, Sri Indulal Shah, Sri Rayaningar and Dr S Bhagavantham spoke on the subjects placed before the delegates for discussion.

Baba then discoursed on the main steps in the spiritual uplift of man. "The Pandava Brothers represent the Five Vital Airts of Man; since they were yearning for the Lord and were immersed in His contemplation, they were able to achieve Victory. All acts words and thoughts must be dedicated to the Lord, Baba advised. Every member of every Sathya Sai Organisation must engage himself in Sadhana; his status and function depend entirely upon his Sadhana."

There are four types of men, said Baba. (1) Those who do not distinguish or differentiate between good and bad, because they have gone beyond all dualities (2) those who accept the good and reject the bad (3) those who accept the bad and reject the good and (4) those who change the good into bad and revel in making everything bad. Man must endeavour to rise up to the two higher types and not demean himself into the two lower. Constant vigilance is necessary for this" Baba reminded the gathering.

When the Conference held its evening Sessions at 5 P. M., four Pundits of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha Central Committee discoursed in Sanskrit on the Message of Baba. Sri. Nanubhai Sastry of Navsari offered at His Feet a Sanskrit Epic on His Life, consisting of 1008 slokas. Sri. P. K. Sawant and Mrs. Osborne addressed the gathering for a few minutes. Then, Baba spoke on the importance of mind-control, and sense-control. The four wheels of a car are directed by the steering wheel inside the car; so too the mind operates the four Purusharthas; the tyres should be filled with faith and the inner wheel has to be in the hands of Intelligence. The current that illumines all bulbs is the same; differences in light are caused by the strength or weakness of the bulbs; to realise the One that animates all, recital and remembrance of the Name are the means.

Baba said that all days are holy for this purpose and all hours of the day; all songs that sing His Glory can be used; one has only to chant them with sincerity and yearning, so that it may not jar on other ears. Never damage another's faith or boast of your own, Baba advised. The Bhajan has to be started with Pranava and ended with it. Some time has to be devoted after Bhajan, for Dhyana; but, reading some sacred texts after Bhajan will not contribute to the maintenance of the peace and joy and so, Study Circles may have the Readings, apart from Bhajans. For Dhyana, a Flame or Jyoti will be of great help, in the initial stages. The Flame has to be drawn in by Dhyana as Illumination, between the brows, and thence to the Lotus of the Heart, where it sheds Light and removes Darkness, as the petals open. Then, the Light must illumine the senses, destroying evil from each, and fill the entire being, bathing the Body in splendour. One must take in, into the Light, friends and foes, kith and kin, and all mankind, all beings, all Creation, until nothing else remains. Dhyana on the Jyoti can be practised by all, irrespective of colour or creed, age or sex caste or country."

Referring to the varied opinions on the nature of the `offerings' usually distributed to participants after Bhajan, Baba said, "I hold that it is enough if you distribute to every participant the holy Name of God; nothing can equal that Prasad."

That night, a magnificent Dummy Horse Dance Performance by Sri Sundaramurthy and Party of Bangalore gave delight to all. Every day during the Conference, thousands gathered at the spacious Pandal in the premises of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for the morning Bhajan Sessions and Baba graciously gave them the coveted Darshan.

The Valedictory Gathering of the World Conference was held in this Pandal on the 19th May, at 10 A.M. About 75, 000 people attended. Baba directed Sri Indulal Shah to describe briefly the deliberations of the Conference, so that the avid Public may have some idea of its work and significance. Hon'ble Sri. P. K. Sawant also spoke of the importance of the Conference in the context of the unrest and anxiety that are haunting man in all lands. Dr. Gokak said, "SAI is no blinding word; nor is it a binding word, or a limiting word. It is the gateway to all the greatness and all the effulgence of the Spirit. That universal Love is the Message that we are carrying with us from this Conference." Hon'ble Sri Bharde, Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, said, "Baba is transforming this Bhoganagari into a Yoganagari. He is prompting all to realise the inner springs of Love Peace and joy and to draw sustenance therefrom."

In His Valedictory Discourse, Baba said, that man is fundamentally the inheritor of Immortality and he can never have Peace or joy so long as he identifies himself with the body that declines and dies. Man can never be happy so long as he does not breathe the invigorating atmosphere of Immortality. Man is now aware of this in the depth of his heart, but, for want of proper guidance at the proper time from proper teachers and masters, he is unable to derive the full benefit of that awareness. This World Conference has as its aim, this urgent need of man: to become aware of Reality and to benefit to the utmost, from that awareness."

At the end of two golden weeks during which Baba gave Himself to Bombay, the citizens in their thousands went back to their daily chores, wiser, braver and happier, with tears of gratitude in their eyes, the smile of courage on their lips, and the honey of sympathy in their words.

(ED.)

Sri Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

May: 10-24	Baba at Bombay.
12	Berhampore (Orissa) Sri Sathya Sai Bhakta Samithi: Anniversary Celebrations.
25-27	Baba in Gujarat: Navsari, Surat, Baroda.
26	Viliupuram. (S. Arcot Dist) Sri Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali; Anniversary celebrations
29-30	Baba at Poona: Discourse at Andhra Association.
31	Baba at Sholapur: Discourse at Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi.

June: 1-8 Baba at Hyderabad.
4 Alike (South Kanara District): Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi: Anniversary.
Celebrations.
10 Baba returned to Prasanthi Nilayam.
13 Baba at Whitefield.

Bhagavata Vahini

26

Parikshit heard from the sage, Vyasa, his description of the deep devotion and steady faith of the Pandavas; he was thrilled when he heard of the unbounded Grace of Lord Krishna, which was showered on them; the king was so immersed in joy that he scarce realised whether it was night or day! Suddenly, he was awakened by the sweet chirpings of birds and the loud crow of the cock. He heard the songs with which his subjects daily welcomed the Gods at dawn; the temple bells were ringing around the palace.

Vyasa too realised it was the beginning of another day. He said, "Son! I must be going now" and, taking the water-pot which he carried while journeying, he rose and blessed the king, who fell at his feet, in great sorrow. "Alas, that the dawn broke so soon! I have yet to grasp fully the grandeur and glory of my grandfathers! I have yet to fathom completely the depth of their devotion and sense of duty," he lamented.

He rotated in his mind the incidents he had heard and tasted their uniqueness. He was so filled with exaltation that he could not turn to the affairs of the kingdom. In fact, he avoided entangling himself in them and sought to be alone. He decided to go into the forest a-hunting, as an alternative. He instructed that arrangements be made for an expedition into the jungle.

Very soon, the men at the door brought the news that everything was ready, and the huntsmen and others had gathered in full strength. With a heavy heart, he dragged his body towards the chariot and placed himself in it. The attendants, with their equipments, moved on, both before the royal chariot and after, as was their wont. The king felt, for some reason or other, that so many need not accompany him; so, he asked some to return. When they advanced, a few herds were noticed moving about; that sight stirred the king to activity. He got down from the chariot and, with the bow kept in readiness, he stalked the animals with a few men following him. The herds scattered in fear, with the huntsmen in hot pursuit. The king had his aim fixed on one group of fleeing animals and he sped behind it, unaware that he was alone, cut off from his attendants who had gone on different trails.

He had trekked a long distance and could not bag any beast; a fierce thirst began tormenting him; he was exhausted beyond endurance. Frantically, he searched for water. Luckily, he espied a hermitage, a cottage thatched with grass. Highly expectant, he hurried towards it. There was no one in view! The place appeared empty. He called out very distressingly; as loudly as he could manage. With his feeble throat he shouted, "Thirst," "Thirst," plaintively. There was no reply from the cottage. When he entered he found therein Sameeka engaged in meditation. He went near him and addressed him pathetically, "Sir" "Sir" but, Sameeka was so lost in the depths of meditation that there was no response at all.

At this, the king was overcome by resentment and a fierce gust of anger. Having come to a hermitage and seen the hermit, he was still helpless with hunger and thirst; this wounded his pride, for, he was the Ruler of the realm and the hermit had dared to dwell within himself, when he had come before him and called out for him. He became blind to the rules of propriety, for, he could hardly control his anger. His feet trod on some rope on the floor; he discovered, it was a

dead snake. That put a wicked idea into his head, quite by a twist of fate. He threw the dead snake round the neck of the hermit, sitting like a statue, heedless of other's distress; and, then, he left the hermitage and walked away fast, to seek some other place to slake his thirst and get some food.

Some boys saw him emerge from the cottage; they entered the place to find out why he had gone in and what had happened there, for he looked a Stranger and he was gorgeously dressed. They saw round the neck of the sage Sameeka, a snake! They went closer and examined it, to discover that it was dead. They wondered who could have done this atrocity. They surmised it must be the handiwork of the man who had just left the hermitage. So, they ran out and informed Sringin of Sameeka, who was playing games with his comrades. He did not lend his ear to their story, for he thought that no one would insult his father so. He busied himself with the game; but, the boys repeated their tale and insisted on his verifying its eracity, seeing the plight of his father with his own eyes.

Sringi was amazed at their insistence and he got afraid that the incident might actually have happened! He ran into the cottage and found that the unbelievable had happened! He sought to find out the culprit who had perpetrated this atrocity against his revered father. He came to know that a person in royal robes had gone in and come out and that there was no one else around, since morning. The boys concluded that it must be his handiwork. At this, he ran in the direction pointed by them to catch him; before long, he saw the person in regal clothing and his anger knew no bounds. He threw a handful of water at the king, slowly walking before him and pronounced the curse: "May he who threw the dead snake round the neck of my father be bitten by a snake on the seventh day and may he die that day of that poison." The boys around him appealed to him not to, but, he threw the curse at the king, nevertheless. Then, he went back into the cottage and slumped on the Door, in a corner, with his head aflame with anger.

"Alas, that my father had to suffer this ignominy, when I am alive and about; I could well have been dead. Of what use is a son alive, if he cannot prevent some one insulting his father?" he condemned himself thus and be-wailed his fate, most pitably. His companions sat around him and tried to pacify him, they abused the wrongdoer roundly; they tried to console the disconsolate boy.

Meanwhile sage Sameeka emerged from his inner bliss and returned to the realm of Consciousness. He unwound the dead snake from his neck and placed it beside him. He saw the son weeping in a corner and beckoned to him to come near. He asked the reason for his grief and got from him the tale of the stranger and the dead snake. Sameeka smiled and said "Poor fellow!"

He did it out of ignorance and you reveal *your* ignorance weeping for it. I am, not concerned with honour or dishonour. The knowledge of the Atma enables a man to keep himself on an even keel, neither rising when praised nor falling when blamed. Some boor must have played this silly prank; since you are yet boys, you are exaggerating it into a big crime; you are undergoing a mountain of grief over a mole-hill Get up and go to the playground," he said He made his son sit on his lap and gently stroked his head, so that his grief might abate a little.

Sringi told his father, "This is no prank played by a boor." This is a terrible sacrilege committed by an ego intoxicated fellow in the garb of a king." At this, Sameeka asked, "What do you say? A person in the garb of a king? Did you see him? Did the king commit this stupid misdemeanour? This silly thing can never enter a king's head." The comrades of Sringi joined their voices and testified that they too saw the person responsible for this sacrilege. "Master! We saw the dead snake and we ran to where Sringi was and brought him here. Sringi got so angry that he took the water of the Kowsiki in his hand and threw it at that person who was walking very fast, pronouncing at the same time with appropriate ritual formulae the curse: let the person who placed the dead snake die of snakebite, the seventh day from today."

Sameeka was shocked at this news; he was astonished at the behaviour of his son. He pushed him out of his lap on to the door. "What! Did you throw a curse like that? Alas, that the son of a sage should have behaved like this? What a calamitous curse for this trivial offence! Yours is a wrong which can never be atoned; You are a disgrace to the group of comrades around you, for you cannot bear with fortitude such a silly, insignificant prank! I am ashamed to say that such a boy is my son. You have no strength of mind to bear such little affronts. O, what a pity! Alas, that your childishness should plunge all sages and ascetics into ill fame; people will say we have not got even elementary patience and fortitude! Do not show me your face; to see it is a sacrilege. To punish people for wrongs done is the duty of the king; not that of the recluse in the forest. The recluse who pronounces curses is no recluse at all.

"Moved by the yearning to achieve the vision and the Presence of the Guide and Guardian of all the Worlds, the recluse has given up all attachment; he has established himself in the forest; he lives on fruits and roots; he denounces all catering to the senses as detrimental to spiritual progress. That such horrid curses born of impatience and egoism should come on the tongue of a recluse is a sign of impending doom: it marks the dawn of the Iron Age of Untruth," Sameeka said.

"Alas! What a great sin you have added to your burden today," he remarked; he described to his son and his comrades the heinousness of the act that Sringi had done. He took him severely to task.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Two Mothers

You are the greatest treasure that this country has; on you, its future rests. This is the land where the sacred Vedas were first uttered, the land where sages and saints who followed the Vedic discipline realised the Divinity that they were, the land where generation after generation of pious people lived simple and contented lives full of love towards all beings. It is a great pity that you are growing up, utter strangers to this glorious heritage.

The truth, that the Vedas teach man is: "Soham: That is I; the Principle that is Immanent in the Universe is the same Principle that is immanent in Me, too." Meditation on this grand Thought gradually leads man to know that there is no distinction between That and I, that both are One, that there is no separate Sah and Aham, and so there is only Om.

The Vedas also teach three other basic beliefs. (1) Karmaphala—Every act has an inevitable consequence. Every cause has an effect. If you act with an eye on the consequence, you have to suffer the consequence. Attachment results in bondage; detachment lead, to liberation. It is the ego, the I consciousness which tells you that you are the body, with its pack of senses that drives von into attachment. Be vigilant that it does not lead you into desires that are harmful. You are now free, you can go where you like, hiking on your two legs when you marry, you become a quadruped and when you get a child, you develop two legs more. Thus you grow into a centipede and start crawling. Attachment makes you burdened and bound. The mind is the source of all desire; Go, try to acquire, not diamond, but, 'diemind'. Let all desires for sense-object, die, or, concentrate all desires on God. Surrender all desires to Him. Surrender all instincts, impulses, attachments to Him. In the Gita, Krishna has assured: "When you surrender everything to Me, your welfare and happiness become My responsibility." The other two doctrines are (2) Punar-Janma: Rebirth, according to Karmaphala and 3) The unique Birth of the Lord as Avatar to save Humanity from the Fall. You must start with Faith; then only can knowledge grow. Have faith in the book and start studying it; then only do you get knowledge out of it. Without getting into water, Yon cannot learn the art of swimming. You will get the proof you need, only when you approach with humility and faith.

Be always cheerful, sprightly. Ups and downs there will always be on the road of life. Pleasant or unpleasant, take all vicissitudes alike, with fortitude. In the sky of your heart, dark thick clouds of desire and doubt hide out the brilliance of the Sun of Intellect, or Buddhi. They are only clouds; they will pass away. Develop a strong character; reason will blow the wind which will drive off the clouds. Meditate on God and pray that they pass away; the Lord will came to your help.

Develop unshakeable faith in yourself, your capacity to live well and long, to be of service to your parents and the country. That is Atma-vishwasa. That is the root of the tree of life. The sweetness in the fruit the tree yields is the sweetness of character. Pursue your studies, not for the sake of a job alone, but, for living , a good and happy life. That is to say, you must, even from now, cultivate faith in God, keep virtuous company, (nourish discipline and cherish ideals of Service. Control the senses; avoid seeing evil, hearing evil and relishing evil sights, words and news. Bad thoughts breed bad character and drag you down into the beast. Those whom we now adore for their exemplary lives have been boys and young men like you; they did not neglect during their youth the development of their moral fibre and qualities of sympathy and service You too should not neglect these.

Vidyarthi (student) means, one who aspires to acquire Vidya, (a person engaged in study) but, Vidyarthi have now become Vishayarthi (those who aspire to acquire sense pleasures and sense. objects)! Vidya is becoming shunya, (zero) since students are kept busy with other things than study. Not all are bad; but, the entire student community has to bear the blame, when a few among them are drawn into wrong ways.

Nowadays, students do not enjoy the confidence and trust of the people. In the olden days, when ladies or old people or sick persons had to travel in train without any escort or help, when they found even a single student in the compartment, they felt happy and relieved; for, they said, "O, we have a student travelling with us: he will take good care of us; he will tell us where to get down; he will get for us what we need." But, today, the presence of a student is not welcomed! What a fall, this is! How sad and unfortunate! Bad guidance from parents and teachers and the so-called leaders of the land, bad company at school and college, reading bad books, the craving to see films, all are responsible for the damage done to the pure-hearted, blemishless youth of this great country. Students have a natural reverence for the parent, the teacher and the leader; but, when these do not set a good example, when the teacher stoops to borrow a cigarette from the student, how can reverence persist?

Do not worry at the faults of others. Try to look into your own and correct them. For the disease from which you suffer, the drug must be taken by you only. If you are not at fault, never bother about what others may say. But, first, examine your behaviour and see that it is above criticism. Grow straight; do not grow crooked. Do not read trash and attend bad films, they warp character and extol violence and wickedness. Spend the money you have on good food instead. Develop good habits: doing Bhajan, practising Asanas, meditation, silence: these will give you peace and buy, a clear brain and concentration. They will discipline the wayward mind.

Curb your craving for being 'fashionable'. You do not know how much your parents have to sacrifice to cater to your tastes. They often borrow money, so that you can adopt the latest in dress or equipment. And, later, they are harassed by the money-lenders. Be continent; learn contentment. There is no wealth, like contentment. Use your time, as if it is something very precious. It is really the most precious gift of God. It is fast running out; every moment lost is lost for ever. Try to serve the sick, the suffering; learn how to serve them efficiently and quickly. Move about always with a smile on your face; do not make the smile, a cynical grin or a laugh of merriment. No one should feel hurt by that smile; every one should feel happy, should catch the infection of joy.

Try to have restraint and moderation in everything, food recreation talk etc, Have neither too much freedom, nor too much restraint or regimentation. Revere your parents; they have gifted this body to you. They are your immediate and visible Gods. Be grateful to your mother who nourished you with her own blood and bore pangs for your sake, and poured out her heart in love on you. Serving and worshipping the parents is really service and worship of God. For Sri Rama, the command of the father was as potent as Divine Command. At 7 o'clock in the morning, Rama was to be crowned Emperor; he walked towards the throne, to receive the crown and the homage. At 6-55, he was asked to walk into the forest, an exile for 14 years! He walked away as joyfully as he walked towards the throne; he had the same equanimity, whether it was this or that. Its reward was the Joy that he had followed the command of his father. That equanimity is the real state of Samadhi, Sama-dhi, equal awareness, undisturbed reaction to both pain and pleasure.

You are growing older every moment; you will not be young always. The friendship; and contacts you develop now at school or college are temporary. After your term is over, each goes in his own path, away from the rest. These attachments will then break off and new ones will fill their place. So, chooses good companions and do not develop too strong an attachment to any

one. Be friendly with all, but, do not allow that friendship to grow into excess. Try to get into the company of devoted and God-fearing persons. When dust joins the company of air, it rises up into the sky; when it joins the company of water, it sinks into the depths of the earth. Your future is shaped by the company you fall into now. So, be very careful; I always like youngsters and I yearn to shower upon them My Grace.

Look upon all girls as your sisters. If you look at them with evil thoughts, impure thoughts, you will be sliding down the path of ruin. If any one looks upon your sister with impure motives, how much will you be pained, how hurt will you be! Remember that and avoid hurting the others too. Try to develop brotherly and sisterly attitudes towards all you meet. Do not take delight in taunting or decrying girl students. Respect them and pay heed to their sense of self-respect. That is the means of winning My Grace.

Remember that you have two mothers: the Desa-mata (the Mother-country) and the Deha-mata (Mother). If you do not have a sterling character, the Mother-country is thrown into grief. If you do not have love and gratitude, the Mother is thrown into grief. When both are happy through you, I am pleased and I will shower Grace on you. Your life is then indeed blessed.

From Baba's Discourse to the 'Prasanthi Vihar' Youth Camp: Dharmakshetra 13-5-68

Revolution and Evolution

Baba declares that political revolutions cannot change human nature or ensure human liberation. Man has evolved from the stone and plant, to tree and animal, and now from man he must evolve into the God that he fundamentally is. This process has to be initiated by each individual for himself and by himself. Man is now struggling at the level of animal desires and passions, impulses and instincts. As taught by the sages of all lands and all religions, he must now raise himself into the level of the Divine. Manava must elevate himself into Madhava, Nara must raise himself into Narayana—that is the exhortation which Baba gives us, unceasingly.

Only an Avatar like Baba, with the might and majesty of Divine Grace, untarnished and undiminished, can hasten this evolution of man into God. He is making millions aware of the truth, that man's soul is but an infinitesimal part of the Universal Soul that animates all that is. In fact, that Universal Soul has become all that is, all this. So, man is a spark of God, part and parcel of Divinity.

This fact is forgotten or ignored by man, since he is immersed and involved in the sensual temporalities. The Vedas and the Upanishads have declared in clear and convincing terms, the fact that it is Brahman, the One Primal, that has assumed all the multifarious Names and Forms for this Drama of Time-Space-Causation. When the mind that runs helter-skelter behind the senses and entangles man in the sensory world is curbed and trained to obey the Intelligence, it will lead man into the pathway of liberation. Baba has given us rules and methods by which we

can approach the Truth and realise It; He is Himself the Truth which we seek for our liberation. Namasmarana or, the constant recapitulation of God's Glory and Grace, will facilitate this process of inner evolution' Baba says.

Surrender the mind to its Source, its Motivator. That is the only method to achieve victory over the animal which weighs us down. When we are filled with yearning to defeat it, Baba will certainly shower His Grace on us and help our evolution forward. But, if we are satisfied with our animality, how can we win that Grace? "Leave all your worries, anxieties and troubles with Me; I shall give you, instead, Peace of Mind, Courage and Light". His Love is abundant, but, we crave for petty desires and do not crave for sharing that Love. Desire to escape from the animal into the human, from the human into the divine and, Baba is ever ready with Light and Love.

When we pray to Baba, let us include this too, therein: "Lord! We are ashamed of our animal nature; it is making us mean and miserable. Make us happier, more peaceful, more contented, more loving; let us evolve into You. Make our minds and intelligences instruments fit for achieving the next and last step in our evolution".

G. N. Acharya

Always—The Word

While waking, working, meditating, eating,
Chanting, writing, reading, writhing in pain
Or happily walking or talking with chums,
Unheard, the inner Voice, it hums,
Sairam, Sairam, Sairam.

When worries and trials bark at me
I drown their clamour in a trice
Chanting Sairam, Sairam, Sairam.—

When trivial pleasures tempt me
Or petty cravings haunt me,
I free myself from tangle
Saying Sairam, Sairam, Sairam.

When I fast, I live on Thee;
When I break nay fast, I taste Thee;
For, Thou art the Food sustaining me,
Thy Name, my tonic, Sairam, Sairam.

Every night when Thou appear
In dream, I cry in joy;

Every morn, when my eyes do fall
On Thy Picture full of charm,
"I shout in great delight—
Sairam, Sairam, Sairam.

In the depth of slumber
When I am all alone
With nothing to distract,
And none to draw my thoughts,
I whisper mute, with every breath—
Sairam, Sairam, Sairam !

—Dr. Somasunderam
Jaffna (Ceylon)

The Inner Silence

After years of trial and error, we discover that true happiness lies in suppressing our ego and behaving unselfishly, with love and service as the only motives for action. Until this discovery, we waste our precious years seeking limited pleasures, short-lived comforts, and external sources of gratification. No one can make us happy, no external object can give us pleasure; we can get them only from within ourselves, for, within us, is the source of all joy, God. To realise this and to merge ourselves in that reality is the goal of existence.

Baba, says that as a first step in the pilgrimage to this goal, man must develop Vairagya, withdrawing his mind away from every thing, in spite of its apparent attractions, as a result of the awareness of its transitory nature, won by the exercise of intelligence and discrimination between what is eternal and what is not eternal. Intelligence of the higher order is the result of Vairagya. It is not to be confused with correct belief or theoretical learning. Ignorance or Ajnana is not an intellectual error; it is spiritual blindness.

Worldly objects have no inherent charm or attraction. Electricity does not exist in the bulb; it flows from the power-house where it is generated and stored. Even so, the joy comes from the Self, which is the generator and the reservoir. If the object is itself the source of joy, one should not feel satiated! When man suffers from pain or humiliation, he tries to get rid of the body by suicide; this shows that man has no lasting love for the body; we keep it for the sake of our own happiness, the happiness of the I which is distinct from the body. Only that I is real; the rest is delusion, as the snake seen on the rope in the dusk or as the objects and incidents seen in dreams. The delusion is broken when man wakes into light, when Ajnana disappears. Baba says that we should practise dispassion every moment of our lives, so that detachment may be fixed and unshakeable. Retirement into the woods is not needed; retirement into one's own inner silence is enough, wherever one is, whatever one's occupation. That science of inner retreat or Dhyana is being taught by Baba, in His Discourses and Writings and by every word of advice that lie vouchsafes.

May the Self-Effulgent Parabrahmam of Prasanthi Nilayam bless us all to attain that dispassion and acquire that enthusiasm for mastering Atmavidya.

K. V. Ramachandram
Madras

Tune in, to Baba

This is a piece of my Imagination, set in a musical frame. Indian Devotional Music is, in all aspects, the highest expression of the purest tone of the Soul. While listening to a recital, which created a wonderful sphere for the Imagination, the following came to My Mind:

"As the instrument (for example, the Veena) is the Body of Sound, the body is the Sound-box of the Spirit; the senses, controlled through the conscientious practice of the Organs require right tuning, to produce the purest tones, when practised fingers play.

After rendering the basic tones, (of, for instance, Hamsadhwani), depicting the mood of devotion, the musician, in full concentration on this particular state of mind, and inspired by a purified heart, conjures the improvisations within the scope of this given Theme.

This Raga may be compared with the Divine Scheme of Baba's Story, the realization of which should reverberate in the heart of every devotee, improvising the Melody as the unblemished love wills.

As the Melody repeats indefinitely the enchanting Rhythm of the Raga (as in Japam), the musician, (that is, the Soul or Jivatma) partakes of a Resignation to the environment and to Time, losing the Self in the beauty of the improvisation which transports the Individual, beyond thought and feeling, into the Dimension of Eternal Peace and Full Freedom, the Region of Paramananda, of Moksha.

So if the heart of Man abounds with the Creative Beauty of this Music, the beauty would be tuned in to the Divine Composition of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and, as a Universal Symphony, transmuted into daily practice of life, it could be ANANDA for the entire World.

Anne Balabrege

The Revelation

All are devotees, who have gathered here.

Devotees from all the nations of the world have gathered here.

Therefore, I should not fail to tell you about a certain matter:

World Conferences or Conferences of different faiths or Assemblies of spiritual aspirants from all nations have taken place, before this.

But, such have happened, after the Divine Inspirer has left the world.

This Conference, however, is taking place, when this Body and the Name associated with this Body are present in the World.

This has to be considered by you.

The basic cause of this uniqueness is the Reality of My Advent.

Ninety nine out of a hundred among you cannot delve into that Reality.

You have gathered here, drawn by diverse needs.

Some have come seeking spiritual uplift.

Some have come seeking the progress of institutions and organisations, in which they are interested.

Some have come prompted by mere love and reverence.

Some have yielded to the temporary urge of enthusiasm

To every one, My Reality is unreachable,

Unreachable it will be, not today only, but, for a thousand years of ardent inquiry by all the people of the world, even if, they sought it unitedly.

But, the Bliss emanating from that Reality (Tattwa)—that has come in this sacred Body—is within your reach and the reach of the nations of the earth, and you can partake of it quite soon.

When you observe Me moving among you, talking as you do and eating as you do, and thence conclude that I am but human, you are perpetrating a mistake.

In all ages, this has been the lot of man.

Men have failed to recognise Me, for I am enveloped in human-ness.

My Reality is this: This is a Human Form, worn by the Principle that manifests Itself as all, the God-Forms adored by Man.

I must say that I confuse you through words and actions.

But, however confused, if you only install in the altar of your heart, steady faith in My Divinity, you can achieve the Vision of My real Reality.

If, instead, you swing like the pendulum of a clock, one moment to one side and the next to the other, you can never comprehend My Truth.

Let Me draw your attention to another point:

On other occasions when there was the Advent of the Incarnations of God, the world bent before Them, often for reasons other than Divine, namely, imperial authority or some such related power or influence.

But, now, in this Kali Age of rampant materialism, in this Manifestation of Sathya Sai, all the peoples are adoring It, because, as must be clearly evident to you, It is the Godhead that is the Prime Principle, beyond All.

This Sathya Sai Swarupam (Manifestation) is Daivaswarupam (Divine Reality).

You are fortunate that you can grasp this Truth, not at some future date when this Human Frame has been discarded, but, luckily, even while It is with you, before you.

You will soon be awarded the chance to witness the homage of adoration that all countries will offer to India (Bharat-desa), and to listen to the Declaration by all peoples of the Divinity of this Sathya Sai Manifestation.

And, there is something more:

I have resolved to enfold in the fostering care of Sanathana Dharma, the Dharma laid down in the Vedas, the peoples of the world.

This will be done, soon.

This is My Task; it is not My Task to spread awe and wonder in the World, by My Power and draw men to Me thereby.

I shall sustain Truth, and uproot Untruth.

I shall render you happy and ecstatic, in the Splendour of that Triumph.

This Saiswarupam is the Sakthiswarupam which will achieve that Triumph, and confer that Bliss.

From the Divine Discourse of BABA at the World Conference: 17 May, 1968.

The Light of Love

"You and I, dear Brother, and over a thousand delegates from India and many other countries, had the rare fortune to hear Baba make His Wondrous Declaration, as if to the whole world. That was on May 17th. That Glorious Declaration will be deeply read and more clearly understood as time progresses.

On arriving in California, having flown across half of the world in a day, the mind kept dwelling upon Baba's words about His future Revelations of "this Divine Body". In each country, where the jets landed, viewing the uprising in France, the tragedies everywhere; the gloomy news in the press and the struggle against oppression in Vietnam. I cried out to Baba: 'Baba how can You take upon Your Shoulders this enormous task ? How can Your work make a dint upon the millions and millions of drooping hearts around this sorrow-filled world?' To me with my limited view and understanding the whole mess seemed to be even beyond Baba. This ,afternoon Baba softly spoke to me about these things and lie guides my pen as I write this to you 'Charles! When you look all around you and observe people wearing worried looks you only look at their bodies. You look at them physically. You multiply these human beings and start counting them in their millions and rightfully so you multiply,, their gloom a million-fold.

If you were to look at just one person, observe the gloom and multiply that one person a thousand times, then, that is how I 'see' each Being. Man is not, as you now know, a one time thing, with countless bodies he dips to the earth hoping each time, before he arrives, to start earning his Liberation.

Just as you once 'saw' Me lifting up a sick child from the inside of the child, so do I lift up all souls from the inside. Those who are fortunate to reach Me in the Concrete Form return to their homes with, my Love. Such fortunate ones by their own presence at home are then able to start drawing Darkened souls upwards. The process of raising mortals to immortality requires time beyond human understanding and patience beyond human endurance.

You, Charles, saw at Bombay the tens of thousands of seekers of Liberation striving to Catch even a glimpse of Me. These numbers are but a drop in the ocean compared to the countless unseen Darkened Souls, who try to reach Me from beyond mortal bounds. To all I give My Light and Love to help each move forwards towards ultimate Liberation from the cycles of Birth and Death.

All who come to Me, in their concrete form have fortunately reached the stage when they are beginning to 'see' the True Reality while they are mortals. Those who cry for the chance to see Me in the Concrete Form have their prayers answered. To each I give every opportunity for My Darshan for they deserve My Love and each receives My Love.

Then, Charles, there are those who may never 'see' Me in the Concrete Form; these have reached Me through a Friend, a Book or a Photograph. To each of these, if they yearn deeply, I give my Darshan Inwardly. These I love just as deeply for they have begun to 'see' their Body and Divine

Soul separately. This is true advancement towards Self-realization, Liberation and Peace can be theirs through loving the Lord in Meditation. All who Meditate upon Me will have Santhi.

You had the good fortune to see Me in the Concrete Form, in Bombay, on May 10th for the first time. You too have been aware of some of My visits to you, but, I have met everyone countless times too. Sometimes the Presence is known, most times it is not. I am nestled in the Spiritual Heart of everyone.

A wave of outward change is constantly sweeping the World. Unfortunately through greed and misguidance many peace-seeking people have had their hearts and minds filled with fear and even hate. Craving for power has caused meaningless wars causing untold death to even the citizens. Not one ounce of plunder gained can be taken by anyone beyond the grave. Even this simple truth cannot be believed by most people.

I have come, Charles, to bring the Light of Love to the world. It will reach the heart of devotees disciples; they in turn will let the glow of love surround them and reach outwards to all they meet. That Love is God; it can drive away the darkness. The magnificence and power of This Divine Body will burn brighter and brighter. Its beam will encircle the World just as it does the other planets. The spread of Love can move faster than that of the lower forces because Love is the ultimate Goal. Fortunate is he who has this understanding for he knows no darkness and neither can darkness, which is none other than ignorance of the Truth, reach him".

—Charles Penn
California U S A

The Guru Symbolism

The common conception of a Guru or spiritual teacher is associated with his person and any special powers attached to or manifested by him. The personal relationship between the Guru and his disciple dates back to the remote past when according to Shastric tradition, a seeker after liberation was required to learn at the feet of a Guru by formal initiation. The Guru is one who shows the path and in the ancient times was an ascetic, reputed for austerities and wisdom as also spiritual attainment. With the lapse of time, and growth of different schools of devotional thought, esoteric loyalties developed and the element of personality of the Guru acquired a more predominant influence in religious and philosophical advancement. There were, no doubt, great sages or saints of real merits. However, the devotional approach was determined or encouraged by the personality of the Guru, more than his intrinsic spiritual merit. In our time when material welfare has stronger claims on the mind than the spiritual, the difficulty of finding a worthy Guru to show the path, is real.

Devotion is a personal urge arising in the impure medium of the mind and activated by intellect, emotion and will. This explains the interplay of Jnana, bhakti and karma in devotional effort. Those seekers who are endowed with intuition or vichara learn by observation of and enquiry into the nature of the world and experience of life. In the case of the great Avadhuta (Lord

Dattatreya) he had several Gurus, viz., the earth, tree, dove, python, the wasp, bee, body etc., from each of which he learnt the right path. The normal human mind, however, which is afflicted by the vagaries of life, seeks support in God and naturally tends to envisage the form, being conditioned by the attributes of the world of names and forms. In this state of disposition, the Guru has a vital role. The Guru may operate through a human form. As the seeker's mind is extrovert, the Paramatman takes a human shape as a Guru to help driving it inward. He appears in a body in order to dispel the seeker's notion "I-am-the-body". The appearance of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as an incarnation in our time is indeed providential. His message has a common appeal, as it is an inclusive scheme of the spiritual uplift of seekers or devotees of varying temperaments, irrespective of status or condition in life and provides a synthesis of the bhakti, jnana and karma yogas. While Baba underscores the need for a Guru, He has pronounced in His speeches that where, in the existing circumstances, it is difficult for the sadhaka to select a worthy Guru, he may adopt the Paramatman Himself as his Guru and surrender himself to Him. As the Jagadguru or Sadguru, He will respond to earnest devotion. Such a conception of the Guru does not confine him to the limitations of human form, the emphasis being on the eternal principle enshrined in that form. In a state where one realises that one's Guru is the Sadguru, one comes to know one. self as His servant, or a part of Him or His very Self, depending on the line of approach. This is illustrated by the famous words of Hanuman to Sri Rama.

This clearly shows the evolution of bhakti from the personal level to the impersonal, from the form to the abstract truth. The Sadguru has the power to deliver man from (Bhavasagara) or the bondage of the ego. The growing sphere of adoration for Baba shows various stages and phases of devotion and He distributes Grace all around. The benefit of such grace can, however, accrue to the seeker or devotee depending on the extent of his receptivity or in other words, the removal of egocentricity through cultivation of Viveka, vairagya and vichara, which develop through one-pointed devotion to God. While proximity with and contact of the Guru have their potential benefits to the seekers, the more important factor in reformation is the ability to deny the claims of self-interest, and to place complete reliance on the Divine, Grace flowing through him.

Baba, as an embodiment of the Universal, Principle, accepts devotion from all equally. His declaration "Why fear, when I am always within you?" is a clear pointer to the right kind of Sadhana and understanding of the content and meaning of the Guru tattwa. What is essential for seekers is to avoid falling a prey to the illusion that devotion means loyalty merely to the personality of Baba. Such an illusion is, no doubt, a projection of the primal illusion which impels man to identify himself with his body and forget his real nature. It is this misconception which drives bhakti into the shallow waters of exhibitionism and claims of preferential merits on the basis of contact or special benefits. Baba's tireless propagation of the potentiality of 'namasmarana' for spiritual uplift and the vital necessity for striving to purify thought, words and deed through the observance of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema, underlines the fundamental need for abdication of the ego. This idealism should find practical shape in directing all devotional activity, at either personal or organisational level, on the strength of the conviction that we are all tools of the Divine Will reflected through Baba. The adoption of this practical ideal should, through Baba's Grace, help to remove the soot of the ego from the mirror of our minds and to realise that Baba is not as a mere person but an embodied Truth.

Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

- Ma y 10&11: Eluru (West Godavari) Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Discourses by Sri 'Ramasaran'
- 11: Bhatlamagawr (West Godavari Dt) Inauguration of Sri Sathya Sai Samaja. :Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh): Sri Sathya Sai Bala Vihar: Children's Gathering.
- 28: Gangalakurru (East Godavari Dt): Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha: Br: Kolluri Sumasekhara Sastri, Discourse.
- June 2: Ambajipeta (E. Godavari Dt): Discourse: Br: Achanna Sastri.
- 3: Deturu (Guntur Dt): Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Bapatla: Akhandanama-sankeerthana-Sapthaha. till 11th June.
- 9: Poona: Sathya Sai Laksharchana: Frere Rd, Kirkee. :Doddipatla (West Godavari Dt): Fifth Conference of District Organisations of Sathya Sai Devotees.
- 13-28 Brindavan-Whitefield (Bangalore Dt): Baba at Brindavan.
- 13: Kothapeta (E Godavari Dt): Sathya Sai Seva Samithi: 1st Anniversary Celebrations: Discourses on 14th, also. By Br: Varanasi Subrahmanya Sastri, Sripada Lakshminarayana Sastri, and Vemparala Sivabrahmasastri.
- 16: Vellore (N Arcot Dt): 1st Anniversary of Sri Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali. Bapatla (Guntur Dt): Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi: Inauguration of Nagara Sankeerthana.
- 23: Vepery (Madras): IInd Anniversary of Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali: President: Major R P V Rayaningar.
- 28: Bombay: Baba reached Dharmakshetra Bombay.
- 30: Kampala (Uganda, East Africa): Baba arrived at Kampala, on a short African Tour, at the invitation of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Kampala.

Bhagavata Vahini

27

The pointed words of the father inflicted great pain on the tender heart of Sringeri, the son; they fell like sword thrusts or hammer strokes; the poor boy could bear them no longer; he fell on the floor and grasping the feet of his father, he wailed, "Father, pardon me. I was overcome by anger that the king himself should behave so outrageously insolently so irreverently, so inhumanly. I could not control my resentment at the insult hurled on you. It is not proper that a king should behave like this, in this most inappropriate manner, having come into a hermitage; isn't it?"

Seeing his plight, Sameeka, the ascetic, took the son beside him and said, "Son, the compulsion of the moment is inescapable. The dictates of reason are often brushed aside by man, due to that compulsion. The drag of destiny will destroy the reins of reason. The force of the moment faces man with all its power and he cannot but yield. This king is a staunch theist, a deep devotee. He has earned spiritual splendour. He is established in moral behaviour. He is the lord of all the regions; his fame has pervaded all the three worlds. He is served always by thousands of loyal men and minds. When he leaves his mansion and moves out, he is accompanied by many guards who await with folded hands and eyes fixed on him, his least command, so that they may win his favour by executing them to his satisfaction. As soon as he enters a kingdom, the ruler thereof accords him a glorious welcome, offers him magnificent hospitality and respectful homage. A person accustomed to this rich routine was naturally shocked when he did not receive any sign of welcome here; he was not even recognised and respected; the neglect was so serious that he did not get a cup of water to alleviate his thirst. He was torn by the pangs of hunger and of humiliation, for there was no response even though he called out many times. So, unable to bear the agony and the shock, he was led to commit this improper act. Of course, it is a fault but, just for this small misdemeanour, when you reacted so harshly, you brought irreparable damage to the entire community of ascetics and hermits. Alas! What a terrible calamity have you called down!"

The aged hermit closed his eyes and sat silent for a while, seeking some means by which the king can be saved from the curse. Finding none, and realising that God alone can set such things right, since He is all-powerful and all-knowing, he prayed with all his heart, "O, Refuge of all the Worlds! This immature little boy, with no knowledge of right and wrong, of what is one's duty and what is not, prompted by ignorance, has committed this great blunder, harmful to the king. Pardon this boy or punish him; but, promote the welfare of the king.

The hermit opened his eyes. He saw the ascetics and the young comrades of his son who stood around him. In sadness, he told them, "Did you notice the injury that my son has perpetrated? It is not right that we, hermits, should insult and injure the king who is the guardian and guide of humanity, isn't it?"

"Therefore, I request you all to pray to God that the king should come to no harm and that only auspicious things be added unto him." When the Rishi Sameeka directed them thus, an aged monk rose from the group; he was the very picture of peace and resignation; he said, "Great Soul! You are showering such profuse Grace on this king. The person who pronounced this curse is your own son; surely your spiritual attainments are much higher than your son's and, you can

achieve anything through them. Why then are you so much concerned about the curse that this boy hurled at the king? You can make it ineffective, can't you?" At this, the rest of the group, the elders and the young ones, exclaimed, "True, true; listen to our prayers and pardon this boy. Bring about the welfare of the king and save him from harm."

The sage Sameeka smiled; he closed his eyes; he saw with his inner yogic vision the past and the future of the king, and examined whether his present was conditioned by his past or by his future. He found that Parikshit had to suffer the poison-bite of the cobra, Takshaka and that this was his destiny. He felt that trying to save him from this end will be going counter to the dictates of Divinity; he realised that the misbehaviour of the king and the angry reaction of his son were both the consequences of that compulsive urge. He concluded that only God, the artificer of all resolutions and achievements, can modify events and that, any effort on his part would amount to an exhibition of egoism.

He knew that egoism is the deadliest foe of hermits; but, yet he did not amass his undoubted strength against it and destroy it completely. He decided to render what little help he could to the unfortunate king of the realm. Opening his eyes, he looked on all four sides to select a clever disciple of his from among the gathering. At last, he called one student to him and, said "You must proceed immediately to Hastinapur and return; prepare yourself for the journey and come to me again." The student replied, "I am ever ready to obey your command; what have I to do with preparations? I am ever prepared. I can start this very moment; tell me what I have to do there." With these words, he fell at his feet and offered his obeisance. The sage rose from his seat and took the student into the inner apartment. He told him in detail all the points that he had to convey to the king. Then, the student fell at the master's feet and set out towards the capital.

Meanwhile, the king had reached his palace and after a short rest, he awoke into a realisation of the enormity of the wrong that he had done at the hermitage. "Alas, into what depths of foulness did my mind fall? It is indeed a heinous sin that I, the emperor, should cast an insult on that ascetic." He lamented within himself. "How am I to make amends for this crime? Shall I go to that hermitage and plead for pardon? Or, shall I offer my head to bear the punishment that is my due? What exactly is my duty now?" He struggled with himself for an answer.

Just then, he saw a guard who came up to the door and stood silent with folded arms. He asked him why he had come. The man said, "A student from a hermitage has come and is waiting for audience; he says, he has been sent by the sage Sameeka; he says his message is very urgent and important; he is in great hurry I am awaiting royal orders."

When these words fell on his ears, the bed of jasmine flowers on which he was reclining appeared to have been transformed into a bed of snakes with fiery tongues, hissing and writhing all around him. He called the guard to come near him and he pelted question after question at him about the young man who had come from the hermitage: how is he? Does he appear sad or angry? Or, is he brimful of joy and equanimity?

The guard replied, "O King! The sage's son who has come to have your audience is quite calm and peaceful. He is repeating the words, 'Victory to the king,' 'Victory to our Ruler'. I do not see any trace of anger or passion on his face." This gave the king some comfort. He sought to find

out what reply had been given to the questions asked by the young student. The guard said, "We told him, the King had been to the forest, he returned only just now, he is taking rest for a while; please wait for some time; as soon as he breaks his rest, we shall inform him." The king inquired, "What did he say in reply to this?" The guard said "Lord! The young man was most anxious to see you as quickly as possible. He said he had some urgent message to communicate; he said his master would be awaiting his return and counting the minutes. He said that the sooner he sees you the better. He was repeating within himself all the time, 'May it be well with the king, may safety and prosperity be on him.' We offered him a high seat and invited him to occupy it, but, he did not accept it. He preferred to stand at the door; he is counting minutes there."

Tears of joy welled within the eyes of the king. Wiping them off, he hurried towards the entrance, without donning regal robes or insignia, without caring even to wear sandals or a robe over the chest. He fell prostrate at the feet of that son of a hermit; he held both his hands in his own and led him into the inner apartments, where he placed him on a high seat and himself sat on the floor beneath. He prayed that he might be told the reason for the journey.

The student said, "O King! My master, Sage Sameeka sends you his special blessings. He has commissioned me to communicate to you some special matters," and broke into tears. Seeing this, the king exclaimed, "Well, tell me soon; if anything has to be done by me, tell me soon; I am prepared to lay down my life in the discharge of my obligations. Or, is my kingdom in any danger? Have I to take any measure of relief? I am ready to sacrifice anything for saving it."

The student messenger replied, "O King! No danger threatens the realm or the hermits. No fear can ever bother them. You are the very person whom dangers threaten, whom harm will overtake." When he gave this subtle warning, the king declared exultingly, "I am indeed blessed. When my subjects and the hermits engaged in asceticism are safe, I do not in the least care what happens to me. I inhale and exhale so that I can ensure peace and prosperity for them both." The king quietened after some time and asked the Disciple, "Now tell me what your Master wanted me to know." He replied, "King! My master is very much concerned over a grievous wrong that has been committed, out of sheer ignorance. That is the prime reason for his sending me to you."

Hearing this, Parikshit was very much agitated. He asked, "What is the wrong, you speak about? Who did that wrong? Tell me, tell me all," he pleaded.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Light of Love

"I have resolved to enfold, in the fostering care of Sanathana Dharma, the peoples of the World" Baba declared, at the World Conference held in May last, at Bombay. He indicated that day itself that His Grace will be showered first on the peoples of East Africa, who have been praying that

He should bless their land, in the month of June itself. And, on 30th June, at 12 noon, the Air India Boeing which landed at Nairobi brought Baba to Kenya, in East Africa!

Baba has said often that the world is His mansion and that each continent is but a hall in that mansion. But, for devotees, His journey to Africa was a Historic Event, from which they could draw further sustenance of joy, through which they could sense deeper kinship with new peoples and cultures. So, they gathered in thousands at the airport at Bangalore on the 28th, when He left for Bombay and at Dharmakshetra on the 29th, when a Meeting was announced by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti to pray for Baba's Blessings, on the eve of His Departure from India. The citizens of Bombay gathered in thousands to witness the embarkation of Baba at 0 A.M. on the 30th June.

There was a mammoth gathering of Indians and Africans at the Embakasi International Airport, Nairobi, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Avatar from the East, the Master who awakens the spark of Sathya Dharma. Santhi and Prema, in every heart. Their joy knew no bounds when Baba went among them; the songs and hymns they sang were overflowing with ecstasy. Baba said, the scene reminded Him of the days of Jayadeva and Gouranga!

Baba proceeded by car with Dr. Chotabhai G Patel, the Host, to Kampala, 407 miles away. At Nakuru, 97 miles from Nairobi, hundreds of devotees were engaged in Bhajan at the house of the ex-Mayor and Baba graciously gave Darshan to them; so, too, at Eldoret (190 miles off), Tororo (280 miles) and Jinja (357 miles), huge gatherings awaited the moment when they could welcome Baba and fulfill their long cherished desire; for Darshan. When at last, Baba reached Kampala late at night, He was enthusiastically received by thousands who were engaged in Bhajan, in the spacious pandal erected by Dr Patel around his house.

That pandal proved inadequate to seat the streams of Indians and Africans who hurried to Baba, for the morning and evening Bhajan sever day during His stay. During Bhajan He moved among the gathering and selected for special inter views and treatment, the sick, the disabled, the distressed, the old, and the spiritually hungry, from the people who had been attracted by His Divine Personality. It was a source of great joy to see Africans predominating in the groups thus selected, for Baba has come for all humanity and all peoples of the World have an equal claim on His Grace. No one who attended a single session of the thrilling Bhajan absented himself or herself from subsequent sessions; besides, he or she brought kith and kin, and friends, from distant towns and villages, to whom the message of the arrival of the 'God-Man' had been communicated by telephone, telegram or letter. Thus, in a few days, the open spaces around the house were packed to capacity and the roads too had to be closed for traffic. Such was the anxious yearning of the people of Uganda for the Darshan of Baba.

Baba was received with acclamation at Malabi, where He entered Uganda. A pilot motor van preceded His car thenceforward, throughout His stay. The Inspector-General of Police Mr. Oryema paid his respects, within hours of His arrival at Kampala. The Chief of Staff of the Uganda General Idi Amin came to see Baba and a long talk with Him. Baba revealed to every who contacted Him, His Omnipotence and Omniscience. He created some appropriate signs of His Grace for each; and they offered love and gratitude. He gave also timely advice and teachings about habits and courses of conduct and spiritual practice which each valued greatly.

Boys affected by polio, young persons pushed about in wheel chairs were called by Him for personal Grace and they walked out of His room, quite normal, to the wonderment of the vast multitude outside! Even while Baba was passing through the farthest jungle, supplicants for His Mercy, made aware of its efficiency through newspapers, crowded around Him and sought the coveted Gift.

On 1st July at 6 P.M. Baba gave Darshan to many thousand Indians at the Sanathana Dharma Temple, Kampala. He sang a few Bhajans in order to demonstrate the sweetness that can be tasted while adoring God through this means. On 2nd, He visited the Bahai Temple, built on one of the seven hills around Kampala.

On 3rd July, Baba and some members of the party flew in two chartered planes to "Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania, to watch the huge variety of animal and bird life living in that sanctuary. Bob Raymer and Mrs Raymer, Los Angeles, U.S.A., who were also of the party had earlier left by plane for Nairobi and they flew in from that City, within minutes of Baba's arrival there. Going round the 120 sq. miles floor area of this fantastic volcanic crater in Land Rovers, the party saw at close quarters vast herds of plains game, antelopes gnus zebras, ostriches, and a number of lions and elephants, besides flamingoes by the million. On the flight back to Nairobi, the planes flew over a newly formed volcano near Lake Natron, the crater still emitting smoke!

At 6-30 p m. Baba addressed a Public Gathering of Indians and Africans at Nairobi, a gathering almost unprecedented in the history of Nairobi, for, about 20,000 people of all creeds and races attended. Baba won the hearts of all, moving amidst the serried ranks and showering His Grace on the sick people whom He discovered. In His Discourse, Baba declared that all countries are sustained by the one world; all 'bodies' are sustained by the same Divine Principle He said that man is forgetting his humanness; he is ignoring his destiny of God-ness; he is degrading, himself into beast-ness and even worse, ogre-ness. It is only when every one remembers that he is born as man, to fulfill a high purpose, namely realising the Divinity in him and merging in the Ocean of Divinity that the world will have Peace. He called upon all to develop Love, "I have come here only to share your Love and to gift you a share My Love. I have not come to publicise Myself or collect disciples or gather support for the Hindu or any other Dharma. I have come to tell you of the all-inclusive Dharma of Love, Love between all creeds, all faiths. That is the Message I live, that is the Message I bring".

On the 4th, Baba and His party visited the Nairobi National Park where they saw lion cheetahs hippopotamuses and giraffes, besides, many other game, in their natural habitat. In the evening, the party motored to the equatorial forest, Secret Valley, and saw at close quarters leopards and other wild animals. Being Thursday, Baba held a spiritual seminar on Sadhana and gave gifts of Grace to all. Returning to Nairobi on the 5th, Baba left by special plane from Wilson Airport, to Entebbe, the International Airport, 21 miles near Kampala, reaching that City at 2 p. m. The residents of Kampala, whose appetite for Baba had sharpened during His absence, swarmed around Him that evening and prayed that He must vouch safe Darsan to them every day. They clamoured that His stay must be prolonged beyond the rumoured date, namely, 10th July. For, Baba's mission of mercy had captured their hearts. On the 6th, the Indian High Commissioner in Uganda, Sri K. P. R. Singh came to meet Baba and had discussion with Him on the practical application of spiritual values. In the evening, Baba had a lively meeting with about a hundred

Lawyers, Rotarians 'Lions', and Headmasters of Kampala and other towns. They sought to clarify their doubts by means of a series of questions and Baba graciously answered them in His sweet and simple style, with many a parable to make the points clear.

On the 7th and the 8th, Baba addressed Public Meetings in the vast open space around the Patidar Building, Kampala, where more than 30,000 people gathered each day. He spoke of the fundamental unity of all faiths and the need for intelligent co-operation between the followers.

On the 8th, the Minister for Information and Broadcasting in Uganda, Mr. Ojira, and the Defence Minister of Uganda Mr. Onama came to Dr Patel's House to meet Baba. Baba blessed them and had a long conversation with them. That night, Uganda Television broadcast pictures of the interviews which they had with Baba. Referring to the discourses of Baba on 7th and 8th, the Announcer said, "At both meetings, the Hindu Religious Leader Sri Sathya Sai Baba emphasised the need for brotherliness and love between all countries and creeds".

Baba would not deny the vast gatherings the chance of Darshan everyday, and the sick among them the chance of personal Grace; so, every day at 8 A.M., and at 6 P. M. Bhajan was held and Baba selected about a hundred persons each day for individual attention thereafter.

On the 9th, Baba met devotees from Kampala Nairobi Jinja Mbale Tororo Eldoret and other towns who were anxious to engage themselves in some spiritual endeavour and some item of social 'service and wanted Baba's blessings and guidance, Baba told them that, ultimately, all activity is for the Ananda of the self: the ultimate benefactor is oneself, and not the other. He laid down lines of work for medical practitioners and lawyers among, their poorer and in the hospitals and for women among, their poorer and illiterate sisters. He suggested the formation of a single Sathya Sai Seva Samiti for East Africa with Headquarters at Kampala and branches in Kenya and Tanzania, for the present. In the evening, there was an intimate meeting between the Sadhakas and Seekers (Indians and Africans) and Baba, when regulations for Dhyana were explained by Baba, to about a hundred persons. At 8 P.M., the Minister for Internal Affairs, Uganda, Mr. Bataringay came to meet Baba and had a long talk with Him.

The tenth day of July was Guru Poornima Day, the Day when seekers everywhere dedicate themselves at the Feet of the Master. Special worship was offered that day to Baba in a thousand villages and towns all over the World by devotees. Baba was physically at Kampala that day, showering Grace on the Patels, the members of His Party and more than all, on the thousands of Indians and Africans who were adoring Him and seeking His Grace with sincere yearning. African students of the University of Makerere received His Grace that day, in a special measure. So also delegations from Kabale Kakira Igaye Masaka and the villages around Kampala. More than 20,000 persons joined in the morning Bhajan that sacred day and all of them were blessed with the chance of Namaskar and the gift of Prasad from the Divine Hand.

Besides the police who were sincerely devoted to the task of traffic control and crowd guidance, a task which they managed with tact and patience, the Bhajan Sessions at the Pandal around Dr. Patel's Bungalow and the Public Meetings at Patidar Compound, and Baba's visits to places in the City entailed hard work for a group of volunteers, young and old, about 200 in number, who toiled day and night, with signal enthusiasm and spirit of service. Baba decided to bless them, on

Guru Poornima Day and so, they were called that evening, into the Divine Presence. He appreciated their work of which proved successful in spite of absence of training and previous experience, He spoke to them of Hanuman, of Vivekananda and other great social workers, and pointed out that no one can become an efficient master, without first learning to be an efficient servant.

On the 11th, there was a record gathering for Bhajan Sessions and Baba too selected the largest number that day for individual attention. In the evening after Bhajan Baba visited the houses of some ardent devotees and rendered that day a golden day in their lives.

On the 12th, even before dawn, Baba and His Party motored to Murchison Falls National Park 190 miles from Kampala, reaching the Praa Safari Lodge by about noon, There were elephants roaming freely round the Lodge and later, hundreds were seen all along the roads and even across them Baba and the party went on a launch trip on the romantic Victoria Nile from Lake Albert to Murchison Falls, seeing hundreds of hippos and literally thousands of giant crocodiles, from the boat. Baba drove to the high rocks overlooking the Falls and watched the thundering waters of the Nile squeezing through a narrow gap down to the rocks 140 feet below. Returning to Masindi about 9 P.M. Baba graciously accepted the invitation of a devotee to visit his 2600 acre farm at Kikonda, about 80 miles away. He reached Kampala at 1 A.M. to find Bhajan being continued with unabated enthusiasm by Indian and African devotees so that they might get the coveted Darshan during the concluding Arati.

The news that Baba had decided to leave for India the next day filled the roads around the bungalow of Dr Patel to bursting point, on the 13th long before sunrise. Volunteers had a hard time to regulate the excitement of the gathering and their yearning to have Darshan, to touch the hem, of Baba's garment, to hand Him a prayer like; "Father! Do not leave us". In the evening, the Mayor of Kampala prayed on behalf of the citizens that the visit may be extended, but, Baba told him that He had to inaugurate the Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women at Anantapur, on 22nd July and so, He had to leave as programmed.

On the 14th, when Baba left Kampala at 10 A.M. for Entebbe Airport, there was no eye that was dry; many could not suppress their sobs. Every one felt that a precious component of them was merged in Baba and was going with Him, to India and Prasanthi Nilayam, that their lives could no longer be the same drab meaningless rigmarole, now that Baba had illumined it for a fortnight. Though Entebbe is 21 miles away, thousands managed to assemble there and have one more Darshan of the Lord, as He boarded the E A A Plane. At Nairobi, when the plane arrived two hours late, thousands got Darshan from afar, for Baba boarded the Air India Boeing from the tarmac itself; when Baba waved them His Abhayahasta, there was the loud acclamation of grateful acknowledgement. At Aden, many devotees came into the plane and were rewarded by the unique chance of Darshan and Prasad Baba arrived at Bombay at 12-45 Indian Standard Time. Thousands were awaiting His arrival, in spite of the late hour, and Baba blessed them all by giving Darshan.

On the 15th, the Sathya Sai Seva Samiti organised a Public Meeting at Dharmakshetra to facilitate East Africa on the visit of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. It was presided over by Dr. K. M. Munshi and attended by over 30,000 devotees. Dr. Munshi expressed his great joy that he

had at last found Baba, who could restore faith in morals and religion in all men. Baba described the enthusiasm and discipline of the huge gatherings at Nairobi and Kampala during Bhajan and discourses, the restraint and humility that the volunteers filled their movements with, the sweetness and simplicity of the Africans, and the eagerness with which all listened to His Message. He declared that, He had stepped only from one room of His Mansion into another, and so, there was no occasion for such jubilation. "I am alien in no land; I am native, everywhere", He said. "Africans responded magnificently to the teaching that each one was essentially the Atma, and a wave of the vast Ocean of Grace." Verily, He lit the Lamp of Love in every Heart.

(Ed.)

Inauguration

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba inaugurated the Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women, at Anantapur, on 22nd June 1968. The Governing-Body of the College met that day at Anantapur in the morning and appointed from among the members, a Committee for the selection of, the Principal and members of the Staff and another for the selection of students for the P.U.C and B. A Classes, which were to be started.

At the Public Meeting held in connection with the Inauguration, attended by over 30,000 people, Hon'ble T. V. Raghavulugaru, Minister for Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh presided. Dr. S. Bhagavantham, D. Sc, New Delhi, Member of the Governing Body said that Baba had announced in 1966 while presiding over the School Day Celebrations of the Girls, High School, Anantapur, that a College for Girls was very necessary for the town. That Sankalpa of His prevailed and through His Grace, the College has been started (and affiliated to the Venkateswara University) with a distinguished Staff, efficient equipment, and a Governing Body consisting of eminent educationists and social workers from all over India and even outside, men and women deeply attached to Baba and the ideals He emphasised. He announced the names of the rest of the members: Dr. V. K. Gokak, M.A., D. Litt. Bangalore; V. K. Rao, I.C.S., Hyderabad; H. H. The Rajamatha of Nawanagar; H. H. The Maharani of Kutch; Dr. K. Bhaskaran Nair, D. S.c., Indulal H Shah, Bombay; The Kumara Raja of Venkatagiri, Raja Omopathy Rao, Hyderabad; Sohan Lal, New Delhi; S. Sitaram London., T. Ramchandra Reddy, Anantapur; Principal Viswanatham, Anantapur, Prof. Krishna, Post Graduate Section, Venkateswara University; Anantapur; Anthony Reddy, M.P. Anantapur and R Janakiramiah, Puttaparthi, with Dr. Damayanthi Doongaji, M. A., L. L. B., Ph. D, the Principal of the Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women as Secretary, and Dr. S. Balakrishna as Correspondent.

Dr. Bhagavantham thanked the Chief Minister and the Education Minister as well as the education Secretary and the Vice-Chancellor and "Registrar of the Venkateswara University for all the help and guidance they rendered to this College started under the direct supervision and management of Bhagavan, with its Governing Body as His instrument.

Dr. S. Balakrishna read and presented an Address of Welcome to the Minister of Education on behalf of the members of the Governing Body. He announced that the members and others had

donated the annual fee amount for about a hundred students of this College and that the award of these Free Studentships will be announced in due course.

Hon'ble Sri Raghavulu acknowledged with gratitude the Grace that Baba was showering on the College; he felt sure that His Blessings will ensure a great future for the Institution, which, with the guidance and support of the galaxy of talent and devotion that constitutes the Governing Body, will soon become an Ideal College, to be emulated by Women's educational institutions all over India. Baba in His Discourse explained the role of women as mothers, and teachers of the coming generation. He spoke of the need to spiritualise education, so that the individual and the nation and the world can live in peace and joy. He described the devoted enthusiasm of the members of the Governing Body, who had come from all the States of India, to serve the cause He promoted; He also described the scholarship, attainments and devotion to service, of the Principal as well as of Members of the Staff, some of whom had come from America and New Delhi. Baba said that His recent visit to East Africa had shown that the people of the world were convinced that the culture and philosophy of India alone can establish Peace among men. But, in India, the inheritors of that culture are discarding it, for the tawdry tinsels of the West! This College, He said, will feed the roots of that culture and help in the resuscitation of Dharma.

"The tragedy today is that India has forgotten its real source of strength, like the elephant that crouches at the slightest command of the mahout, ignorant of its inherent might. It can get back its strength through the cultivation of spiritual disciplines which will reveal the Atmic reality. The real Vidya is Atmavidya, Vidya that helps to recognise the reality and draw strength, joy and peace therefrom. But, no glimpse of this spring of joy is given to the students in our schools and colleges today.

The Mahabharata battle lasted for 18 days; other epic battles lasted for longer or shorter periods. But, they lasted only for a duration; they ended thereafter. But, the battle between Maya and the Jivi, the Individual and the Deluding Nature around him has been continuing since ages, through a series of births; it has not ended! It can bring victory to the Jivi only when, like Arjuna, he chooses God as his charioteer. If, like Duryodhana, the leader of the Kaurava Forces who fought against Arjuna, he chooses not God but material weapons and hardware, he is bound to fall into ruin. Maya can be conquered only by allying firmly with the master of Maya, namely, Madhava. That is the lesson that Atmavidya teaches."

"I have started this College, for this high purpose, of imparting some knowledge of, this Atmavidya to the Women of this country. The members of the Governing Body have also joined Me in this, because they too are actuated by these lofty ideals." Baba concluded.

Sri Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

June 25:	Rajkot (Gujarat) Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali: Inauguration of Library
27:	Badulla (Ceylon): Inauguration: Sri Sathya Sai Satsangam
30:	Narasannapet: Inauguration of Nagarsankirtan by Sathya Sai Seva Samiti
30-July 13:	Baba in East Africa.

- July 8: Ernakulam: (Kerala): Inauguration of Telugu Classes by Sathya Sai Seva Samiti
- 10: Bhubaneswar (Orissa): Inauguration of Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali
- 14: Kasapuram (Anantapur Dt): Inauguration of Nagarsankirtan
- 15: Bombay: Dharmakshetra: Public Meeting: President: Dr, K. M. Munshi.
Discourse by Baba
Amalapuram (E.G. Dt): Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha: Discourses on Bhagavatham (15 & 16)
- 17: Hyderabad: Baba at Hyderabad.
- 20: Themamane (Shimoga Dt) : IInd Anniversary Celebrations of Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali
- 21: Sathyavada (W. G. Dt.): Conference of West Godavari Sathya Sai Organisations: Discourses by Pundits G. Subrahmania Sastry, P. Viswanatha Sarma and others
- 22: Anantapur: Inauguration of Women's College by Baba.
- 25-26: Bangalore: Akhanda Bhajan: Discourse by Bhagavan: Speeches by Dr. V. K. Gokak and Prof. G. P. Rajarathnam
- 25: Hyderabad-Secunderabad, Inauguration of Nagarsankirtan saptaha by all Sathya Sai Organisations (25-31 July)
- 28: Ambattur (Madras): IInd Anniversary Celebrations of Sathya Sai Seva Samiti.
- August 1: Hyderabad: Akhanda Bhajan at 'Lata' Nampalle, Discourse by Baba.
- 11: Madras: Nagarsankirtan Festival by City Sathya Sai Organisations.

Bhagavata Vahini

28

The messenger from the hermitage said, "O Emperor, our Preceptor has a son: though he is of tender years, the splendour of his spiritual attainment is overwhelming. He reveres his father as his God and has as his chief aim in life, his service and the upkeep of his renown. His name is Sringeri. You came to that hermitage; propelled by some inscrutable impulse, you placed a dead snake round the neck of the father of this Sringeri, who is also my Preceptor. A few children saw it and they ran towards Sringeri, who was engaged in games with his comrades, to inform him. He did not believe it at first; he continued with his game. But, the children of the hermitage repeated the news often and insistently; they jeered at him for merrily playing on, when his father had been insulted so grossly. Even his playmates laughed at his callousness. So, he ran as fast as he could towards his cottage, and found that their report was true.

When he turned back, he saw you moving off from the place and, without any sense of discrimination about what is of lasting significance and what is of temporary interest, urged on by frantic passion and anger, that teenage fellow lost control over himself...pronounced a curse on you. This has caused unending pain to my Preceptor." The Emperor interrupted him and asked, "O son of a hermit, tell me what the curse is." The youth replied, "Lord, I find it hard to tell you. My tongue refuses to utter it. But, yet, I have to communicate it since my Preceptor has commissioned me to do so. The son of my Preceptor promptly took the waters of the holy Kowsiki river in his palm, and pronounced, 'Seven days from this day, may the King be bitten by the snake Takshaka', a terrible curse, indeed." The youth stopped, for his grief overpowered him and he broke into tears.

But, the Emperor only smiled. He said, "Young hermit, is this a curse? To be bitten by Takshaka, and that too seven days later? This is no curse, this is a signal gift of Grace! This is a Blessing from the lips of the son of the Preceptor. Immersed in the affairs of the empire, I had become slothful regarding the affairs of the spirit and of God, which are the goals of life. As a result, the merciful Lord, Hari, moved the tongue of that Rishi's son to articulate those words. He has allotted me an interval of seven days! What a great blessing is this! It must be Divine Will that I should spend every moment of these seven days in the contemplation of God. From this very second, I shall dedicate both Time and Thought, without intermission at the Feet of the Lord. Young friend, what more did your Preceptor command you to inform me? Tell me soon. My heart is yearning to hear it."

The young messenger continued, "My Preceptor felt that this curse amounted to unpardonable treason, for, you are well established in Dharma, and you are a great devotee of the Lord. So, he sought for long to discover some means by which the consequences of the curse could be avoided; however, he came to know through his yogic skill, that you are destined to give up your life as a result of snakebite and destined also to reach the Seat of the Lord on death. He felt that this was an end, which was worthwhile; and that it was sinful to obstruct such a glorious consummation. So, he sends you through me, his blessings that you may reach the Presence of God. I have now finished my mission. I can leave, as soon as you permit me."

Parikshit prostrated before the young disciple and prayed that his reverential gratitude may be communicated to the great saint Sameeka and his son. At this, he left and reaching the hermitage, he informed the hermit all that transpired at the capital.

Meanwhile, the emperor proceeded in great joy to the inner apartments and standing before the entrance of zenana, he asked that his son, Janamejaya, be brought to him. Hearing the call the son wondered why he was summoned so suddenly and he ran towards the father. Parikshit got an old Brahmin into his room, and placing on the son's head his own crown lying on the cot, he walked barefoot, with just the clothes he had on, at the moment, towards the Ganga entrusting the new king to the old priest.

Within minutes, the news spread all over the place and all through the City; groups of men and women, brahmins and ministers hurried behind the king and remonstrated piteously; but, it was all in vain. They wept aloud; they fell at his feet; they rolled along the road across his path. The king did not notice anything; he vouchsafed no reply; he moved on, with the Name of the Lord in his mind and the Goal of Realisation in his thought. He was fast moving towards the bank of the Holy Ganga. Finding that the King had left alone and unattended for the River, the Royal Elephant, the Royal Horse, the Palanquin were taken in a line behind him, so that he may ascend any one of them as was his wont; but, the King did not pay any attention to the importunities. The populace were amazed to see their ruler discard food and drink; he was engaged without a moment's break in the recitation of the Name of the Lord. Since no one knew the reason for this sudden resolution to renounce, all sorts of rumours got afloat, based on the imaginative faculty of each individual.

But, some people investigated the antecedents of the event of renunciation and discovered that the disciple of a hermit had come with some important news, and following that cue, it was known that the king had only seven days more to live; the people gathered on the bank of the river and sat sunk in grief around the king, praying for his safety.

The tragic news spread so fast that it reached even the forest. The ascetics and Sadhakas, the sages and saints—they too trekked along to the bank of Ganga, with water pots in their hands. The whole place put on the appearance of a huge festival. The place resounded to the chanting of the Pranava, the recitation of Vedic hymns, and the singing in chorus of the glory of the Lord. Some groups were roundly scolding the son of Sameeka who was the cause of all the tragedy. Thus, in a short time, the bank was filled with human heads, so that not a grain of sand could be seen.

Meanwhile, an aged hermit who was filled with great pity and affection towards the Emperor approached him and, shedding tears of love, he spoke to him thus: “O King! People say all kinds of things; there are many versions going round from mouth to mouth; I have come to you to find out the truth; I can walk only with great difficulty. I love you so much that I cannot bear to hear all that people say about you. What exactly did happen? What is the reason for this sudden act of sacrifice? What is the mystery behind the curse that the son of a hermit pronounced on such a highly evolved soul as you? Declare it! Satisfy our craving to know the truth. I cannot look on while the people are suffering like this; you were like a father to them. Now, you pay no heed to their pleadings. You have given up all attachments and come here. Speak to them at least a few

words of solace. With you, sitting silent and hungry on the riverbank, engaged in rigorous asceticism, the queens and ministers are in distress like fish thrown out of water. Who was that young man, whose words caused this disastrous storm? Can he be genuinely the son of a hermit? Or, is that only a disguise? It is all a mystery to me."

The King listened to these words, spoken with such affection and equanimity. He opened his eyes, and fell at the feet of the sage. "Master! Mahatma! What have I to hide from you? It cannot be hidden, even if I want to. I went into the forest a-hunting. Many wild animals were seen but they scattered at our approach. The small band of bowmen that was with me was also scattered in the attempt to pursue the animals. I found myself alone, on the track of game and was far away from my retinue. I got no game; I was overcome with hunger and thirst; the scorching heat exhausted me; at last, I discovered a hermitage and entered it. I came to know later that it was the cottage of Rishi Sameeka. I called out repeatedly to discover whether there was any one in. No answer came, nor did any one come out. I saw a hermit sitting in deep meditation, lost in his own Dhyana. While coming out from the cottage, I felt something soft under my foot. I lifted it with my fingers and found it was a dead serpent. As soon as my eyes fell on it, a foul thought came into me; I placed the dead snake round the neck of that hermit engaged in Dhyana. This was somehow cognised by the son of that hermit; he could not bear the ignominy. He cursed, 'May this snake round the neck of my father take the form of Takshaka and end the life of the man who insulted my father thus, on the seventh day from today.'

"News was sent to me from the hermitage, of this curse and its consequence. I am conscious of the sin I have committed; I feel that a king capable of this sin has no place in the kingdom. So I have given up everything, every attachment. I have decided to use these seven days for the ceaseless contemplation of the Glory of God; it is great good fortune that this chance has been given to me. That is why I have come here."

Thus, when the nobles, courtiers, princes, queens, ministers, hermits and others who were around him came to know the true facts they dropped from their minds the wild guesses they had made so far; they prayed aloud that the curse may lose its fatal sting.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Nagarsankirtan

In the silence of the golden dawn
The Glory of God is flooding the sky!
The praise of God is streaming through the street,
The name of God is pouring through the door,
The fragrance of God is filling the room!

It is cool, comforting, calm; I cannot sleep any more.
Something is lifting me, my I chastises me,

To rise, to raise my hands, in praise.
The God within me thrills
To the ecstasy that floods me.

Here they come, the blessed throng,
I shall open the window of my heart
And drink my fill, divine delight.
I shall mark the time, true as they do,
I shall sing the song, in tune.

I am no more entitled to sleep,
My ears are echoing joy,
My eyes are both astir with avid thirst!

I have to merge in the deep,
I shall shirk all shallowness.

They have raised the curtain for another day
With song and dance and drum!

I must arise and act the role He has cast for me
Until He leads me away, with a pat
And says, "Well done; go home"!

—Kasturi

Desire More Desire More

If at any time we find Baba denying our prayers, be it understood that it is for our good and we are profiting by losing our prayers. A child sometimes asks for something harmful from his father. The father never cares for the weeping or wailing of the child and never gives him that thing. Thereby the child thinks that the father is behaving like an enemy and that he is tyrannising over him by withholding the object asked for, but the father remains adamant and gives the child only those things which are useful and harmless.

Whenever this faith arises in a person that his Maker and Protector is always mindful about his welfare and will go on giving him from time to time all things which are beneficial for him, then that person upon realising this truth, gives up all desires and thinks that when Baba has made his abode within him, then why will he not cater to his own requirements; secondly, when we are His parts and bits, it becomes incumbent upon Him to care for all our proper needs; thirdly, when He has made us, He will care for us like a potter who cares for his pots.

If we hold that Prakriti (Nature) rules are operating, even then when Prakriti has given things their proper shape and their proper form and also endowed them with proper ways for self preservation; likewise Prakriti will afford similar facilities as well to us.

Jesus said, (St. Mathew VI-32) "Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for itself". So don't care for the morrow. He who will make the sun rise for us tomorrow and make the moon shine and stars twinkle, and give us air to breathe, water and various kinds of fruits and bring before our vision this Universe, He will surely cater for our necessities and needs as well.

He has given the quality, of heat to the Sun, not upon being told by someone to bestow this, quality on it; likewise coolness to Moon; but all these were given to them without asking, likewise, the future as well, He will go on bestowing without asking. That great Giver and Provider, Baba who has been granting us our innumerable wants without asking all these days, He will never point to us, another door for a single want of ours.

The great Giver Baba who is in the constant habit of giving, cannot refrain his hand from giving or withhold it from bestowing. Even if we do not possess the beggar's bowl, He will bestow the same upon us to receive his bountiful gifts; by bestowing on us eyes, He shows the sun; by bestowing ears, He makes us hear music; by bestowing us heart he will bestow upon us His Prakash. In truth, He gives us edible things, it is He who gives us the appetite as well. By giving the appetite, He makes us give value to our food; by giving us eyes, he reveals beauty; by endowing us with Prema, He gives us His darshan. When He has given us thirst why will He not give Water? He who has generated desire in us, why will He not grant us the objects of our desire? Such a great Giver Baba, if He remains silent upon hearing our request, then His silence is much more valuable than giving. His silence indicates that He is either going to give us some greater thing than asked for or indicates that He is saving us from the great harm which would have befallen to us, if he were to grant our prayers.

The best course open for us is to entrust ourselves to Him like a child to his mother, or a sick man to the doctor. If per chance our desires do not appear to be realised, the best course open is to reconcile our desires with His Will. Then we will have no opportunity to say, that our desire was not fulfilled. We should only keep His memory very fresh in us, and He would take proper care of our needs. If we have not strength to relinquish our desires, then taking all these with us, we should go and sit in His lap. When we are there in His Protective lap, our desires will be fulfilled by His Gracious Hand. We should not enlarge our egos by seeing our desires realised by our strength; perchance there maybe some evil lurking underneath.

We should consider the disappointments coming from Him, greater than our achievements. If we cannot desist from generating desires then we should create a desire for Him only. The natural consequence would be either our desires would vanish in Him or will be fulfilled automatically; we should remain Santa (at peace) for we shall be provided. God has entrusted us to Prakriti (Nature) and Prakriti has to look after our welfare because we have been entrusted by God and Prakriti is also answerable for us to God.

We possess all; it is sheerly on account of A-Jnana (ignorance) that we drown ourselves in sorrow, pain and misery. We are the sons of God. Why should we worry? We should be at Peace.

S. D. Khera

Vidya Gita

The Tripura Rahasya, otherwise known as Haritayana Samhita, after its reputed author Haritayana, contains a section called Sri Vidya Gita, which is a proper subject for study, during the Navaratri, when Tripura-sundari, the Goddess Shakti or Maya or Kali or Saraswati is being worshipped and meditated upon by all ardent aspirants. The Gita is in the form of a story: Once upon a time, a distinguished galaxy of sages assembled in Brahmaloaka. Each one held forth loud and long on his own system, with the courage of conviction and declared that it was the best. This led to great confusion and they could not all agree upon the system that was the best. So, they prayed to the Goddess Tripura to solve their problem. When She manifested Herself before them, they asked Her, "What is the proper and perfect means of attaining Thee? What is the nature and result of this attainment? Who is the best among the sages who have accomplished the, goal?"

The answer given contains the cream of the highest gains of Indian philosophy. "I am the ABSTRACT Intelligence, wherefrom the Cosmos originates, whereon it flourishes, wherein it resolves. The ignorant call Me, Prakriti, or the. Gross Universe, the wise know Me, as their own pure Being, the `I' within. Being non-dual and abstract Intelligence, I spontaneously manifest as the minutest particle in the Universe as well as the Universe itself. I manifest in diverse ways; but, I am unblemished, for I am absolute. Though I am the abode of all and immanent in all, I remain pure.

I wield My Maya and I play in it. I become covered with ignorance; I appear full of desires; I seek their fulfillment and appear happy or miserable; I project favourable or unfavourable environments; I appear to be born again and again; I learn the Truth and get absolved. This manifestation as the ignorant and the bound is called Creation. Supreme Wisdom is the state devoid of thoughts, will and desire and is unimpeded by ignorance. Non-dual consciousness is the state of emancipation. Emancipation is eternal and therefore, here and now; it is not a state to be acquired.

If the longing for becoming aware of emancipation is intense and unwavering, you will succeed. Three evil propensities this befoul the intellect have to be overcome: (i) want of faith in the Sastras and the Guru (ii) addiction to desires and (iii) dullness. Believe firmly, convince yourself by correct logic, develop dispassion, and to overcome dullness, practise adoration, prayer, meditation so that you may win Divine Grace. He who unreservedly surrenders himself to Me, with devotion, is endowed with all the requisites necessary for the Realisation of the Self, that is to say, Me.

You ask Me who among you is the best. Well, He who has one-pointed devotion to God is the best of aspirants, because his dullness will disappear through Grace. But, the one devoted to Abstract Consciousness excels every other seeker. Some sages, like Janaka, abide as the Self, even while engaged in complex duties. Though engaged in work, if a person does not look upon anything as non-self, he is a perfect sage. The best among the sages is never out of samadhi, be

he working or idle. He is not influenced by happiness or misery, by pleasure or pain, nor by fear or doubt or desire. He feels himself pervading all, as all. He is at peace, he is aware that all dualities are in the Self and of the Self. He feels this continuously and spontaneously. Such a one is the best among you. This is called Vidya Gita, because Tripura, or She who presides over the three Puras, cities that is to say, the gross, subtle and kaarana-sariras or bodies, is Vidya or the Highest Wisdom Itself.

In the Devi Mahatmya, the Goddess is described, "Sarvasya buddhi rupena, Janasya hrdis samsthithe!" "She who is in every being as Buddhi or Intelligence". She is Mahavidya, Mahavani, Bharathi, Vaak Saraswati. She promotes, confers, directs, Intelligence. The Navaratri is a Festival during which this Muktipradayani. She confers Liberation through Intelligence and removes the fog of Delusion from the inner eye is worshipped, adored and propitiated. May Intelligence grow, May Ignorance vanish, May all of us, through the Grace of Sai Mata (Mother Sai) be released from bondage to the senses and bondage to the temporary and the tawdry.

—Janakicharan Das

The Healing Process

East Africa is the first land outside India to receive the impact of the present Avatar. The dark continent, for long doomed to turn white, now bids, fair to have a place in the comity of nations, a niche in the temple of time. Once the happy hunting ground of European slave-traders, explorers, colonists, missionaries and adventurers, Africa is on the threshold of a great spiritual upheaval. The winds of change have already begun to blow, and imperialism and apartheid have been challenged. The visit of Sri Sathya Sai Baba signifies the emanation of the spirit, and its upsurge will transform the country. Known as Kusa-Dwipa (one of the seven continents of Hindu mythology), Africa borders the Atlantic and Indian Oceans with a rich terrain and tropical luxuriance of flora and fauna. The fabled land of Atlantis, presumably the patala of Sanskrit literature, is believed to have been submerged in a deluge. Plato records this in his Lost Atlantis, and Cheiro refers to its supermen. Escaping from the cataclysm, one of its tribes made Egypt its habitat and founded there a remarkable civilisation. The pyramid, the sphinx and the mummy, misted with myth, are a few relics of its past.....! Egypt is the gift of the Nile, an artery of pristine plenty, and has had close cultural and commercial ties with India. Abyssinia, Homer's Ethiopia, the biblical land of Sheda, is another civilised territory. These and other regions are now pulsing with a new fervour.

Now Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has planted His standard in the heart of Africa. Kampala is the nucleus of His mission there; it will soon begin ringing in our ears as Kamadhenu, and will surely push its steps into every part of the country. Inscrutable are the ways of God but He will not permit violence and injustice to... forever.

On the trans-Atlantic coast is Mexico, the Mayan land of gold, the El Dorado, abounding in remnants of yore, ruins of temples, a thousand-pillared hall, rock-cut images, has reliefs and a

touching tradition of its hoary connection with India. Peru with its rich civilisation under the, powerful Incas is another beckoning horizon. There are others, but space forbids me to glance further. All these are limbs-broken, no doubt, by the hand of the bigot and the vandal—of our ancient way of life.

The modern nations of America and Europe, as indeed those of Asia and Australia, are in the throes of profound unrest. The Symptoms are obvious but the causes obscure. Lack of faith in God with a flippant outlook and disregard for morals are common everywhere. The treatment must be for the whole ailing world.

Now the healing process under the compassionate and compelling guidance of Baba has made some headway. Europe and, America, too, will welcome Him very soon. The heritage of God is for all the world; it cannot suffer any parallel complexes, with a sectarian monopoly of right, a breached highway of progress, an intricate network of cant. It postulates the fundamental unity of all men as well as creeds—the picturesque facets of the integral, sempiternal Truth. In its shrine all are welcome to worship, to believe, to share, to serve, to help, to rest. Its benevolence will ensure the general summum bonum.

Bhagavan has thrown open its portals to every, one without restriction. All can enter and be entertained not as guests, but as inmates. Only they should attune themselves to His purpose and hearken to His Voice. They will become the visible universal choir, to produce and share the orchestral symphony of the Divine. Its diapason is the cadenced chorus of all the united chords which will outlast the music of the spheres.

Let us try to be fit instruments for His music. His lips can fashion a reed into a flute His letters of credit for the role He plays need no scrutiny; the Sun is above testimony as the central luminary of the world and the source of its light and warmth; He makes the day dawn.

May Sri Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba bless all with His grace.

Prof. P. G. Narayan

Krishna Jayanti

Today is the Birthday of the Lord KRISHNA. What is the day of Birth? Every breath is a Birth of Creation, a re-birth of Soul. May Baba's GRACE grant a re-birth for all here, for all the people in India and all over the world.

The main thing that attracts everyone to KRISHNA is His ALL OVER POWERING LOVE, which is ETERNAL, as He is THE GOD OF LOVE. But what is LOVE, what is GOD? GOD is That LOVE and That LOVE is GOD. THAT LOVE is expressed by various human beings in different moods, in the scope of their inner development and realisation. It is formed, reformed, or even deformed by the number or layers; of Karmic debts; LOVE may be born of Devotion, out of Tenderness and Compassion for the small and weak creatures; out of the serene greatness, of Nature, or out of emotions and passions; but there is also the kind of LOVE for material

wealth, comfort and possessions and for worldly powers. However, every, kind of, LOVE, whether following the righteous path, or not, is the EVER PUSHING URGE of the SUPREME SPIRIT INSIDE OF MAN, which can only be recognised through man's own will and Faith and be, enlightened by THE LORD'S GRACE.

The concentrated thoughts of LOVE which reverberate in one's Being will awaken the ATMAN, who in response will do ITS Work according to one's own Nature. It may take a short time, or a longer time, or ages of generations, in the end, all LOVE will equally reach its Purification and unite with the ONE GREAT SOURCE OF LOVE, THE LORD, GOD, or whatever Name may be given to the ALL-IN-ALL.

A child, in its first grade of schooling, has to learn the alphabet and the forming of words by looking at their respective images until it can forget the pictures and know the words by recognising them in their minds. So does every human being in his first stage of spiritual unfoldment need an object, a FORM OF WORSHIP, by the remembrance of which the mind melts into a flow of LOVE AND DEVOTION, evoking the Entity which embodies those thoughts and which transmutes into the visible Form of the Worshipped One, who is loved and followed according to his own heart. So whether it be through the LORD KRISHNA, THE BUDDHA, THE CHRIST, OUR BHAGAVAN BABA, or any chosen GODMAN, it is the INDWELLING SPIRIT OF LOVE that wants to be or is worshipped.

The present Form of the LORD KRISHNA, whom we are so fortunate to have amidst us, is visualised as THE GOD OF LOVE AND LIGHT and ALL THAT BRAHMAN IS INDEED, in concentrated HUMAN FORM, whose RESIDENCE IS IN THE SUPREME ABODE OF ALL HEARTS.

The Birth—Story of the KRISHNA—aspect of the Western World, who is JESUS, THE CHRIST, to me—a symbolic meaning with respect to Bharat, starting with the Birth of the LORD KRISHNA, THE GREATEST TEACHER OF ALL TEACHERS.

(There, is a similarity in the word CHRIST, which originates from the Greek word CHRISTOS which means SOUL and the Name of KRISHNA which also means SOUL)

The Christian Story tells that: "Once upon a time, Three Wise Men came from the East, following a scintillating Star, through deserts and wilderness, which directed them to a newly-born Baby, a Manifestation of the LORD.

(Those Three Wise Men may symbolise the Three GUNAS which in the TAMAS, RAJAS and SATWIC Natures of Man followed the Light of the ATMAN through inner deserts to reach the LIGHT OF SUPREME KNOWLEDGE, The PARAMATMAN.)

They found this Baby wrapped in rags, laying in a manger and they laid their valuable offerings of GOLD, MYRRH and FRANKINCENSE at the Holy Feet of the Baby who reflected the effulgent Light of ITS GODLY NATURE.

The Baby grew up and as a Boy He already gave His Lessons of Godly Wisdom to the Great, Wise Men and Pundits. As a Young Man, His Body had to die on the Cross to save Humanity from its ignorance".

BHARAT, in Her beginning Era, had sown the seeds of TRUTH and WISDOM, which were handed down from the Great Rishis and Saints to the Disciples through generations. The seeds grew into seedlings and further into Trees as ages went on. Even through times of economic and financial earthquakes, typhoons, suppression of the inborn Spirit by temporary occupations, Her Trees stood firm and their priceless Fruits were, growing and ripening from the treasured fields and orchards. These fruits are now being stored until the time comes that She will feed the outside world with them. With Her EGO BEING CROSSED, India became FREE, free to be re-born in the INDIA OF THE VEDAS WHICH REMAIN ETERNAL BEHIND THE PROBLEM-RIDDEN, SOCIO-ECONOMIC PASSING INDIA of the present.

And it is this INDIA that is awakening the inner SELF OF MANKIND in a frustrated outer world.

In the Gita it is said: "The Lord will create a Form for Himself and come into Human affairs, when Dharma is in grave peril". All who understand the Teachings of Bhagavan Baba may know that this Time has come and that through our PRESENT AVATAR, the Vedic Teachings are gradually being put into practice in every way of life, so that DHARMA will be re-established. The Manifestation of the LORD at this time and age, may be in the Form of BHARAT, with BHAGAVAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA centered within as the Enlightening HEART which Rhythmic, Harmonious Beat sounds like the TEMPLE BELLS, calling all peoples from far and near, beyond all borders, without discrimination of religion, of nationality or social standards, to all join in HIS ARMY OF TRUTH, PEACE, HARMONY and EVERLASTING BROTHERHOOD.

I pray that the spirit of LORD KRISHNA who is manifest in our BHAGAVAN BABA will lead Bharat's chariot along her own 'ancient, but ever renewed' treasured highway into the hearts of all humanity which will bring about peace and harmony in the entire world.

Anne Balabrega

Nagarsankirtan

It is an established tradition in our country for groups of people to go round the streets singing the name and glory of the Lord. This is done not only on some important days of religious significance, but also continuously for some days in particular seasons in different parts of the country. Such a tradition is not peculiar to Hindus only, people of other religions also do it. During Christmas season, devout Christians go about singing carols.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba lays great emphasis on the importance of nagarsankirtan for purification and spiritual advancement. The best time to do this is during the Brahma-muhurtam

(early hours of the morning, between 4 to 5-30 a.m.). This is the time when people are waking up from, sleep. Creation itself starts becoming active at this time. This stage of transition from nidra to jagrat is really a miniature rebirth. The day, rather the life cannot be started more auspiciously than hearing the sweet name of the Lords.

It is essential that groups of devotees who, have firm faith in this should go round the streets singing the Lord's name and glory. This is an independent sadhana, bereft of all the trappings of adhikara (qualifications) etc. It confers on the participant the benefit of chanting the Lord's name and also of satsang. It also benefits those who hear the name. To carry on this sadhana which is also a seva, requires unshakable faith, perseverance, and moral courage. There are many people who grumble and complain that because of nagarsankirtan their sleep is disturbed. This is the natural cry of the tamasic man, the indolent and lazy late riser. He happily puts up with uncouth shouting of the early morning milk delivery man and the incessant hooting of the horn of the passing lorry. It is a tragedy that the sweet name of the Lord causes disturbance to these. 'Marushya rupena charanti mrigaha'; animals roam about in the form of man. Even these will surely benefit in course of time. Medicine is not palatable, but one has to continue to take it for the disease to be cured.

Nama is name, Rupa is form. Without a name a form is not perceived. Nama is akshara rupa is kshara. Form will come and disappear. In the midst of all illusory and evanescent things God's name alone is imperishable. The form dwells in the name. What is it that a name does"? It only calls the object of that name, and takes one beyond the name. Saguna first and nirguna next. It is not possible to think of the impersonal without the personal. To reach those dizzy heights one can use the safe ladder of namasankirtan.

What is creation? The avyakta becoming vyakta. When the supreme Brahman manifests, the first form that is assumed is sound (shabda), nada brahman. From this nada shakti it is that all subsequent creation issues forth. By chanting the Lord's name we not only produce mere sound but those sound vibrations permeate the whole universe, and the manifested form will be seen by the attuned. To hear the sweet name and glory of the Lord is both elevating and absorbing. When such sweet and enchanting sound is heard with faith and devotion, one is taken beyond the realm of name and form, and the supreme seated in the lotus of the heart (hridayakamala) is found. This is the dawn of wisdom, all-knowledge ends; the answer to the question 'Who am I' is revealed. Shabda arrests the restless ripples of the truant mind. All types of Sadhanas are only to eliminate the mind. Namasankirtan is the easiest, most pleasant and rewarding way of doing it.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has given us the much wanted lead in showing this flower strewn path of nagarsankirtan, leading to the golden threshold of the city of liberation. To the common man the impenetrable and intricate mysteries of metaphysics are a terror; the abstruse and inscrutable labyrinth of ritual rigours are frightening. Out of His concern and compassion for the common man, Bhagavan Baba has given the clarion call for this nagarsankirtan movement. It gives the much needed hope for many an aspirant, that by taking to this sadhana of sankirtan one can also rise above the limitations of the human mind and reach the goal. When chanting is harmoniously synchronised with the aspirations of the devotee, the bonds of love which bind the devotee, to the Lord continue to shrink closer and closer resulting in merger (sayujya).

To utter and hear the sweet name of the Lord, and experience the thrill of enjoyment is one of the rarest privileges. It is a pity that the modern man, the so called intellectual type, is not able to appreciate this simple truth. The fragrance of the flower is enjoyed not by the flower but by those who smell, the milk is not enjoyed by the cow but the calf that drinks; so too the nectarine sweetness of the God's name is enjoyed by the devotee and not by the God. Can there be anything greater? Chanting the name in all faith and devotion makes the God run to the devotee. Is it necessary to catalogue the many instances; especially to the devotees of Bhagavan Baba?

It is therefore no wonder that many of our saints and sages, from Brahmarishi Narada the father of Kirtan paddhati, to the present day, have extolled the benefits of this sadhana in glorious words. Tulasidas says that God's name is like a lamp in the doorway of the devotee's tongue, illumining both inside and outside. There is light for you and light for others. To him the utterance of the Lord's name and singing His glory was the pinnacle of devotion. Kabirdas compares the name of the Lord as the oil in which the self should be soaked and lighted by the fire of God. Such light alone burns bright and really illumines. These are the great thoughts of great men of God, who have experienced and enjoyed that rare bliss.

This nagarsankirtan movement is really, a revolutionary one. In a short time the Lord's name will be reverberating in every nook and corner. There lies salvation. It brings together people of different types, for a common purpose, to share the bliss of the Nama, benefits them and also benefits others. Its motto can well be 'BENEFIT YOURSELF, BENEFIT OTHERS.'

By a devotee

Sri Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

- Aug: 16: Ragampeta: Sri Sathya Sai Mahila Satsang: Puja, Discourses
:Vijayawada: Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Sri Krishna Vaibhavam:
Discourse: Br: Katta Lakshminarasimha Sastry
:Mettupalaiyam: Children's Day: Procession: Prize Distribution.
Nellore: Gopuja: Gokulashtami Celebrations
- 16-17: Prasanthi Nilayam: Gokulashtami: Speeches: Sri Venkataramana Naidu,
Dr. Damayanthi Doongaii, Anne Balabrege Discourses by Bhagavan.
- 18: Kakinada: Discourse: Br: Uppaluri Ganapathi Sastry
Trichinapoly: Study Circle: Annual Day: Prof: C. Kamalpathi: Discourse
:Pangedigudem: 7th District Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations of W
G Dt
- 24: Jamnagar: Nagarasankirtana: Poornahuthi of Sravan
:Peddapuram: Anniversary Celebrations of Sathya Sai Seva Samiti.
Inauguration of Mahila Sangham.
- 24, 25, 26: Ernakulam, Kerala: Bhagavatham Discourses: Dr. Unni Nambudripad
- 25: Berhampore: IInd Anniversary Celebrations of Seva Samithi: President
Hon'ble Sri Bonamali Patnaik, Education: Minister, Orissa
- 26: Sampara: Inauguration of Nagarsankirtan.

- 27: Guntakal: Anniversary Celebrations of Seva Samiti
:Path a-Gannavaram: Ganapathinavaratrotsavam' Inauguration.
- 30: Vigyanapuri: Sathya Sai Satsang: Anniversary Celebrations: President
Hon'ble Sri Justice V Parthasarathi
- 31: Uapakurru: Inauguration of Sathya Sai Seva Samiti
- Sept. 5: Anantapur: Inauguration of Special Classes on Indian Culture, at the
Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women by H H the Maharani of
Jind. Discourse by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Talks by: Hon'ble
justice V B Eradi, Sri Venkatramana Naidu. Teachers' Day: Government
Girls School: Discourse by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
- 7-8: Prasanthi Dharmotsavam: Sirsi, Siddapur, Karwar: Discourses by N
Kasturi, H M Sivaram, V Ramachandra Rko: President: Sri Venkatesan, I
A S District Collector.
- 8: Secunderabad: Annual Day Celebrations. President. Hon'ble T V
Raghavulu, Minister for law
- 14: Lalgudi: Bhajan Mandali: Akhanda Bhajan
Coimbatore: II Annual Celebrations: President: Hon'ble Justice V B Eradi

Dasara Programme

Dasara will be celebrated at the Prasanthi Nilayam, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba from 23rd September to 2nd October, 1963. The Programme includes Veda Saptaha Yajna, which will be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Minister for Religious Endowments, Sri. Ramalinga Raju, on the 25th September, special Sessions of the Akhila Bharat Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, the Parayana of the Scriptures, Homa, Ekadasarudrabhisheka, Vedic Recitation etc. Every day there will be Adhyatmic discourses between 4 and 7 p, M., and from 8 P. m. items of spiritual entertainment like Harikatha, Drama, Music, Burrakatha etc will be arranged. On the 24th September, the feeding of the Poor has been arranged. This is a chance for all seekers and aspirants, to benefit from the disciplined atmosphere of the Nilayam, the Darshan of Bhagavan, an, the Discourses of Bhagavan and the speeches of the Pundits, and to progress further towards the Goal of Self-realisation.

Bhagavata Vahini

29

Some ascetics who heard the story of the curse from the lips of the king were so incensed at the 'son of Sameeka' that they declared he must be a fake, an unworthy child, for, no child born of a Rishi of the stature of Sameeka will ever pronounce such a devastating curse, for such a trivial misdemeanour. He must be an ignorant fool or a madcap, they guessed. How can the curse emanating from the tongue of such a one take effect, they asked. The king cannot come to harm, as a consequence of his curse, they affirmed. They tried to convince the King that he need have no fear on that account.

Many who felt similarly argued that the King had no reason to take the curse seriously, but, the King was unmoved. He replied to them with folded hands: "You are thinking and speaking on these lines, prompted by sympathy and kindness towards me. But, I know that the wrong I have committed is not light and inconsiderable. Is there a more terrible sin than casting insult on those deserving reverence? Besides, I am the King, responsible for their welfare and the maintenance of their honour. How can my act be dismissed as light and inconsiderable? Moreover, if you only consider it deeply, the curse pronounced by the boy is no curse at all. It is on the other hand, a great big boon.

"For, I had fallen into the well of sin called empire; I had deluded myself into the belief that pleasure is the be-all and end-all of life; I was leading the life of a mere beast; I had forgotten God and my duty towards Him. God Himself has, by this means and through this instrument, directed me along the correct path. God has blessed me. This is a boon, not a punishment for past wrongs, as you imagine."

When the King spoke thus, tears of joy and thankfulness flowed from his eyes; he was visibly moved by extreme sincerity and devotion. He was uttering what he felt in calm, unruffled contentment. The ascetics and the subjects around him were amazed at his equanimity. They knew his declaration was true.

The aged ascetic rose and standing before the wailing populace, he addressed the gathering thus, "O Best of Kings! Your words are rays of sunlight to the hearts of the ascetics; they are so appropriate to your lineage and upbringing; for, you are a Pandava born. The Pandavas never even once slipped into wrong or sin. They held fast always to the Feet of Hari, the Lord; they stuck to the commands of the Lord, unwaveringly. When the Lord returned to His Abode, they gave up the kingdom as a result of spontaneous renunciation; they left for the northern regions. You too are today following this holy path, since you belong to this great clan, which has inherited this way of life."

At this, the King prayed to them, with palms folded in adoration: "O best among ascetics! I have just one doubt; please remove it from my mind. Make my days worth while." "Tell me what it is," responded the ascetic. The king asked that he be informed what the man for whom death is imminent can best do. At this, one sage rose and said that, so far as time permitted, one could perform yajnas or yagas, or one could engage himself in japa or tapa, acts of charity or pilgrimages, or fasts or ritual worship. Another declared that liberation can be acquired only

through the acquisition of Jnana, "Jnaanaadevathu Kaivalyam"; a third spoke of the supreme importance of holy acts prescribed in the Vedas and Sastras, "Karmanyaivahi shamsiddhi". Some others argued that cultivating devotion to God is the best method of using the week, "Bhakthirvasah Purushah", the Lord is won over by devotion alone. In this confusion of conflicting opinions, the king sought the true path and the ascetics were silenced by the persistence of the king to get a real answer to the problem he had posed.

Meanwhile, a youthful ascetic, with an extraordinarily bright face, and personality of attractive splendour, moved through the gathering of aged sages, like a fast stream of light and reaching the presence of the king he seated himself on a height. The onlookers were amazed at this sudden appearance. Some among them were stricken with Curiosity about his antecedents. To all outward appearance, he was a 'munikumar' that is to say, the son of an ascetic. But his stance, his pose and poise, his personality—all affirmed that he was a Master. In years, he was quite tender. Yet, there was a divine halo, bathing him.

Very soon, one wise old sage, identified him and approached him reverentially with folded palms. "Blessed indeed are all of us. This ray of Divine effulgence is no other than Sri Suka, the precious offspring of Vyasa-bhagavan." Introducing the stranger thus to the gathering, the sage continued: "From the moment of birth, this person is free from all attachment. He is the master of all knowledge." The king who heard this shed tears of gratitude and joy. He rose like a kite in the air, so light and full of joy, and fell prostrate at his feet. His palms were folded in prayer when he stood up; he was straight and silent as a pillar. He was immersed in bliss. He visualised youth before him as Krishna Himself. The splendour of Suka was too brilliant for his eyes. His charm appeared to the king, equal to the God of Love. The black curly rings of hair moved like black serpent hoods hovering over the white oval face. As stars amidst the dark clouds, his eyes shed cool lustre and shone extraordinarily bright. A smile showered drops of joy from his lips.

The King neared Suka, with slow steps; his voice was broken and indistinct; his throat was quivering with emotion. He said, "Master! I have no strength to describe the depth of your grace. Every act of yours is aimed at the welfare of the world. It is indeed my fortune that I had your Darsan today, so easily, for, I know it can be won only by protracted and persistent effort. O, how fortunate am I! I must ascribe it to the merit earned by my grandparents." The King was overcome with grateful joy at the presence of Suka; he stood with tears of joy streaming from his eyes.

With a smile hovering on his lips, Suka, directed the King to sit by his side. He said: 'O King! You are no doubt straight and steadfast in moral conduct. You are intent on the service of the good and the godly. Your meritorious life has drawn this large gathering of sages around you, this day. Or else, these ascetics who are concerned with spiritual discipline would not have left their schedules to come here and pray that you may attain the realisation of the Highest. This is no act of charity! You have earned this gift by many lives spent virtuously and well.'

The King was gazing with devoted admiration at the face of Suka, while he was speaking to him. Suddenly, he raised his head and addressed the young sage thus: "Lord! I have a doubt pestering me. Remove it and give peace to my heart. I was laying it before this assembly when you came. You can, I know, solve that doubt, in a trice. It must be child's play for you." Suka interrupted

him and said, "Parikshit! The reason I have come to you is to solve this doubt that is pestering you, you can ask me what you have in mind. I shall resolve your doubt and grant you satisfaction." When the great Suka uttered these words, the sages who had gathered, exclaimed, what great fortune!" "Blessed indeed!" and clapped their hands in joy so loud that the acclamation reached the sky.

The King spoke humbly and with evident anxiety, "Lord! What should a person facing death and who is aware of the oncoming of the end, engage himself in? What should his mind dwell upon? After succumbing to death, he should not be born again. When that is his prayer, how should he spend the days at his disposal? This is the problem that is bothering me at present. What is my highest duty?" the King pleaded again and again for guidance.

Suka answered, "King! Withdraw your mind from worldly thoughts and fix it on Hari, the Lord who charms all hearts. I shall instruct you in the wisdom of the Divine the Bhagavata-tattwa. Listen to it with all your heart; there is no activity holier than that. There can be no greater spiritual exercise, or discipline or vow. The human body is a worthy boat; the story of Hari is the rudder; this world of change, this constant flow, this Samsara, is the sea. Hari is the boatman! Today, this sacred equipment is available for you.

"The problem you have raised is not concerned with just one individual, the whole world is concerned with it, and its solution. It is the most vital of all problems that deserves inquiry. The Atma principle is the panacea for all ills. That is the ultimate Truth. No one can escape it. To establish oneself in that faith during the final days is the duty of living beings. It is on this basis that status in the next birth is determined. So, the question that you asked and the doubt that you raised, are matters of great moment for the welfare of the whole world. The answer is not for you alone, Listen."

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Do Not Ask

We should not ask for anything from Baba, for He is more generous than we know; for He knows, even before we ask Him; for, we are likely to ask for wrong and harmful things; for, if we do not get it, our faith may get shattered; for He knows best what to give, when and how; for He has come to give us what we need most.

S. D. Khera

Navaratri

The Sun rose on the 23rd September, to see the happy thousands gathered before the Prasanthi Nilayam, which was ushering in with acclamation, the Navaratri Festival in the Divine Presence of Siva-Shakti Swarupa, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. When Baba granted Darshan to them that morning, Hon'ble Sri. P. K. Savant, Minister, Maharashtra State, offered Him a garland of

flowers, on behalf of the devotees, all over the World. He also explained the significance of the Festival and declared that it was a great gift of good fortune that he and others were able to be present before Him that day.

In His Discourse, Baba spoke of the conflagrations of Lust Greed and Hate that result in terrible disaster to man. "Though the flames could be scotched by good company, good thoughts and good deeds, the fire is likely to leap again, as soon as circumstances become favourable. The flames can be fully put out, only by the Grace on the Source of all Power, Parashakti, appearing in the three aspects of Mahakali (Strength) Mahasaraswati (Wisdom) and Mahalakshmi (Prosperity). Her Grace can be won through the cleansing of the mind, the purification of the inner consciousness, by means of the recitation of Vedic hymns, ritual worship, propitiation of God, and the performance of sacrifice, in a true spirit of renunciation. It is this schedule of cleansing that you are initiated into, here, during the Navaratri Festival," He said.

Then, He explained the meaning of the symbol on the Prasanthi Flag with reference to the concrete representation of the Flag, in the front garden of the Nilayam. It taught that man can attain Prasanthi, only after the conquest of his inner foes and the achievement of the virtue of universal love; it symbolised the state of Yoga, during which the Lotus of the heart blooms and the flame of Wisdom is kindled in the heart. Thereafter, He unfurled the Prasanthi Flag on the Prasanthi Nilayam, while thousands hoisted it on their own hearts.

The Sanathana Bhagavata Bhakta Samajam, an association of scholars, artistes, and popular exponents of Vedic lore which is affiliated to the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, organised under the leadership of its President, Brahmasri Sishta Chandramouli Sastry, a Three-day-Programme of activities with a daily schedule of Puja, Parayana, Taranga songs and Harikathas. The functions arranged by them on 23, 24 and 25 Sep. gave great joy to the gathering, since they were full of significance and sweetness.

In the evening of the 23rd, the Sri Sathya Sai Hospital celebrated the 12th Anniversary of its Foundation, with Dr. Balasubrahmanyam, Principal Medical College, Goa, as the President. Dr. B. Sitaramiah presented the Annual Report in Telugu and Dr. N. Jayalakshmi read the English version thereof. Dr. Balasubrahmanyam in his speech said, "I am now in the Presence of the Greatest Physician of all; we are but instruments in His hands. The more experience we gain in the treatment of disease, the more we realise that the unseen Hand of the Divine Healer is guiding us. We have limitations in knowledge and skill; He alone can give us these in full measure". Bhagavan in His Discourse elaborated on the role of Divine Grace. "Length of life does not depend on upbringing or intake, medical skill or efficacy of drugs. It is concerned with the strength and steadiness of the Prana or Vital Airs. You can overcome the fear of death, if you deny that you are the body. When the rules regarding food and recreation are rigorously followed, illness can never approach man. Eat Satwic food; observe the limits imposed by moral conduct; watch your means as carefully as you watch the ends. Then, you will always be healthy happy and holy. I am not moved to appreciation when statistics reveal that more than 17,000 out patients were treated last year. I desire a Hospital which does not have to treat a single patient, because there are no cases of illness all around ! I want to tell you that the most potent drug, the most effective panacea is the Name of God. Keep it on the tongue, imbibe its taste, its flavour, and it will keep you in the best of health," He said.

On the 24th, more than 10,000 poor people who had gathered from far and near were sumptuously fed, Bhagavan Himself serving them sweet prasadam. Hundreds among them were given new Dhotis and Saris; they were distributed by Sri Ramalinga Raju the Hon'ble Minister for Religious Endowments, Andhra Pradesh and by Mrs. Ramalinga Raju.

The 25th was the Inaugural Day of the Vedapurusha Saptaha Yajna, the great Vedic rite prescribed for the attainment of human welfare. At 9 A. M., Bhagavan reached the Yajna mantapa in procession, accompanied by the Hon'ble Minister for Religious Endowments. Aged Pundits versed in Vedic ritual, students of the Vedasastra Pathashala and many great scholars learned in the ancient heritage of India recited Vedic hymns, when they moved along with Bhagavan. The recital provided appropriate background to the Yajna. Conches blew; nadaswaram preceded Him; 'Sai Gita' the elephant was gaily caparisoned for the occasion. Devotees had rendered the path to the Mantapa a beautifully designed carpet of multicoloured flowers. Baba wore a floral garland and proceeded slowly under the shade of a silken umbrella with a golden hamsa as its finial. The scene reminded one of the magnificent epic Yajnas, described in the Bhagavata, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas.

Presiding over the Inauguration of the Yajna, the Minister declared, Bhagavan is transmuting the minds of men into instruments for spiritual progress not only in India but, even in countries beyond the seas. Man's life is but a short span; Bhagavan is teaching man to save himself and liberate himself, during this short term itself, by means of His simple and sweet advice. I am indeed fortunate to witness this vast gathering of devotees from all the states of India, and outside. I am myself aspiring to follow His teachings and be esteemed as His devotee".

In the discourse with which Bhagavan inaugurated the Yajna, Bhagavan declared that He had willed the Yajna, not for deriving benefit therefrom, but, as a means of demonstrating the efficacy of Vedic injunctions. Yajna is a duty enjoined on man, to further the welfare of humanity. It should not be used for pomp or personal glory, or conspicuous waste of money. The only Ananda is that granted by the Grace of God. That is won by renunciation, which is the essence of Yajna, He said. The World is the Body of God; any act of sacrifice done for the betterment of the World is an act of worship, a Yajna. Sacrifice sustains the Universe. The Sun sacrifices his status and serves as a water-carrier' for He raises water from the sea and bales it over the fields and forests. Those in authority, and those before the public eye must serve, sacrificing their ego so that they can be supreme examples of Yajna. Moral activity ennoble your physical equipment; it sanctifies Time", Baba said. "Rituals, prayers, meditation, recitation of hymns are all turned worthless, if the mind of the aspirant is tainted with ego. We call such people, sel-fish; the name fits, because, like fish, such persons find it difficult to get rid of the stink, though they are in water (spiritual exercise) all the time! Try therefore to be rid of selfish tendencies; let these be the attitudes you sacrifice"; Baba advised.

As soon as the Divine Discourse ended, the Yajna began, in strict conformity, with Vedic injunctions, with its components like Athirudra Yajna, Vedaparayana, the Parayana of the Ramayana, Bhagavata, Devibhagavatha, Navavara narchana, Sahasralingapuja, Suryanamaskara; Vedapurushapuja, etc. Thousands were elevated into heights of spiritual joy at the rare religious sight. The Yajna continued from dawn to noon, on seven days; Baba was present everyday for

hours on the Mantapa, watching the rites, blessing the participants and accepting the adoration of all.

At 8 P. M., on the 25th, the young boys of the Sri Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala enacted "Bhakta Dhruva", a musical play, written by Bhagavan Himself. In His infinite Love, Bhagavan Himself had supervised the rehearsals for many weeks, and with His Blessings, the play was most successful in conveying to the mammoth gathering that enjoyed it, the spiritual inspiration He had filled it with.

On the 26th at the Evening Gathering, Dr Divakarla Venkatavadhani, M. A., Ph. D., Professor of Telugu, Osmania University, spoke on "The Bhagavata" as depicted by the great Telugu Poet-saint, Pothana. Pothana, he explained, had made the fullest use of the incidents in the Bhagavata to saturate his classic with the sweet fragrance of supreme devotion. Then, Sri. R. Venkateswarlu, M. A., spoke on "Manava-Dharma", Baba, in His Discourse dwelt on the fact that the culture of India was built on theism. The faith in God must be translated into action through Dharma. He said that Dharma alone can guarantee individual and social happiness.

On the 27th, Br. Sri Kolluri Somasekhara Sastry spoke on Advaita and elucidated that axiom clearly by apt illustrations. He said that dualism can be established as truth, only when the reflection has a separate existence. He also made it clear that Baba and the Veda are identical, and that Baba can be understood only through the Veda. Then Sri Hari Adisehsu spoke on 'Jijnasa' or 'Inquiry', as depicted in the Bhagavad-Gita. Baba said that devotion and dedication are the two requisites, for attaining the goal of Liberation. Mere thirst (trishna) for objective pleasure must be given up. More yearning for Krishna must be evinced, He said. Inquiry into Truth must reveal the wiles of the inner foes and the stratagems by which they can be foiled, He advised.

On the 28th, in the evening, Dr. S. Gopalakrishnamurthy, D. Sc, addressed the huge gathering of devotees on "Nishkama Karma". Br. Sri. Vemparala Suryanarayanasastry spoke on service to God as service to oneself. Baba, while clarifying the essential elements in Nishkama Karma (acts done with no eye on the consequences thereof), said, "The fundamental attitude that marks out such Karma is the feeling that you are puppets on the stage, acting the roles He has allotted, according to the movements of the strings that He pulls". He also defined the stage of Liberation, as the Ananda that one is filled with, when the mastery of the dark forces of egoism is ended.

On the 29th, Br. Sri Sishta Chandramouli Sastri elaborated on the Bhagavata statement, "Gopika eva dhanyaah, nathu anyaah", (the Gopikas alone lived worth-while lives, no one else had that luck) and described the purity of the urge which attracted them to the Lord. Malladi Gopalakrishna Sarma, M. A., spoke on the Way of Life, as described in the Indian philosophical Schools or Darshanas. Dr. Gopalakrishnamurthy, D. Sc. then addressed the gathering and held it spell-bound for over an hour, demonstrating from the statements of Baba Himself, how He is the Chaitanya or Super-mind that wills the Energy, that plays the role of Matter. He declared that the 'miracles' which are inscrutable to the limited canons of science at the present time are but concretizations of the Super-Will or Chaitanya. Bhagavan, in the Discourse which He gave, asked that all efforts to probe into Godhead be given up, for, they will be as ineffective as the attempt of the ant to gauge the depth of the sea. He wanted, on the other hand, efforts to imbibe

the, ananda that God his come to shower, and is showering. Follow His Word and derive Joy immeasurable", He advised.

Later, the Yakshagana group from Puttur, Mysore Mysore State put on board the play, "Krishna Leela," with traditional costumes, songs, and musical instruments.

By the 30th, the gathering of devotees had swollen into a big flood of twenty thousands. That evening, two great vidwans were honoured, with the presentation of shawls and purses, which were given by the Divine hand of Baba Himself. Vedasamrat Br. Sri Kameswara Ghanapati, the Principal of the Sri Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala, Prasanthi Nilayam (with a record number of students specializing in Vedic recitation), was the first; the second was Br. Sri Sishta Chandramouli Sastry, a great exponent of mantra Sastra and the energetic President for over 40 years of the Sanathana Bhagavata Bhakta Samajam, doing yeoman service for popularising the fundamentals of Indian Culture. After a short speech by Sri. Chandramoulisashastry, Br. Sri Deepala Pichayya Sastry placed his book on the Andhra Bhagavatham at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan; he gave a resume of the book and elucidated the Sharanagati attitude with which Pothana, the saintly author, had saturated the epic. Br. Sri Kuppa Bairagi Sastry spoke on Bhakti and Jnana as paths to self-realisation. Baba clarified the roles of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana to the process of self-realisation. He said that the three impurities that clog the inner consciousness—mala (hatred, cruelty, lust etc), vikshepa (seeking objective pleasures, identifying oneself with the body etc) and avarana—the ego principle—can be removed completely by the three paths, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana, respectively.

Then, Srimathi Hirabai Barodekar and Sister; thrilled the vast gathering with their musical recital of devotional songs. Afterwards, the little pupils of the Sri Sathya Sai Vedasastra Pathashala enacted a musical play, Sakkubai written, and taught to them by Baba Himself. The play gave the vast gathering the cream of Baba's Teachings, sweetened with song and dance, concretised through objective background and display.

The First Day of October was Vijayadashami Day, the Day of Victory. That day the valedictory Offering of the Vedapurusha Saptaha Yajna had to be placed ritually in the Sacred Fire, during the auspicious moment of supreme sacrifice. When Baba moved that morning in procession to the Yajnamantapa, the Gods must have been delighted, for, He gave Darshan as Vedapurusha Himself. He created the mystic plate that was included a in the Valedictory Oblation, and accepted the homage of the participants and the people. Their, as part of the Dasara Celebrations, the image of the Shirdi Avatar of Himself was ceremonially bathed Baba created a brilliant necklace of diamonds for the idol! When Bhagavan began to pour Vibhuti on the Idol from a receptacle, contact with the Divine Hand resulted in a continuous stream of enormous quantities of the miraculous sacred ash. It was a scene of profound mystery and significance, for which the vast multitude was looking forward with eager expectancy. Later, Baba showered with His Divine hand the consecrated water of the Vedapurushayajna, on the gathering and blessed them.

Baba also, in His Infinite Mercy, addressed the vast assembly, on the meaning and significance of the Yajna. He said that the day's function was called in Sanskrit, Samapti, meaning the attainment of Sama or the Universal Absolute, Brahman. Sa also indicated the stages of Salokya, Samipya, Sarupya, and Sayujya, indicative of the Sadhaka's approach to Godhead, until the final

merger. He spoke of insane criticisms of Yajnas, and the imputation, that they involve huge waste of valuable things. A person unacquainted with agriculture will impute similar charges against the ryot, who scatters precious seeds on the soil; but, the ryot is confident that the seeds will come back into his granary, multiplied a hundred fold. In the regions of the spirit, ocular proof is not feasible. These yajnas promote human welfare, establish prosperity and peace. That is what the Vedas declare and the Vedas are their own proofs.

The eye is the judge of what is seen; you cannot test it with the ear. The ear is the proof of what is heard; you cannot judge whether you have heard correctly, through the eye. So the Veda is its authority. It has to be known by results, only. The Vedic rituals ensure Shanti, peace, for the individual, society and the world. That is why so often the mantra, Om Santih Santih Santih, was heard here these seven days, Baba explained.

At 4 P. M. Baba called together the Office bearers of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations who had come from Andhra Pradesh and gave them all advice and inspiration to carry on service among the people.

Baba, in His Discourse, spoke about the institution of Yajnas, as part of the spiritual discipline prescribed in the Vedas. He described the various types of Yajna, enjoined upon the householder Sadhakas and the benefits of each. He declared, however, that He had no obligation to act, no motive to act, no compulsion, but, yet, He engaged Himself in activity, to set an example and to ensure, thereby, progress of humanity. 'I arranged this Yajna, for the sake of the Yajna; that is all; not for any benefit therefrom', He announced. He advised devotees to avoid evil sight, evil listening, evil speech, evil deeds and evil thoughts; He said, that if this is achieved, it is more effective than any Yajna.

Later, Nidadavole Achutharamiah and party, the famous reciters of Burrakatha, gave a musical recital of "Maharathi Karna", the episode of Karna, from the Mahabharata. On the 2nd, in the morning, Baba spoke to the men and women volunteers whom He had selected on the 22nd, and who had served as such, during the Festival. He exhorted them to carry the message of service to their villages and to alleviate distress and pain, wherever they are found. He warned them against the pitfalls of egoism, sense-pleasure, and evil company. He pressed upon them the need for reverence to parents, teachers and elders, for soft and sweet speech, for steadfastness in virtue and straight conduct.

In the evening, at the gathering of the devotees in the Divine Presence, Dr. K. Bhaskaran Nair, D. Sc , Director of Collegiate Education, Kerala, declared, during his speech, "It is ten years and five month, since I surrendered at the Lotus Feet of Baba. My life has achieved, as a result of that surrender, a richness and a purpose, it did not have before". "This is the land which places the spirit on a far higher pedestal than matter. Where Sivaji placed his empire at the feet of his Guru, Samartha Ramadas where Marthandavarma the ruler of Travancore dedicated his kingdom to God Padmanabha, and prided himself on the name, Padmanabhadasa. It is only this Bharatiya culture, as propounded by Baba with such love, sweetness and simplicity, that can win back the Youth of the world, who are drifting into irreverence and irresponsibility, through lack of guidance, he said. May Baba lead the world from darkness to Light is the prayer of millions he announced.

Br. Sri Deepala Pichayya Sastri described the deep devotion of Pothana, the author of the Andhra Bhagavata, with profuse quotations from the great classic. Then, Sri N. Kasturi spoke on the visit of Bhagavan to the States of East Africa and the spontaneous upsurge of devotion, which inspired the people wherever Baba was seen and heard. Baba directed that the valuable spiritual suggestions and advice gained by the listeners, during the ten days of the Festival must be cherished in the heart, and carefully ruminated upon, so that they may advance and progress towards realisation, and release. Dharma alone can purify living; pure life alone can reflect Love. Love is overpowered by egoism and greed. They can be burnt only through true knowledge. That is why the Gayatri mantra prays for the awakening of the intelligence", Baba said.

At 9 P. M., Baba gave Darshan on the jhoola, which was bedecked and set up with deep devotion by earnest hands. Bhaktas filled their eyes and minds with Ananda. Sri Nidadavole Achutharamiah and party recited the episode of Sithakalyana, in the traditional burrakatha style.

The Dasara Festival was thus a magnificent Feast for the soul, elevating and inspiring it to hanker more for liberation and merger. The Festival was celebrated all over India, from Bareilly, Moradabad and Delhi to Trivandrum and Kanyakumari, from Shillong and Kohima to Surat and Somnath, in East Africa, South East Asia and other lands beyond the seas, by the Sathya Sai Seva Samitis, Bhajan Mandalis, Mahilasathsanghs, Balavihars and other organisations. The programmes centred round Bhajans.' Nagarsankirtans and the Feeding off the Poor.; There were special Pujas and Discourses by Pundits and Lectures by scholars. Many Samitis arranged music recitals full of the message of spiritual uplift. Through these functions, the Name and Message of Sai reverberated in millions of hearts and transmuted them into aspirants. May victory be achieved by the aspirants.

(Ed.)

A Wish

Oh, how much I wish
To have the wings of the swallow
To chirp sweet notes in thy ear!

Oh how I wish
To be the pigeon to fly in to thy room
And feed my sight!

Oh how I wish
To be thy soft bed to lie upon!

Oh how I wish
To be the whirling fan
To give thee soft breeze!
May be the water thou drink'st
May be the food thou eat'st

May be anything, to be one with thee
How my soul yearns for thee !
Oh Sri Sathya Sai Baba!

A. V. Suryanarayan

He Blessed Me

(From the Speech of Hon'ble Sri Thriguna Minister for Education, Government of India, on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samiti, Berhampore, Orissa, on September 5, 1968 with Sri A. N. Khosla, former Governor of Orissa of as President).

Being a Hindu, I believe in re-birth; through kindness of God, I have been born as man. All of us have to be grateful for this great chance. I feel that it is due to the kindness of God that I live as a man amongst men, that I am having the chance and opportunity to serve you. All sages have declared than Dharma is Service, nothing but service.

We go to temples, and worship God. but, how many of us can see God. visualise God? It is very difficult, indeed. At the same time, if we must serve man truly and well, we must acquire the strength necessary from God, through His Blessings. How to get these? I have been thinking of this problem, since many and many a year. To pray God for one's own self, for liberation for one's own self, and to go away to the Himalayas Badrinath or Rishikesh for that purpose—is it not a trace of selfishness? I have been going from place to place, to meet people who can tell me whether I am right in my belief that "Man can be served, only through the blessings of God" whether it is wrong. I am eager to verify this.

One of the persons to whom I went is Baba, to whom we pray today. I went to see Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba twice, thrice and even four times; I stayed there, at nights, in his Ashram at Puttaparthi, to discuss whether I am right or wrong. I asked him, "Baba ! Am I right ? I do not want God, because I cannot see Him. But, I want to forget myself in serving humanity. You must give me strength for that. Why do you not bless me? I demand you, of it." Baba embraced me; he blessed me. I am very happy tonight, to be with you, to think of him, and to pay my respects to him.

Idols and Ideals

Man's existence on earth is a series of experiences from which he derives joy and sorrow. Whatever activity he may be indulging in has for its goal the attainment of the three-fold aspect: SAT-CHIT-ANANDA (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss). But under the delusion that happiness can be had from objects, he goes all out to acquire them, not knowing that eternal bliss emanates from a life led in purity, selflessness and dedicated to a nobler cause. He is blessed with intelligence and discriminatory power on the one hand, while on the other he has, to reckon with the attractions which the objects offer him. These two modes of living, broadly classified as

subjective and objective, which go to shape his future, have good and bad effects, depending upon the kind of idol and ideal chosen.

Idols are plentiful in number and diverse in quality, the two main opposing types being those depicting higher and lower nature. Among the higher types are idols personifying Gods, Avatars and other Beings who stand for glorious or divine qualities in various spheres. The other type includes all those possessing lower tendencies varying widely from person to person. The role played by idols or images is highly significant and crucial in as much as they leave a tremendous effect on the lives of human beings.

Ideals, which too are innumerable, consist of two contradictory types the higher and the lower. Just as in the case of idols, ideals also have a vital bearing on our lives, which tend to alter the entire outlook and eventually carve out a future of our own making, termed in common parlance as destiny or fate. For instance, ideals laid down by materialists, if followed, will only turn us into rank materialists, whereas ideals set by great and divine personalities will help us turn over a new leaf, ultimately taking us to great spiritual heights.

Knowing full well as we do the dire consequences which either the idols or ideals of lower tendencies place us into, let us switch the scope of our study more to the benefits accruing as a result of our following the higher types. Taking the example of temple-going or oblations and rituals offered to idols symbolising Gods, such practices, if observed as a mere formality to keep ourselves within the narrow bound, of custom and tradition, will be rather a long drawn-out process for gaining enlightenment. What is of prime importance in idol-worship is the amount of faith, devotion and reverence with which we make the approach. To describe idol-worship in Swami Vivekananda's words: "The STONE IS NOT GOD, BUT GOD IS IN THE STONE TO ONE WHO BELIEVES". This view has been further amplified by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba stone or metal is not God, but man, in an attitude of complete self-surrender, raises them to the level of God. It is with this object in view that, even in the present modern times, idol-worship occupies a place of prominence among the masses, as it is the simplest form of showing our devotion and the one and the only means whereby any trace of ego left lost, is sacrificed at the Lotus Feet of the Lord of the Universe.

Ideals set by divine beings, with their life and teachings, are spread broadcast time and again for the good of none other than the mankind. Any endeavour on our part to live up to them will put us on the right track and, as a natural consequence, a better man emerges out of an ordinary being, with the process continuing until at last he reaches the stage where his Atman merges with the Paramatman. Besides, there are Scriptures and precepts in all religions which contain a variety of teachings to suit the taste of, and cater to, all types of people in accordance with their respective states of development.

Coming now to precepts, in the lineage of Sai Avatars, Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi declared "IF YOU LOOK TO ME, LOOK TO YOU", and Sri Sathya Sai Baba of Puttaparthi has coined a phrase "WHY FEAR WHEN I AM HERE". These precepts, if taken literally, would have an ambiguous meaning, the one supposedly implying that a cursory exchange of "LOOKS" will bring about an instantaneous and phenomenal transformation within us, and the other supporting to offer us immunity against "FEAR", taking for granted that we hold a blanket license to use our free-will

as we jolly well please. A careful analysis will, however, reveal to us that it is upon such of the fortunate few, who pave their way to take to a better living, is conferred the grace and blessings of being "LOOKED" after under the divine protection, free from all "FEAR" arising out of the complexities of life.

To summarise, it may be said in conclusion that a harmonious blending of the idols worthy of worship and the ideals loftier to be lived is the call, nay a command, given out by all religious teachers. A beginning, however small, made in right earnest, is bound to bear fruit in a big way as has been promised unto us by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in the following words: "IF YOU TAKE TWO STEPS TOWARDS ME, I TAKE TEN STEPS TOWARDS YOU". There is many a slip between the cup and the lip, but we can draw courage from the famous maxim: "Glory lies not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall". May our attempts meet with success with Baba's benign grace and may His blessings be ever upon us!

V. P. Karkal (Bombay)

A Lake of Joy

Why wander far and near to seek?
He dwells within thy heart;
Yes, turn within and find Him there,
He longs to see you start.

But clean your heart before you seek,
And offer it to Him,
A holy shrine in which to stay,
A Lake of joy to swim.

Just keep in mind the noble words,
WHY FEAR WHEN I AM NEAR,
Keep serving Him in all you do,
For He is everywhere.

The BABA's Grace is ever there,
You've just to feel it, friends,
He's everywhere, at every time;
He, time and space, transcends.

T. Muttoo (Pilani)

*We have lost our way,
Our ancient way,*

*Away, away, we wonder!
And blindly founder*

*But, hark, the Guide, the God,
The Sai Maa has come!
The way is clear, our home is near,
We shall no more fear!*

Sri Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

- September 8: Raghavapuram (W. Godavari Dt): Inauguration of Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali
: Airport Colony (Bombay): Inauguration of Nagarsankirtan.
- September 12: Trichur (Kerala): Sevasamithi, Annual Day Celebrations; Justice V.B.Eradi President. N.Kasturi, Speaker
- September 13: Calicut (Kerala): Seva Samiti; District Convention; President; Justice V.B.Eradi; Inauguration of Nagarsankirtan, distribution of prize Gold Medals, to Students Essay; Competition Prize winners; N. Kasturi
- September 14: Coimbatore (Tamilnadu): Seva Samiti Annual Day: Photographs Exhibition: President; Justice V.B. Eradi, Kerala; Speaker; N. Kasturi.
- September 14: Lalgudi (Trichy Dt): Akhanda Bhajan Kailasapuram Inauguration; Bhajan Mandali.
- September 15: Ernakulam – Cochin: Seva Samitis; Speeches; N. Kasturi
: Voduru (W.Godavari Dt): District Conference, Sathya Sai Organisations; Speeches by ‘Ramasaran’ and others.
- September 16: Mettupalayam (Nilgiris): Inauguration, Study Circle, by Seva Samiti.
- September 17: Amalapuram (E. Godavari Dt): Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha; Discourses Br. Sri. V. Sivasubhramanya Sastry, P. Sthyanarayana Sastry and others.
- September 19: Long Beach (California, U.S.A) Speech by Indra Devi, at the Church of Christian Metaphysics.
- September 27: Penakametta (W.Godavari Dt):Inauguration of Nagarsankirtan.
- September 29: Nagapattinam (Tamilnadu): IV Annual Day Seva Samiti.
: Poona (Maharashtra): Seva Samiti: Exhibition on Divine Message of: Baba: Inauguration; Hon’ble T.S. Bharde, Speaker, Legislative Assembly.
- October 01: Colombo (Cylone): Seva Samiti: Inauguration: Nagarsankirtan.
: Pekeru (W. Godavari Dt): Inauguration: Seva Samiti.
: Chittavalasa (Vizag Dt):Inauguration Nagarsankirtan.
: Poona: Inauguration: Mahila Satsang
: Chitturpu (Krishna Dt): Seva Samiti: Burrakatha Recital on Baba’s Glory.
- October 02: Baroda (Gujarat): Nagarsankirtan, by Balavihar students.
- October 03: Vizianagaram (Vizag Dt): Inauguration: Nagarsankirtan
- October 05: Meerut (U.P) Seva Samiti: Special Bhajan Celebrations
- October 11: Kallukkuzhi (Trichy Dt): Inauguration: Vedaparayana School,
- October 12: Wallajahbad (Chingelpet Dt): 12 Hours Akhanda Bhajan.
- October 13: Dharmakshetra (Bombay) Vijay Merchant, President, Cricket Club of India

Addressed Sathya Sai Seva Dal on Practical Dharma.

Bhagavata Vahini

30

Sage Suka commenced his momentous message to King He said: "Maharaja! The great Tree that Bhagavata is, truly inspires reverential awe. It has, incorporated in it, every conceivable source of auspiciousness and joy. The Lord, Sri Narayana is the seed from which it has sprouted. The sprout is Brahman. The trunk of the Tree is Narada. Vyasa constitutes the branches. Its sweet fruit is the nectarine story of Krishna. Those earnest souls that yearn for that nectar and pine plaintively, regardless of bodily comfort or the passage of the years, until they secure the fruit and imbibe its essence, such are real saints and yogis.

"O, ye ascetics and sages! This day, I am relating to you that Bhagavata Sastra, that enchanting story of Krishna; treasure it in your memory and save yourself from delusion and grief. You have listened to the recitals of all Sastras already. You have also mastered all Sadhanas. But, you have not known the greatest of them all. I shall now give you the sacred Name of Krishna and the Sweetness that is flowing from it. It is the sweetest name one can conceive; when it falls on the ear, the heart is filled with joy; when you recall the Name to memory; a stream of Love springs from the heart. The Bhagavata inspires and promotes deep devotion to Lord Krishna.

"The Universal Absolute, the Birthless, Formless, Unmanifest, Infinite, took on limitations of Name and Form, and concretised Itself as Avatars (Incarnations) on many occasions and manifested countless instances of Divine Intercession and Grace. Through these, as well as the characteristics assumed and the ideas propagated, God saved mankind from downfall. Those who sing the story of this Glory, those who listen eagerly to the recital, those who imbibe and digest the lessons conveyed, these are the real devotees. They are the Bhagavatas, those who follow the path laid down in the Bhagavata. Bhagavata binds Bhakta with Bhagavan; that is to say the Story fills you with God, and transmutes you into Divinity.

"God incarnates, not merely for the destruction of the wicked; that is just an excuse, one of the obvious reasons. Really speaking God incarnates for the sake of Bhaktas (faithful devotees). The cow has milk primarily as sustenance for its calf. But, it is used by man for maintaining his health and efficiency. So too, God incarnates, primarily for the sustenance of the faithful, the devoted, the virtuous and the good. But, even the faithless and the bad, use the chance for their own purpose. Therefore, in the Bhagavata, stories of such wicked persons intervene amidst the accounts of the Glory and Grace of God. This does not make the Bhagavata any the less holy. When the sweet juice has been squeezed out of the sugarcane, the bagasse is discarded. When the sweetness of Divine Majesty has been tasted, the bagasse can well be thrown out. The cane has both bagasse and sugar; it cannot be sugar only. So too, devotees have to be amidst the faithless; they cannot be without the others.

"God has no bondage to time and space. For Him all beings are the same. He is the master of the living and the non-living. At the conclusion of every aeon, the process of involution is completed in the Deluge; then, evolution starts again and, as Brahma, He creates beings again. He enlightens every one with a spark of His own Glory and fosters on the path of fulfillment every one of them, as Vishnu. It is He again, who as Siva, concludes the process by the destruction of all. Thus, you can see that there is no limit to His Might, no end to His Potence. There can be no

boundaries for His achievements. He incarnates in countless ways; He comes as an Incarnation of a Kala (fragment) of His, or an Amsa (part) of His; He comes as an Inner inspirer for some definite Purpose; He comes to close an epoch and inaugurate another (Yugavatar). The narrative of these Incarnations is the Bhagavata.

The One Divine Principle works through three Forms, as Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, in order to manipulate and complete the process of becoming and being, called Srishti. The three are fundamentally of the same essence; there is no higher or lower; all three are equally Divine. Associated with Creation, He is Brahma; with Protection, He is Vishnu; with Dissolution, He is Siva. When He comes down assuming special form on special occasions for a specific purpose, He is known as Avatar. In fact, Manu and Prajapati and other Persons are Divine Persons entrusted by Brahma with the mission of peopling the world. Everything happens in consonance with the Divine Will. So, we can assert that the saints, sages, ascetics and men, both good and bad, are all Avatars of the Vishnu Entity. Avatars are as countless as living beings are, for, each is born as a consequence of Divine Will. But, the story of the Yugavatar alone is worth perusal, for, the Advent is to restore Dharma and moral life. The story of all the rest is but a story of distress and despair.

Brahma deputed Manu to proceed to the earth and to create living beings thereon; Devi, the Feminine Principle, eluded him and took the Earth into the nether regions. Brahma then had to seek help from Vishnu (Hari) and He assumed the Form of a Boar and brought the Earth from the nether regions, and placed it among the waters. Later, the Earth was so incensed at the atrocities of Emperor Vena, she kept all the seeds sown, within herself and did not allow them to sprout. So, all beings were afflicted with the agony of hunger. The earth became a medley of hills and valleys with nothing green on it. Then, the Lord assumed the Form of Pritu, who levelled the surface and added fertility to the soil and induced the growth of agriculture and promoted the welfare of mankind. He fostered the Earth like his own child and so, the Earth is called Prithvi. He is said to have built the first cities upon the earth.

“That is to say, it was the Lord's Will that it should be done so. It is that Will which is being worked out. The Lord originated the Vedas, for the preservation of man, through the practice of morals and spiritual exercises. The Vedas contain Names that will liberate beings, and the rules and regulations that will guide men, When the Asuras or the Evil-minded threatened to steal the Vedas, they hid themselves in the waters and the Lord assumed the form of a Fish to recover them. He saved the Seven Sages and Manu from the same waters. This is the reason why it is said that the Lord incarnated as a Fish.

“O, ye ascetics! O, King Parikshit! Doubts may arise in your minds when you hear the story of creation and the early history of man on earth. The processes of the Divine Will are mysterious wonders; they cannot be grasped by the faculties with which you measure earthly events. Often, they may strike you as devoid of any basis but the Lord will never involve Himself in any deed without proper cause. That Will need not be explicable; it is its own prompter. Everything everywhere is due to His Will.

“To initiate Creation, there must be some attraction that will act as the urge. So, Brahma had to become two, in body and activity. The One Body was transformed into two and therefore, where

there was one Will formerly, two appeared, one which attracted and the other which was drawn towards creation, the feminine and the masculine. Since the one attracted in a hundred distinct ways it was called Satharupa (hundred-faceted) and Beloved of Brahma (Brahmapriya). The other was named Manu. These two gained renown in the first Stage of creation. Satharupa and Manu were the first progenitors.”

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Not We; But He

All we have been, and seen
And done and thought—
Not we... but, Baba has seen,
And been and wrought.
Pilgrim, Pilgrimage, Road—
Was, but, Himself unto Himself!
Come, lost atoms! To the centre, draw!
Turn, wandering rays, back to the Sun!
Don't stray; but, stay
In Baba, whose lap is Love.

—S. D. Khera

The Alphabet of Ananda

—Charles Penn

I know people are thirsty for Baba and His Teachings. You can get Baba's answers to your, questions in your own heart. Right here; close up your mind, and ask Him the question. Don't be too impatient, Wait. He is with you, in you.

Baba! What shall I tell these young men? What would these people like to hear from me? Or, rather, what would you like me to tell them? You must teach me... What do you teach me?...

Alright. I shall begin with the alphabet. Yes. There are 26 letters, and I shall tell them about 26 words, each word beginning with one of the letters:

A...A, for apple; the fruit, the fruit that keeps the doctor away; eat to live, do not live to eat. As spiritual growth is attained, you will need less and less of food for the body.

B...B, for Boy; sapling, trying to get a firm hold in the soil, trying to draw sustenance from the sun; put your, roots in Baba, then you can never be felled by any storm. Draw sustenance from Baba; He is the Sun illumining Your Intelligence.

C...C, for Creek; little stream struggling to find its way, to the Sea, to merge therein; like all human souls that strive to merge in the Supreme Universal Soul.

D...D, for Dust, even Dust has, a purpose; be like the dust that mixes in the company of the wind, then, you rise upward into the skies; do not be like the dust that joins the company of water, then, you are washed into the depths.

E...E, for Ever, ever-green; be ever green, even in a desert. When Baba is with you, in you, how can you be dry? He will keep you ever fresh and ever happy.

F...F, for Flavour, bitter or sweet, take them as they come. Do not be disturbed or upset. Maintain equanimity, whether the circumstances are conducive or non-conducive.

G...G, for Growth; growth of the body and growth of the spirit, the soul. The fruit of Baba's Message and of His Grace helps the growth of the spirit. Baba's Grace knows no decline; He will give you basketfuls and basketfuls, if you strive to follow His Directions, for your betterment.

H...H, for Happiness; feel happiness in every one of your actions, however insignificant the action may appear to be. If you are asked to clean this black-board, be happy, because when you do it, more words can be written upon it, for the benefit of all who are here.

I...I for I, I is the Inner Self of each one, of all, everywhere, at all times. The Inner Self uses the body, as its vehicle, for its journey on the Earth.

J...j, for Joy; give joy to others, be full of joy, always.

K...K, for Kindness; Be tender and kind be sweet to every one, at home, at school, in gatherings, while on journeys, everywhere.

L...L, for Love; love virtue, love patience, love humility, love, so that you may be loved by the good and the wise. Love the Universal Spirit everywhere, irrespective of colour or form. Baba likes both the yellow flower as well as the red. We too should not differentiate. Colour is just an illusion; there is no blue in the sky.

M...M, for Mother; Baba always harps upon the supreme role of mothers and upon the duty of revering her and offering gratitude to her. Love your mother, respect her, always.

N...N, for Now; The 'past' is gone, the future is uncertain; the 'present', the 'now' is here. Right now, is the golden moment. Do not waste the precious 'present'.

O...O, for Open; have all doors open, except one; that one is the door of the mind; lock the mind in its own room. Submerge the mind, in the Inner Self. Delve within your self for finding peace. When a thought or feeling arises in the mind let the Intellect question its bona fides; if it approves, then, tell your inner Self, "I don't want to go anywhere; if you want me to go, I shall come with you; I shall go with you only". Your Inner Self is Baba; seek His Guidance.

P... P, for Pure; You are essentially pure, re main pure, put the mind under control; tell your mind, 'go back into your room'.

Q...Q, for Quality; quality, not quantity is what Baba likes; to cultivate quality, quality of spiritual effort, sit quietly, talking to Baba or listening to Baba, as your companion and charioteer. That is the purest approach.

R...R, for Run; Run ... that is what Baba has taught me. When you see an accident, run, to help the victim. Don't sit and moan; don't say, 'It is the other's job; it is not my job'. Find happiness in helping; ask for nothing in return; Leave the fruit of the service, if any, in the hands of God. Forget about it. If any one asks you, 'Aren't you the person who helped that old man?' just say, 'Maybe', and come away.

S...S, For Sai; say 'Sai', and He comes to lift you up, your physical self and your Inner self. The Inner Self is Soham; 'He', is there, in you, with you.

T...T, for Tree. When the roots have grown deep and strong, the Inner Self blossoms; the tree has reached maturity; the blossoming of Universal Love, the Urge to Serve is the real majority.

U... U, for Usefulness; Learn to lean less and less on the world and more and more, on yourselves, on your inward strength. Make your life beneficial and useful.

V...V, for Victory; Victory over your desires, desires that are bad. Good desires, like Love for God are a must! But, do not welcome any desire that is harmful. Sublimate all bad desires. That will lead you to the state of desire-less-ness.

W ...W, for Will; develop your will-power aright. Control is the secret of power. Control the senses, the mind; control speech, impulse, passion, emotion.

X...X, for Excellence; Do your best, in the circumstances in which you are, that is excellence. Be your best, draw out all the goodness in you, all the capabilities for service that you have.

Y...Y, for Why; inquire, ask, investigate; Baba will give you the clue, the answer, the light. When you see a bird fly, ask why? Baba will answer, "The wind is blowing that way; it just flies in the direction of the wind". Baba then warns you, "You must fly against the wind; you must swim against the current; Then you, can reach Me soon; or else, it may take many lives of effort."

Z...Z, for Zeal; Reach Baba, with zeal; have the zeal, to get to Him, as fast as you can. He is always with you; He will guide you aright, so that you may discover Him, in you. He is ever gracious to give you peace and joy, to fill you with Ananda. A... A, for Ananda; the letter with which we began. Ananda is the real nature of Man.

From the Talk given at Prasanthi Vihar. Youth Camp, Bombay.

Only a Miracle can Save Him

I

On Friday, 28th June 1968, at Devi Vilas, Palghat, thrice blessed by Baba's visit 93 year old, Sri Bharat Kesari Mannath Padmanabhan, the Founder-Leader of the Nair Service Society, Kerala, was suddenly taken ill. His condition worsened hour after hour. Speech became incoherent; he lost his memory; his condition was pronounced comatic. His pulse was only 50; he was definitely sinking. Stalwarts of the medical profession had rushed into the room as soon as they received the news; they declared that it was a case of cerebral thrombosis. "Only a miracle can save him", they said.

Mannom-ji had dedicated himself 50 years ago, to the service of the Nairs. Before a lighted lamp, with five wicks, and a measure of paddy kept in ritual ceremonial, Mannomji had taken solemn pledge, and his aged mother had blessed him, invoking God, while placing her hand on his head. He has worked to fulfill that pledge, for half a century now; the result is evident all over Kerala, 100 High Schools, 20 Colleges, Polytechnics, Engineering College, Medical, Missions, Temples. Unmindful of his 93 summers, Mannom-ji had come to Palghat, for some work related to the Engineering College of the Nair Service Society. The day he arrived was Thursday, when Devi Vilas had Baba Bhajan, in the evening. He listened reverentially to the Bhajan. He said, "This Bhajan has given me overwhelming joy; I am so full of joy, that I have no relish for dinner". He stood with folded palms before the decorated Portrait of Baba for sometime. He talked with the inmates for some time, on the meaning and purpose of the advent of Baba. Then, he retired for the night. Next morning, he was ill.

The foremost doctors, standing around his bed, said, "Only a miracle can save him". And, the miracle happened! Mrs. Menon dashed into the Prayer Room. She recalled the miraculous cures effected by Baba's Grace; she remembered His Declaration: "My Dharma is Bhaktarakshana." She brought a packet of the Vibhuti which Baba had created and given to her; a few pinches of that Vibhuti were given to Mannom-ji.. Amazing! Glorious! Mannom-ji rallied round; he tided over the crisis; he became almost normal. Doctors, kinsmen, and friends stood bewildered; they whispered, "It is Divine Grace, indeed, that has saved Mannom-ji"!

What was developing into a dangerous and critical cerebral thrombosis fizzled out, into a mere blood spasm. The clot in the brain had dissolved.

Doctors say that this cure is unique in medical history... After a couple of days' rest at Devi Vilas, Mannom-ji went back to Trivandrum journeying 250 miles, by car. And, there, he progressed fast.

I was privileged to be a thrilled participant of this Mahima revealing Baba's Glory and Grace, His Compassion and His Omnipresence'

T. S. Menon, Palghat 24-7-68

Only a Miracle can Save Him

II

On the 16th September, '68, my eleven year old son returned from school, in tears. His friend, Mohan, admitted to the Government Hospital, Madurai, for treatment of typhoid fever was very dangerously ill. We were moved by his grief. I phoned to the doctor who was in charge, to find out the condition of the boy. The doctor, a leading physician, an M. D., M. R. C. P., said that Mohan was indeed very seriously ill, and that he wouldn't live. The patient's bone marrow was not functioning; there was no hope of survival. He added, "Only a miracle can save him".

We were all very much upset at this verdict, We knew from our son that Mohan was the only child of his parents; they were Christians. We had no personal acquaintance with them. But, my wife felt Bhagavan only could save Mohan. Nothing is impossible for Him, she said. She began to pray to Him to save Mohan.

The next morning, after the doctor visited the Hospital wards, we contacted him again. He said, "Strangely enough, there is some change for the better, in the patient. There is a ray of hope now. But, you cannot depend on it; it may take a bad turn, any moment. The blood-smear, which on previous occasions, did not show any white blood corpuscles, showed a few, this morning."

My wife continued to pray! In the evening, the doctor phoned to us to say that Mohan's leucocytes was rising, and there was definite hope of survival! Previous to 16-9-68, the boy had blood transfusion and all possible treatment, but, he had not shown any improvement. Now, by the 18th, his temperature came down to normal, as also his leukocyte count.

The M. D., M. R. C. P., says, "I cannot explain this peculiar presentation in this case".

We know, for certain, it is Bhagavan's Grace.

K. Balakrishnan, M. B. B. S., T. D. D.
Madurai

For Thee Alone

Let me worship Thee, sweet Lord of Love,
Thou, who art the seed and tree,
The flower and the fruit, the Universe!

I bow to Thee, O Glorious One!
Thou, who hast guided this bark
Across the billows and the storms
To shelter at Thy Lotus Feet.

Bless me ever to hear Thy Praise
And to sing ecstatic tales of Thee
And keep Thee smiling in my heart
O, Guru, Guide and God.

Let my mind, absorbed in Thee,
Be free from hatred, from anger too,
Free from thirst for pleasure and pomp
Ever in the land of Eternal Bliss.

Give me, Baba, a life of Truth,
A life along Thy Dharmic path,
A life I'll spend in serving Thee—
I was made for Thee alone!

O Blessed the day, I looked and looked
Into Thine eyes, and touched Thy Feet!
I have secured all there is to get.

For, there's none so great as Thee
Creation's Cause and Cosmic Consequence!
Take my homage, Lord! And with Thy Hand,
Light the Lamp of Love within my heart.
And pour its fill of Peace and Prem.

O, change my darkness to Thy Light
O, change my hardness to Thy Love.

V. Sathasivam, Colombo

Baba Personal—Impersonal

Dr. Venkatanarayana, Ph.D.

The terms, personal and impersonal, mean to most of us, the Personal God or Avatar and the Impersonal Brahman. In this sense, Baba would be interpreted as the Personal God, as celebrated in our ancient texts, like the Bhagavata and the Gita. But, what I wish to elaborate upon is the personal-impersonal aspect of Baba, something of which we are all familiar.

First, the *Personal* aspect of Baba: It is common experience that though one may be in a large crowd, everybody gets the feeling that Baba has looked at him directly and recognised him. When He talks to you, you are sure that He is personally interested in you. In fact, the most characteristic aspect of Baba for which most of us clamour and long, is this personal aspect; He is remarkable in making everyone feel that He is intensely interested personally in him. For, He is actually so interested. This feeling becomes a reality, when one is blessed with the much-

coveted interview. Then, He is so much concerned with your personal problems, in advising you how to overcome them, and in giving you the confidence that He is with you (as He is within you). This is His personal aspect.

Now for the *impersonal* aspect: This same Baba whom you discover as the very personification of love, and kindness, looks so different, ever so often, outside. You feel that He has forgotten you and that He is no longer interested in your petty affairs, problems and welfare. This impersonal Baba is as real as the personal friend that you meet within the interview Room, or, when He chooses to smile at You. He is the perfect example of complete attachment, and equally complete detachment—the Teacher of Nishkamakarma that He is. With His Divine knowledge of the past, present and future, He can view our problems impersonally, and also provide guidance impersonally, as no human friend can. He teaches each one of us, the ideal way of peaceful and useful living.

Baba the Taskmaster

P. B. Naik, Kampala

Baba's Divine Message, to the huge congregations in Kampala (East Africa) the ringing stream of nectar that flowed from His lips, awakened the hearts of thousands here, to a divine experience hitherto Unknown to them. Like a ray of light, the Word of Baba illumined the dim darkened corners of the minds of many, who had given themselves up to mere earthly existence.

I wish to dwell here on one advice that Baba gave, in the context of Bhakti. The path of Bhakti is the path of Love—the path of Love—oriented thought and action. He made it clear to us that, in order to be anywhere near God "it is not enough for you to love Me; I should, love you, too".

These words of Baba will remain engraved in the hearts of thousands of people who heard Him and will serve them as the beacon light on the path of life. By the condition, "I should love you too", He emphasised Action, the Way of Life. It is easy to realise that He can never be pleased by "songs of praise or even of penance without action that is right, and therefore, rewarding. All that is required by Him is that the action must bring solace where there is grief, joy where there is sorrow, contentment where there is greed. His emphasis is on Karma. Karma is the keynote of the Gita. Baba has come to awaken man to Duty and the corresponding Right.

Bhakti pervades in almost every Indian home, expressed in one form or another. Not only among Indians, but, among all mankind, we have holy places where rites of worship are performed to invoke the blessings of God or higher Powers. Satsangs are organised and every opportunity is taken to arrange and listen to holy discourses. Baba declares, that none or all these put together, is sufficient to claim "My Love". Sincerity of purpose, readiness to serve and sacrifice, is the corner stone of Bhakti, He says.

The question before us is, "Who can claim the Love of God? Baba's answer is, "Who cannot?" Every human being who has the will, has the ability to realise God's Love. Baba is the

Realisation-Revelation-Avatar. His Mission is to awaken mankind to its Real Self, which is Peace, Love, and Joy. He is set on transforming mankind into an instrument for the triumph of Dharma.

In answer to a question on man's attitude to life, Baba said once, that man's life should be like the Flute in the hands of Lord Krishna. One cannot think of a more appropriate or more inspiring simile, to put the lesson across. If every human being were to be aware of the Divine in him, or—to continue Baba's simile—to think and act as inspired by the Will of God, sing and dance to the melody of Krishna's Breath, there could be no other Heaven, than here, on this earth.

But, Baba is a hard taskmaster. He takes nothing for granted. His directive is clear and firm. To attain Love from Him, to lay claim to His Love, we must take to the path of Karmic Bhakti, that is, offer our lives and our life-work at, the Feet of the Lord, trying ever, to make the World a little happier thereby.

Krishna's Flute did all this and more. Let man as flute fill the air with the sweet harmony of thought and action, and awaken all fellow-beings to that supra-natural meta-physical Divine joy lying latent in them.

How fortunate for us, that Baba is amongst us not only to direct us, but also to be with us at every step, giving us the strength and the steadfastness to reach the goal of Sweetness and Light.

Place And Date

Do you say, Brother, He was bona
On a certain date and place?
Say rather, Brother, He is born
In your own heart (that is the Place)
On the very day (that is the Date)
When you see His charming Form
In that holy love lit-shrine.

—J. C. Das

The Historic Advent

Dr. K. Bhaskaran Nair D.Sc.

There can be no conflict between the pursuit of science and the pure call of the spirit. It is now ten years and five months since I came to Prasanthi Nilayam and surrendered myself and my family at the Lotus Feet of Baba. My life has acquired a richness and a purpose as a result of that surrender. I still continue to be a student of science. I know where science has to tread warily and where it can walk freely. I cherish the philosophy and culture of this land, which bowed down to

the spirit and honoured the masters of the spirit, more than the men of might. Vallathol Narayana Menon has depicted this in a fine poem, where he pictures Shivaji placing his empire at the Feet of his Preceptor Samartha Ramadas, and the Kerala Monarch, Marthanda Varma dedicating his entire kingdom at the Altar of Sri Padmanabha at Trivandrum. Detachment, renunciation, control regulation, limitation of desires and wants— these were the hall mark, of greatness in India once, and even until recently.

The lowering of values, the straying away from high thinking and simple living, which is seriously undermining our culture now, is not a phenomenon peculiar to this country; it is a worldwide calamity. Youth is the greatest sufferer by this infection, for, it is being led into wild excitement, or depressing drugs, in its search for peace and contentment. Similar situations when man ignored the dictates of truth and morality are described in the Puranas; they have also recurred in history before. Those who are aware of the dangers to society and individuals from licence and the loss of love between man and man have to assert, and stand out as examples of courage and straightforwardness. The traditional values of our Dharma have stood the test of generations; they form the perennial heritage of man. It is in this context that the Advent of Bhagavan is positively significant, in the history of the world.

Thirteen years ago, Prof. Julian Huxley, the famous biologist, paid a visit to Trivandrum (Kerala) and is, Professor of Zoology in the Kerala University, I had the honour to welcome him into the Town. I was surprised to find that Prof. Huxley had come, not to visit my laboratory, but a Sadhu, whose address he had secured, who was an expert in Kundalini Yoga!

He had a correct sense of values! I have been asked whether Baba is a Yogi or a Sadhu; I reply that He is the manifestation of God Himself, walking among men, showering Grace on all; He is every deity that man worships everywhere, at all times, be they the Incas of Peru or the Bushmen of Australia. Unless we recognise Him as this, we shall not have understood the full significance of His Advent. A thrill passed over me, when He Himself made this revelation at Bombay, during the World Conference last May. May Bhagavan lead us from the darkness of materialistic nihilism and lead us to the realisation of the eternal source of Beauty, Goodness and Truth. May He bless us with renewed vigour to pursue the path of the spirit, which we have missed.

Bring me the dirt of continents,
O, rivers! ... says the Sea.
I am unmoved, ever free!
O, rivers! ... says the Sea.
Bring Me and lay at My Feet
Your faults and failing;
O, mankind! ... says the Sai.

The Adoration of Millions

“Sri Rama awakened the stone that Ahalya, had become and restored it to life and beauty and goodness. We too who have been engaged in the study and manipulation of matter have become material. Awaken us and restore us into the life of beauty and goodness we have ignored”: thus spoke Dr. A. S. Adke, Vice-Chancellor, Karnatak University, while welcoming Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, on the eve of His Tour of the Dharwar, Karwar, Belgaum and Bijapur Districts of Mysore State. At the Inaugural Public Meeting on 21st October, held at the University Campus, attended by thousands of students and citizens, Dr. V. K. Gokak, Vice-Chancellor, University of Bangalore addressed the gathering on the uniqueness of the Baba Manifestation and the Love and Wisdom that He embodied. Baba, in His overwhelming, Love towards the people of Karnataka, showered His Grace in an amazingly new way: for, He discoursed in the language of the people, in sweet simple Kannada and thrilled the hearts of all!

Earlier, in the day, He had met the office bearers of the Sathya Sai Organisations of the four districts, and graciously agreed to a Programme of Visits and Public Functions, which stirred the entire region into enthusiastic adoration. On the 22nd, Bhagavan visited Vidyagiri, where the students of Janata College and other institutions flourishing there, offered Him the homage of sincere devotion. The same evening, Baba visited the Karnatak Medical College at Hubli, and after Bhajan by the students, He gave there too an illuminating discourse on the duties and responsibilities of youth. On the 23rd, Baba left by car towards Sirsi and Karwar (on the West Coast). The news of the tour had spread far and wide and aroused not only, the villages along the roads, but even those far away, from where the people trekked to the sides of the road, and waited in calm composure in spite of sun and rain, hunger and thirst, engaged in disciplined Bhajan, for the precious chance of Darshan as Baba passed by. Baba Himself stopped the car graciously wherever these groups were, and often alighted among them, and spoke a few words of encouragement, appreciation and advice, which the people will cherish throughout their lives. "You have bound Me by the sweet bonds of Love. I bring only Love with Me. That is My Message, My Mission, the Path through which you can follow Me and attain Me", Baba declared, before the mammoth gathering at Sirsi.

From Sirsi to Karwar, it was one continuous stream of Bhajan for miles and miles. In fact, this was the remarkable trait all through the tour, in all the districts—a feature that reveals the deep devotion of the people demonstrating itself as Adoration, when the Avatar of the Lord made Himself available for Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan. At Karwar, Bhagavan characterised the unprecedentedly huge gathering on the seashore, as a 'Janasamudra' (Ocean of Men) by the side of the 'Jalasangraha' (Ocean of Waters). On the 24th, Baba crossed over to Goa, where the devotees had assembled at Panaji.

At the Bhajan Sessions in Panaji, Baba gave Darshan to a large gathering of devotees. From thence, Baba drove on to Belgaum, a great educational center with a number of Colleges, including a Medical College. The mammoth gathering- at this place had the benefit of Baba's Divine Discourse, which was as usual full of the most revealing parables and stories, emphasising the fundamental values of Vedic and Upanishadic teachings. The next day, Baba moved on to Gokak, via Bailhongal and after granting the precious chance of Darshan to thousands all along the route, and at Gokak, He reached Bijapur, where the people, long thirsty

for the Darshan, were packed in serried ranks along the road for miles ahead. Bhagavan addressed a huge Public Meeting there too and installed Himself in every heart through His Divine Love.

On the 26th, Baba reached the industrial town of Bagalkot in the forenoon and gave Darshan to the thousands who had gathered. Passing through Nargund and Navalgund, He reached Gadag via Hulkoti. Every few miles on the highway, Baba was welcomed by large groups of villagers who yearned to have the Darshan of the Lord, and sang Bhajans in chorus, as offerings to Him. At Gadag, a gathering of a few lakhs had assembled to have the unique Darshan, from villages far and near, by rail and bus, and cart. Baba showered Ananda and Prema on all and inspired them to seek the spring of Ananda within them, the Ananda that comes of Atmic Realisation.

The next day, Bhagavan left Dharwar for Harihar and Bangalore. North Karnataka which had waited for this triumphal sojourn of Baba for years and prepared for it since months and thrilled by it for days now had, deep in its heart, the charming Form of the Lord and the sweet nectar of His Voice, as a treasured possession for life. The road from Dharwar to Harihar and even beyond until Bangalore was dotted with festoons, pandals and banners of welcome erected by large groups of devoted villagers in a (superfluous) attempt to draw the Grace of Baba upon themselves! Baba halted at Kundgol, Karjgi, Agadi, Haveri and Ranebennur on the way and stayed for some time at Harihar to give Darshan to the thousands who had collected there, from the hinterland of mountain, valley and coast which that town commands.

The adoration which was offered to Baba and the attention which the disciplined gatherings at every place, whether it be a tiny village, a City of Colleges, an industrial complex, a historic capital, or a place of pilgrimage, treasured the Divine Words of Courage and Confidence that Baba spoke to them is an eye-opener to those who plan for the future of our country. They reveal that the people are eminently responsive to the call of the spirit and of the higher life; that the fascination for alien means and artificial standards of life; however deep-ranted, cannot withstand the Divine Directive of Baba to disappear and give place to eternal values.

(Ed)

Sri Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

- October 6: Kavitam (W. G. Dt): Nagarsankirtan Week-Inauguration
7: Narasapuram (W. G. Dt): Bhakta Sangham: Public Meeting: Sri. P. Dixit Das
13: Kavitam (W. G. Dt): IX District Conference of W. G. Dt. Organisations
16: Narasaraopet (Guntur Dt): Public Meeting: S. S. N. College: Prof: Suryanarayana & B. Sitaramayya, B. A., B. L.: Speakers.
Vijayawada (Krishna Dt): Pushkaram Festival: Special Nagarasankirtan Week: Inauguration
18: Los Angeles (U. S. A.) Dr. Anderson Research Foundation: Talk by Charles Penn on Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

- 20-28 : Dharwar (Mysore State): Bhagavan's Tour of Dharwar, Karwar, Goa, Belgaum and Bijapur Dts of Mysore
- 23: Bobbili (Srikakulam Dt): Inauguration: Nagarasankirtan
- 24: Koppa (Chikmagalur Dt):Inauguration: Nagarasankirtan
- 27: Kalyan (Maharashtra) Inauguration: Nagarasankirtan
- 28: Dyapasandra (Mandya Dt). Inauguration: Nagarasankirtan
- 31: Gangalakurru (E. G. Dt): Sathya Sai Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha: Discourses:
Br: Lanka Venkataratna Somayajulu
- Nov. 1: Agraharam (E. G. Dt): Discourses by Pundits at Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha
- 2: Colombo (Ceylon) Gathering of All-Ceylon Sathya Sai Bhaktas: Akhanda bhajan;
Nagarasankirtan.
Kovvur (W. G. Dt): Inauguration: Sathya Sai Seva Samiti: Nagarasankirtan Week
Kakinadi (E. G. Dt): Inauguration: Nagarasankirtan Public Meeting: President: S.
M. Narasimham, Agent, Bank of Baroda
- 3: Hyderabad: Inauguration of Yajurveda Saptaham (Vedic Recitation Week) by
the Hon'ble: Minister for Religious Endowments, Sri Ramalinga Raju.
- 4: Prasanthi Nilayam: Arrival of Group of Sadhakas from the United States of
America with Sm. Indra Devi of Tecate, Mexico
- 5: Prasanthi Nilayam: Return of Bhagavan after His North Karnataka Tour
- 9: Hyderabad: Valedictory Festival of Yajurveda Saptaham: Distribution of Food
and Clothes (Asokanagar)
- 10: Dombivli (Thana Dt): Inauguration: Study Circle.
:Kallukkuzhy (Tricky Dt): Anniversary Celebrations of Bhajan Mandali:
President: Major R A P Rayaningar
:Guntur (Gantur Dt): District Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations: Speakers;
Sri. D. Venkatavadhani, M. A., Ph. D: Sri. C. N. Sastry, M. A., Ph. D. President:
Br. Sitaramayya
II: Anantapur: Sathya Sai Arts & Science College for Women. Lecture by
Indradevi, Discourse by Bhagavan
- 13: Nelamangala (Bangalore Dt): Anniversary Celebrations: Speakers Dr. V. K.
Gokak
- 14&15: Palghat (Kerala) Indra Devi: Lectures at Sathya Sai Nagar, Devivilas,
Malampuzha and Koppam
- 16: Calicut (Kerala): Public Meeting: Lecture by Indra Devi, on Bhagavan's Message.

Bhagavata Vahini

31

Describing the stages of Creation Sage Suka said, "Satharupa and Manu together approached the Lord of Creation and inquired what they had to fulfill. Brahma replied with a smile, 'Be mates of each other; beget and people the Earth.' Equipped with the authority derived from this command, they filled the earth with people.

At this the King interjected: "Master! I have learnt from my own experience that the origin of all grief in this world is Infatuation or Moha. I have no desire to hear about these matters; please relate to me how to overcome infatuation, delusion and attachment. In these last days, what exactly has man to do? Which Name has he to keep constantly in mind so that he can avoid forever this round of birth and death? Tell me these things," he asked.

Suka was very much delighted at this query. He replied, "O King! You are a spiritual soul. You serve sages with devotion. This large gathering of monks, ascetics and sages is proof of your meritorious acts. For, these do not usually congregate in any place." The King interrupted him with his protests. "No, no, my Lord! I am a great sinner; I have no trace of spiritual progress in me. If I had the least merit, if I had served sages devotedly, I would not have become the target for the curse of the Brahmin. The fortune that I now enjoy, namely, the company of these great sages and the chance of adoring your feet, is the consequence of the meritorious acts of my forefathers. I know fully well that my activities have not contributed anything to it. The grace that Shyamasundara (Krishna) showered on my grandparents is the cause. Had it been otherwise, can persons like me who are sunk in the well of Samsara, immersed in the vain pursuit of sensory pleasure, who do not contemplate for a moment the True, the Eternal and the Pure—can we ever hope to see before us, in concrete form your presence, ever roaming in the silences of the forests, unknown to man? Really, this is an unattainable piece of good fortune. All this is due to the blessings of my grandparents, and the Grace of Shyamasundara (Krishna); not to anything else. You are full of affection for me, and so, you attribute this to my own merit. I am only too well aware of my failings.

Kindly continue to shower on me the same affection, and help me to decide what has to be given up by a person whose death is imminent, what has to be adopted and practised by him. Advise me on this and make my days worthwhile. You alone can solve this for me. Relate to me the Bhagavata, as you said you would. You told me that it is the basis for progress and for liberation; it will destroy sins; it will result in prosperity. Let me quaff the sacred nectar of the Name of Krishna and refresh myself, in this feverish heat, he pleaded.

Suka smiled at the King and said, "The Bhagavata is as worthy of reverence as the Vedas, as worthy of study and observance. At the end of the Dwapara age, on the Gandhamadana Mountain, in the hermitage of my father Vyasa, I had listened to that sacred text. I shall repeat the same to you. Listen." At this, the King inquired, with his palms held together in prayer, "O Incomparable Sage! I have heard that you were an ascetic deep in detachment from the very moment of birth. Even without the traditional ceremonial rites which purify and clarify the intellect, (such as Jatakarma, Namakarana, and Upanayana) you had won the fullest awareness of the Reality, and hence, I have heard, you were moving about in the consciousness of that Truth,

away from men, in the forests. Hence, I am surprised that your heart was drawn towards this text which, you say, is saturated with devotion. What caused your interest in this path? I pray that you describe the circumstances to me.”

Suka started explaining with a calm, unruffled countenance. “Yes, I am beyond prescriptions and prohibitions. I am in unbroken mergence in the attributeless, Nirguna Brahma. That is the truth about me. Nevertheless, I must declare that there is an inexpressible sweetness in God that attracts you and captivates you by His Sportive Activities and Attributes. I must confess also that I have listened to the description of the beauty and the sweetness of God. My mind delighted in hearing and reading the Glories of God, manifesting His Divine attributes, through each of these. I could not remain at peace; I exulted like a mad man, thrilled by the bliss I derived from listening and reading. His sweet pranks and sports intoxicated me with infinite joy. This day I came hither, since I became aware that a chance has arisen to relate them to a group of eager listeners persons who, in all respects, deserve to hear them, and understand their significance. Therefore, I shall relate that sacred Bhagavata to you and through you, to the personages gathered here. You have the avidity and the attainment necessary to listen to it. You have resolved to achieve the Highest Goal of Man.

“Those who listen to this narrative with earnest devotion, (not merely listen) and reflect upon its value and significance and act according to the Light it sheds on their minds, such will merge in the Bliss of which Vaasudeva, the Lord, is the embodiment. Their hearts will be filled with the sweet nectar of the Personification of Captivating Charm (Madanamohana) and they will experience the Advaita-ananda, the Bliss of being One and Only. The highest Sadhana is the recitation of the Name of God with full vigilance of thought, feeling and utterance (Manovaak-kaya) and the loud singing of His Glory. No better Sadhana exists.

“O King, do not lose yourself in anxiety that time is short. Not much time is needed to win the Grace of God. The rays of Grace from that Embodiment of Compassion can fall on you as quick as the wink of the eye. I shall enable you to listen during these seven days, the stories of many who experienced spiritual bliss, how Vaasudeva blessed them with spiritual progress, how persons crossed the Ocean of Birth and Death through the hearing of stories and the singing of the Glory of God that is manifest in them. We shall not waste a single moment. You are conscious that you have only seven more days of life. Therefore, give up all sense of ‘mine’ and ‘thine’, of the body in which you live and the home in which the body lives. Be aware only of the story of Madhava, The Lord of the Universe; drink the nectarine narratives of the Incarnations of the Lord. It is quite a common occurrence that stories are told and heard by gatherings of thousands. But, Jnana can be achieved only by placing complete faith in what is heard. That faith must result in a cleansed mind, a pure heart.

“One further point, O King! There are countless exponents who go about discoursing on morals and spiritual matters on the basis of mere study; they do not have an iota of experience of what they preach. They have no faith in the authenticity of the various Manifestations of Divine Glory which they dilate upon. Such exhortation is as ineffective as offerings of ghee made, not in flames but on a cold heap of ashes. It will not cure the mind of faults and failures.

“In your case, there is no fear of such ineffectiveness; your heart is immersed in the uninterrupted flood of Love for Shyamasundara (Krishna). Whoever listens to this narrative and imbibes the nectar of this story with a heart, bubbling over with Divine yearning, unshakable faith in God, and constant joy can attain the realisation of the Self. This is beyond the realm of doubt. O King! This occasion, this text and this listener are all quite appropriate and excellent.”

Saying, “O, how fortunate you are!” the sage Suka placed his hand on the head of the King in benediction; he caressed the thick curls of his hair. The King pleaded most humbly, “Master, You know too well that I have very little time before me”. “Therefore,” he continued with folded palms, “give me the highest guidance, and I shall get myself established in it, all these seven days. Give me the holy formula so that I can repeat it in the short time I have, and keep it fresh in memory and save myself.”

The sage laughed. “Parikshit! Those who are intent on sensory pleasures spend their days in worry, in anxiety, in pain, grief and tears throughout a long period of life, they breed like birds and beasts; they eat good food and cast it away as urine and faeces. This is the purposeless life that most people lead. Can you call this, the process of living? Enormous numbers of living beings exist on the earth. Living is not enough; it has no value by itself, for itself. It is the motives, the feelings, the thoughts, the attitudes that prompt the day-to-day life that matters. If a person has divine qualities manifesting themselves as thoughts, feelings, etc., then he is alive. Instead, if a person defiles the holy encasement of his, (body) by utilizing it for unholy purposes that cater to momentary happiness, thereby ignoring the All-knowing, All-powerful Providence, it is to be condemned as a calculated denial of one’s humanity. Take the case of a person who has fixed his mind on the Lotus Feet of the Lord (Hari); it does not matter if he is short-lived. During that short period, he can make his life fruitful and auspicious. O King, to remove your doubt I shall tell you the beautiful story of a Rajarshi. Listen.

“In the Solar Dynasty there was once a ruler who was mighty in prowess, heroic on the field, prolific in charity, upright in character, and just in his dealings. He was named Khatvanga. He had no equal, no one who could challenge him. Meanwhile, the wicked Daityas and Danavas mustered their forces and went to war against the Devas (gods); the gods were afraid of being overwhelmed; they realized their weakness and came down to earth and sought help from King Khatvanga. The king was also longing for the adventure of battle; so, he collected his bow and arrows and riding his chariot, he proceeded to the scene of war. There he shook the hearts of the Daityas and Danavas by sheer terror of his valour. The enemy fled in panic, unable to withstand the terrific onslaught. Since it is immoral to subject a fleeing foe to hot pursuit, Khatvanga desisted from further clashes.

“The gods (Devas) were happy that they could achieve victory through the timely help of Khatvanga. They praised his might and his sense of righteousness. ‘O King, there is no one who can compare with you, in contemporary history. You granted us triumph in this deadly struggle against the forces of evil. We desire that you should accept from us in return any help that you need and we can render.’ The King told them, ‘Ye gods! Yajnas and Yagas are performed by men to please you, isn’t it? This battle in which I had the privilege to participate is therefore a Yajna, so far as I am concerned. What else do I need from you than this Grace that you have showered on me? This is adequate boon.’ Declaring thus, he fell at the feet of the gods.

“Not satisfied with this reply, the gods compelled him to ask for something, some boon from them. Though he had no mind to ask anything, he was forced to frame some wish, since he felt he would not be left alone. At last, he said, “Ye gods! Reveal to me how many years more I shall live. Only then can I decide which boon I can ask from you.” Purandara (Indra) the monarch of the gods is all-knowing and so, without a moment’s delay, he replied, ‘O King, your span of life is very nearly over. You can live only for one more muhurta (a period of a few minutes).’ On hearing this, Khatvanga said, ‘I have nothing to ask. I do not need anything. I feel that all the pleasures of this world and the next are trifles to be discarded. I shall not enter again the slush of sensory pleasure. Give me the boon of attaining the Sublime Presence of the Lord, from which there is no return, for which all life is dedicated.’ Then, he sat with closed eyes repeating the Name of God and, at the end of the Muhurta he achieved the Lotus Feet of Hari (God)!

“Note how in a few moments, he cast off from the mind all attachment to objective pleasure! Khatvanga was thus able to reach the Feet of the Lord, where fear dare not approach. You have *seven* days, while he had a few minutes only. Therefore, you have no reason to be anxious. During these days, purify your inner consciousness by attentively listening to the best and holiest narrative of the manifestation of God.”

At this, Parikshit shed tears of joy, remembering the supreme benediction won by the great devotee, Khatvanga. He exclaimed, “Master! Instruct me what I must do now; I do not get words to express my yearning. My heart is overflowing with bliss.” He sat in petrified silence.

Suka advised, “O King, equip yourself with the sword of detachment. Cut into pieces the deluded affection for the body. Give up the ‘my-ness’ that makes you cling to your kith and kin. Be seated firmly on the bank of this sacred river.” Then, when Suka was about to begin his narrative, Parikshit appeared anxious to ask some question. Seeing this, Suka said, “You seem to be perplexed with some thing. Ask me what you wish to know and have that doubt removed from your mind.” Immediately, the King said, “Master! You are indeed an Ocean of Compassion. As a tasty meal to a starving person, your words bring cool comfort to my burning heart. Revered Preceptor, you had spoken to me a short while ago about the beginnings of Creation. I did not understand it clearly. Why did the Attributeless Parabrahman (Formless—Immanence—Transcendence) assume Form and Attributes? Tell me about that.” The King sat with expectant face, all attention, praying sincerely and eager to hear and learn.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

By the Grace of God

Because of a disturbing event I tried time and time again to counter the action of a ‘superior’ I tried often just to hand it over to Baba. It was His Sankalpa, I reasoned. That was on Friday November 1, 1968. Last night, Sunday November 3, endeavors to go deeper into Dhyana were

unsuccessful. A high condition of Consciousness was granted; towards dawn a "sleep" state was entered into with the "happening" at the place of employment still bothering me.

"Baba! Should I counter with an opposing attitude to show another his fault?" I asked in prayer. Within a very short while I found myself arising and I began to reach among some nearby papers and writing sheets. There that little gem book of Light, "Teachings of Our Lord" was found immediately. The very first page I turned to was 35. There were Baba's words "Do not harbour anger or vengeance against persons who point out your faults; do not retort pointing out the faults of those persons themselves, but show your gratitude to them." Baba had quickly "cured" me and it was just before dawn that I slipped into a samadhi-like sleep.

May I share with you now the lesson Baba then gave to me. The final significance of the amazing events that you will hear about are beyond this devotee's understanding.

Baba showed me a scene. A slave who had all but been torn to pieces by the brutal lashes of a slave master's leather whip lay bleeding and probably dead upon the barren rocky ground. Sprawled on some rocks some twenty paces to the right was the gratified slave master; his face wore that sadistic look that grew even more contented as he eyed the bloody mass. But standing just to the right of the slaver was a tall man with clear eyes that blazed at him. He was a man of tremendous self-control and he spoke thus:

"You have already become, in the eyes of the Lord a, vicious reptile. Already you are crawling through the muck and slush of swamps in the upper reaches of the river beyond the hills. Already your dragging living mass is being torn at by reptiles of your own-kind. You see not the open jaws lying in wait for you to increase your pain. The pain you inflicted here, you will feel a thousand times greater and longer" vowed the brave one.

"And who are you to have the courage to risk your life admonishing me who is armed with death in this right hand?" angrily shouted the slaver.

"The Master calls me John," replied the staunch one.

"Who is this Master, and where does He live," demanded the slaver.

"He is Jesus. He lives in that small village yonder. The village is called Nazareth" clearly cried John.

"And what can this Master of yours down there do here where I am master" sneered the out holding the great whip tightly.

It was at this point that I saw John approach the torn one on the ground. He touched him it seemed and to my amazement the slave rose. As he stood on his feet his wounds were healing. He was very tall and as he walked towards the startled slave master all wounds were gone. He began to become enfolded in a great light. Within a few feet of the slaver the "risen" one became resplendent in Light and completely vanished. At this point Baba began again to speak.

Baba began to explain the strange reference to the slaver becoming a reptile—a pain racked crocodile! I had pictured to myself the terrible pain being felt by the reptile from the jaws of the others—the gouging and the tearing.

"Man can by the Grace of God be granted a role befitting his acts. He can reap for himself the pain he causes others with planned malice and an unforgiving heart. Man metes out his own treatment. Transgression from beast to man is not the only direction that can be taken", Baba explained.

"Likewise among those reptiles there are some that never harm or cause pain, even maliciously like the unrepentant slave master did. By God's Grace the reptile too can progress. Therefore just as man fluctuates on his Path to Me so does beast": Baba thus revealed.

"That man has evolved from the lower strata of life is accepted by many; few know that it is possible to return to the lower state. Without donning even the bodies of reptiles some people have already sunken even beyond that level of life," Baba sadly said.

"It is the very same life within all creatures whether they have no legs, two legs or four. When man has his chance to use his capacity to elevate himself even higher, what a pity so many choose to endure the struggle all over again" Baba concluded.

With the dawn already ushered into the room I "awoke" with that wonderful feeling of beauty that comes with the union of Baba. Words are so poor a means of expressing the depth of this event. Baba had turned back time almost 2000 years showing, an incident to uncover a great Truth.

Baba's naming the witness to the crime as JOHN is in itself a lesson; for was it not this one that was known as "the beloved Disciple"? John represents the highest power and the strongest quality, LOVE. John the Disciple says, (I John 4:8) "God is Love". And how often have we heard Baba say, "God is Love-Love is God". Jesus loved the disciple John, as a brother and John too was the first to recognize Jesus after the Resurrection.

—Charles Penn

The Sathya Yuga

A Fellow Pilgrims of the Spirit, Fellow Devotees of Bhagavan! The sun that has risen this morning is no ordinary sun. It is the sun that proclaims to the World, the 43rd Birthday Anniversary of the Incarnation, whose advent we have met to celebrate. It is the Sun of the Spirit, announcing the great day, to Humanity, the advent of a new Age, the Age of Truth, forward from the age of decadence and destruction. To bring in this New Age to Humanity and the World, Bhagavan stands here as the embodiment in human form of the Transcendental Divine. There are persons who know him to be the greatest fulfillment; there are some who approach him in the human level. But all receive the gift of peace that lasts; humanity is assured by Him of a transformed world order.

The Upanishad sages have described the Universe as a giant Ashwattha Tree, with its roots up in Heaven and its branches down below. We have in Bhagavan the embodiment of the five roots of the Universe, the basic realities: Truth Beauty Goodness Love and Power. If we want to see Truth with a capital T, where else can we see it and realise it except in Him? If we want to experience and realise beauty with a capital B, where else can we have it except in Him and through Him? He is Goodness incarnate, showering succour and healing on humanity in distress. He is Love Incarnate, Love that fosters and protects even those who have not visualised His Divinity and Power? He has come to transform the rampant confusion and disorder of the Present into a New World Order. For our guidance and benefaction, He has put on the robes of mortality. He bears on His atlantean shoulders the burden of humanity. The Mission of this Avatar is to usher in the Age of Truth, the Sathya Yuga.

At the Conference of State Presidents held here yesterday, Bhagavan said that money is not to be mixed up with matters of the spirit and that organisations are only instruments for service and self-development. Do not waste your time and energy planning for raising funds, He said. When the moment comes, the thing will be done; it is for the Divine Will to get it done. Bhagavan's Power is manifold and infinite. Let us be spotless and efficient instruments in His hands. We shall obey His Will as It emanates from Him. He will not cease His labour, until His Mission is achieved.

In the age of the Ramavatar, Sita had to be released from the tentacles of Ravana. Now, this Avatar has come to rescue the soul of humanity from the grip of the Evil that has made humanity fragmented, divided, moving it towards a destruction whose depth it cannot even imagine. Bhagavan has come to save humanity from this doom.

Victory to Sathya Sai Bhagavan, Victory to His Mission of rescuing Humanity, of building a New World Order.

Dr. V. K. Gokak (23-11-68)
Prasanthi Nilayam

Andhra Pradesh Conference

The Second Annual Conference of the Office Bearers of Sathya Sai Organisations in Andhra Pradesh was held at the Prasanthi Nilayam, on 21 and 22 November, 1968, in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan Himself. About 600 representatives of 180 organisations were able to attend. In the Morning Session on the 21st, Baba placed before the members, five topics on which He directed them to focus their attention, in district-wise discussions and instructed them to present their suggestions to Him, before the evening sessions began. The topics were: The duties and responsibilities of the Presidents of Organisations, the duties and responsibilities of the District Presidents, the modus operandi of collecting funds for the organisations, the improvement and extension of the Nagarsankirtan programme, and the venues for the World Conference and the All-India Conferences. Baba asked that they should have in their minds the

fundamental purpose of these Organisations: individual progress in Sadhana, service itself being highly beneficial Sadhana, as well as the planting of faith in the Moral Order and in Divine Dispensation, among all classes of society. In your daily work and discussions, keep these two aims always before you, He commanded.

In the Evening Session, the District Presidents of Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavaris, Guntur, Nellore, Kurnool, Anantapur, Krishna, and Hyderabad districts presented reports of the progress achieved since the last Conference. Thereafter, Baba, emphasised that all preaching must be based on personal practice and that no one who does not himself do Sadhana and Service has a right to advise or lead others in such matters. The President of each unit must be a person of known integrity, a believer in God and in this particular Manifestation with this Name and Form, and one who is enthusiastic to render Service and cultivate his own spiritual improvement. The District Presidents have the responsibility to guide, to inspire and to lead the devotees who are eager to take up one or more of the lines of work laid down for social uplift and service. They have to correct the ignorant, control the over-enthusiastic, curb the wayward, and uphold the purity and efficiency of the Organisation. He has to do this by persuasion and the processes of love, as far as possible.

Regarding the means and methods of finding the funds necessary for work, Baba laid aside the suggestions given by all the groups, and advised that there should be rigorous curtailing of all pomp, show and imitative, competitive squandering of money. He directed that there should be no plate collections or hundi boxes, no membership fees, no receipts issued involving elaborate bookkeeping and auditing and submission of accounts. The group consisting of the members of the Samiti or Mandali or Sangham or Study Circle must be able to find the money needed for routine expenses among themselves, without the humiliating process of going to all and sundry, with lists of donors and subscribers. Cut the size of expenditure to the size of the resources that can be pooled together silently and without causing heartburn. "No good work will ever stop for want of funds; you do your best, the 15 or 20 who are the members of the Committee responsible for the Samiti or Mandali; develop your faith and devotion and spirit of service; I shall secure success for you" Baba declared. "Your organisations are named after One whose hand is ever showering Grace, engaged only in GIVING, never Taking; that is your unique distinction. Do not degrade yourself, and your unit by 'asking' for help from others, by 'taking' or 'receiving' money from others", Baba exhorted.

"Whenever extra money is needed for some special function, resort to this method that I am telling you now: Let all the members gather on a fixed date and time and place. Have a locked box with a slit on the lid, in the adjacent room. Decide upon the amount needed for the function, paying attention to the importance of economy and simplicity. Make that amount known to every one. Then, let each one go in alone and deposit in the box whatever he feels he can; after all have contributed, the amount is to be counted; if the total is less than what is needed, the balance should be equally divided and each has to pay his quota. If the amount is more, it can be kept by or spent on the feeding of the poor. This is the only way by which pressure and pride are eliminated, and love and co-operation, maintained.

About Nagarsankirtan, Baba advised that the parties start out about 5 A. M. and return within 7 A. M., that there should be no attempt to overdo others, that the Kirtans should be on all Names;

and Forms of God, that there should be no particularisation of Sai Or Sathya Sai, or any other specific name. No portrait or picture or image should be taken along with the party. Instead of groups trudging distances in order to join other groups before starting out with Kirtan, each group can do the Kirtan in its own adjacent area, Baba said.

Speaking about the Conference, Baba announced that the World Conference need be convened only once in three years and all future All-India Conferences of Sathya Sai Organisations will be held at the Prasanthi Nilayam itself, than which there can be no more appropriate place for such gatherings of Sadhakas Aspirants and Workers.

On the 22nd, Baba gathered the delegates again and emphasised the need for self-examination by each. 'Think of your duties, not of your status and rights. Do not yield to egoism or conceit; do not parade your faith or devotion, or achievements,' He advised. The Seva Samiti is the key of development, it should supervise and foster the Bhajan Mandalis, the Mahila Sanghas, the Study Circles, the Seva Dals, and keep loving watch. Engage Yourselves in Puja japam Dhyana or Service activities fur your own sake, not for publicity or pomp, or excelling other orgainsations, or groups or Samitis. "Keep My Commands, My Directions, My Advice ever clear before you. Then, success and joy will be yours," Baba assured.

His Gift to Us

Our Lord's Birthday! Once again, those of us who are still using these 'shapes' to live in, will be able to celebrate our Birthday.

Until we had the fortune to find Our Lord on Earth, we were but unborn ones. Then came our Birthday; and, our steps were all towards Him.

I feel most fortunate to be so 'young'—for, 1965 was the year of My Birth. Now, I am only 3 years of age. I have all that time left, to be bathed in Swami's constant presence.

On His Birthday, we should all count His Gifts to us. The list is endless:

Faith Hope Understanding Compassion

Sincerity Selflessness

Happiness, Love

to name, but nine of them.

There is one other Gift that Swami gives to all of His devotees. This gift is very precious. That gift is 'Friendships'.

And, what does He ask of us? Only to share with Him, the Bliss we reap from His Presents.

—Charles Penn

The Forty-third Birthday

Weeks previous to the 23rd Day of November, the day when God came on Earth, the yearning to express the gratitude and joy that filled the heart persuaded the seekers in many towns in many lands to celebrate the event. So we had week-long Festivals, marked by bhajans, Discourses, Puja, Musical Recitals, Children's Dramas, Gita Recitation Contests. Others had special Puja and Bhajan for 42 days, prior to the Birthday, so that the valedictory function could be held with maximum devotion on the Birthday itself. Many villages used the occasion to inaugurate Vedic Schools, Libraries, Suva Dals, Study Circles, Service Homes, and the popular Nagarsankirtan Programmes. Millions of faces all over the World beamed in bliss, as they 'saw' before them the Divine Form, of Baba, in complete clarity, that Saturday morn when they sat or stood or knelt to adore Him in their own shrines on that auspicious day.

At Prasanthi Nilayam, streams of devotees from all the States of India, and from the Far East, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and North and South Americas had gathered, to feast their eyes and mends on the Divine Presence Itself. Dr. V. K. Gokak wove this adoration into a fine fabric of Homage, when he spoke to the vast assembly awaiting Bhagavan's Birthday Message, prior to the Hoisting of the Prasanthi Flag on the Nilayam by His Divine Hand. Addressing the huge gathering sitting in perfect silence, Baba told them that the Prasanthi Nilayam is *their* residence, but, He resided in their hearts. He called upon them to transform their hearts by Faith Purity and Discipline into Abodes of Unsullied Peace, Prasanthi Nilayam. The Flag is but a reminder of the need to overcome anger and hatred, and to cultivate love and finally attain the Light that shines in the Lotus of the Heart by means of Dhyana. Keep away from the mania for accumulation of wealth; develop the yearning for accumulation of virtue and sense control, Baba said. Of all the senses that make man their slave, the tongue and sex are the most deadly. But, the tongue is deadlier, for it serves two purposes: taste and talk. Moreover, what the tongue craves for affects the emotions and passions and so, the tongue inflames sex too. The tongue is an instrument for establishing cordiality or implanting hatred; a wrong word harms more than a planeload of bombs can by clever subtlety undermine the foundation of virtue and goodness. Do not cater to the tongue, whatever it asks. Keep it under strict control. It may ask for rich food and toxic drinks in a large and larger quantities. Deny them and it will lie low. Be the master of your tongue. Use it with discrimination, for your good and the good others. Let it talk low and little, lovingly and sweetly. Let it taste the nectar of the Name God.

The tongue teaches you a number of good, lessons; reflect on these and correct yourselves. It is the perfect example for renunciation. It spits out or swallows all that is placed on it; it does not keep anything for itself. Many things pass over it or through it, greasy sticky hard smooth bitter sweet—but, it is unaffected. The tongue teaches you how to live safe in the confusing complex of Samsar. See how it lives in its own small apartment, seldom appearing outside its doors; see also how cleverly it moves inside that apartment, especially when you talk or eat, an apartment where there are 32 sharp teeth who might at the merest slip inflict a bite on the tongue! Learn that supreme cleverness, from the tongue", Baba directed.

Baba spoke of the Conference of State Presidents held the previous day and of His instructing them that Sathya Sai Organisations should not pursue wealth and pomp but should concentrate on morality and virtue, as well as spiritual Sadhana. After the Discourse, Baba gave Darsan on

the terrace and hoisted the Prasanthi Flag, amidst the acclamation of thousands of devoted aspirants.

At 10 A. M. Baba moved in procession to the gaily-decorated Auditorium. Sai Gita, the elephant, bent low and placed a garland on Him, as He took the first steps. The students of the Vedasastra Pathashala recited hymns in chorus; music filled the air; a carpet of floral petals was beautifully designed on the road that led to the thickly packed Auditorium. Seated on the Silver Chair, Baba graciously allowed some devotees to anoint Him with consecrated oil, and place flowers at His Feet. The mother, Easwaramma, to whom all devotees are grateful, applied the sacred oil first. Thereafter, a few others followed, including Indra Devi from Mexico, Begum Tahira Sayeed from Hyderabad, the Rani of Jind from the Punjab, M. S. Dixit who was at Shirdi for years with Baba while He was in the Previous Body, the Rajamata of Nawanager, Rajamata of Sirohi, Dr. Gokak, and Mrs. Anderson from U S A Mrs. Anderson was brought by her husband is a wheeled chair, for, she was suffering since years and could not walk. Baba went to her chair and very graciously bent His Head so that she could have the pleasure of anointing Him. Then, He held her hand and asked her to get up. She did. He led her walking towards the centre of the dais, move than twenty paces, and she accomplished it. The miraculous cure moved the vast gathering into ecstatic acclamation.

After this Ceremony, Baba started giving with His own Hands the Gift of Laddu (Sweets) to every one of the 20,000, seated in rows. It took nearly four hours. In the evening, Sri S. D. Khera from Calcutta, Swami Karunyananda of the Jeevakarunyasangha from Rajahmundry And Sri M. Suryanarayana from Kovvur spoke on the Message of Baba, and His Glory. Baba declared that God incarnates in Human Form when man earns the right to move with Him. Punishing the vicious and correcting them, protecting the righteous and fostering them, are incidental. Speaking of Birth and Birthdays, Baba said, "There are five reasons for the birth of children: (1) Nyasaputhra: born to realize the value of something he deposited with you in your past birth, which you had misappropriated then (2) Rnabhoktha: born to recover the loan he had lent to you in the previous birth (3) Rnadatha: born to repay the loan you had lent to him in his previous birth (4) Suputhra: born as a consequence of the blessing of God or some saint and (5) Upeksha: born like Avatars with no sense of attachment to parents, or kith and kin, or the past or future, or the world for the fulfillment of Divine Purpose. "The Ageless Divine cannot be limited into the Birth-Death Cycle; the Atma, whether it is the particularised Jiva or the Universalised Paramatma, is Beginningless and Endless, Baba announced.

At 9 P M., Baba gave Darsan seated in a floral Jhoola which was set up by the adoring hearts of devotees. Sri A. K. C. Natarajan, famous Clarinet Artiste, thrilled the assembly with his rendering of Carnatic Hindustani and Western tunes and songs.

On the 24th, Sri Indulal H. Shah of Bombay, addressing the gathering spoke of the assembly before him being the most potent example of national and international integration, brought about by the power of Love. Major Rayaningar of Madras explained how attachment to God brings about detachment from the world. Justice V. Balakrishna Eradi from Kerala said, "Posterity will look upon these years as the most fortunate era for humanity for, we have God inhuman form walking on this Earth. He teaches us infinite truths and guides us into the spiritual path of self-realisation and grants us His Grace so that we can discharge our duties and

responsibilities with unshaken rectitude." Sri `Ramasaran' spoke on the relationship between Maya and God and demonstrated how Baba is the true elaboration of the sloka in the Gita (IV: 6) where the Lord says, "Although I am the Unborn and am immutable in essence, and though I am the Lord of all existences, I do become born through My own creative potency (Maya) having assumed sway over mine own Nature." Baba in His, Discourse emphasised the need to feel the constant Presence of God, so that one may be vigilant and steady in Sadhana. Do not divide your loyalty or give way to doubt or disputation. The One Supreme has many Forms and many Names. All are equally sweet," Baba declared. Ten men crossed a river swimming, but, when they counted themselves, since each man had his finger pointed outwards to the rest, he counted only nine. So, they all started weeping for the tenth man who was drowned! A wise man who heard the uproar showed them they were ten. The outward look leads to grief; the inward look ensures peace, Baba advised.

On the 25th, evening, Dr. G. V. L. N. Murthy, D. Sc. of Jamshedpur addressed the vast gathering and recited Sanskrit and Telugu hymns composed by him. Sri P. Madhusudana Rao of Bhattiprolu, and Sri Pemmaraju Ramarao of Tanuku also spoke, on the Gita. Begum Tahira Sayeed whose poems on Baba have been translated and published as "Arpana" in Telugu, recited a few of her latest Urdu compositions. Baba referred to a statement made by one of the speakers that Yuga-by-Yuga the sacred Cow of Dharma has been losing leg after leg so that it is now standing on one leg only. Baba said that in every Yuga there was an Incarnation of God, for the restoration of Dharma and so, it is wrong to say that Dharma has been losing its foundations continuously. Truth which is the real Dharma, the sustainer of all morality, peace and joy is ever on its four legs, stable and unshaken. He pointed out that sincere and earnest prayer, will be heard by God and answered. But, there must be a purification of character, expressed in acts in thoughts and feelings. He gave the example of Chandasoka being transformed into the famous Ashoka of history, to prove the efficacy of inner awareness.

On the 26th, Sri K. R. K. Bhat had the privilege of addressing the huge gathering of devotees prior to Bhagavan's Discourse. He described how the adoration that is offered to God in any Form under whatever Name reaches Baba. His personal experiences of Bhagavan's Omnipresence and Grace thrilled every one of the listeners. Then, Sri Sishta Suryanarayana, M. A., of Amalapuram spoke on the value of Namasankirtan as a means of propagating theism and spiritual progress. Baba said that the seed of faith must be sown in the heart prepared to receive it and grow it, into a big tree. Sadhana is the care and attention required to foster it; love is the food it grows on; ananda is the flower it blossoms into; the experience of Unity with the Supreme is the fruit. When the Namasankirtan or Namasmarana is being gone through, care should be taken that the Nami (Owner of the Name) is present before the mind's eye, in all His Glory, whenever the Name is uttered by the tongue. The Nama and the Nami are identical and cannot be separated. The Rama Form disappeared with the end of the physical career, but, the Name conjures up the Form and the Glory clearly, every time it is pronounced.

On the 27th, Brahmasri Kollur Somasekhara Sastry, revered by thousands of pupils as a great scholar and teacher, spoke to the gathering on the extreme experience of Advaita, the Ultimate Truth, which can be won by achieving Grace. Indra Devi, the `First Lady' of Yoga in America, then spoke on Baba's Divinity. "How fortunate are we to be living under the same sky, to tread the same ground that He treads, to be able to have His darsan and to listen to His nectarine

words! I am a Russia-born American citizen, with an Indian name living in Mexico, but, my motherland is India and my heart is at His Lotus Feet", she declared. Baba said that the roots of a tree must go deeper to hold the tree firmer and firmer and feed it more and more, as it grows taller and wider; so too, one's hold on God must become firmer and deeper, the more one involves himself in worldly activities and entanglements.

From the 28th, Baba was busy engaging Himself in the disbursement of His Divine Grace to the thousands who had come seeking it. He left for Bangalore and other places on the same mission, on the fourth December.

Sri Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

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Nov:

- 16: Dharmapuri (Madras State): Anniversary Celebrations of Seva Samiti: President: Sri. T. R. Singaravelu, B. A., B. L.
- 17: Palghat (Kerala): Anniversary Celebrations of Seva Samiti: President: Sri G. K. Damodara Rao, B. A., B. L.
- 23: Bhagavan's Birthday Celebrations all over the World.
- 25: Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh) Champa Shashti Celebrations by Seva Samiti: Namasankirtan
- 28: Kanpur (Uttara Pradesh): Inauguration: Sathya Sai Bhajan Mandali: Sgd. Lr. Sri M. L. Kapur (Retd.)
- 30: Malleswaram (Mysore State): Seventh Anniversary Celebrations: Bhajan Mandali: Akhanda Namasankirtan.

Dec:

- 3: Mandapeta (W. Godavari Dt): Inauguration; Bhajan Mandali and Nagarsankirtan
- 4: Bhagavan left Prasanthi Nilayam for Bangalore and Madras
- 5: Palasa (Srikakulam Dt): Inauguration: Seva Samiti
- 8: Gowdagere (Mandya District): Inauguration: Sathya Sai Library & Study Circle
- 10. Mamuduru (W. Godavari Dt): Xth District Assembly of Sathya Sai Organisations.
- 14: Hogenakal (Dharmapuri Dt): Antharyoga: (Camp for Sadhakas): Seva Samiti Auspices