

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

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Rama saw his father overpowered by affection for him; he moved towards the throne and held his hand lovingly. He said. "Father! It appears you have forgotten who you are. Bring into your memory who you are, in which royal family immortalised by which forefathers you were born, and how much fame they had attained. Then, you will not weep as you are doing now. You took birth in the Ikshvaku dynasty. Till this day, you have spent your years, as the very embodiment of Dharma. The three worlds have acclaimed you as the dutiful observer of vows, as the guardian and practitioner of Dharma, and as the most redoubtable hero on the battlefield, as well as elsewhere. You are aware that there is no greater sin than retracting the word once given. Going back on the word you have given to the sage will tarnish your fair fame. Your sons cannot tolerate this ill fame. When you cannot act according to your word, you can have no share in the merit of the sacrifices performed by you or even of the beneficial acts done by you like digging wells, and planting trees. Why dilate? We, your sons feel that it is a mark of disgrace, for which we have to bend our heads, even to listen to the talk that Dasaratha broke his plighted word. This is an indelible blot on the reputation of the dynasty itself.

Your affection for your sons is blind; it is not based on discrimination. It will bring on us punishment, not protection. If really you are moved by affection towards us, you should pay attention to the promotion of our fame, shouldn't you? Of course, we are in no position to advise you. You know all this. Your affection has drawn you into this miasma of ignorance; it has made it difficult for you to recognise your duty. As for us, we have not the slightest shred of fear. The Bride of victory will certainly espouse us. Do not hesitate; bless us and entrust us to the sage." Rama pleaded thus, and bending his head low, he touched the feet of his father.

Dasaratha drew Rama to himself and fondled his head; he said, "Son! All you have said is true. They are gems of great worth. I am not a fool to deny them. I shall proceed this moment with my four-winged army and protect the sacrificial ceremony of this sage at the cost of all that I possess. But, my mind does not accept the proposal to send you, just now being trained in the arts of war and weaponry, into the arms of those demoniac Rakshasas. No father will knowingly offer into the tiger's paw the sons he has borne. And, is it right for you too to plunge us into the flames of grief? We gained you through austerity, and fostered you as the very breath of our lives? Alas! What can any one do when destiny itself is against us? I shall not blame you or any one else; it is the consequence of the sins I have myself committed."

Dasaratha bewailed thus, with his hand upon his head. At this, Rama broke into a smile. He said, "Father! What is this weakness? You speak of thrusting us into the tiger's mouth! Haven't you realised yet that we are not goats to be so offered? Believe us to be lion cubs, send us on this sacred task with your blessings. Kings must not delay sacred tasks!" Hearing these rather sharp remarks of Rama, Vasishta rose, saying, "Excellent! Dasaratha! Did you hear the lion's roar? Why the jackal howl hereafter? Arise! Send the message to the mothers and fetch them; place your sons at the service of Viswamitra." Hearing these words, Dasaratha felt he could not do anything else than obey; he sent word that the Queens come into the presence.

The Queens put in their appearance with veils over their heads; they touched the feet of the sages and of Dasaratha and afterwards, they moved towards the children and stood by their side,

fondling with loving fingers the crown of their heads. Vasishta spoke to them first. He said, "Mother! Our Rama and Lakshmana are ready to leave with Viswamitra in order to guard his Yajna rite from interference and obstruction by demoniac hordes; bless them before they leave." As soon as she heard this, Kausalya raised her head in surprise saying: "What is this I hear? Are these saplings to guard and protect the Yajna which the great Sage is celebrating? I have heard that the Mantras themselves with their Divine potency will be the best armour; how can mere man dare take upon himself the burden of saving the Yajna from harm. The responsibility for the successful conclusion of the Yajna lies on the rectitude of the participating priesthood."

This appealed to Vasishta as correct; but yet, he thought it best to shed a little more light on the situation. "Kausalya! Mother! The Yajna of Viswamitra is no ordinary rite! Many obstacles are affecting it and creating anxiety." Vasishta was continuing with his explanation when Kausalya intervened and said, "I am really amazed to hear that anxiety overshadows the Yajnas performed by sages and Rishis. I believe that no power can stand against any sacred resolve. The sage is nursing this desire and craving for its fulfillment in order to manifest the Supreme Light and Peace; that is my surmise.

He might have put forward this request in order to test the King's attachment to his children. Or else, how can we believe that these tiny sprouts of tenderness will guard from harm the Yajna that this sage, endowed with all mystic and mysterious powers, is proposing to celebrate?" While Kausalya was saying this, her hand caressing the head of Rama, Dasaratha who was listening to her talk, suddenly realised the truth in a flash and arrived at a bold decision. He said, "Yes! The words of Kausalya convey authentic truth. This is but a plan to test me; I am certain about it. Master! How can I, a weakling, encounter your test? I shall abide by your wish, whatever it is!"

With these words, Dasaratha fell at the feet of Vasishta. Vasishta looked at him and said, "Maharaja! You have proved yourself worthy. These boys are not of common stamp. Their skills and capacities are limitless. We know this. Others do not know. This occasion is but the inauguration of their triumphal march; it is the prologue to the history of their victorious career. It is the taking on by them of the vow of Dharma-rakshana, the Guardianship of Righteousness. They will return soon with the Bride of Victory. Therefore, without further thought, hand them over gladly to Viswamitra." Vasishta called the boys to his side and placing his auspicious palm on their heads, he recited some hymns pronouncing his Blessings on them. The boys fell at the feet of the mothers and received their blessings. They stood ready to depart. Dasaratha noticed the glow of joy and courage on their faces; he suppressed the grief that was surging within him; he placed his hands on the shoulders of the boys and came near Viswamitra; he fell at his feet and said, "These two, O Master, are from this day your sons; their health and happiness are dependent on you; if you order that a few personal guards may be sent with them, I shall gladly comply."

At this, Viswamitra burst into laughter. "O! King, you are really insane! Is there any one who can guard them, these heroes who are coming to free the Yajna from obstruction? Do they need any? They are out to guard the Yajna which we cannot guard; do such mighty heroes need some one to protect them? Of course, your affection has blinded you. King! I shall bring them with me to you when the task for which I am taking them is accomplished.

Do not worry. Rule over the kingdom without injustice or interruption." Viswamitra rose from the seat; every one offered reverential obeisance to the great sage. He walked out of the hall first,

and the two princes followed him. As soon as they reached the main gate of the palace, people heard heavenly drums and clarions resounding from the sky. A shower of flowers rained upon them. As they moved along, the music of conches rose from every doorstep; the peal of trumpets was heard from every few yards of the road. They appeared to men, women and children, to the citizens of all ages, as two cobs trotting behind an elderly lion. No one knew why the princes were walking barefoot and leaving the palace with the celebrated sage; so, each one started asking his neighbour what the mission was on which they were bound. The ministers, courtiers and citizens accompanied them only as far as the City Gate, for, that was the royal command. There, they bade farewell to the princes and turned back.

Thereafter, they continued their journey, Viswamitra leading the way, Rama close behind him and Lakshmana bringing up the rear. They saw the lines of charming trees on both sides of the track; they filled themselves with the beauty of Nature that revealed itself before their eyes. When they had trekked some distance, they entered a jungle devoid of human habitation. Viswamitra ordered that they should wear from then on, wrist guards and finger guards of leather; he asked them to take on hand the bows slung on the shoulder and hold them in readiness. Thus equipped, they moved along the silent (error-striking forest, through the tangled bushes, fearless and effulgent, as if they were the monarchs of the region. Soon, they reached the river Sarayu.

The sun was preparing to set; so, Viswamitra called Rama and Lakshmana near him and spoke to them soft and sweet words, "Darlings! Go to the river without further delay and have the ceremonial washing of hands and feet. I shall now impart to you two mystic formulae, (Mantra), which form the crown jewels of all mantras. They are named Bala and Athi-Bala (strength and super-strength). They are both charged with tremendous power. They will restore freshness to you, however exhausted you may be; they will prevent exhaustion however heavily you exert yourselves; they will not allow illness to approach you; they will save you from demonic forces. Again, whenever you are journeying, they will, if you recollect them, keep away hunger and thirst, bestow exhilarating health and shower joy and enthusiasm. They will strengthen limbs and minds.

"Rama! These two mantras are supreme over all other Mantras; they are more effulgent and efficacious than the rest." Viswamitra expatiated upon the potency of the Mantras for a long while. Rama had no need to be told of them; he listened with apparent surprise and with wonder filled eyes. Lakshmana, meanwhile, was watching both the Sage and Rama, laughing within himself!

This incident is a good lesson for the world, wherein Rama had come to revive Dharma. It is a lesson Rama taught by his behaviour, rather than by words.

"Maya is inescapable for any one however great; it will turn them upside down in a moment; it will not loosen its grasp so long as the victim is engrossed in the belief that he is the 'body'; it will not be frightened by the name or fame, the skill or intelligence, of the person it seeks to possess. Only when the individual discards name and form, releases himself from body-consciousness and establishes himself in the Atma, can he escape from the misconceptions that Maya inflicts." This was that lesson!

For, note this! Viswamitra had these two powerful Mantras in his control he had accumulated a great store of spiritual treasure, he had realised, in spite of his own far-famed resources, that Rama alone had the might needed to outwit and destroy the demonic hordes intent on disrupting the Yajna he was set on celebrating. He had counselled Dasaratha against over-affection towards the son, blinding him to the divine majesty of Rama; he had announced that Rama was the guardian of the entire world; he believed that there was no height of heroism that Rama could not reach. Yet he was preparing to initiate those very princes into some mystic mantras, as if they were children of common stock. Surely, Viswamitra was shackled by Maya! He had yielded to the delusion of judging by apparent attributes Rama laid bare the strength of the stranglehold of Maya on the sage. For, it was He who had shrouded Viswamitra's mind and made him enter proudly upon these initiation rites!

Rama and Lakshmana finished their ablutions in the river as directed by Viswamitra. The sage came to Rama and initiated Him into the two mantras. Rama pronounced: the formulae after the teacher, and nodded his head as a novice should do, when a mantra is taught. Lakshmana too did the same. They bowed their heads as if they had agreed to be the 'disciples' of Viswamitra.

Soon it became dark and the brothers arranged for themselves as beds the grass which grew thick on the ground. After they laid themselves, Viswamitra sat by their side and related tales of olden times. Soon the boys appeared as if they had gone to sleep, as a result apparently of the exhaustion of tramping long distances on foot. Viswamitra stopped his story and was lost in thought about his own destiny and destination.

Meanwhile, daylight broke across the land. Multicoloured birds flitted from branch to branch on the tree, under which the two brothers were sleeping, singing sweetly, as if they were intent on awakening Rama and Lakshmana! It was to the ear the music of aerial minstrels.

But they could not rise the sleepers! So, Viswamitra accosted Rama and announced that dawn had arrived. "Awake," he said. Rama sat up; he awakened Lakshmana who was in bed by his side, and both fell at the feet of the sage. They finished their morning ablutions in the Sarayu river; they took the sacred water in their palms and let it down again uttering hymn: in praise of the Goddess of the River. Then, they bathed in the river and performed thereafter the Sandhya rite, involving the recitation of the Gayatri mantra. Soon they, got ready for the journey and stood before the sage, with arms folded.

Viswamitra asked, "Dear ones! Now we can move towards our hermitage, can't we?" And Rama replied, "We await your command!" So, they started walking, with the sage in front and the brothers behind. Soon, they reached the confluence of the Sarayu with the Ganga. The brothers prostrated before the holy river, and cast their eyes all around the holy spot.

They saw a hermitage, with heavenly vibrations pervading the surroundings. It struck them as very ancient and full of hoary associations. Lakshmana questioned the sage, "Master! Who lives in that holy hermitage? What is name of the great personage who dwells there?" The sage smiled at the inquiry. He said, "Dear Ones! God Siva had come here long ago with His divine attendants, to engage in austerities prior to His wedding Parvati. While He was fulfilling His Divine obligations from here, Manmatha (the God of Love) obstructed the spiritual practices and caused anger to sprout in the Divine Heart. He opened His Third Eye, which threw such searing

flames that Manmatha was burnt into ash. His body was destroyed and so, he is known now as 'limbless', Ananga. The word for a limb is anga; since Manmatha lost his angas here, in this region, this part of the country is known ever after as Anga!

This is a rich region. This hermitage was used by Siva and it is being used since, by generations of His devotees, each of whom has merged in Him as the fruit of arduous asceticism. This hermitage will accept as residents only strict followers of the Dharmic Path. If you so desire, we shall spend the night here and start out again, after a bath in the Ganga.”

Rama and Lakshmana could not contain their delight when Viswamitra came forward with this proposal. They said, "We are very happy" and accepted the idea. They bathed in the holy Ganga.

Meanwhile, the news that Viswamitra was available near their residences and that he had with him two heroic sons of the Emperor spread wide and many rushed to welcome them and receive them in their own hermitages.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The Birth of our Beloved

Mrs. Michael Shultz

Before Kali Yuga started, sweet Lord Krishna oft proclaimed
"To this Earth again will I be born, when it is steeped in shame".

And thus it was so written, 'pon the Gita's golden page
"For the protection of the Righteous, I am born from age to age."

And then the world retreated deep—into Maya's cold embrace
A handful cried to God Himself to assuage them with His Grace.

Thus in humble Puttaparthi, as the Lord destined it be
A little one was coming to the Raju Family!

Unknowing Easwaramma, beauteous with child
Had begged the gods for a son—the Lord Himself just smiled!

Midnight marked the holy advent of November twenty-third
The pious family lay at rest; there was but naught a word!

SUDDENLY! Tamboura's drone ethereal with ecstatic joy of drum
"Proclaimed out of their own accord: "The Lord Himself will come!"

Thus in the earliest morning, Easwaramma felt the pangs
And the Greatest God began descent unto this lowly plane.

The mother partook of worship, water sanctified, and flowers
And the village was chanting "Shiva! Shiva!" in these dawning hours!

The Sunrise was the Advent! The dawn of Humankind's dream
The Divine and Glorious Babe was born, aglow with Light Supreme.

The blessed year-1926—thus our Precious Lord appeared
Announcing once again to all—"I am your Charioteer!"

A cobra, strange, 'neath Baby's Bed—mysteriously made it shake
For mighty Vishnu rest again—as Seshasayi 'pon the snake!

God lay in His New Body, tiny head in halo'd cloud
And measured lofty Powers with which He'd been endowed!

His smile captured all the Hearts of those who were so bless'd
And wondrous realms of Divine Abode could this little face suggest!

'Sathyanarayana' was given as His Name
Supreme Embodiment of Truth, Full-Grace Full Sri, Full Fame!

A celestial little laugh amidst a head of silken curls
Dazzled Mother Earth and delighted all the worlds!

O, if we could have peered then—into those sparkling Lotus Eyes
We would have wept with joy and cried—"He's come for us! Our Sai!"

Soon the air was softly filled with the breath of jasmine bloom
Little Sathya radiated Bliss! And a God's Perfume!

Our Merciful little Gopal, now Sathya in this life
Came to comfort the weary world for her human tears and strife.

The Lord's figure grew into a charming abode of Grace
Today lakhs come to get the Darshan of His Blissful Face!

O, our Great Sai Baba—You've toiled here forty-four sweet years
What merit have we won that You call all of us "My dears?"

Let us kiss Your Lotus Feet, O God, on this auspicious day
Grant that there we'll e'er remain, to never go astray!

So on Your Glorious Birthday, Lord, may every heart rejoice
JAI! We are all reborn! We've hearkened to Thy Voice!

Out of the Jaw

Dr. B. Janakirama Rao, M. B. B. S., L. O., D. O.

During this year's Birthday Festival, I had the opportunity of going to Prasanthi Nilayam, as a Delegate to the All India Conference of Office Bearers of the Sathya Sai Organisations. While at the Nilayam, I secured the chance of offering my services to the Sathya Sai Hospital there. I had heard of the miraculous cures that the Grace of Bhagavan brings about at that Hospital and all over the world, when His Grace is sought after with prayer. This time, I had the good fortune of personally witnessing the miracle happening at the Hospital and I yearn to share the thrill with my brother doctors, and brother devotees.

Sri Raju, age 45, of Bavadevapalli, Divi Taluk, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh had come as a Delegate like myself for the Conference and, like myself, he stayed on for the Birthday Festival. On the 24th, a day after the Birthday, he fell ill, with fever and constipation. His condition worsened on the 25th, when he took a tablet of a popular brand of laxative. The motions induced by that tablet brought on bleeding, which developed into vomits of blood, thrice in the night!

Volunteers of the Sathya Sai Seva Dal removed him to the Hospital at 12 midnight, on the 25th. His pulse was 120/ minute, and his B. P. was 120/80. We gave the treatment indicated, viz., clauden 10 cc I. V., morphia with atropine and a styptovit tablet. At about 2-30 A. M., Dr. K. Bhaskara Rao of Eluru was called in for consultation, since the patient vomited a large quantity of blood and was restless. The pulse was rapid and thready; B P. was 80/?

We did the best that could be done, under the circumstances; 500 cc I. V. of saline was given, along with 2 ampoules of styptochrome and calcium with Vit. C., and morphia with atropine was repeated.

But, there was no improvement; the condition of the patient was deteriorating. On the 26th, all through the day, he was worse. We gave him again 500 cc of I. V. glucose with saline, calcium and Vit. C, and morphia with atropine and styptochrome. By evening; his condition deteriorated further, and were fast losing hope.

At 2 o'clock in the night, we were called in. Myself and Dr. Bhaskara Rao examined the patient. Radial and brachial pulse could not be felt. B. P. could not be recorded. So, the patient was removed to a separate room. He was sinking fast. We decided that further treatment was of no avail. However, we gave him a coramine injection and, as a last resort we put into his mouth, the Vibhuti (Sacred Ash) from one of five packets, given by Baba for him, earlier in the day, with the wards, "So, the doctors think the illness is very serious, do they?" We also rubbed the ash over his stomach and prayed for the Grace of Baba upon the unfortunate man who was slipping away.

Our prayers were granted! When we came to the Hospital on the 27th, at 8 A. M. we could feel very rapid radial pulse; but that did not infuse much hope in us, even then! The patient, however, told us that he had a motion, at night (!), and that some one had helped him with a bed pan (!)

The hospital attendant when asked knew nothing about it; he had not taken the bed pan to the patient, but, it was there, under the bed, all right! What an inexplicable happening, in the hospital, we wondered. This encouraged us to hope for further effects of Grace.

No further treatment was given. At 12 noon, the pulse count, I found, was 120/ minute, and the B. P. rose to 110/84!

I could not believe it to be true. He revived, through the Grace of Baba, most certainly. Therefore, I started the usual treatment: styptochrome, kaplin and colloidal calcium with B12, and sips of cold water and milk.

In, the afternoon, he had three black motions and I was expecting a further fall in B. P. But, when I examined him at 6 P M, there was no such fall! The B. P. was maintained at 194/84, and the pulse at 100/minute. So, I gave him another injection of styptochrome, along with an infusion of pomegranate. On the 28th, in the early small hours, at 3 A. M., I went to the Hospital and I found Sri Raju sleeping calmly. I found the pulse full and bounding, 100/minute. He talked cogently and told me that he had to write to his officer a letter asking for extension of leave. He was employed as a teacher.

The previous night, we had given him up as lost; but, with Baba's Grace, he had come out of the jaw of Death! Jai Sai Ram.

Razole 28-11-70

Thrice Fortunate!

(From the Divine Discourse of Bhagavan, on the Third and Last day of the All India Conference of Sathya Sai Organisations: 22nd, November, 1970)

Embodiments of Divine Atma

In this land of Bharat, along with the growth of spiritual organisations dedicated to the illumination of the hearts of men, certain movements that bring ridicule on these organisations are also afoot. If you ask, of what type are these, I have to state that, while in a few states and areas, in order to make known my glory and splendour, certain instances of inexplicable wonder are happening many take advantage of this and publicise that sacred ash is showering from the pictures in their houses, that amrita is dripping from pictures in their shrines, that some articles fall miraculously from picture in their homes, in order that they may gain money and reputation from people who easily believe their claims as true! This false propaganda causes lasting damage to the Sai Organisation and its units. Those who develop any kind of relationship with such people should not be allowed to associate in any way with the Sathya Sai Organisation.

This is not all. There is another type publicity that is being indulged in by some. They claim that in some places I have entered into some people or 'possessed' them, and that I am answering questions and solving problems posed before such persons! Those who claim this and behave in this manner have something 'loose' in their brains; or, they are ill with hysteria; or, they are insane; or, they suffer from some mania, or else, they are clever crooks, who have discovered a

way of cheating gullible folk and earning money by this means. I warn you not to believe them; for, I declare most emphatically that whoever it is, it is not I that is speaking to them or through them.

For a day or two, such people are freely visited as wonders; but, you will find that within a week, they will insist on the purchase of tickets for consultation, or, you will find a collection box, installed fleecing those who are attracted. I warn you against such tricksters and command that such people should not have any place in any unit of our Organisation. Each one of you has to develop your own faith and devotion. Entangling yourself with such low behaviour, you have nothing to gain; you can only lose what you have gained.

Again some States and regions, there are some crooks who move about announcing that I have authorised them (!) and given them some tasks to perform in those regions, because as they say, "My devotees have increased so fast and so much in numbers that I am not able to cope with the consequent work; so, I have requested these fellows to foster and guard devotees in that area, on my behalf!" Never believe them, for, this has never happened; nor will it ever happen! This propaganda is but a mean ruse to turn devotees into the wrong path. Realise this and be warned.

Moreover, such pretenders gather around themselves persons of the same vile nature; for as the saying goes, the load gets the vehicle it deserves! Persons with mean desires and low intellects group around them and fall into ruin. So, you have to remove from the Organisation persons who attach themselves with such claims; you can do it as soon as you discover them associating with such men; you can take the approval of the District or State President, later. You can see that the ways in which they demonstrate their devotion and faith, the way in which they behave and act... are disgusting to say the least. And, you are asked to believe that I go into their homes and manifest my glory and powers therein! Surely, it is a punishment of fate, if it is true!

How can you ever put faith in them? Grace is something that is not won, even by persons who dedicate their entire lives to me, and who yearn from the depth of their heart crying out in agony, Sai Sai Sai! And, these persons whose personal life is soaked in bad habits, vicious behaviour and disgusting deeds claim that I am with them and that I am showing my glory and power 'through' them! This claim is something that defames and disgraces me; it is to be strongly condemned.

Certain evil forces are also afoot, to attract devotees by such propaganda and later, when they have submitted to the wiles, turn them into wrong paths and destroy their faith and devotion. There is a vast gulf between the Sai Force and these low forces. Now that the necessity has arisen, this has to be referred to now. There is none, who can stop or diminish my splendour. It has no bounds; it can meet with no obstacle. You may believe it or you may not believe it. But, I can transform the earth into sky and the sky into earth, and that in a moment." The low forces seek to exhibit, but, the Divine is, it does not do anything more than be, according to its nature. They seek to attract by demonstration; the Divine is its own evidence.

But, you may ask: They too give things out of their hands as You do; They too wear a robe like You; they talk and move like You! But, you cannot determine such matters with reference to articles given or the language spoken or the dress worn. Can all green birds talk like the parrot?

Can all worms that creep on flowers become butterflies? Can a donkey wearing the skin of a tiger become a tiger? Can a bloated pig become an elephant? Thus says a poet. So, do not be misled by artificial tricks borrowing the dress and manners. Truth is ever truth; the false is ever false. This is related to genuine Truth, this has no kinship with delusion or falsity.

For one suffering from overproduction of bile or same types of indigestion, even sugar will taste bitter. Persons having no faith in God may have their own conception of Me, but whatever they might feel or express, I shall not be affected, in the least.

The Tower

We have here, gathered in thousands, the employees of the Kamani Enterprises and other factories. The Industrial, agricultural, mercantile, political and administrative fields are all interdependent like the five vital airs of the human body. They have to be healthy and work harmoniously, so that mankind can have peace and prosperity. If they lovingly cooperate in the common endeavour, this country and the world can celebrate each day as a festival and each door can have a green festoon over it. But, this bond of love is absent. There are factions in each of these, each contributing its share of confusion, and so there is deeper and deeper anxiety.

Today the agitation is only for one's rights; there is no attempt to earn the right by sincere efficient work. Every one must work in the faith that Work is Worship and Duty is God. The Kamani's are fabricating transmission towers. Every person engaged in the fabrication has to work correct and sincerely, so that the towers may be strong and secure. This is the way to deserve the right, to build up authority. Who among the workers does the more or less important item of work? There is no need to discriminate; there should not be any attempt to cast the slur of inferiority or the halo of superiority on any one. All are sharers of the responsibility and the privilege.

Baba, at Bombay 1-1-71

The Assumed Illness

(From Baba's Christmas Day Discourse, Dharmakshetra, Bombay)

Embodiments of Divine Atma,

This is just the occasion when I have to tell you the truth, the principle, that underlies this body. So, I am telling you this: There fore, these words are not intended to announce any superiority or to claim greatness. Let me tell you of one instance: The astounding expressions of power which Swami is manifesting, the power, the majesty, the wonders—these are characterised by some persons cannot bear with this divinity, as miracle, mesmerism or magic. They indulge in this kind of vile propaganda. Mine is no miracle, mesmerism or magic. Mine is 'authentic' Divine Power.

Foolish persons who Cannot accomplish these wonders themselves base their conclusions on these. They say that it is not possible to achieve self-realisation through these miracles, that we cannot derive any benefit from persons endowed with such powers; they try to promote their selfish interest through such wrong paths. All this is due to their weakness, their lack of power.

When Krishna appeared at one time on one side, on the other side at another time, all around him sometimes, Kamsa scorned at Krishna and said, "You fellow! Krishna! Put a stop to your magic. tricks!" He did not stop with that. He boasted, "Face to face with, the might of my shoulders, the might of your magic, how much is it? Only a tiny drop!" When the same Krishna, a seven year youngster vaulted over him and felled him to the ground, and sitting on his chest squeezed his neck in mortal hold, Kamsa wailed piteously! "O! Oh! I am dying!" Then, Krishna retorted, "Uncle! Do not wail! This is but magic! Magic! Only Magic!"

Of course, people can talk loose, using the words that rise from the tongue; but, no one should bandy about meaningless words when they have not understood the mystery of Divinity. All powers are within His grip. My powers are not such as those that last but a few minutes and fade away. '

Aindrajaalam idam sarvam. All this is magic, they have no intrinsic worth or validity. The body lasts for a period and then it disintegrates. But, my powers, will continue without intermission or diminution. The body, of curse, has been adopted for the propagation of Dharma, and after that task is accomplished, it will disintegrate. Many Bhaktas (devotees) were plunged into grief, since they heard that a serious illness had come into this body. But, in truth, no illness can ever happen in this body. Any illness that affects it is a passing cloud only, assumed from some one out of Grace in order to save. It comes from one side and goes like the cloud to the other side. When it comes, this body appears to be afflicted! But, I have no contact with the suffering the illness causes. It is unrelated to me.

Bhaktas, however, take it as real suffering and they grieve over it. They even make attempts to advise Me, saying, "Swami! let that one person be afflicted with the illness; for, then, it is only that person himself that will suffer. But, when you take it over and suffer vicariously on his behalf to save him, lakhs of people suffer!"

Well, to feel agitated and anxious when this body is suffering is the duty of Bhaktas: to take upon myself the suffering of my devotee is my duty! I do mine and you do yours. Yours is as much your duty as My assumption of the illness is mine.

If you really understand the Reality, you have no reason to suffer, nor have I any suffering. These are only temporary, transitory suffering and anxieties, that are both the expressions of Prema (Love). When the relationship between us is fixed in the recognition of Truth and the Atmic Principle, there can be no suffering, no anxiety, no agitation.

The Lotus Feet

Bhagavan reached Bombay on the 21st, December, after His epochal stay at Goa. Every day, until the 9th January, (when He left Bombay). Bhajan Sessions, at Dharmakshetra in the morning and evening hours, were attended by thousands, among whom Baba walked seeking out the distressed to heal and console. On Christmas Day, and on New Years' Day, and on Vaikuntha Ekadasi Day (Jan 7) Bhagavan gave His Divine Discourses. Dr. V K Gokak, Dr John Hislop from California and Sri Page (who dedicated the book, Dialogues with the Divine, at His Feet) also spoke on these days. On New Year Day, Bhagavan inaugurated the Community Centre, of the Kamani Enterprises and addressed a mammoth gathering of workers and their families at Kurla. On the 4th, Bhagavan flew to Poona, where after directing the Seva Samiti and inaugurating the Mahila Vibhag, He blessed the Bhajan Gathering in the morning, and addressed a vast concourse of citizens in the evening, on the Essentials of Sadhana.

He showered His Blessings on the children dwelling in the hutment, colonies around, who are studying in the Prathamik School at Dharmakshetra.

Baba also blessed about a thousand children attending Bala Vihars, who enacted delightful entertainment items on four evenings. He discoursed to groups of Rotarians, Artistes and Intellectuals, Seva Dal Members, Volunteers, Balavihar Teachers, and Sadhakas on different days. For about twenty days, Dharmakshetra was resplendent with the Sai illumination, which drew Bombay into its Divine Aura. His Grace was showered on every one and His Message inspired hundreds of thousands into the resolve to tread the path to God.

Sri Sathya Sai Satsang Samachar

Dec:

- 11 : RATLAM: Dr. V. K. Gokak: speech on Baba
:COLOMBO: Mahila Sangh: Laksharchana
- 13 : KANPUR: Inauguration: Study Circle'
- 19 : MALLESWARAM: Mahila Sangh: Feeding of the Poor (Laksharchan Rice)
- 20 : BI JAPUR: Samithi: Bhajan at Anatha Balikasram
- 24 : SALUR, Srikakulam Dt: Inauguration: Samiti

Jan:

- 1 : NELLORE: IV Annual Day of Balavihar
- 3 : NAGARKURNOOL: Samiti: II Annual Day
:ULSOOR: I Annual Day of Central Jail Bhajan Seva
- 9 : AMLA-BETUL: Samiti: II Annual Day
- 14 : REPALLE: III Annual Day: President: Major R P V Rayaningar
:PASCHIMA VAHINI: Sathya Sai Kavi Sammelan: Dr. D R Bendre, Prof. R G Kulkarni,
Prof. G. P. Rajarathna and others
:PRASANTHI NILAYAM: Bhagavan's discourse
:VELLORE: Inauguration of New Bhajan Hall
- 16 : BELLARE: S. Kanara: Bhajan Mandali: X. Annual Day

17 : NAGPUR: Samiti: I Annual Day: Bhajan: Home for Crippled Children. Inauguration:
Seva Dal.

Baba in the Twin Cities

On 24 January, 1971, Bhagavan reached Brindavan, Hyderabad, from Brindavan, Whitefield, travelling by plane from Bangalore. The thousands who gathered for the evening Bhajan had the unique chance of Darshan that day. On the 25th, there was held a Public Meeting at Brindavan, with Dr. M. N. Lakshminarasiah, the Minister of Transport, as President. Baba thrilled and inspired the vast gathering with His Divine Message. On the 26th, Baba instructed the members of Sathya Sai Seva Dal in the art of seva and blessed their attempts to cultivate kinship with the poor and the distressed. Then He visited the Senior Certified School for Juvenile Delinquents, where members of tire Seva Organisation were conducting Bhajans; He spoke to the inmates and filled them with comfort and the courage to advance. In the evening, Baba gave His Divine Message at a Public Meeting, attended by many thousands, presided over by justice Parthasarathi. He witnessed a play enacted by students, named "Namasankirtan". Later, H. E. the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Sri Khandubhai Desai arrived and had conversation with Baba.

On the 27th, a Public Meeting was arranged at the Mahboob College Grounds in Secundrabad. Hon'ble Sri. R. Ramalingaraju, Minister for Religious Endowments, presided. More then 60,000 persons attended, Baba gave His Divine Discourse and filled every one with new hope and enlightenment.

On the 28th, Baba inaugurated the Mahila Vibhag, as well as the new Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, for both the twin cities. He exhorted them to live the Message which they profess to propagate. In the evening justice Parthasarathi presided over another Public Meeting where Baba delivered His Divine Discourse. Later, Baba addressed a gathering of Secretaries of Ministers and Heads of Departments of the Government, of Andhra Pradesh.

On the 29th, Baba spoke to a gathering of members, of the Mahila Vibhag at 10 A.M. and left Hyderabad by plane at 12 Noon. The six days of His Stay was a succession of blissful moments when the hundreds of thousands of the residents of the Twin Cities could derive precious joy and peace from His Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashana.

Parva Nai

(Indra Devi, Tecate, Mexico)

Although most of us know that Baba is Bhagavan and nothing is impossible for Him, still we like to hear about His Mahimas (miracles), marvelling at them, all over again, as if they were not a self-understood matter, when He is concerned.

Therefore when addressing the Fourth All-India Conference of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations at Prasanthi Nilayam on November 21, I preferred to share with the delegates some of my experiences, rather than bore them with a lengthy report of the activities of the Sai Family in California where we have several centers—the Sathya Sai Society of America, the

Sathya Sai Book Center, and the recently formed Sai Foundation (in place of the. Indra Devi Yoga Foundation) which maintains a Center on 2720 Sunset Boulevard, and Sai Nilayam, a retreat in Tecate, California, especially popular with long-haired and big-bearded youngsters, who are prevented from crossing the border into Tecate, Mexico—the home of our main center.

A recent fire, the biggest ever in that area, had destroyed 3000 homes and thousands of acres of forest. It was threatening to burn down both our branches on the Mexican and U SA sides. The devotees in Sai Nilayam (the American Retreat) had no time even to save their belongings from a tent pitched near the house; the fire was spreading so fast. They all fled in cars to the top of Mount Chuchuma, where they had to spend our hours, between life and death in a small cement building, praying to BABA. The entire mountain caught fire and was engulfed in a blaze of flame. After the fire subsided and when they were able to come down, they found, to their amazement, that though the truck was destroyed by the fire, the house had remained intact! Inside, it was covered by a thick layer of soot except for the Meditation Room which had the picture of Bhagavan! In that room, the carpet had remained white! Baba must have been here, protecting the place, some one suggested.

This fire broke out, when i was away in Chicago, lecturing on Bhagavan. So, when i saw it on television, and read in the papers that it was raging 200 feet away from the Indra Devi Yoga Foundation, to my own surprise, the news didn't touch me in the least bit. To the suggestion that i should fly home immediately, i answered, "What for? It is Bhagavan's place. If He wants to protect it, He will. If He thinks it should be destroyed, let it be". They asked, "What! So much faith you have in Him?" i answered, "Yes. i do".

I then told the delegates to the Conference that there were many more things happening to me, but, i didn't want to take up their time. But, a "PARVA NAI" (Does not matter) from BABA encouraged me. So, i told another miraculous happening that occurred several months ago, when i was driving alone at midnight, from Los Angeles to San Diego, where i was to give a lecture at the University the next morning.

It was raining heavily and i was tired. So i must have dozed off at the wheel for a moment, when suddenly my car skidded, and, making a swift turn, swerved across to the other side of the Freeway, where cars were dashing into the opposite direction at a speed of 65-70 miles per hour! The Freeways have eight lanes-four on each side, and no traffic (except motor vehicles) is allowed on them. Having lost control of the steering wheel, i was awaiting the unavoidable crash, as the car kept on circling from one side of the Freeway to the other, like a merry-go-round!

Luckily there was a narrow strip of grass there, as the dividing line between the two halves of the Freeway, instead of the usual iron grilles. "Stop, Stop, Stop!" i finally pleaded with the car, in despair. At that moment, my eyes, fell on Bhagavan's photograph. i realised only then that my right foot was still on the gas pedal!

Afterwards, when the police came to my rescue, (i had a flat tire), and told the officers what had happened, they simply could not understand how i did not meet with a fatal accident. "You must have a special guardian angel", one of them said. "A very special one", i answered,

without mentioning Bhagavan, lest they would take me for treatment against hallucinations into a mental hospital!

Once on this subject of car accidents, i briefly described to the audience another incident which took place when i was about to get on the Freeway from a lower road and make a turn—when a passenger bus speeded by in front of me (!) Me a hurricane, narrowly missing the nose of my car! Completely flabbergasted, I stopped with an open mouth in the middle of 'Govinda Krishna Jai' and after a deep breath, i continued 'Gopala Krishna jai' singing to Bhagavan a praise of gratitude for saving me from being run over by that flying giant of a bus (which i did not see coming behind a parked lorry that had obstructed it when i looked whether the highway was clear.)

i ended my talk, saying that many miraculous things were happening to me during this past year which was a very trying one for me. i said, if it were not for Bhagavan's help and guidance, i don't know how i could get through it wife and sane, since the most incredible situations were involved, including the use of witchcraft and black-magic, to do away with me.

Tell them about the ring!" urged Bhagavan, as soon as i concluded the talk.

So, i resumed and told about the ring which Bhagavan had given to me about three years ago, pleased with the Yogasanas i had been teaching the joys of the Sanskrit Pathashala at Prasanthi Nilayam. Actually, He had first given me a different one He created. "Shadguna!" He said "Rays of Virtue!" He explained, while He gave it to me. Whom i came to my room i didn't feel too happy about it, because it didn't have His image and i had given up wearing jewels ever since starting to teach Yoga in 1939.

The neat morning, when we were all called back into the 'interview room' the first thing Bhagavan told, turning to me was, "Give me the ring: Accha nahi hai (it is not good)" Then, taking it by the hand, He merely, blew on it, there by transforming it into a ring set with a single diamond. "You wanted to see My image in it?" He smiled, knowing my thoughts. "You will see it whenever you want, but, no one else will". With these words, He placed the ring on my finger. "Wear it, especially when going out", Bhagavan instructed, "it will let me know when you are in danger so that I can protect you."

Once when i was in far-off California, i looked at the ring and clearly saw in it Baba sitting in a white car! "He must be going somewhere", i figured and wrote down the date in the calendar. On another occasion, i saw Him addressing a crowd that was sitting in a semicircle. It did not look like Prasanthi Nilayam. Again, i made a note of the date and on my next pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam, i checked the dates with Brother Kasturi. He attested that on the first occasion, Bhagavan had gone on tour on the date i saw Him. "I saw Him in a white car, whereas His car is a dark one". i argued! "He has now a white one", replied Brother. He also verified that on the second occasion Bhagavan was addressing a gathering in Kerala, where people sat in a semicircle!

"Are you spying on Him?" Brother Kasturi asked me, jokingly! When i quoted this remark of Brother Kasturi, Bhagavan and with Him, the entire audience broke into laughter. i felt that that was the best time for me to end my talk.

Goa
12-12-70

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

13

That night, the Sage and the Princes stayed at the Ashram of Siva; they ate fruits and roots; they watched with interest the activities of the residents of the hermitage. The Princes listened to the holy stories narrated by Viswamitra; time flew past in that flood of Bliss. As soon as day dawned, they had their bath and ablutions and lovingly took leave of the hermits. They then walked on, the Guru in front and the two disciples following him one behind the other.

They had to cross the Ganga River and so, the people of that area had made a boat ready; they rowed then across and set them on the other bank. There, they reverentially bade farewell and fell at the feet of Viswamitra, before they returned. Viswamitra was gratified at their hospitality: he appreciated the depth of their devotion and sense of surrender; he allowed them to depart, and loaded them with his blessings.

Meanwhile, a noise as of a rumbling subterranean flood sweeping over the land battered their ears. The waters of the river were raging and rising, with long chains of froth on the crest of the waves. Rama saw the confounding by appearance of the vast sheet of water; he asked the sage, "Master! What is this rumbling I hear? Why is it that all of a sudden the angry flood has filled the basin and how could they surge so fast and so high? The echo of this noise is terrible". The sage replied, "Rama! The full and furious Sarayu falls into the calm quiet flowing Ganga, at this place; hence, this reverberation and this rumbling! That is all". The sage uttered these words coolly and casually.

He continued, "Rama! In the ages gone by, on one occasion, Brahma willed and a great lake was immediately formed near Mount Kailasa; this is known as Manasa-sarovar; the word means the sarovar (lake) of Manasa (the mind). The gods named it, so. When the snows melt and the rains fall, the lake gets overfull and the flow from out of the sarovar becomes the Sarayu river, running by the side of Ayodhya towards the Ganga and joining her here.

"The Sarayu is a sacred river, because the waters rise from the lake willed by Brahma Himself".

They proceeded forward, spending the time and forgetting their several selves in the thrilling stories that lighted every river and spot of land. Then they entered a thick, dark jungle. It aroused

awe and a sense of terror. Rama asked the Master, "No sign of man, ever having traversed this jungle, is seen!" Before he could get the answer, an eerie combination of terror-striking voices from the throats of a huge variety of wild animals—tigers, lions, leopards and a host of lesser wild life—captured their attention. It appeared as if the earth was being torn asunder! They also saw some wild animals engaged in mortal fight with others, some running into the thickets, away from violent death. The jungle was the home of close grown trees that reached the skies and spread their shades thick over the ground—the banyan, the deodar, pine, the holy fig etc.

There was no path to guide the feet; they had to clear a track for themselves. Lakshmana could not contain his curiosity; he asked Viswamitra, "Master! Who rules this fearful forest? What is its name?" The Master replied, "Lakshmana! Where this jungle has grown, there were formerly two, little kingdoms, Malada and Karosa. They shone like the region of gods in fact people spoke of the area as having been created and fostered by the gods. They relate a story about it. When the God Indra killed Vritra, He suffered contamination of sin and as a consequence, he was stricken with insatiable hunger! Indra was brought in that pathetic condition by the sages to this region, and given a bath in the holy Ganga. After that immersion, they poured on His Head pots and pots of Ganga water, uttering all the while, holy hymns, and formulae. With that, the sin (of killing a person of high caste) He had incurred was washed away.

"Brahma was delighted that the contamination (Mala) as well as the cry, (Krosa of hunger ended. So, He named these kingdoms as Malad and Karosa. The kingdoms, too, rose to fame with this great blessing. The gods willed that the two areas be resplendent with grain and gold, and all means of plenty and prosperity.

"Meanwhile, a cruel ogress named Thataki appeared in this region and she started laying waste the rich and peaceful land. She was a Yakshini who could transform herself into anything she liked. It is rumoured that even as she was born, she was endowed with the prowess of a thousand elephants! She brought forth a son named Maricha. He had the might and heroism of Indra himself. Mother and son jointly caused tremendous havoc and disaster from which the populace suffered.

The jungle in which that vile ogress lives is at a distance of a yojana (nine miles) and a half. Sloe reduced these two wealthy valleys Malada and Karosa into this wilderness of forest and fear. For, the cultivators of the fertile fields fled in terror at her approach and so the jungle crept on and on, over the fields. The thickly populated cities and villages were deserted and ruined, leaving no trace of human habitation. She could not be captured or destroyed, for, she could escape from all attempts to destroy her. No one has yet determined to catch her and put an end to her depredations.

I cannot think of any one except you, (yes, my deepest guess says so), no one except you can destroy this monster possessing such overwhelming might. These two, the vicious mother and son, lead and guide the demons to disrupt and pollute the yagas and sacred rituals of the hermits".

Thus they walked on, describing and hearing the achievements and atrocities of those demonic monsters. The words of Viswamitra moved the heart of Rama. He could not contain

within himself the feelings that surged up. With great humility and reverence, he said, "O great among ascetics! I have heard that the Yakshas are of poor might; besides, this Thataki is a female; woman is the weaker sex; how could she terrorise the entire population so? Wherefrom did she acquire all that power? How could she reduce to rack and ruin this region, blessed by Brahma and the Gods? This is indeed astoundingly wondrous! It is something that is beyond the bounds of belief."

Then, Viswamitra said, "Rama! My words are absolutely true. I shall explain further. Listen! There was, in the past, a Yaksha named Sukethu. He was as rich in virtues as in prowess. He had no child to succeed him and so, he practised severe austerities in order to propitiate the Gods and receive their blessings. At last, God Brahma was pleased with his austerity; He appeared before him; He blessed him; that He will get a daughter, with extraordinary strength, cleverness and skill. Sukethu was elated at this boon, though the boon mentioned a daughter, not a son.

"Sukethu returned home and after sometime, a daughter was born to him, as anticipated. The child grew fast and strong. Though it was of the weaker sex, through the grace of Brahma, it had the might of thousand elephants; she was moving about, with no law or limit as if she was the owner of all that she saw! She was a very charming girl and so, Sukethu, sought far and wide for an equally charming groom; finally, he secured one; his name was Sunda; and, Sukethu gave her in marriage to him. Three years later, she gave birth to a son; he is the demon named Maricha, about whom I told you; the mother is Thataki.

Mother and son have become invincible in strength and combat. Sunda started off on his demonic adventures and attempted to ruin the yagas of sages and so, he incurred the wrath of the great Agasthya. He hurled a curse on the vile fellow, which killed him and saved the sages from further grief. In revenge, Thataki took her son along, to fall upon the hermitage of Agasthya. Agasthya had fore-warning of this attack; so, he cursed them both to be reduced to the status of ogres, Rakshasas! This enraged them more; they roared abuses and advanced frightfully with blood-red eyes against Agasthya! Agasthya felt that delay would be dangerous; he cursed Thataki that she should lose her charm and become an ugly fright! He willed that she be, come a cannibal! She was not subdued by the curse, but, she started her attack with renewed voracity. So, Agasthya escaped from the ravage and went to a safer place. Angered by this disappointment, Thataki spent her ire on this region (Malada and Karosa) destroying; all the crops and gardens and reducing the place to waste and jungle, uninhabited by humans.

When this tale was repeated to Rama, he said, "Master! Since she was born as a consequence of Brahma's boon, and as a gift for his austerity, she had all these skills and strength; she misused them and drew upon herself the wrath and the curse; still, being a woman, Agasthya must have desisted from killing her, for her cruel deeds! The sin of killing a woman is, as mentioned in the scriptures, very heinous, isn't it? Agasthya must have let her off with the curse of ugliness, for this very reason. Or else, could not great sage who caused the husband to die kill the wife also? I have heard that leonine male warriors should not be so mean and weak as to kill women. So, tell me what I should do now; I am prepared to obey your command". Thus Rama placed his doubts before the sage for his consideration.

Viswamitra was happy that Rama had these qualms, dictated by Dharma. "Of course, I am not ignorant of the fact that the killing of a woman is a heinous sin. Nevertheless, the protection of spiritually progressing men, (the Brahmins), the virtuous, as well as cows—this is most important. Dharma is intertwined in these three. There is no sin when acts are done, for the promotion of Dharma and the removal of Adharma. Don't you know the dictum, Dharmo rakshathi rakshithah: Dharma saves those who save it? This is not violence used for one's own aggrandizement. When violence is used for preserving the peace and prosperity of the whole world it cannot draw down any bad reaction. This is my assurance.

"Moreover, creation, preservation and destruction are expressions of the Divine law; they happen according to the Divine Will. They are not bound by the whims of man. You are born as Divine Manifestations. You have the authority and the duty. No dirt can stick to fire; so too, no sin can contaminate the Divine. The will that creates, the obligation that protects can also execute the obligation to punish. The punishment that awaits the sins of the mother and son can never be avoided; it must be considered fortunate that Thataki ends her life at your hands today, before she adds to the heap of sins for which she has to suffer already. You will only be serving her best interests and the interests of the country; this is neither wrong nor sinful. If now you entertain any feeling of compassion, it would cause unlimited damage to the world; it would be promoting the decline of Dharma; it would help Thataki to indulge in more sins. Why should I dwell more on this point and relate a thousand arguments" I have seen all, though my spiritual eye; you have incarnated in human form to destroy the Rakshasa brood. This is your mission, your task. You have to carry it out today and throughout your career. The guardianship of Dharma, and the destruction of the Rakshasas, (people with demonic tendencies) are the very purposes which persuaded you to take birth!

I knew this truth; that is the reason why I rushed to you for help; or else, why should I seek your support and service? Hermits, anchorites, and those performing austerities in forest retreats, entreat the help of the rulers of the land' for the sake, not of themselves, but of the whole world. They give up all attachments, and sustain themselves on a few roots and fruits, collected by them; after some months or years of this regimen, they harden their lives even more, so that they may lose the body-consciousness and merge in the Light; why should such people worry over what happens to the world? But, the Wise, the Realised, besides saving themselves by the illumination of revelation, endeavour to tell others the path they have trodden, the glory of the goal they have reached, to persuade others to practise the disciplines that made them ready to receive the Truth.

"If the Wise care only for themselves and their liberation, what is to happen to the world? People will descend further and further into iniquity, that is all. Dharma will be sub, merged: Hermits keep up relationship with the world for this reason, not for any selfish craving of theirs. They are as the lotus on water. They may be closely tangled with the world, for all appearances; but, they have no attachment with the world. They will not allow the world to tarnish them. Their aim is just one and one only: the progress and welfare of the world. They attend only to the fostering of Dharma. They depend only on God."

When Viswamitra laid bare the truth in these words, Rama responded, as if he was a novice, unacquainted with all that he had heard. He said. "The world will not understand that the words

of hermits and sages have holy significances embedded in them, isn't it? I interrogated you on the morality of this act so that they may know how you elaborate the justice and merit. Do not read any other meaning into my question. Whatever any thing may be, I shall act according to my father's direction. My father, Dasaratha, told me to obey Viswamitra, the Sage and do what he commands. My vow is to follow what my father orders. You are a Great Rishi. You have undergone severe austerities. When such as you declare that Thataki can be killed without incurring sin and that the act is just and moral, I do not commit any wrong. I am ready to execute any duty; which you may impose upon me for fostering Dharma and for promoting the welfare of the people".

So saying, he held the bow in his hand, and tested the tightness of the string, producing a sound that echoed and re-echoed from the ten directions. The entire jungle was awakened in terror by this; wild animals fled far and wide; Thataki was shocked by the unusually loud and lurid sound; she was inflamed with rage at this disturbing phenomenon; she rushed towards the place wherefrom it emanated!

Rama saw the monster moving towards him like a mountain surging fast, or a huge wild elephant charging forward. He smiled and told Lakshmana, "Brother! Look at this mass of ugliness! Can common man survive the sight of this devilish personality? The very appearance is terrible! What are we then to say of its might? And, it is a woman! My mind does not fully agree with me when I resolve to kill it! I believe this will die, if its hands and legs are cut apart, that may be enough to destroy it".

Thataki was rushing towards Rama with outstretched arms, so that she could grasp him and put him into her mouth like fried chips and eat him up! She was roaring wildly and in terror striking excitement. Viswamitra was praying, with eyes closed, that the brothers may not suffer harm in this combat. Thataki moved nearer and nearer to Rama with greater and greater difficulty, for, in his presence, she felt a kind of shock (as of electricity). Once or twice, she went near, but, she had to retreat fast. So, she jumped about in such fury at her plight that the dust kicked up by her rendered the area dark and suffocating. Rama, Lakshmana and Viswamitra stood silent and inactive for a while.

Soon, Thataki, who was an adept in the art of delusion and destruction created a shower of stones. Rama now decided that such an ogress should no longer be allowed to live on earth; she cannot be excused any longer on the score of femininity! So, he drew his bow and shot an arrow at the subtle body of Thataki identifying where exactly it was at the time. At this, she rushed once again at Rama. Her two arms were cut down by his arrows. She fell on the ground, crying in agony and pain. Lakshmana cut off her limbs, one by one. But, Thataki could adopt form after form, as she liked. So, she gave up one form and assumed another, quickly and reappeared fresh and fighting before them! She pretended to be dead, but soon came forward alive! She adopted a variety of forms at the same time and started her old trick of the shower of stones. She exhibited all her wicked talents and tricks of warfare.

Rama and Lakshmana received some injuries, however watchful they were. Seeing this, Viswamitra felt that there should be no more delay, that she must be killed straightaway. He said, "Rams! do not hesitate! This is not the moment to consider her womanhood and show

concessions! The removal of limbs will not be of any benefit. So long as there is life these Rakshasas can adopt any number of forms. Therefore, decide to kill! Get ready!"

(To be continued)

The Lord of the Heart

John Hislop of Los Angeles

When Baba sent word that I was to make some remarks at this great New Year's Gathering of Sathya Sai Devotees, the thought occurred to me was that if I were to speak with all the truth that I could muster; there was only one topic on which I could speak. And, that topic is personal in its reference, not general.

It is: What does Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba mean to me, to this mind and body, educated and cultured in a foreign country and also, what does He mean to that subtler aspect of me, which is without nationality?

My wife and I first heard of Swamiji in 1968, through a description of Him as given to a friend of mine by a lady who had visited Prasanthi Nilayam. This lady had brought back some sacred Vibhuti, a beautiful ring as a gift to her from the miraculous nature of Baba and she had many fascinating stories to tell. But one special remark struck fire to my mind and imagination. The lady said that she had felt a change in her character, while at Prasanthi Nilayam, and that change persisted even after returning home.

This statement really struck my mind with the impact of a great storm. Could there be a man, was there a man living today, whose art was so subtle, so powerful, so mysterious; so divine, that he could change the human heart.

If it were indeed true that such a man lived in today's world, then nothing else in my life could equal the urgency of seeking Him out, prostrating myself at His Feet, and praying that through His Grace, He would be so kind as to cultivate my dry heart with His Divine Power so that my heart might open into fresh life as the dry fields become alive and vibrant with the spring rain.

My wife and I heard the story of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on a Monday and that same week, we were abroad a plane to India.

I should not imply that my faith was able to keep up with the eager rush of my heart to the Lord. After all, my mind was educated in the cold scientific methodology of a Western University and then, cultured in the profit climate of the business world. Moreover, I had disappointing experiences with various spiritual preceptors.

However, my intellectual doubts which had gained considerable strength during the journey were unable to survive even the first meeting with Swamiji. In His Divine Presence, how can doubt maintain itself? In His Presence, doubt is like very shallow water in the burning sun—in no time at all, it disappeared.

As my wife and I sat before Swamiji at Prasanthi Nilayam, in the room reserved for meetings with inquirers, we soon realised that the elegant and charming Indian gentleman speaking with us was unmistakably something far more than that. We listened to His sweet voice, felt the warmth of His loving smile, noted the impression of irresistible power conveyed by the cast of His features, looked as deeply as we dared into His eyes—now soft, now flashing. But, beneath these surface impressions, our awareness was deepening, we became conscious that a state of love and affection now existed in the room. In my heart, there arose a movement, a new feeling, a joy so intense that tears came from my eyes.

So to me, first of all, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the Lord of the heart, He who is able so quickly to remove all the hardness accumulated in the years and make the heart fresh again, new again, joyful again.

Then, the next aspect of Baba that strikes me with real force is the overwhelming and incomprehensible mystery of His Divinity.

There appears to be a man, but, even a dullard can see that Baba is not a man. One looks at Him and sees the blue perfect calm of the deep sky. One tries to define His Form but can see only space. The only thing certain about Him is that He loves us—otherwise, to predict Him or define Him is like trying to capture the wind, or the silver of the moonlight.

Even the stories we read of the Avatar are just other futile attempts to define Swamiji. It is said that the Supreme and Only Being wills to take Form as an object within that world of Maya created by Himself and that, there He plays a human role without in any way compromising His Total Subjectivity.

Out of such words, reason may satisfy itself, constructing some framework of meaning. But, that meaning can only be relative, whereas Baba is not relative. So, if we are honest about it, we end up where we started facing a Divine Mystery that is incomprehensible,

The third aspect of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba which has a tremendous importance for me, is Baba as the Supreme Teacher of men, He who guides us to, liberation—to reunion with Him.

Each word that He speaks carries a lesson intended for our benefit. Certain basic principles are repeated by Baba again and again. Perhaps these basic principles could be summarised into seven cardinal points:-

No. I. Be happy. Bliss is God's Nature expressed in the Individual and happiness is also our social duty. Simple happiness rooted in good becomes value to every one around us.

No. 2. Feel always that you are Divine. There is One Only. We are not different from that One.

No. 3. Let thought, word and action flow from that Divine which is one's essential nature. How happy we feel when we engage in noble action, and how miserable when our action is petty or hateful!

No. 4. Behave to others with the same kindness that we use to ourselves, because at some subtle level of our being, I am you and you are me—we are not two, opposing forces.

No. 5. Awake with love, fill the day with love, end the day with love. It is not that we should feel love. In truth, we are love. As man, we are just appearance. In truth, each one of us is a flame of love, dancing in ecstasy against the background of the Lord's Maya.

No. 6. Love God with all your heart. Trust Him completely. Abandon your will and your life to Him. He is the only refuge. Even though pain and death be our lot, only in God may we find refuge.

No. 7. Let the mind be alert, always to penetrate appearance, and uncover Reality. Let the mind never be caught up in appearance, but let it be engaged always in ceaseless enquiry: Who am I? What is my real nature? Where do I come from? Where am I going? Where and what is my home?

This summary of the seven cardinal points of Swamiji's Teachings is just as it appears to my mind, which is severely limited. Today we have the great joy of being able to hear the Truth from the unlimited, from the Lord Himself, from our beloved Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Dharmakshetra 1-1-71

The Spirit of the Great Truth

—Tal Booke

I believe that as we examine history throughout the Aeons, in fact throughout time immemorial there emerge certain patterns or cycles. Perhaps we should say divine cycles or patterns. Old cycles appear in new guises but they hold the same pattern albeit with newer variations on the same old theme... perhaps with more embellishment. The Ramayana took place with kingdoms, men and their horses and weaponry, simple weaponry; at the core of the Ramayana was the great avatar RAM. The Ramayana of today will be the same theme, but perhaps with a new twist. We have the Avatar, we have men, and now we also have technology and science, and a vaster amount of power per capita within the technological world structures. The Ramayana of today will not be between kingdoms but amongst nations and within nations separated by far greater distances, with, at times, extreme differences in traditions and cultures. The chariots of yesteryear are now jets, fighter planes, super cars, and tanks, submarines, and space rockets; the bows and arrows of yesteryear have reappeared as atomic canons, polaris

missiles, flame throwers, nerve gas, sophisticated hand guns, minuteman ... and, the hydrogen bomb; the carrier pigeons and messenger boys of yesteryear have reappeared as microwave transmitters, radar detectors, global telephones, televisions, radio, and satellite receivers and transducers. The old battle strategists of the fields have been replaced by systems analysts, computers, and organized groups of scientific super specialists who are able to calculate millions of complex variables in the battlefield of today; the global battlefield.

Yet, perhaps this Avatar will not allow a Ramayana or Mahabharata to, take place, for the risks are too, great in terms of survival. Baba has ways of engineering a victory that, none of us can know about and none of us can suspect.... any ONE who can pour unlimited pounds of vibhuti through tens of thousands of pictures all over the world, simultaneously, can defuse thousands of atom bombs simultaneously. From afar, HE can make a subtle adjustment to render any amount of weaponry nonfunctional... since He has free play over the entire relative Universe.

We sit and watch for Him to act according to our preconceptions, and when He does not, we assume that He is either limited or incapable; but Baba replies that sometimes He waits to get ten things that are all synchronized, in a flash. Man is in no way capable of understanding the dynamics behind DIVINE TIMING, and so, we judge out of ignorance by half witted standards. Our intellects are far too limited to understand these higher forces, and we cannot until we become Jivan Muktas with infinite intelligence; limited man does not stand the chance of understanding the UNLIMITED ABSOLUTE, Anantham Brahma.

Dear Brothers, you have a treasure walking amongst you here in India that no value in the world is sufficient to compare it with; if you fail to recognise it, it does not mean that others will make the same mistake. The man who has forfeited what he once took for granted, can then reconsider the value when he is faced with loss. So, let us all hallow this coming day, that marks the appearance of the Avatar of this age—for HE chose to come NOW, out of all the periods in history, and He chose to come HERE, of all the places in the world. Had He come in another country or during another era in history, most of us would not have even the remotest chance of experiencing HIM. He is here now and there will be unlimited millions who will want to experience Him. Those here who come and think that SAI BABA is just another holy man, those who yawn during darshan, will be the ones hopping up and down at the back of a crowd of a million just in order to get a glimpse of Baba's head from half a mile away. If you think that what I am suggesting is ridiculous, just wait, and see...time will bear this out.

If the world of today is poised for a jolt, it does not necessarily have to come through war, the jolt can be through a moral and physical crisis from within. As history has well illustrated, a civilization can be broken either from without, by an external war, or from within, due to inner chaos, anarchism, factions, decay ...the foundation and structure can collapse from within; in fact, before the new can come, the old must be transmuted or destroyed. So, in truth, for a Higher Spiritual Age to come, as this Avatar has claimed that it would, the present age must be transmuted; not necessarily by war, but by interior means. It will mean collapse without annihilation, so that the rebuilding can take place as rapidly as possible.

Well, this Avatar is here. The Spirit of Truth is amongst us... literally. His name is Truth, or Sathya in Sanskrit, which means Truth. The Gospel of John talks about an age in which the

Advocate or Spirit of the Great Truth will be walking amongst us ...he will have more power, than can even be imagined. In Revelations, the Advocate of Truth is said to come wearing robes "drenched in blood", or the color of blood, RED. Look at Sai Baba's robes and what do you most commonly see? Bright Red. I am convinced that all this is quite sufficiently beyond coincidence. If you know this, then you had better grasp on to THIS TRUTH with all the force and all the will that you have in the deepest reaches of your self. When an Indian gives Prasad, as he does traditionally ...be it to Ram, Hanuman, Krishna, Vishnu, or Durga, he does not waver... he does not offer the sacrament and then falter in the holy temple, he does not change his mind. No, he places it down positively with deep commitment and in humble awe. Well, don't you know that the highest honour your lives can take is through your being a living Prasad to Sai Baba? Don't falter, brothers, but leap for the Truth, Sathya, and hold on to it with everything you've got...that will unleash the great Transforming power that can thrust you right into the Heart of Supreme Divinity Itself.

Namo Namaste

Baba the Sun

Through the royal banner
Of the rising sun,
Sink forever.
In the fathomless ocean eye,
Tumble down
To the garden beyond.
Rise;
To the garden here.
Hidden holiness revealed,
In every drop of rain,
In every drop of life.
See the throb
Peacefully pacing;
The rumbling rolling river
Fruitfully flowing;
From blossom to blossom,
From sea to sea.
The enlightened eye
Sees all souls.

—*Anthony, Malta*

Baba the Moon

A quiet breeze
Rustles the leaves.
Clouds scatter
Revealing the purity
Of the moon:
An eye
In the sky.
Hanging;
Watching;
Filling the earth
With waters of love.
Floating;
Dancing;
Like white butterfly fingers
Over sitar strings,
He harmonizes man,

—*Anthony Malta*

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14

When evening approaches, the roar and rage will swell even more. After sunset, it becomes impossible to encounter Rakshasas, whoever might attempt to do so. She must be destroyed within that hour. Arise!" Saying this, Viswamitra uttered the sacred mantras that ensure protection and grant safety.

Rama too directed his inquiry towards the Truth, and through his power of guiding arrows in the direction of the sound emanating from the target and hitting it, he recognised where Thataki was and, shot a fast arrow in that direction. The arrow had the effect of binding her and preventing her from making the slightest movement.

Then Thataki screeched most ferociously, and putting out her terrible tongue, she attempted to fall upon Rama and Lakshmana and crush them under her weight. On this Rama decided that delaying any further will only be inviting worse consequences; he shot a sharp arrow right into the chest; with that, she rolled on the ground and gave up her life. The earth grew a big well of a hole where she fell. The huge trees near by were uprooted at the impact of the huge mass. A ring of hundred yards radius became flat level ground, when she rolled in agony. The last gasp of breath she had was so weird and loud, that the wild beasts of the forest fled far in fear; herds of animals ran helter skelter.

When the awful demoness fell dead, Viswamitra called Rama near, and stroking his hair lovingly, he said, "Son! Were you afraid? No! How can the saviour of all the worlds be afraid? This is a memorable foundation stone; the strength of this stone ensures the stability of the mansion; come you are tired. The sun too has set. Perform the evening worship and rest awhile. Come with me". He took them to the river, and later said, "Children! We shall rest here for the night and we can proceed to our hermitage, at dawn" They spent the night listening to the stories that Viswamitra related to them; the Master also described to them their own heroic faculties.

The dawn broke. The sage went through the morning ablutions, and approached the sleeping brothers with a benign smile. He spoke soft and sweet words to them. "Rama! I am delighted at your heroism! When you were overcoming that demoness Thataki, I comprehended your being the Absolute. Really, I am very fortunate." Viswamitra shed tears of bliss. He held forth the mystic weapons he possessed, symbolically, as of the mantras which shape and sustain them, and in a sudden act of dedication he placed them all in the hands of Rama. "I hold no authority to wield these weapons; of what avail are they then for me, even if I have them in my possession? You are the master and wielder of all weapons. They too will be most pleased when they are with you, for, they can fulfill best their destiny and duty. Note this! From this moment, all the weapons I commanded so far shall be your instruments, available for the mission on which you have come", he said, pouring water with appropriate mantra, indicative of an irrevocable surrender of ownership.

Thus, he offered the Dandachakra, the Dharmachakra, the Kalachakra, the Indrastra, the Vajrastra, the Siva-inspired Trisula, Brahmasirastra, Aishikastra and the most mighty and destructive of all, the Brahmastra—all to Rama. Then, he sat silent for a while, with eyes closed. He rose with the words, "Now, what have I to do with these too?" and he gave Rama two powerful maces, Modak and Sikhar. He said, "After reaching our Ashram, I shall bring forth other weapons too—the Agni missile, (Agniasta) the Krauncha missile, the Narayana missile, the Vayu missile and others". "Son," he said, "All these weapons are at the beck and call of the master; they are overwhelmingly effective; they are unique in themselves, they are amazingly overpowering." Thus saying, he whispered into Rama's ear the mystic formulae which can activate and materialise them, and direct them towards the targets with undiminished fury. He asked him to recite the formulae under his direct supervision. Before long, Rama was able to visualise the deities presiding over each of the divine missiles and weapons and receive their grateful homage.

Each deity presented itself before Rama and fell prostrate before him. Each one said, "Rama! We are your servants from this moment. We all vow and affirm that we shall abide by your commands." Then they all disappeared, awaiting further summons. Rama was glad at this development; he touched the Sage's feet, saying, "Master! Your heart is the treasure house of renunciation. You are, I realise, the Divine embodiment of Thyaga (detachment) and Yoga (conquest of the senses). Or else, will any one else in the world renounce and gift away such an array of, potent hard-won weapons? Master! Please delight me by counselling the manner in which I can withdraw the weapons after releasing them? You have now taught me the formulae for unleashing them. I desire to know how I can recover them, after they have done their task." At this, Viswamitra felt elated; he said, "These forces and instruments—Sathyakeerti, Drishta, Rabhasa, Pitsomasa, Krsana, Virasya, Yougandha, Vidhootha, Karaveeraka, Jrmabhaka—are automatically recoverable by the exercise of the will of the bowman using them, expressed through mantras, which I shall communicate to you now." He then initiated him into those formulae. When they were pronounced, the deities so propitiated, appeared before the eye and prostrated to their new Master. Rama told them that they have to be ready when called, and that they could meanwhile be at ease.

Viswamitra then proposed to resume the journey and the three of them started to foot their way along. A little distance later, they entered a region of high-peaked hills; their eyes fell on a charming garden, the fragrance of which welcomed them and refreshed their bodies and minds. The brothers were curious to know who owned that lovely spot. They asked the Sage to enlighten them. Viswamitra replied, "Son! This is the holy area which the gods choose when they come down on earth to practise austerity for the success of their desires. The great Kasyapa did penance here and won the goal. The place confers victory for holy efforts. So it is named Siddha-ashram, the Hermitage of Achievement! I have myself taken residence here, with the intention of cultivating Bhakthi, the Attitude of Dedication and Surrender. This hermitage is the target of attack for the demons who intercept and befoul every holy rite done here. You have to destroy them while they attempt their nefarious tactics in this region."

So saying, Viswamitra entered the heartwarming seat of charm. He placed his arm on Rama's shoulder, caressingly and said "This Ashram is as much yours from today, as it was mine until now." The hoary sage shed tears of gratification as he uttered those words. Even as they stepped

into the Siddha-ashram, the residents ran forward with eager haste, to wash the feet of the Master and offer water for ablutions to Rama and Lakshmana.

They scattered flowers along the path towards the Ashram and led them to the door. They offered them fruits and sweet cool drink. They proposed to Rama and Lakshmana that they should take rest in a cottage specially allotted to them and made ready for their use. They did accordingly and after some rest, which refreshed them a great deal, they washed their feet and faces and came to the Sage Viswamitra, to learn his instructions.

They stood before the Teacher with arms folded and said, "Master! The Yajna which you have willed to perform can be inaugurated tomorrow, can't it be?" Viswamitra was elated at this query; he replied, "Yes! Everything is ready! In this Siddha-ashram, it is so always. There is no need to wait for preparations to be completed. They are always fully met. I shall take the vow. when dawn breaks tomorrow." The news spread and every one set about the task of collecting all that was necessary for the great event.

Dawn broke. Viswamitra took the vow of initiation and the Yajna began. As Skanda and Visakha stood guard for the Gods, the two brothers, Rama and Lakshmana stood resolutely determined to encounter all who attempt to interfere with its due performance. Since it was improper to speak to Viswamitra who was engaged in the sacrificial ceremony, Rama gestured to the other participants to find out from them when exactly the demon horde could be expected and from which direction. They could only answer, "It is not possible to say when and from where."

"The demons have no regular timings any moment, they might pounce on us. Who can predict the time of their onslaught?" The hermits spoke to Rama about the demons, each according to his estimate of their character and habits. Rama was delighted at the replies given by them; he decided that the wisest course would be, to be ever vigilant and ready to beat back the demon forces; who attempt to frustrate the sacred ceremonies of hermits. He alerted his brother too. They watched the four quarters very carefully and paid attention to the slightest sound from afar, indicative of the approach of danger. Recognising their bravery and earnestness, the ascetics derived vast joy and wonder, for, they were of tender age and lovely complexion, barely out of boyish pranks.

For five days and nights, the brothers, kept unremittent guard over the sacrificial site and the hermitage, without a wink of sleep or a moment of rest. The sixth day too started with the same routine. Viswamitra was engaged in the yajna, immersed in the ritual exactitude of each fraction of the ceremony. The ritwiks (reciters of hymns and other participants) were engaged in their tasks of recitation, oblations, accessory acts etc.,

Suddenly, they were astounded by a thunderous noise that-broke from the sky, as if the firmament itself was exploding into fragments! Fire emanated from all the sacred articles around the sacrificial platform—the kusa grass, the plates and cups, holy vessels holding ritual objects, the dry sticks which had to be offered in the holy fire of yajna along with mantras invoking deities, the flowers, the kumkum and other auspicious articles collected for the sake of worshipping gods! High flames rose on all sides!

Very soon, the sky was overcast by dark fearsome clouds and the bright day was transformed into a night of pitch darkness. Mysterious evil fumes sped fast towards the place where the yajna was being performed! The sinister clouds started raining blood, and the drops when they fell were welcomed by tongues of flame which rose to receive them! Rama and Lakshmana sought to locate the enemy demons amidst the dark phantasmagoria of cruelty and hate. Rama, through His Divine Vision, knew where the leading ogres, Maricha and Subahu, were, and he released the Manasa arrow in that direction. It struck the breast of Maricha, and stopped any further mischief from him. Next, he shot the Agni-astra (Fire-weapon) at Subahu and it got lodged in the heart of Subahu. Rama understood that if their corpses dropped on the holy region the hermitage itself will be polluted; so, to prevent the sinful contact the arrows of Rama carried the vicious bodies hundreds of miles afar and cast them into the ocean! Maricha and Subahu shrieked and groaned in unbearable agony and struggled desperately amidst the waves; but, they did not die.

The other leaders of the demon hordes fled for their lives beyond the horizon. Lakshmana said that it was not advisable to allow any demon however cowardly they might appear, to live, for, they would cause trouble another day, returning to their wicked practices. So, he prompted Rama to kill off the entire gang. The hermits who watched this great act of heroism were elated with admiration; they believed that the brothers were really Siva Himself, in His terror-striking boon-conferring Forms. They bowed in reverence to them, in their own minds -- for, they were too young to accept their homage in the open.

The forest put on the vesture of brightness and joy, in a moment! Amidst all the distractions, Viswamitra continued steadily and without interruption the meditation on the sacrificial deities and the recitation of the holy hymns that were enjoined for the Yajna! He never made even the slightest movement of body or mind; such was the depth of his concentration!

The Valedictory Offering in the Sacred Fire was fulfilled with correctitude and thankfulness. Then, Viswamitra came smiling to where Rama and Lakshmana were standing, and declaring, "O worthy of fame! You brought victory to my vow! Through you, I have realised my life's desire. The name of this Ashram has been justified; it has become truly the Hermitage of Achievement!" The sage shed tears of bliss; he fondled and caressed the boys; he proceeded towards the hermitage with his hands placed on the shoulders of Rama and Lakshmana; there, he gave them the share of the holy offerings made at the sacrificial fire. He asked them to retire and refresh themselves with a little rest.

Though the fulfillment of the purpose for which they had been brought was itself the most effective restorative for their limbs and minds, they felt that it would be improper to discard the command of the Master and so, they retired and slept soundly a long while. The Master removed himself to another grass thatched cottage, to ensure undisturbed sleep for them; he also instructed some men to keep guard so that no one unwittingly created noise which might awaken them, While the brothers were sleeping, Viswamitra was exulting over the successful conclusion of the Yajna and the Divine Prowess of Rama and Lakshmana.

Meanwhile, Rama and Lakshmana woke up and after washing face hand and foot, they came out through the door, to find there the boys of hermit families keeping guard, best their sleep be disturbed! They were informed the Master was conversing with the ascetics in another cottage.

So they moved thither and fell at the sage's feet. Rising, they stood with arms folded and said, "Great Teacher! If these servants of yours have to do any other task, please inform us and we shall gladly carry it out."

At this, one ascetic from the group stood up and addressed them thus, "With the destruction of the demons, all that has to be done has been accomplished. What else is there to be done? The desire entertained by the Master, Viswamitra, since years, has been fulfilled. Nothing higher than this is needed by us. You two are of the form of Siva-Sakthi. That is how you appear to our eyes. You are no common mortals. 'Tis our huge good fortune that has given us this chance to see you. Our gratitude knows no bounds. At this, all the residents touched the feet of Rama and Lakshmana.

Meanwhile, one young student disciple ran in with a bundle of palm leaf manuscripts and placed it in the hands of Viswamitra. He turned over the leaves and afterwards passed it onto a reverend old hermit sitting by his side. The Master asked the old man to read it aloud so that all might hear.

He read that Emperor Janaka of Mithila had resolved to perform a celebrated Yajna, expressive of the highest righteousness, that he was praying, Viswamitra to give him joy by his gracious Presence with his disciples. When they heard this, all exclaimed, "Subham, Subham" (May it, grant fulfillment).

Viswamitra said, "Sons! Now that we can travel through the forests free from fear of the demonic gangs, I have decided to start on the journey to Mithila with all the residents of the Ashram, tomorrow itself!"

When he heard this, Rama said "Master! 'Tis really a source of delight! Since there is nothing more that you need us for we shall return to Ayodhya, if you permit us to do so. Please allow us to leave. At this, Viswamitra said, "I have given word to Dasaratha for a few more things; I have to keep those words too! Haven't I to? I have promised him that I would myself bring you back to him and so, you cannot return, without me! A unique Yajna is taking place in Mithila City: There is not enough time for me to take you to Ayodhya and then, reach Mithila when, the Yajna begins. If you two accompany me to Mithila, you can witness the Yajna and proceed to Ayodhya with me from there itself." Hearing these, words which had no trace of hesitation or doubt, Rama answered decisively, without weighing pros and cons, "Master! Since my chief vow is obedience of the orders of the father, I have to submit a prayer before you." Viswamitra asked, "Come! Tell me, what is your prayer?" Rama replied, "My father directed us to guard the Yajna of Viswamitra from defilement and sacrilege, and to make the great sage happy. He asked us to return victorious; he has not directed us to attend other Yajnas elsewhere. Should I not receive special per mission from my father for moving on to Mithila?"

At this, Viswamitra said, "Rama! Dasaratha did not stop with that only! No. He said, 'Go and obey all that the sages command you to do; do not transgress their commands by even the width of a grain' He told me, Master! You must yourselves assume full responsibility for my children, you must yourselves bring them back to me. You have listened, to what he said when we left Ayodhya! So, follow my words now, come with me to Mithila, and from there we shall go to

Ayodhya, I and you and all my disciples." Rama realised the truth that was inherent in this plan and he nodded his head in agreement saying, "We shall do as you desire".

Instruction went forth that every one must get ready before daybreak for the journey to Mithila. Viswamitra rose early and led the boys to the river for ablutions. He was thrilled at the chance of telling them of the hardships he encountered from the demons (rakshasas) whenever he attempted to celebrate yajnas in the past; he related to them how all his counter-measures failed to achieve their object; he expressed his gratitude for the destruction of the demons which has ensured safety for not only the hermitage but for the surrounding regions also. He described how the people were now happily relieved of fear and were enjoying unalloyed peace and joy.

(To be continued)

Sivarathri: Its Significance

The scriptures composed by the sages of Bharat are testaments of genuine experience; they are to be interpreted and observed in practice, after reverential study by persons who have clarified their intellects by rigorous disciplines. They can confer eternal Ananda when they are thus utilised; but, scholastic or philological or grammatical inquiries which seek to comment and confuse can only lead to the neglect and loss of the precious content. They are ready to teach the Truth and lead the student towards the goal of Ananda; they are eager to grant immortality and save man from the dreary round of birth and death.

Really speaking, children of Bharat are fortunate to have this invaluable heritage. The Vedas and Sastras speak of this fortune; the sages extol this land on this score; the Upanishads acclaim the people who have such gurus and guides; the achievements of generations of aspirants and seekers stand witness to this Treasure and its worth. But, some blind cynics discard the treasure, and condemn it as something that draws men away into futility! One can only pity them for their lack of vision. Bharat is the name of a way of life, not an extent of land between the Seas and the Himalayas. It is another name for tolerance and mutual love, which have made it a garden of multicoloured religions and philosophies, creeds and faiths.

It is the land where the identity between man and Goal has been declared by persons who, have attained that realisation. The individual is encased, while God is unbound; the individual believes himself bound, as having name and form, as the body and its appurtenances. The fire that is latent in the fuel can manifest only when it is lit by external fire. So too, the divinity of the intellect, the mind and the inner instruments of cognition can manifest only when the Atma is prompting and urging them. Otherwise, if they are prompted and urged by the senses, they will lead only to perdition and delusion.

Every directive given in the scripture on discipline is intended to help the Sadhaka to realise this identity and to derive the Ananda which recognition of this Unity confers. For example, take the exhortation in the Gita Sloka, which says, Sarva dharmaan parithyajya maam ekam saranam vraja. What is the Dharma that has to be given up? Are all duties and responsibilities to be

discarded? Or, does Dharma here refer only to some of these? Dharma is an omnibus expression, which means a lot of things, attitudes, behaviour patterns and mores. It includes often mere rules, which are known as Vidhi and Nishedha, Do's and Don'ts. If you are anxious, to catch a bus, board a plane or entrain for some place, you have to be at the stop or port or station before a particular time that is a Vidhi. When two brothers divide among themselves the possessions left by their father, they share half and half; this is Dharma, that is to say, right and proper, moral, approvable. Now, Dharma of this nature is laid down and observed, that we get peace and content, so that Sukha (happiness) may be promoted. It belongs to the relative world, the absolute has no concern with these relative advantages or benefits. It is in the realm of Ajnana that Sukha is desired and Dukha is avoided.

Kama is the urge for Karma. It is regulated and modified by Dharma, so that Sukha may be gained and Dukha avoided. And, Kama is the product or expression of Ajnana. So, when the Gita directs that all Dharma be given up, what is meant is that Ajnana (which induces Kama, the progenitor of Karma which has to subserve Dharma) is to be conquered, and overcome. Acquire Jnana; know the truth of thyself. Then, you will be free from lust and hate, because you will know that you are the Ever Full, the Ever Blissful.

Imagine a person searching for things in a room. His eye falls on all the articles he wants to secure, but, he does not notice the person who searches! The seeker does not see himself! When you give up the search for objects, for things other than yourself, you see yourself and know yourself. When the drishta (seer) is seen, the Drisya (seen) is negated; when the Drisya (seen) is seen, the drishta (seer) is ignored!

Tideman said just now that in the very first meeting he had with me. I told him that I am God. In fact, every one is God, limiting himself into this particular name and form in which he is encased! If you believe your self to be the label that is now affixed on you, and call your self by the name that others have given you, you can never know your reality and have unshakeable joy. This is the lesson that Vedanta teaches. Each one is "Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma" But, sunk in the morass of Ajnana which multiplies endlessly the desires that haunt the mind, man forgets the core of his being. Every one must get convinced that he is the Atman not the Body which is its material residence. To instruct you about this is the special purpose of the festival of Mahasivarathri.

People ask, why does Swami produce the Lingam from within himself on this day? But, let me tell you, it is impossible for you to understand the attributes of the Divine and to measure its potentialities, or, to gauge the significance of the manifestation of Divinity. It is agamya (unreachable) and agochara (un-understandable, mysterious). Therefore, in order to bear witness to the fact that the Divinity is amidst you, it becomes necessary to express this attribute. Or else, the atmosphere of hatred, greed, cruelty, violence and irreverence will overwhelm the good, the humble and the pious.

The Linga is just a symbol, a sign, an illustration, of the beginningless, the endless, the limitless—for it has no limbs, no face, no feet, no front or back, no beginning or end. Its shape is like the picture one imagines the Nirakara (Formless) to be. As a matter of fact, Linga means—Leeyathe (that in which all forms and names merge) and gamyathe (that towards which all names

and forms are proceeding, to attain fulfilment). It is the fittest symbol of the All pervasive, the All-knowing, the All-powerful. Everything is subsumed in it; everything starts from it; from the Lingam arises Jangam (Universe) from the Jangam arises Sangam (Association, attachment, activity) and as a result of the Sangam, one realises the Lingam (Attributeless Atma). Thus, the circle is completed! From the beginningless to the beginningless! This is the lesson that Lingobdhavam teaches. The Lingasarira (the Physical body) that is inhabited by the Atma is but a vesture worn for this particular sojourn! Many a vesture has this soul worn, though its reality is eternal!

People have not imprinted on their hearts the lessons that the ancient Hindu scriptures and epics seek to teach. I have been, for example, asked often, why some persons who have associated themselves with Prasanthi Nilayam for years leave off and do not appear again! The reply is evident for those who have studied the Ramayana well. After ten or twelve years of 'devotion' suddenly these people take a turn for the worse and stray away; as the Sastras say, 'When the accumulated merit gets spent, they slip into the depths of mortality'. Sita is the Daughter of Earth, of Nature or Prakriti, seeking the eternal comradeship of Purusha. She weds the Purusha, the Lord come as Rama. When Rama agrees to go into exile and proceeds to the forest for a stay of fourteen long years, Sita too gives up all the luxuries she was accustomed to; she braves the perils of jungle life, for the sake of being in the presence of Rama. She renounced desire from her heart for the sole goal of Rama.

Thirteen years she spent with the Lord, in perfect bliss, as a consequence of the sacrifice she dared to make. Then, quite suddenly, desire sprouted in her mind, and carried her away, far far away from the Lord! She saw a golden deer, and she coveted it! She who had renounced huge treasures of gold and diamond was attracted by a fantasy and this led to the agonising separation.

So too, for those long attached to me, there arises some desire—for lands, jobs, family life, fame, position, possessions—and they move away! But Sita repented for her mistake, and her mind suffered extreme anguish at the separation. She called on her Lord to redeem her, calling out in contrition, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, with very breath. And, finally, Rama Himself moved towards her and restored Himself to the devotee! So too, if you are agonisingly repentant and aware of the loss and anxious to rejoin, craving for the Presence, this Sairam too will move towards you and grant you Grace.

—From Divine Discourse, 23-2-1971

The Message and the Response

—Arun Kumar Dutt

Our American friends sing a beautiful hymn of praise on Bhagavan's Glory, which very aptly describes the Message which He is constantly teaching us. It declares Baba as saying, "My Life is My Message." Let each one of us respond with, "Lord! My life is my homage, my answer, my reply".

I believe that the underlying Principles of His Life which He wants us to learn and follow are: Discipline, Tolerance, Equality and Love. The lesson of Discipline is illustrated by Bhagavan's own daily routine. He is beyond rules and laws; but, He himself adopts a regulated life, to set an example for us. Every morning at Prasanthi Nilayam, He grants Darshan. His routine has a regularity and an ineffable charm, all its own. He meets the devoted seekers of Grace walking between them, showering, His Love and Blessings. The sick, the infirm and the old get preference while He selects people whom He consoles and cures. Bhagavan expects us to behave in a disciplined manner. If someone rushes forward and causes obstruction to others, He turns back, for discipline is disturbed thereby.

How tolerant and forgiving is Baba! We are all liable to fall into error in our waywardness. We manage to forget or ignore His Divine Counsel and Commands soon after we hear them. But, does He, for this reason, withhold His Blessings and Love from any of us? No. He is as loving as the father and mother. He pardons us and urges us to repent and improve by means of steady sincere effort. He corrects us at every stage and encourages us to rise up and move on.

Tolerance is the basis of all religions; it is the prime requisite for social security and peace; it is the most fundamental duty as well as right. Equal protection is guaranteed by our Constitution; but, Bhagavan is the best teacher who impresses on us the need to foster tolerance. He insists on our forgetting the faults of others and our own petty pride on trivial excellences. For Him all are His children, there is neither high nor low. He moves among the nearest and the farthest, the scholars and the illiterate, elders and children, rich and poor, with the gift of Grace which is shared by all.

Bhagavan is Premavatar. He seeks Prema, blesses Prema, teaches us the highest form of Prema, and establishes Prema in the driest of hearts. His compassionate Touch, His consoling Look, His soothing Word, so sweet and strengthening, these are all gifts of Prema which one receives from Him as inspiration for leading one's own life in the Path of Prema. Baba's Love is limitless and ever flowing. The Divine Hymn sung by the Americans says, "there is no reason for Love; there is no season for Love." Criminals and sinners, atheists and agnostics are won over into purity by the alchemy of Baba's Love.

The world is passing through a crisis when love tolerance discipline and morality have given place to anger jealousy hatred distrust and violence! We are fortunate that the Incarnation of the Lord, come to reestablish Dharma in the hearts of man and the councils of the nations, is available to us for Darshan Sparshan and Sambhashana, that we are within the horizon of His Grace. Let us try to understand His Glorious Message and follow its directions, at least in part, so that we might approach Him a little nearer, and receive His Grace a little more. For this opportunity so rare in many ages of human history, let us offer reverence and grateful homage to our parents.

Admonition

My dearest SELF!

Bear all; and, Do nothing!
Hear all; and, Say nothing!
Give all; and, Take nothing!
Serve all; and, Do nothing.

—*Everyman*

Baba on Himself

IN THE NAME BABA,

B MEANS BEING: SATH.
A MEANS AWARENESS: CHITH
B MEANS BLISS: ANANDA
A MEANS THE SOUL: ATMA

The Name Means

I am the Sat-Chit-Ananda Swarupa Atman The omnipresent, Omniscient, All-Blissful, of which you too are Expressions.

Liberation From Bondage

Many a Sadhaka has gone through long and arduous disciplines in order to win his dearest ambition of entering the kingdom where there is no bondage; he has recited the Name or meditated on the Form or denied the senses. There are others who have ventured with Reason as their sole guide, into the realms of the inner consciousness and discovered that liberation consists in realising the Reality that is, behind all the transient and manifold phenomena. But, the experiences of these heroic men and women are, discarded as the vapourings of crazy individuals by those who live on the flimsy surface of the first of the five sheaths of human personality, the Annamaya (physical). They identify the body as themselves and do not delve behind the falsehood into the realm of Truth.

Such cynics who condemn the Vedantic approach to the problems of living are not rare even in the land that gave birth to Vedanta! The reason behind their attitude is—they do not grasp the fact that Vedanta reveals only the genuine history of each one of them. It but seeks to hold before every one the true picture of himself, devoid of deficiencies or exaggerations. Liberation or Moksha is no special and exclusive heaven into which one has to earn admission; it is not a

special status or acquisition or possession. It is just the removal of the false notion that we are bound and limited by the body, the senses, the intellect, the mind, the ego and other fancies.

What exactly is the bond which one has to free himself from? The bonds have been forged by fear and anxiety, produced by desire which holds one in its grip. Fundamentally, fear arises because you feel there is before you, another, a second! If there is no second, whom can one fear? The first person is the seer; the second is "all others beings and things" which are seen, observed, Nature.

The objective world is the illusion caused by ignorance, which makes one ignore the One that is only apparent as Many. Ignorance causes the identification with the limited I and the attachment with Mine. So, when some one attached to us die, we feel broken-hearted, whereas, when some one who is not in the circle of kith or kin dies, we are not affected at all. It is the sense of I and Mine that causes grief, and fear. That is why the Upanishads proclaim that Renunciation alone confers Immortality, Freedom, Fulfillment.

The highest wisdom is the awareness of the Unity, the One, which is all this. In fact, there is no Two, there is only One Brahman. You realise this when you are in deep sleep, when all thought, feeling, emotion, passion, attachment, knowledge cease; only the I remaining; and the happiness of being only the I. But, the Ananda is not known at the time of sleep! It is only after waking, that, you declare I enjoyed fine sleep. If only you were aware of the Ananda, sleep will be Samadhi, for, it is Ananda unalloyed. So also, in the Waking stage, you have knowledge, but no Ananda.

If you can experience the Knowledge of the waking stage and the Ananda of the sleeping stage, both at the same time and to the full, that is Moksha. That is true Liberation. Then you have Consciousness, Knowledge and Bliss, unalloyed; you are Sat-Chit-Ananda Itself, pure and simple.

You must watch for the moment when the wakeful stage passes into the sleeping stage and concentrate on that moment, purifying it of all the agitations and thoughts which mar the Wisdom and the Ananda. Of course it is difficult in the beginning! When you are at the wheel of your car, driving along, far off into the night, there comes a fateful moment when you slip into sleep, from the awareness of awakening! There is nothing that you cannot gain, by practice! You have learnt the highly complicated and strange skills of walking erect, of writing scripts and reading them and interpreting them, all by practice, haven't you? This is the way of acquiring and experiencing the Jnana which alone can grant Liberation from fear and grief.

From the seed of Love, springs the sprout of devotion to the Lord. The devotee sees everything as the Manifestation of the Glory of God, every act as His Handiwork, every word as His Voice; he offers every thought, word and deed inspired and prompted by Him to Him. Thus for Him, the world is but He, He is the world. There is no second. So, the fruit of the Tree of Love is Jnana. The sweetness in that fruit is Ananda and the fruit contains once again the seed of Love from which the sapling put forth its leaves. In the Viswa-viraat-swarupa which Krishna allowed Arjuna to witness Arjuna found himself, as well as his brothers and cousins.

Mahasivaratri

—At Los Angeles

We spent a most wonderful Sivarathri at the Sathya Sai Baba Centre, at Los Angeles. We started the Bhajans, exactly when the time for Abhishekam approached at Prasanthi Nilayam, that is at 9 P. M. on February 22. An hour after we started, we had the strange experience of witnessing the flow of Vibhuti! Dennis Bowman sang the Bhajans, until midnight, when we continued with tape recordings, where Bhagavan is lead Bhajans. We joined the Prasanthi Nilayam Chorus of the devotees! At 2 A. M. Dennis resumed again. At 4 A. M., the Hislops came in, adding Sweet Rice and Cookies to the already prepared Prasadam.

At about 6 A. M., (7-30 P. M. in Prasanthi Nilayam) I put on the tape of Bhajans which Bhagavan sang in 1967 and then, the song in '68, where He sang the Linga Song (it was Lingodbhava Time then) about the two Lingams which emanated from Him.

Then, we sat in silence; we all felt Baba's Presence: we prostrated at Baba's Feet; many were sobbing! Some felt the smell of jasmine which had penetrated the air thick. John Hislop declared, "Swami was with us."

—*Indra Devi; Tecate, Mexico*

So many are turning to Baba here. In the Meditation Groups I am conducting here, Baba's Presence is always felt. He comes in visions, dreams and during meditations to those in the groups. The young kids are turning away from drugs and getting help from Baba's Divine Presence.

—*Shanti-Hilda; Charlton New York*

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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The place was silent, calm, comforting. Sitting on the soft sands, the sage Viswamitra was relating the special features and supreme significance of the Yajna contemplated by Emperor Janaka, to the two brothers, Rama and Lakshmana, whom he had drawn close to him for the purpose.

During the description, he referred to a precious bow that Janaka had in his possession, a bow that was uniquely potent, and shone with rare splendour; he declared that they must not miss

seeing it. At this, Rama asked how the bow happened to reach Janaka and Viswamitra answered him thus: "Listen, son! Years ago, the emperor of Mithila named Devaratha celebrated a great Yajna, a Yajna the like of which no mortal could dare perform, a Yajna which can confer vast spiritual benefits, a Yajna which pleased the Gods so highly that they gifted him this divine bow, as a mark of appreciation.

"It is the Bow of Siva. It is being worshipped with due rites by Janaka every day. He offers flowers and sandal paste, and waves camphor flame and incense in its honour; he places eatables and fruits before it, in reverential homage. The bow is so loaded with divinity that no one can raise it and string it, be he god demon, angel or sprite. Many princes who attempted to string it have met with disgraceful disappointment.

"Rama! You two are worthy heroes who can examine it. During this coming Yajna, the Bow, too will most probably be on show so, this is a good chance, certainly". Viswamitra went on describing the wonderful potency of the bow.

Lakshmana turned his eyes round, as if searching for the direction which must be taken to proceed to Mithila. Meanwhile Rama said, with delight "Certainly! We must see it. We shall come with you tomorrow." Hearing this, Viswamitra was elated.

Darkness fell and every one rose and moved towards Siddha-ashram. Viswamitra called together the residents of the Ashram and ordered that they should get ready to leave for Mithila, as soon as the hour of dawn struck.

Then, some of them asked, "Master! How can the routine of the Ashram be observed without interruption if there is none left here to attend to that?" The sage replied, "If each one carries on his duties wherever he is, that itself is the proper observance of the Ashram routine, isn't it? There is no special routine for the Ashram apart from the Ashramites, is there? Those who seek Ashraya (support) make up the Ashram; without the Ashritas (dependents) there can be no Ashram. When the Ashritas are with me, why worry about the Ashram and its routine." The disciples are those to be cared for, those that have to observe disciplinary routine. Moreover, since the place has now become free from the fear of demons, the Ashram cannot come to harm. The Creator of All is our Ashramam (Refuge) and when we depend on Him, He will foster all. Viswamitra spoke in this rather unfamiliar strain and continued, "Take with you the things needed for your daily rites as well as all the tools and vessels belong into the Ashram; there is no need to leave any thing here.

Some novitiates queried, "Master! After what interval do we return to this place? If you tell us that, we can select so much of the articles as will suffice for that period of time; why burden ourselves with more than what is actually necessary?"

Viswamitra replied, "Time is no servant of the body; the body is the servant of Time. Therefore, one can never say when will I come again here or no? I doubt!" When they heard this, the hearts of all the residents suffered a sudden shock. The clothes vessels and tools they held in their hands slipped and fell on the ground. They were petrified. They could not find words to speak in reply.

They could not protest, nor could they muster courage to question the Master. So, they bundled up kusa grass, sacred sticks for the sacrificial fire, ceremonial ladles and vessels etc., as much quantity as they could carry. The meaning of Viswamitra's words was a mystery and so, each of them interpreted them in his own way. The night passed, and dawn broke. Every one was soon ready; when the doors were being closed, and bolted, Viswamitra said, "Do not fasten the doors! Leave them open! This is not ours; any one who comes can enter in. This Ashram must welcome all who arrive at all times. This day, the bond between us and this Ashram has snapped!" Standing outside the hermitage, Viswamitra addressed the sylvan deities, "Grow in happiness hereafter, ye patron gods of this holy area! I have achieved success in my endeavour; accept my grateful appreciation in return. You will no more be troubled by the demon hordes; you can now live in peace, with ample progeny, prosperous and happy, all around you. I am today going out of the Siddha-ashram, renouncing it. I have resolved to take residence in the coming days in the region of the Himalayas, lying north of the sacred Ganga River".

Viswamitra prostrated on the ground as a mark of respect for the forest deities. Then, he started out on his journey, with Rama and Lakshmana and the senior monks of the Ashram. The residents of the hermitage realised that their place was where Viswamitra was, and not the forest or huts where they listed so long. They felt that the Himalayan region was equally desirable for them too; so, they offered gratitude and reverence to the forest deities and the grass-thatched dwellings and walked on behind the sage.

While they were thus proceeding in the northerly direction, they saw behind them, following their trail, thousands of deer, peacocks, birds and beasts of the jungle, running with raised tails, in eager haste of yearning. Viswamitra stopped and turning towards them he said "O denizens of the jungle! The places to which I am going are not congenial for your style of living, for your safety and security. This forest is your natural habitat. Give up the sadness of separation; do not follow us; but, remain here itself. God will grant you peace and joy." He took leave of them too, before he resumed the journey.

The day's journey brought them to the bank of the Sona River; they had perforce to spend the night at that place itself. They took their bath in the river and finished the evening ablutions. Then they gathered around the Master eager to listen to his words. Rama asked, "Revered Sir, this region appears rich and prosperous; what is its name and history, I would like to know." Viswamitra replied, "Rama! Brahma had a son through the will of his mind; he was named Kusa; he was a great ascetic, of strict vows, heroic in spiritual adventure, learned in the science of morals. He wedded the daughter of the noble ruler of Vidarbha. The two lived in the awareness and practice of the four ends of human life, Righteousness, Prosperity, Affection and Liberation. They had four sons—Kusamba, Kusanabha, Adhoortharajaka and Vasu—each one, equal to the father in virtue, and highly evolved in righteousness, integrity and the excellences of the warrior caste.

"Kusa divided the world into four parts and assigned one part to each of them, directing them thus: 'Sons! Rule over the part assigned to each of you and prosper!' Thereafter, they carried out their father's command and entered upon their new duties.

"Each of them started constructing a capital city for the kingdom—Kusamba built Kausambi, Kusanabha built Mahodaya, Adhoortharajaka built Dharmaranya and Vasu built Girivraja. Rama! This area is part of the kingdom of Vasu; we have all around us five hills, and so, this City is called Girivraja (Collection of Hills). This auspicious Sona River is also known as Sumagadhi, so that this region is named Magadha. The Magadhi flows from east to west here, like a jasmine garland placed among the mountain valleys. The majesty of Vasu has blessed all the land on both banks of this river to be ever green and plentiful."

The second son, Kusanabha, was well established in Dharma; he was a pillar of righteousness. He had a number of daughters but no son. He taught them right conduct and behaviour as the rules and disciplines laid down in the scriptures. He emphasised that forbearance is the grandest gift one can give another, that forbearance is the richest fruit-bearing Yajna, that forbearance is the most beneficial way of being honest, that forbearance is the root of all right thought and action. He gave them this lesson on the value of forbearance, even from the days when they were fed at the mother's breast. They were later given in marriage all of them—to the ruler of Kampilya City, Brahmadatta by name. When they all left to that City, his house became empty and barren.

"Alas," he moaned, "this house which was so bright and resonant with wit and laughter has today become dark and dumb, dull, deep in gloom. Daughters, however many you may have, have to leave the parental home rendering it drab and dreary. If only I have a son, this calamity will not overpower me." Thus, He entertained a longing for a son.

Just then, his father, Kusa, happened to visit him and he enquired the reason why he looked sad and full of concern; the son laid bare before him his mind and its anxieties. Kusa chided him for becoming so worried for this particular reason; he blessed him that he may get a son, soon. And, as he blessed, so it happened, the son born was named Gaadhi; he grew up a very devoted virtuous prince; since he was born in the lineage of Kusa he was known as Kousika.

His sisters lost their husband after some time and as dutiful wives, they immolated themselves and gained heaven. They were born on the Himalayas as sacred rivers which joined together to form the famous Kousiki river. Kousika was attached very much to the eldest of the sisters, Sathyavathi by name and so, he took residence on the bank of this river, and established himself at Siddha-ashram, and celebrated the Yajna he had resolved upon with ceremonial rectitude.

Rama! Through your immeasurable heroism, the Yajna I had resolved upon has come to successful conclusion. In has borne fruit; my rigorous vows have been fulfilled."

At this, the monks who had gathered around the sage exclaimed, "O, how wonderful! Really, we are fortunate that we could listen to the story of the hoary ancestors of our Master! O, what a great source of joy, the story is! The Kusa line is indeed consecrated. Those born in it are equal to Brahma Himself in sanctity. How lucky we are that we have this singular chance to serve the one visible embodiment of all that the line represents, the sage, Viswamitra; this chance must be the fruit of merit accumulated through many lives in the past."

Viswamitra interrupted them and said, "Rama! I would not have dwelt on all this, but, your question prompted me to reply; else, I do not give details regarding this body and its antecedents. It is already night; let us take rest. Delay in going to sleep might slacken the speed of our journey tomorrow. Rama! See! The Moon is peeping through the branches of yonder tree to catch a glimpse of you! It sends down cool ray; to refresh the earth that has suffered long the hot rays of the sun." That night, every one was ruminating over the tales of the forefathers of the Master.

They awakened from sleep pretty early, and finished morning ablutions. They performed the daily rituals too and got ready in time to continue the journey. They come near Viswamitra, and fell at his feet. Then, they stood one behind the other on one side, awaiting orders.

Rama said, "Master! The river Sona is not deep at this place. The water is clear, we can wade across. No boat is needed!" Viswamitra replied, "Son! You are strange to this place and so, you do not know the exact place where we can wade across. I shall go first; you will follow me". The sage walked into the riverbed and moved on. Every one had his bundle slung on his shoulder. The pace was slow and it was noon when they reached the river Jahnavi.

The first intimation they had about the river was sweet kuhoo notes of swans, parrots and other birds on the bank. Every heart was filled with delight at the entrancing beauty of the scene. They bathed in the pure pellucid stream and, aware of the hallowed story of the river, they offered oblations to departed ancestors and the gods. They lit the sacred fire on the bank and performed ritual sacrifices enjoined by the Sastras. Then, they collected edible fruits from the trees around and after assuaging hunger with them, they drank the nectarine water of the Jahnavi to slake their thirst.

Rama and Lakshmana walked towards the tree, under whose shade Viswamitra was reclining and sat beside him, reverentially. Rama asked him, "Master! Why is it said that the Ganga flows as three streams in the three worlds? How does the Ganga reach the Ocean, the Lord of every stream and river throughout the world? Please tell me and make me glad!" Viswamitra said, "Son! The Himalayan range is the basis of all this world; it is the home for all animals and all herbs. It has two progeny, Ganga and Uma, Ganga being the elder of the two. Both these are being adored by the entire world. The gods asked that Gangs be given to them so that they might have prosperity. So, Himavaan (the Deity of the Himalayas) gifted Ganga to the gods in order to secure them blessings, which will benefit the three worlds.

The younger daughter, Uma, entered upon a life of extreme asceticism. She immersed herself in hard spiritual discipline, prompted by supreme detachment from everything worldly. So, Himavaan sought to settle her in the world as a wife; in spite of strenuous endeavour, he could not succeed in this for long. At last, he persuaded Rudra, to agree to wed her. Thus, she too became entitled to the adoration of the three worlds.

The Ganga you see here is the Ganga that the gods took with them, and that has three steps, one in heaven, one on earth and another sub-terranean.

(To be continued)

Sai Krishna

We are the instruments
The Flutes on which
the Great One plays His melodies
Sometimes it is the pompous march of a Statesman

Again, the wailing of a beggar
Perhaps the heavy sound of a Dictator...
Or the lilting melody of a Dancer...
Artist, Poet.....
The minor tones of refugee agony -- or
Depicting war...
Pestilence ...Karma's grief...
And, yet, the Master-Hand may play
the notes of Saint, Prophet ...Saviour...
Permeating the air with Peace
and, Fulness of Pure Being...
ALL THESE, GOD PLAYS ON US

in perfect Harmony , if we are but tuned
in EVER READINESS
No matter what the melody
whether stately march—
or little tinkling notes ..
of housewife's song—

Each must be in tune
To make the perfect whole!
No one greater ...nor lesser
Than the next; for
ALL make up
THE ONE, GREAT SYMPHONY
OF LIFE.

—Hilda Charlton, New York

The Captain Confirms

"Sathyam Sivam Sundaram" (Volume I) which is the authentic account of the Divine Life of Bhagavan gives, in the opening pages, a description of the holy village where the Incarnation happened, and relates some of the 'legends' which popular memory has retained about the origin and antiquity of the place and its landmarks. One story among these has attracted considerable attention and even scepticism from the readers—the story of the cobra and the cow, which

explains the origin of the Gopalakrishna Temple at Puttaparthi. The Book says, "One day, a cowherd noticed that his favourite cow had no milk in its udder; she secretly watched her movements; he followed her about; he noticed that she went to an ant-hill. There, a cobra issued from out of the mound, raised itself on its tail and applying its lips gently to her teats, drank the milk in glee."

Could this ever happen? Was it merely hallucination or exaggeration or sheer fiction? Many dismissed the story, as clever but false, fixed in folk-imagination but essentially a fib! But, it was not only the simple cow-herd of Puttaparthi who saw such an astounding spectacle! Captain Freddie Guest of the Indian Cavalry saw the same spectacle in 1944, at Bangalore. In his Autobiography, he describes the scene thus, "After breakfast, we would have trick riding, or musical chairs on horseback, which is wonderful fun, and, then, when it was over; we made our way back, in our own time. It was on one of these mornings when I was riding out alone to the rendezvous that I saw one of the strangest sights imaginable.

I had started early as I wanted to see that everything was in order because the party was larger than usual. I was passing on the outskirts of a small village when I heard the mooing of a cow, which sounded rather distressing.

I turned my horse and cantered over to the animal and there in the early morning light—the dawn had just broken—I saw a cow in milk, transfixed to the ground by the efforts of a full sized cobra which had wound its body around the two hind legs of the cow, making it completely immobile and with one of the udders in the mouth, was sucking the cow of its milk.

My horse suddenly became aware of the snake and immediately went into the most awful fit of trembling and I could feel its knees sagging beneath me. If ever a horse was near fainting, this was the time. I always carried a stock whip with lash when riding. As soon as I recovered from my astonishment, I gave a crack of the whip which went off like a pistol shot. It startled the snake, which unwound itself in a second and was away in a flash.

The cow ran off towards the village; but, strangely enough, I had a feeling that IT WAS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT THIS KIND OF THING HAD HAPPENED TO HER I WAS QUITE CERTAIN BY THE SIZE OF THE COBRA THAT IT WAS NOT ITS FIRST MILK FOOD!

It took some time to pacify my horse and I had rough riding for the remainder of the morning as it shied at everything and anything which even reminded a snake such as twigs, branches or cracks in the hard ground.

The story certainly enlivened the breakfast party that morning at which there were some Americans. Every one thought it a tall story which I put on especially for the visitors (just as readers of Sathyam Sivam Sundaram have felt!) but, I CAN VOUCH FOR THE TRUTH OF IT."

There are more things in earth and heaven than our petty puny reason can measure and make its own.

—(Ed)

The Clang

The family of Sethu Madhavan Nair, about eight miles away from the house where a few months back Naxalites committed the most gruesome killings received a threatening letter from them, on 1-3-71. They felt that the Namasankirtan was their only shield. They decided on Akhanda Namabhajan for a week, six days, during day-light hours and on the seventh day, all the twenty four hours! The valedictory function was celebrated with immense joy and the atmosphere was most inspiring.

It must be mentioned that Baba has been revealing His presence by miraculous manifestations in the shrine room of the house. This must have been the immediate reason for the ire that was aroused in the hearts of atheists and votaries of violence.

On the 8th, at 5 A.M., when Sethu Madhavan was near the washbasin at the back of the house, by the side of an open window, a fellow appeared at the window, and threw with fatal force a heavy choffer on the man! But, Baba was quicker! He drew the devotee suddenly to the corner of the room, away from the fatal blow, holding him quick round the body.

He actually had the feel of Baba, drawing him away! The choffer fell with a clang on the floor; Vibhuti had dropped all over the place

The stream of Love which flows from Me is the Holy Ganga. Some do catch fish, others wash cattle, many wash clothes, but a large number bathe in the river in a spirit of Devotion, praying, "O Holy Mother Ganga! Make me pure, cleanse my heart from wicked wayward thoughts". My Love is as the Ganga.

—Baba

The Fifth Root

—Dr. V. K. Gokak, M. A. D. Litt.

This Universe has been described in the Gita as the Sanathana Vriksha, the infinitely spreading Ashwattha Tree, its roots being in the Higher Regions, its branches spread in the Lower, the leaves being all beings in the Universe. It has five roots which draw sustenance from the Heavens - Truth, Goodness, Beauty, Love and Power.

There have been great Saints who have embodied in their lives aspirations and achievements Truth, Goodness Beauty and Love. They have suffered for us, inspired us and paid back hatred

with Love. They have returned good for evil. They have led lives of beauty in the atmosphere of ugliness. We are heavily indebted to them for holding aloft these ideals and striving for victory.

But the embodiment of Power (along with Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Love) is very rare in the history of Humanity—one who can shape our destiny, and grant us a new orientation of life. The world is looking out for One who can and will support all that is good protect all that is good anal one who can and will destroy evil.

This question has been filling man with agony from the dawn of history—when shall Right find its appropriate Might? The Rule of the Jungle, the Rule of Law and the Rule of Love—man has to progress through these three steps. But, we are still under the Rule of the Jungle, though man has proudly walked on the Moon! The Rule of Law is found in the Law Books; the Rule of Love is found only in the Lives of Saints. Who can take us into the Rule of Love, the Ramarajya?

No government has been able so far to achieve this, in any part of the world. For, governments are machines; they work as they are operated on. The individuals who operate them have no transforming Power, on which they can draw. The solution lies in discovering a Personage who can draw on Divine Power. We are meeting here under the auspices of a Samithi, which owes its loyalty to the One Person, who can transform the World.

India has had a galaxy of saints from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Vinoba Bhave, during the last hundred years. India has some prestige today because of the heritage of these saints. I have spent some years now with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. If I am asked to define what Truth is, I would say what Baba says and does is Truth; if I am asked to define what Love is, what He does with the poor, the rich, the distressed, the powerful is Love. In a similar way, what is embodied in Him is Goodness. Beauty too is what He says, does and teaches. But, these four qualities would not have drawn me to Him. He would have been like other saints, perhaps on a higher level that is all.

I am one of the humblest followers of Baba, for, I have found in Him the fifth element—Power, to transform our lives. The word Avatar puts many people off; the westerner does not understand how a human being can be a God; those who have been educated on western lines do but echo the Master's Voice.

If you do not like the word, you can drop it; but, in crucial moments of History, there comes the Leader of the Race. He takes the human cycle one step further ahead. He has the innate Power.

One aspect of this Power is to know what is passing in the mind of other individuals, whether he is before him or 14,000 miles: away. Another is the Power to make every one feel His Presence, immediately. A third aspect is to change a man's destiny, to change circumstances that limit him or canalise him to give Grace where Grace is deserved, and even where it is not deserved. The fourth—to confer Peace and Delight to every one who is in need.

These are the four aspects of surpassing Power—of Divine Power, symbolised by our forefathers as Mahalakshmi, Mahakali, Maheswari and Mahasaraswati. It is the experience of those of us who are members of the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi that Baba is the manifestation of all these aspects of Divine Power.

—From Speech at Ratlam

Beside, Behind, Before

The Sadhaka must have as his objective the state of mental preparation, for the realisation of Godhead at any moment. That is to say, his heart must be cleansed of despair, free from hesitation and doubt, and open to the waves of bliss that surge in from all sides, in God's Universe. Love brings the waves in, ever expansive as they are! Follow the directives, with faith and sincerity. That will help you to realise the purpose of life. Since every act has its appropriate reaction, beware of evil intentions, wicked words, acts that harm others and therefore harm you, and so live that you revere all as moving temples of the Divine.

Narasamma, who passed away recently is a, good example, for you. She was a pure devotee. She came to Parthi 30 years ago; and, once having come, she never turned back to Madras, with any longing for her home, her belongings or her kith and kin! She was friendly with all and put up gladly with all sorts of people. I used to reprimand her often, "Narasamma, why do you welcome all these people into your room and allow them to disturb the Sadhana and silence you need?" But, her heart was large and it was difficult to restrain her. She spent all these years, happily here; and, now she has settled here, as her eternal home.

I wrote a letter to her from Goa. I did not write to any one else from there. I wrote only to her. I wrote, "Narasamma, I am with you, beside; before, behind; and I am guarding you as the lids guard the eye. Do not be worried in the least that I am not there. Since your body is getting weaker and weaker, be ready for any eventuality. Avoid thoughts of the body, be ever full of thoughts of God. Carry on in that manner. When the body gets overripe, it rots; when it rots, it is thrown away. Her body became ripe, overripe and it even suffered due to over ripeness. So, it had to be disposed away. But, her Seva and Sadhana—these do survive.

"Perhaps you wondered why I did not come to give her Darshan, even though she was praying, for it so long! Her fortune was not this kind of Darshan, standing before you, as I do now. But, I certainly stuck to my promise to her, that I shall give Darshan to her, during her last moments. I came, I stood before her, I gave her the Blessing Prasadam, I asked her to put into her mouth the Vibhuti I created and gave her; and, some persons round her bed at the time came to know about it. For they asked Narasamma, 'What is it you are putting into your mouth?' and Narasamma told them, 'Swami came just now and gave me Vibhuti Prasadam.' Until the last breath she was fully conscious."

Narasamma died at seven minutes past eleven in the morning here at Prasanthi Nilayam, and there at Whitefield, I mentioned to Peddabottu (who has come there and is staying there), at seven minutes past eleven; "Your Narasamma has gone!"

Her nature, her heart that corresponded with her nature, her achievement which was characteristic of her heart and its purity—all bore fruit. It is difficult to understand the beauty of such a life and to find analogies by which one can explain it.

The path depends on the principle, they say. Follow good principles, you are led along to the good fruits. So, tread the path of goodness and achieve good results. That is my advice.

—From Discourse by Baba, Prasanthi Nilayam, 18-4-71

The Letter Baba Wrote

Narasamma! Accept blessings. I am proceeding to Bombay, in two days or three, and later I am reaching Prasanthi Nilayam. I know that your health is declining. This is a pity; but, you are very old. You must be feeling very weak. Be taking fruits and nourishing food. Sai is ever residing in your heart. He will not move out, he will at no time forget you. Repeat Sai, Sai, with every breath. Spend all your time contemplating Sai; do not waste it in other thoughts. Sai will save you, he is with you. Be eternally settled, happily merged in Sai.

Convey my blessings to every one there.

*Cabo Raj Nivas.
Goa 14-12-70.*

*The resident, of your heart
(Hrudayavasi) BABA*

Foolish Dreams

Had I been Radha born,
How sweet this Spring would be!
Seeking my Lord, Sri Krishna
Playing His Flute, there, neath a tree!

Had Saraswati I been born
On my lips, His sweetest Song—
Vina striking heavenly tune
Singing to Hari ...brilliance of the Moon!

Mother Sita would I be
Following Ram, dressed in bark of trees
In jungle exile, no palace, throne—
What better way to spend this life
Than, with God to roam?

Now, my Lord, Sai Baba has come!
My foolish dreams are all undone!
I am His child, full of monkey pranks
And ceaseless chatter, bothering Him.

—*Eddie Fleure*
(*Hanuman*)

The Puttaparthi Countryside

Thus it is:
When sitting still
On the side. of a mountain—
An ancient, arena
Of rugged reptile rock
Carefully carved
By the soothing stroke
Of nurturing Nature.
The Glory of People's Toil
Passes by, on compassionate Earth,
Under ancestor trees
Of greens and ageing leaves.
Man miraculously moves
With the tremor of termites—
A permanent, pulsating procession.
Like walking temple
He carries the height
Of hewn steadfastness
From life.....to death,
To.....life,
To..... live, forever!

—*Anthony, Malta*

Gift of Grace

—**Ratan Lal**

How to live at peace with oneself and with one's fellow beings is the main problem of life. Its panacea lies in winning the gift of Grace from the Lord of the Universe according to our ancient view in our land of Vedanta. Peace of mind, being a mental state; cannot be had though physical well-being. The air-conditioned comfort alone cannot give desired mental peace. The money with which this sort of comfort can be bought comes and goes. With money; power, and material advancement, man has gained greater speed, splash and superficiality, beginning and ending in so-called sophisticated doubt; whereas our ancient way of life teaches us to cultivate an unshakable faith in the glory of Atma.

An attempt is made in the following lines to depict and describe the impact, the grace of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has on the people in Bombay. The grace of God is available to us all; it is like sunshine; in order to be in its light, you have only to step out of the darkness of your room; so also in order to win His Grace you have to do sadhana by which ignorance is uprooted, to enable the light of wisdom to dawn.

The silent psychological revolution affecting lacs of people has been brought about by Bhagawan Baba through His inimitable ways: by his individual counsel, by His infinite charm, by His divine power, and by His absolute Vedantic upadesh in simple language, understood by the common man of today, regardless of caste, creed, religion and region. People from all parts of the world who have had the privilege of being near His Lotus Feet and are under His divine spell, have tried to remodel their lives, change their worldview, and their sense of values. Baba not only awakens hunger, but also satiates it, if you are devoted to him. The devotees try to lead more purified and satwic lives by exerting to rub off the tamasic and rajasic vasanas accumulated during their past lives. The yardstick of His Grace is not merely to be found in the cure, of physical ailments, the achievement of some worldly success, or the emergence of Vibhuti or kumkum appearing on His Photos. Bhagawan says that His life is His mission; so each one of us should try to translate His teaching into action and thereby lead such lives that our behaviour and conduct may obviously reveal us to be His humble devotees. As such His Grace would be outwardly visible by our humility or indifference to pomp and publicity, our attaching less and less importance to the world of name and form, our wholehearted abiding faith in absolute divinity and our divine love and worship of Him.

Inwardly we can judge for ourselves the progress in our sadhana. It can easily be found out by the amount of (viveka) discrimination between the real and the unreal, the light and darkness, immorality and mortality, the Self and impure and individualised self, we have cultivated. This would naturally result in, our getting detached from the worldly pleasures. We also would become unruffled in grief and joy; in turn we will become less self-centred and more SELF-centred.

During the visits of Bhagavan to the City the devotees have had several opportunities of having spiritual bath in His Divine Radiation and immediate presence. They are trying to lead more integrated lives, to learn and speak the international language of the heart and thereby understand that the entire creation is one, the underlying divinity being one and the same behind all this manifestation.

It would not be out of place to enumerate briefly the activities of Bhagavan's Seva Organizations being carried on in this City. During His first visit to Bombay about six years, back people had the chance of His darshan, witnessed and experienced His Divine Leela, and heard his upadesh. All these created such a profound impact on the people that they soon set up a committee known as Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi charging it with the task of organizing bhajans, arranging public meetings during Bhagavan's visits to Bombay, and started trying to explore more avenues by which His Divine message could be spread. Indian philosophy teaches secular worship, meaning thereby, that an individual personally can worship his or her chosen name and form, whereas, when a group of people in chorus sing the glory of God, they are encouraged to sing His glory by reciting various names of one and the same spiritual reality.

Now in every part of the City and Greater Bombay there are regular bhajan centres where bhajans are conducted, study classes are held in order to satiate the spiritual hunger of the people. Nagarasankirtan was particularly emphasised by the Divine Master Himself during the World Conference of Sai devotees held in Bombay three years back. It was meant particularly to purify internally those who participated in it and to purify generally the polluted atmosphere. Groups of people practically all over Bombay go early in the mornings singing, the Glory of God. Young persons between the age of 15 and 35 who are eager to perform active seva have been organized, as Seva Dal Corps. They visit hospitals to bring a little comfort, cheer and relief to suffering brothers and sisters and participate in every other programme and activity planned by the Seva Samithi. Three years ago Sri Sathya Sai Education Foundation was inaugurated, which in a humble way, has been assisting the cause of moral education. It is also engaged in printing and publishing literature which embodies the philosophy of Universal Love and pursuit of truth so as to counteract violence, disintegration and lack of moral fibre rampant today.

Bal Vihars in schools and private homes have also been started all over the City in order to acquaint the children at their impressionable age with our ancient Indian Culture as the children of today have to shape the destiny of tomorrow.

Good and Bad

The body is the temple where God dwells within, and is installed in the heart. But, it is not enough if you go on repeating this very pleasing axiom and pretend that you have joined the ranks of the good. To make that statement is a great responsibility. For, you must behave every moment, as if you are aware of the God within. The priest in the temple first cleans the altar, then he scrubs and polishes the vessels used for worship, and then, he pours water sanctified by Mantras in order to cleanse the idol, and finally, he offers adoration through flowers and fragrance, reciting the meaningful Names of God.

You have also to cleanse the senses, the instruments of action and knowledge and remove all the blemishes of bad habits, bad tendencies, feelings and thoughts. Render yourselves pure, steady and unselfish. Then only can you deserve the chance of worshipping the God within. Until then, the temple will be in ruins, infested with bats that revel in the darkness. The word Vyakthi is used to refer to the individual man, not without a certain degree of appropriateness. The Sanskrit word means, he who has made manifest. What has man made manifest? The Divinity in him that is the answer. That which was unmanifested due to the heavy overlay of desire and ego has been manifested, as a result of Sadhana, and the A-vyaktha has become Vyaktha. He who has achieved this is the vyakthi, not each and every single human. Keep the mirror of the heart untainted by desire or Kama, and its chief attendant, Anger or krodha; then, the God within clearly shines therein. As soon as you rise from bed in the morning, examine for a few moments your thoughts, plans, habits and attitudes to others, which are about to pounce on you and decide the shape of things to come, throughout the day. Identify in the motley crowd the vicious, the wicked, the evil, the harmful, the one that are born in anger, that breed on greed and assert that you are not willing to be led by them. Throw your inclination on the side of the good,

the constructive, the clean, the ones that urge you to love, to renounce, and rise up a purer, stronger and happier man than when you went to bed. That is the real Sadhana, not simply spending a few minutes, watching your breath or wandering homeless and living on alms.

There is a belief that is strongly held and justified by many that good deeds and bad will cancel out and it is only the balance that one has to suffer the consequences of! That is to say, the consequences of sin can be diminished by the consequences of acts of merit, done by the same person; ten sins and eleven meritorious acts mean that the balance is favourable to the doer! But, this system of accounting does not hold good in the spiritual field. The consequences are there, but, they do not cancel out. It is like this: a man scatters seeds of thorn plants as well as of fruit trees. Both grow together, and both have to be endured. They sprout distinct and as ruled by their own innate Dharma. You may have in an orchard of 1000 fruit trees one thorn bush, but that will not turn into a fruit tree by association with the rest. What has to be done is to pull out and destroy the bush. Identify it as thorny and harmful; and, then, by discrimination, pull it out by the roots. By the roots—for, when the rains come, the tree will sprout again, if the slightest trace of life in it.

Only very few are now able to spot out the thorny bushes and uproot them; so, they have to suffer the thorns, even while they are enjoying the fruits. Reap the mixed harvest, you must, if you do not take note in time. As I said at the beginning, of this discourse, the tragedy is: Man seeks to avoid the progeny of sin, with pleasure; he seek to earn the fruits of meritorious deeds, but, is not inclined to follow the meritorious path! Be vigilant about your steps. Do they lead you along the road that will take you to the goal you have in view? Or do they turn away from it? How can you reach the east, when your steps lead west?

Many persons ask me, "Swami! When can I realise the Truth? Please grant me, self-realisation." My reply is, "You will be liberated the moment the 'I' goes; do not ask for 'my' liberation. 'My' liberation! The 'I' should go. The 'I' and 'mine' should go. That is itself liberation. This 'I' has been created, protected and grown by your own ignorance. A baby has no 'I' or 'mine'. It easily gives up anything from its grasp; the 'I' hardens with the increase of intelligence, and it does not part with a doll or toy. Do not allow the role of the separate 'I' to damage the springs of love and sacrifice, in your heart."

In order to escape the nefarious influence of this ego, cleanse the heart with constant contemplation of God, His Glory, His Leelas, His Beauty, His amazing attributes. Contemplate the vast, so that your heart too might overstep its limits and become vast. Bhoomaa, the Vast, that alone confers joy. Another directive I give is: Be more concerned with your own progress, your own correction than with the good and evil of others. There is time enough to worry about the good of others, after you have become good, yourself. But, try as far as you can, to give Ananda to others; desist from causing pain to others. You must feel the pain of others as your own you must be happy when others are happy. That is the way to realise the unity of all. Above all, be vigilant; for, the fruits of Sadhana may be destroyed by negligence. When the rains come, the earth is again green, for the seeds of grass are underground, though you thought the land was dry and fallow. Satsang, Satkarma—these have to be kept up, all through life.

Dipavali or Festival of Lights celebrates the destruction by Krishna of Narakasura, King of Pragjyotishapura. Narakasura means the demon who was with every act of his, taking a step towards hell. It symbolises ignorant and evil-minded men. And, which is their pura or habitation or fort? It is called, Prag-jyoti-sha! Prag means the First, the Initial. Jyothi means Light; and Sha means forgetting, ignoring. The City which has forgetter or is ignoring the Primal Light, the Body where man lives which has neglected the Atma which is the Primordial Source of Light (Intelligence, Jnana), that is the Prag-jyoti-sha Pura, over which the Naraka (Hell)-ward marching Demon ruled. And, Krishna saved him, by destroying his demonic tendencies and showing him the Light

—From Baba's Discourse, 18-4-71

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16

The Sage Viswamitra was journeying to wards the city of Mithila with Rama and Lakshmana, as well as few of his disciples, regaling them on the way, throughout the day and far into the night, with picturesque descriptions, of his own previous history, the historical events connected with the places through which they passed, and the annals of the various dynasties which ruled over the regions which they crossed. Thus, they neared the city of Mithila.

That evening, he was seated on the sands of the bed of the Ganga river after the ablutions and rites. Rama reminded him that they will be happy to know about the origin of that holy stream. Viswamitra responded and said, Ramachandra! Your ancestors are responsible for Ganga coming down on earth. As a result of their good deeds, the peoples of the earth are sanctifying themselves now, bathing in the sacred waters and performing morning and evening ceremonial rites and ablutions therein.

The Ganga is the supreme stream of Divine purity. The nectarine waters can confer immortality. She was dwelling in the matted locks on Siva's Head. For that reason, she is most auspicious. She grants all that is beneficial. Hearing Viswamitra extol the river in such superlative terms, Ramachandra said, "How did my ancestors manage to lead down to earth, a river with such amazing attributes of power and purity? If you can describe to us the story, we can derive great joy therefrom."

When Viswamitra heard this request presented with such humility, he said, "Rama! Listen! In ancient times, Ayodhya was ruled by an emperor named Sagara. He was a very righteous ruler, an also a very valiant hero. Fascinated by his qualities of head and heart, the king of Vidarbha gave him his beloved daughter, Kesini, in marriage. She too was a strict follower of Dharma; she never wavered from the path, of Truth.

But, since even after the lapse of many years, they were not blessed with progeny, Sagara married the charming tender daughter of Arishtanemi, named Sumathi, as his second wife, with

the concurrence of Kesini. She too remained barren and so, the king gave up hope, and decided to spend the rest of his life in asceticism. He went to the bank of the stream by the side of which the sage Bhrigu was having his hermitage, and with his two wives, he plunged into the most severe disciplines of the anchorites.

A long time elapsed thus. One day, at break of dawn, the sage Bhrigu, staunch upholder of Truth, appeared before him, and said, "O king! End this tormenting of the body, this asceticism. You will earn unparalleled renown upon this world. Before long, you will be endowed with the bliss of having a son born unto you!" As soon as these words of compassion and grace fell upon his ear, Sagara opened his eyes and saw the sage standing before him. Immediately, he fell at his feet, and signed to the wives too to do likewise. He prayed that the sage may bless them direct.

The senior queen, Kesini, bowed her head low and fell at his feet with many an adulatory hymn emerging from her lips. Bhrigu asked her, "Mother! Do you desire a single son, so that the thread of continuity of the family be not broken, or, do you desire for a large number of sons, who will be endowed with enormous physical valour and vast renown?" She replied that a single son will satisfy her, and prayed that her wish may be gratified. Bhrigu accepted her request and blessed her likewise.

When the second queen Sumathi prostrated before him he asked her the same question. She craved for strong brave celebrated sons in plenty, and so, the sage granted that desire and blessed that it be fulfilled.

Elated by the blessings of the sage, Sagara returned to his capital city, accompanied by his wives. They fixed their minds on the boons they received and spent their time happily. Within a few months, both queens conceived and awaited the happy event of delivery. When the nine months had passed, Kesini delivered and, Sumathi gave birth to many.

As the days sped by, the sons romped about and played very excitedly with children of the same age and later, started moving out beyond the palace in search of companions and for the sake of games. The son of Kesini, Aswamanja by name, took them to the sands of the Sarayu river, he used to take delight in throwing the children into the river and laughed outright in great glee, when the children from the City were drowned! He systematically killed the children of the citizens, and earned an infamous reputation, as the worst criminal in the kingdom!

When they emerged out of their teens, Sagara selected suitable royal brides for each of them and had the marriages celebrated. Aswamanja continued his wickedness, however, and the residents of Ayodhya, had heart-rending grief as a result of his incorrigible viciousness. One day, they approached Sagara and, amidst loud wailings, represented before him the atrocious acts of his eldest son. At this, the king ordered that Aswamanja should immediately leave the city and that he must be exiled into the forests. Aswamanja had a son born to him by then. So, he had to leave behind his wife and son, besides his parents.

Years passed. Aswamanja's son Amsumanta grew up, won renown throughout the world as loveable, virtuous and valiant. Once, Sagara decided on the performance of the great Aswamedha (Horse-Sacrifice), and fixed an auspicious moment for starting the rites. While

Viswamitra was at this point in his narration, Rama put in a question: Master! Was the horse-sacrifice performed in Ayodhya, or, did he choose some holy river-bank, for the purpose? Please tell me, all the details.

Viswamitra smiled, and replied, "Rama! I am realising how earnest you are about sacrifices and how reverend your attitude towards sages is! I shall describe in detail as you desire. Listen! There is a holy range facing the Himalayas, from a distance, called the Vindhya Range. The region in-between is sacred for all yajnas and yagas and the horse sacrifice was done in that region. Experts in the recitation of Vedic hymns gathered there and the mountains echoed and re-echoed to the loud and correct recital of the prescribed ritual formulae. Thousands of citizens were watching with great joy the unique ceremonial. Just then, the beautifully caparisoned horse was led in and worshipped. It was left to roam where it willed. In order to overcome and defeat any opposition to its free movement (indicative of ambition on the part of the ruler who so opposes to be free from the domination of their suzerain, Sagara) Amsumanta followed its footsteps, with his army fully equipped to meet all contingencies. After an unopposed round of the entire country, the horse was led back. The exact moment when the sacrifice had to be done in orthodox Vedic style approached, and people went to bring the animal in. But, the horse was nowhere to be seen! It is laid down that the loss of the sacrificial animal and its non-availability at the auspicious moment bodes ill for the organisers of the Yaga! So, Sagara was naturally upset; he sent the numerous sons of his second wife, armed to the teeth, with the commission to discover the horse and bring it back to the sacrificial altar. They sought the help of the gods and the demons, and searched everywhere and even dug the earth up, lest the horse was kept hidden below, by its captors. But, they had to return and report that their mission had failed.

Sagara was enraged at this. "Of what avail is all this numerous progeny if you announce to me your, incompetence? Why stand before me, with faces darkened with disgrace? Go," he said, "Do not come to me, until, you recover the horse."

The sons reacted sharply to these angry words, they went back into the world, determined to leave no spot unexamined. Mountains, hills, lakes, rivers, caves, towns and villages, forests and jungles—why lengthen the list, they looked closely at every step, every foot of ground. While they were proceeding thus, they found in one place, a hermit, deeply immersed in Dhyana; the horse, was there, near him calmly nibbling grass!

They were overcome by delight when they saw the horse and by anger, when their eyes fell on the hermit; they were tossed between two conflicting emotions. They lost their sanity, as a result of these irrepressible feelings. Their reason failed, their hearts were petrified.

They shouted in the ear of the hermit; "O! Villainous brute! You have stolen our horse and hidden it in your backyard!" The sage Kapila slowly opened his eyes and looked around. The sons of Sagara stood around him and poured abuses on his head; some even got ready to give him a heavy thrashing!

Kapila saw that words and arguments were futile weapons to meet those bullies; he decided that he must deal with them differently. He burnt them into ashes by merely casting his eyes on them.

Greatly distressed at the inordinate delay caused by their failure to return, Sagara was agitated much; how could he stop the sacrifice that he had half gone through? How could he continue and finish it? Seeing his plight, the grandson, Amsumanta fell at his grandfather's feet and offered to search for the horse and his uncles and bring news about them, if only he was sent on that mission. Sagara blessed him and sent him on that errand. Amsumanta was at his job, day and night; at last he was rewarded by success. He saw also signs of his uncle having been reduced into a heap of ashes! He was anxious to perform obsequies for the departed souls; but he could not see any source of water, which is essential for the offerings laid down in the Sastras. Heavily laden with sorrow, he moved some distance forward. A reverend old man came across his path and told him, "Do not allow grief to overpower you, dear son! Your uncles were reduced to ashes by sage Kapila with the welfare of the world in view! Do not be content to offer the ritual obligations with mundane waters. Get the holy water of the Celestial Ganga."

"Bring the Ganga down," he said, "and shower the sacred waters on the ashes. Then, they will be saved. But, first, take the horse along with you and perform the sacrifice until it concludes gloriously. Thereafter, you can think of ways and means to bring the heavenly Ganga to the Earth. Amsumanta fell at the feet of the hermit and hurried to his grandfather, where the yaga was being held up for want of the consecrated animal.

Sagara was awaiting its arrival with vigilant anxiety, both night and day, and so, when the horse was brought, he and the rithwiks (the Vedic scholars who officiated as priests) were plunged in ecstasy. Amsumanta felt that, it will not be proper to announce, during the auspicious festival that the uncles had an untimely death through the sage's curse. So, he allowed the Valedictory Rite also to come to an end and the priests and guests were given their share of votive gifts.

Then Amsumanta gave a detailed account of what had happened to the uncles and exhorted his grandfather to bring the heavenly river of unique sanctity down to the place, where the ashes were.

Sagara was delighted at the suggestion. He engaged himself in many ascetic disciplines and ritual ceremonies, which, according to the advice of elders, would, induce Ganga to give him the boon he wanted. But, he could not succeed. He waned in health day by day as a result of grief at the loss of his sons, and the failure of his attempts to ensure a bright future for them, through sacred obsequies performed with Ganga water. At last, he cast off his body, a disappointed man.

Rama! The ministers crowned Amsumanta, after consulting the will of the people. He ruled over the kingdom, without the slightest error or fault, for he was strong in morality and spiritual excellence. The people were fostered as if they were children born from his own loins.

When old age crept on him, he offered the throne to Dileepa, his son, and, proceeded to the Himalayas for the ascetic disciplines he wanted to impose on himself. His purpose was not only

self-realisation; he sought to bring down the Ganga for the sake of his uncles and their salvation. But, he too had to lose his body, without fulfilling the desire.

Dileepa was also moved by the same wish for, he knew how deeply his father and grandfather had longed for the consummation: bringing the Ganga down on earth! He tried various means, himself. He performed many abstruse yajnas and yagas, on the advice of sages. Pangs of sorrow that he could not fulfil the family ideal invaded him and he became chronically ill. Seeing that physical strength and mental stamina were declining, he placed his son Bhagiratha on the throne; he entrusted to, him the mission that was fixed in his own mind—namely, bringing Ganga down, to purify the souls of his grandfathers cursed by the Sage Kapila! Soon after, Dileepa too left the earth.

Bhagiratha bright with spiritual splendour vowed that he would succeed in the task allotted to him by his father. Though he ruled the kingdom very satisfactorily, he was sad that he had no children to maintain the line. This, as well as the supreme task of getting the Ganga, forced him to hand over the administration to the ministers and retire into the silence of the famous Gokarna Kshetra. He stood there, practising austere penances like bearing the heat of the sun and taking food only once a month! At, last appreciating his austerity, God appeared before him and said, Son! Bhagiratha! Ask any boon you wish for; it shall be granted.

(To be continued)

Divine Power

Power creates, sustains or destroys. If it is exercised on the side of good, it is Divine power; on the side of evil, demoniac power. The earth oscillates like a spinning top, this side and that. It reveals its dark half and its bright half through space and time.

This is true of human potency. But when there is descent of superhuman power, power which stems directly from the Divine, it contributes not to the mere oscillation of earth, but to a new dawn, the world's great age, a new step in human evolution. Baba is the harbinger of this new world order.

Baba's power is the power of spirit. Temporal power may not heed it for a while, blinded by its own glory. But it bends its head low before spirit at the end. It proves to the hilt the truth of the poet's utterances—"Tis the eternal law that first in beauty should be first in might" interpreting 'beauty' to man sheer innocence and purity of being and becoming. It is the power of truth that knows no compromise, of justice undimmed by any frailty of heart or head, of love that washes the human shores of earth whether they be black or yellow, white, red or brown. This Power is a white radiance, a transcendental sunbeam.

What exactly does it consist in? It is a dewdrop that descends from the thousand petalled lotus, the elemental exercise of a Will that is omniscient and omnipotent. It is the will that sees and acts simultaneously. What it wills fills and fulfils itself in space and time. But it bides its time, unwarped by slushy sentiment, unbiased by impatient hurry. And when it strikes, it is there for all to see, like a column of light that unites the earth and the sky.

Baba's power is not the display of a *siddhi* attained after prodigious labour. It scatters its silver and gold with a rare prodigality, giving people what they want, till they begin to aspire for what Baba likes them to want. It is the cascade of *Vibhuti* or holy aches, endless, exhaust-less. It is the crystallisation of *lingam* after *lingam*—spheroids of alabaster or jade—from the silk-soft lotus leaves in the abdomen. It is the ceaseless oozing of honey from the heart of granite itself. It is the descent of a succession of golden images of gods and goddesses, from nowhere. It is the transformation of stray particles of sand on a seashore into the divine image of Sri Krishna the reconstitution of water into petrol. It is the profuse in pouring of *Vibhuti* and the massing in of *kunkum* behind the glass framed on the photograph, the foot-prints in holy ashes leading to the worship room in a house and out of it. It is the flower moving marvelously from the top of a photograph to its base, or whole garlands aflutter, as if shaken by the wind. It is the tyrannical teacher glued to his chair in the class, unable to rise unless he rises with it. It is the rain that suddenly stops raining or the electric bulb that blazes with light when the whole area is plunged in darkness. It is the shaft of light that hits you in the eye from a photograph. All this is not magic. It is the magic of magics! Creation itself, for, there is no hind of the magician there anywhere to be found. No wonder a hippie said that he knew, now that he had met Baba, that the world was safe from atom and hydrogen bombs. The atomic stock-piles of the great powers might, at a strategic moment, lie de-fused in their vaults, with no hand touching them at all.

This is Baba's elemental Power over Nature, which is incredible and yet as clear as daylight. It becomes even more staggering when you remember that these phenomena occur in thousands of homes simultaneously, though removed thousands of miles from each other. It happened years ago, it happens today with unabating vigour and it will continue to happen more miraculously than ever.

There is another dimension to this power. Baba can appear in an operation theatre, behind closed and guarded doors. He can be here and there, in another place a thousand miles away at the same time. His image can stamp itself, as in the heart of crystal, on the stone lingam in a village temple. He can appear in dream before numberless devotees and recount them their dream-experience when he meets them individually. In a chat over the breakfast table speaking to the devotees who were there at the time, regarding all such miracles, he once said: "This is happening in millions of homes. The time has not come as yet to assess it publicly. I am waiting so that all the devotees who have yet to come to me may do so. When there is public assessment, there will be such wide-spread excitement that I may be rendered inaccessible. All these are signs of a Power that can change the very course of events in the world."

An American devotee who was present at the time when these remarks were made, asked: "Baba, have I your permission to tell my friends in America about this pronouncement?"

Straight came the answer: "It's not my business. It may be your duty."

Baba is what he is. It is not for him to proclaim from the housetops what he is. But it becomes the duty of the devotee who has come to know him and to experience his effulgence, to tell the world what Baba is, if the devotee is convinced that what he has experienced is the truth.

It is well known that Baba takes on critical attacks of illness by which his devotees are afflicted. This has happened in a striking manner once when he took on paralysis at Puttaparthi and again, when, in Goa, he took on acute appendix resulting in peritonitis. To put it more precisely, these diseases come on him, rather than being taken on by him. His body, like an Aeolian harp, trembles in response to the call of those who love him with a pure and intense love it is a matter of sympathetic vibrations, for he is Love itself. What saves his body from these fatal attacks is the immortal and unconquerable power of this very Love.

There is another facet to Baba's power. As an American disciple said, Baba can change the human heart. It is not merely a question of teaching yogic or meditative practices. He brings about a transformation in a man's character and personality. Thousands have been changed in this way by his compelling sweetness, his ineffable love, casual word or look. His compassion can put on the mask of harshness, when that becomes necessary.

What is much more difficult to understand is Baba's power to change human destiny. He is endowed with that Power of Grace which can alter the characters writ in the stars or on one's forehead. That he can do this, I have no doubt whatever. If it sounds incredible, it has to be experienced in order to be believed. Here, again, it is divine love that is at work for its own inscrutable purposes.

Baba has declared that he is here in the flesh to restore India to her former spiritual glory and to carry the message of spirituality to the whole of humanity through her. He has said in categorical terms is that his labours in this manifestation will not cease till his mission is over. I am one of those who believe in him and in the surety of his pledge. The question may be asked: Why? On what grounds? My answer to that question is: I believe in Baba and in the surety of his pledge, not because I am what I am, because Baba is what he is.

—Dr. Vinayaka Krishna Gokak
M. A., D. Litt.

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini
Sri Sathya Sai Baba
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Bhagiratha opened his eyes and had the Vision of the One with the brilliance of a billion Suns. He fell prostrate, over,whelmed with gratitude and devotion. He prayed, "Lord! Cause the Celestial Ganga to flow on earth, so that my great grandfathers might be saved from perdition and be restored to Heaven. And, favour me with children so that the Ikshvaku Royal Line might not be rendered extinct, with me as its last representative. May the dynasty continue flourish." He held fast the Feet of the Lord and submitted his supplication.

The Lord Hari replied, "Son! The first of your wishes is very hard to fulfill. Nevertheless, I shall grant you that one, and see that it is fulfilled. Then about the royal line, Yes. You will have a noble son and your line will continue and flourish. Arise!" At this, Bhagiratha rose and the Lord continued, "Bhagiratha! Ganga is tremendously swift; when it falls, the earth will not be able to bear the impact. Since the earth is too weak, you, as Lord of the earth, have to ponder over the problem and the means by which the consequences can be avoided. When the Ganga descends all at once upon the earth, the effect will be calamitous. So, the river must be made to flow on the head of Hara (Shiva); from there, the waters must be led on to earth with lessened impact. This will be the best course, from the point of view of the inhabitants of the earth. Consider this well." After saying this, the Lord returned.

From thence, Bhagiratha began austerities to propitiate Hara and at last, he succeeded in winning his favor and his consent to receive Ganga on his head, when it descends from Heaven to the earth. And so it happened that the Ganga flowed down from the head of Shiva on to the earth, in the seven distinct streams—Hladine, Nalini and Pavani flowed east, Subhakshu, Sita and Sindhu flowed west, and the seventh stream followed the footsteps of Bhagiratha to where he led it, namely, the place where his great grandfathers lay awaiting rescue from hell.

It flowed along the route that the Rajarishi Bhagiratha took; he took the river towards where the ashes of his forefathers lay, but, all along the route, men took advantage of the sacred stream and rendered themselves sanctified by utilising it for their salvation. They were released from the effects of the sins by the cleansing influence of the celestial Ganga. The great grandfathers too were redeemed by the performance of obsequies, with the aid of the thrice holy stream.

Since Bhagiratha brought the Ganga to earth, he is honoured as the Father of the celestial stream, and the river too got the name, Bhagrathi! After the ceremonies for the manes were over, Bhagiratha returned to Ayodhya, and, happy that he could fulfill through Divine Grace the fondest desires of his father and grandfather, he ruled over the empire peacefully for many years, receiving the spontaneous homage of his contented subjects. At last, he too left, the body".

When Viswamitra narrated the story of Rama's forefathers thus, Rama and Lakshman were all attention; they were enraptured with the incidents. But, the Sage said, it was already midnight and they could all go to bed and sleep. So, they prostrated before the Preceptor and laid themselves on the thick sands of the river itself.

Rama and Lakshmana could not sleep; they reclined on the sands, in obedience to the order of their preceptor, not because they needed rest! They lay, picturing to themselves the wonderful story of the descent of Ganga from heaven to earth, and they found that the morning had arrived! Therefore, every one rose and performed the ablutions and morning rituals in the river and prepared soon for the journey ahead.

As soon as the teenage disciples announced that the ferryboat was ready, all moved towards it and took their seats and crossed the holy river. They reached the northern bank safe. They started on the further stages of their journey, admiring the lovely heartening forest scenery through which they passed.

When they had covered some distance they came upon a vast city full of beautiful buildings. Rama turned towards Viswamitra; and asked him, "Master! We are seeing in this exquisite forest this vast City, aren't we? To what kingdom does it belong?" The sage replied, "Rama! It appears to be near, but, in fact, it will take quite some time for us to reach it! Perhaps, we may arrive there, in the evening hours, I shall tell you the story of that City's origin and fortunes when we actually reach it. First, let, us proceed on the journey we are on". Rama heard these words of the sage, spoken with a twinkle in the eye and a smile on the lips; he grasped reverentially the meaning of his directive and walked in fast without a word in reply.

When they descended into the valley there was no sign of any City or human habitation; but, on rising to the heights, the City could be, seen very near! Moving forward like this, they found that though evening drew near they could not reach the City, as Viswamitra had already indicated the City was still far away! As evening fell, they halted and after bath, they performed the evening rituals, laid down in the Sastras. While resting, Rama returned to the question he had already asked. "Master! Will you kindly tell us about the City?" At this, Viswamitra said, "Rama I was just thinking about that matter! Though I knew that you are aware of the working of every mind, still, the veil of Maya (taking the appearance as real) hides the fact and precipitates me into misleading tracks. All cannot be masters of the mind. When persons like me find it impossible to keep it under control, there is no need to dilate on the fate of ordinary Men! The very moment the thought flashed in my mind, that you had forgotten to ask about the story of the City, you questioned me about it! No further proof is wanted to show that you are the All-knowing!

Rama! In ancient times, Kasypa had two wives, Aditi and Diti. The sons of Diti were repositories of physical might and the sons of Aditi, of moral grandeur. They grew up mightier, with each passing day. The parents derived great joy, watching them grew up so fair and fast.

One day, the sons of both Diti and Aditi gathered together in one place and entered into a discussion on the best means for avoiding old age, death and disease. Finally, they came to the conclusion that the Amrith or Nectar that can be secured by churning the Ocean of Milk will prevent, in those who drink it, the physical calamities of senility death and disease.

Soon, they set about that task. The Mandara Peak was plucked and placed in the Ocean as the Churning Rod; the serpent Vasuki was chosen as the rope, to be wound round the rod and drawn, so that the rope might rotate quick and fast. While the churning continued for a long time, the serpent Vasuki began vomiting its poison. It was enraged so much as a result of the pain that it had to undergo that its fangs struck against the rocks of the mountain peak. The poison fumes stuck flames and raged as a huge fire!

Seeing this, the sons of Diti and Aditi became mortally afraid; they felt they would be burnt into ashes in that holocaust! They prayed for succour to the Lord. And, the Lord, Vishnu, appeared and stood before them! The sons of Diti pleaded pathetically, "Lord! Save us! Put a stop to this dread! And the Lord changed into Hara, and said, "Dear Ones! I am the eldest of the Gods, and so, I am entitled to receive the first fruit of this churning process on the Ocean of Milk." Declaring thus, He drank off without delay the Halahala poison that was causing all that fear!

Thereafter, the sons Diti and Aditi continued the churning of the Ocean, with Mandara as the churning-rod. Another calamity threatened them now; the Mandara Peak started sinking into the Ocean! So, they prayed again, for the Lord. Vishnu, the Lord, appeared again and assured them, "Darling children! Do not become frightened." Then, the Lord assumed the Form of a Tortoise, and getting underneath the mountain peak that was sinking into the ocean bed, He raised it on His back and kept it safe on that hard shell, so long as the churning lasted. The sons of Kasyapa were immensely grateful and happy. They extolled the Lord in profusion.

From out of the Ocean of Milk, there emerged a God with a Danda (Stick) and Kamandalu (Water-pot) in His Hands! His name was Dhanvantari. Even as the sons of Diti and Aditi were looking at Him, there emerged again from the Ocean a thick sweet juice or Rasa, which soon got rolled into a ball, which in turn, soon swelled and broke, disclosing a bevy of maidens. Since they were born of Rasa, they are named, Apasras. They tried in many ways to persuade the sons of Diti and Aditi to wed them; they prayed and petitioned; but all their efforts were of no avail; so, they lived without being wedded, free, and fickle. Then, from out of the waves rose the daughter of the Water-god, Varuni and she had a chalice full of intoxicating liquor. The sons of Diti refused to have anything to do with the liquor! The sons of Aditi quaffed it. So, those who did not accept the Sura (Liquor) became known as Asuras, and those who accepted it are known as Suras.

At last, from that Ocean of Milk arose the Amrith (Nectar). Who was to drink the Amrith? There arose a huge conflict between the sons of Diti and Aditi, to settle this issue. In the terrible

fight that ensued, the sons of Aditi began destroying the sons of Diti. The battle threatened to become a battle of extinction of the line of Diti's sons! The earth shook under the thrust and counter thrust of weaponry in that battle. Fear and anxiety spread their dark clouds over the world. Suddenly, Vishnu appeared before the contending parties as an entrancingly charming damsel, who captivated the heart of all and led their minds away from the combat into which they had plunged! She charmed everyone and during the moments of her appearance, the Amrith disappeared! The sons of Diti were dead and the grief of the mother was beyond consolation. Kasyapa failed to bring her to some kind of normalcy. His words and attempts to teach her the evanescence of things, failed to convince her. She wailed aloud and lamented most excruciatingly as if the end of the world had come.

In the end, Kasyapa's advice had some little effect and Diti brought herself round; she approached Kasyapa and said, driving her agony deep into her mind, "Lord! Is this just? We both had children by you. Now I have been made childless. Is this fair? Am I to grieve eternally thus? Not even one of my sons came back alive. Rather than have many short-lived sons, one long-living one is most desirable, isn't it?" When she wept aloud in this manner, Kasyapa consoled her and told her to enter on Tapas (the discipline of austerities, to propitiate the Gods) so that she might have a son who will live long. He advised her to give up grief which could never yield the fulfilment of her desire. Encouraged by him and seeking his blessings she left immediately and started Tapas, with the professed aim of securing the boon from the Gods, of a son who will be able to defeat the Lord of Gods, Indra Himself!

Kasyapa told her, "Tapas is no easy discipline. One has to be pure, until the very end; one has to observe the vows and fasts, without the least infringement; then only will the Gods be pleased and grant the boon." He asked her to proceed and blessed the venture.

Diti reached the region known as Kusaplava and entered upon the rigorous discipline of asceticism and purity. Knowing about her resolve, Indra desired to test her and came to the place in the guise of an attendant. Diti's Prayer was answered; she became pregnant with child, through Divine Grace. Days passed months rolled by. Indra was beside her, as attendant! One day, in the hot hours of noon, overcome by sleep, she lay on the bed with her hair loose and her head placed where the feet were usually placed. This was against the strict rules of ceremonial purity, which she had to observe with tenacity. So, Indra got his chance; He noted that her posture was heterodox and contrary to Sastraic injunctions. So, He punished her, by fragmenting the foetus in her womb. The fragmented portions started weeping for their limbs and segments which had been cut away; the attendant Indra, spoke softly to them, 'Maa ruda, Don't weep!' Diti had terrible bouts of bleeding and she lamented her fate and wept most pitiably.

Indra stood before her with folded palms and pleaded, "Mother; Pardon me. You acted contrary to the rules of ceremonial purity and so, broke the vow. Your hair was unbound and loose; and your head was kept where the feet were normally kept on the bed. When you slept thus, your Tapas was defiled; when the enemy who is waiting for a chance to foil your fortune gets such an opportunity, will he keep quiet?

"You prayed for a son who would kill me, didn't you? The foetus in the womb was to destroy me and so, I took that chance to foil my foe. And I did not destroy him through wrong

and condemnable tactics. You know that strict observance of the vow was essential for the success of your plan; you had to ensure that you do not incur the sin of violating the moral code of the Sastras. The foetus has been cut into seven fragments and I have spoken maa rudah to them. So, they will be born as the Seven Godly Maruths, (Wind-Gods); I am now conferring on you this boon" Indra said thus and receded into Heaven.

Rama! This is the place, where Indra and Diti had this dialogue and this agreement on compromise. Here, Ikshvaku had a son, by Alamba Devi, who was named Visala. This kingdom is called Visala after him. Visala begat Hemachandra, the mighty. He begat Subhadra, and he had as son, Dhoomraswa, whose son was called Srnjaya: Srnjaya's son was Sahadeva.

Sahadeva was very rich and prosperous! He was a strong supporter of morality and righteousness; he was a valiant ruler of the kingdom for a very long period. His son Somadatta had Kakustha born to him; Sumathi was the son of that heroic monarch. He too was a very upright virtuous ruler; in purity and holiness he was equal to the Gods. Rama! This day, we shall enter this Visala City and sleep there; we shall reach the City of Emperor Janaka tomorrow". When they heard these words, all were happy. The news of the arrival of Viswamitra was communicated to Sumathi by messengers and he rushed forward to the Sage, with a retinue of courtiers; ministers, scholars and priests, praying that he should enter the City, and sanctify the Royal palace by his presence and stay.

Viswamitra was pleased at his humility and reverence. He inquired sweetly about his health and happiness, as well as about his, kingdom. They were engaged in conversation for some time, on the affairs of the kingdom and dynasty; Sumathi's eyes fell on the brothers. Rama and Lakshmana were so enchanted by their charm and dignity that he asked Viswamitra; who these lion cubs were! Viswamitra replied, "Sumathi! That is a long story! I have no time to tell you. I shall relate to you the tale after reaching you place. He then directed the great monks and ascetics who had accompanied, him, as well as the two brothers, Rama and Lakshmana, to proceed to the City of Visala; he then rose, and walked, Sumathi, talking, with him all the while on various matters pertaining to the monarch. On entering the City gate, the music from many voices and instruments rent the air; Brahmins recited the hymns of welcome and good wishes, from the scriptures.

(To be continued)

God told a certain Sanyasin, "Do not worry! I am always behind you." One day, the Sanyasin wanted to test whether God spoke the Truth. So, acting out of doubt, he quickly turned his head, and, naturally, did not see God. He asked God why He wasn't there; and God said, "As you turned your head, I moved around with the back of your head! Naturally, you were unable to see me!" God is Truth, Truth is His Nature. Truth is His sign; His breath.

—Baba

The Brilliance of May

May was a great month, for Sri Sathya Sai Organization! The first All India Bal Vihar Teachers Conference was held in the Divine Presence of Bhagavan, at Dharmakshetra, at Bombay, on the 11th and 12th. The third Maharashtra State Conference of the organization was held in the Divine Presence, on 13th March, at Dharmakshetra. The State Conference of the Organisation in Mysore was held on the 14th at Dharwar, in the immediate Presence of Bhagavan on the 16th, the Annual State Conference of the Organization was held at Dwaraka.

Besides these functions, the Third Annual Day of Dharmakshetra was celebrated on the 12th May. A finely produced souvenir 'Dharmakshetra' was published on the occasion by the Kamani Trust, Bombay. The Sarla Charities Trust, Bombay brought out another collection of articles and pictures called "Gift of grace", being an account of the gracious visits of Bhagavan to Bombay and the impact on Bombay of his message. The Seva Samithi, Dharwar also brought out a charming Souvenir, called Sathyajyothi, with articles in Kannada and English and a number of interesting pictures.

Bal Vihar Conference

404 teachers of Bal Vihars run by the organization attended the conference, along with 111 observers. State wise, the number of teachers was: Andhra (91); Mysore (71); Maharashtra (63); Madhya Pradesh (59); Uttar Pradesh (39); Gujarat (37); Kerala (20); Tamil Nadu (15); Bihar (14); West Bengal (12); Orissa (12); Assam (1). Many teachers had expressed their inability to come but for a First Conference of this kind the attendance was highly commendable. Bhagavan inaugurated the Conference, lighting a lamp, with his Divine Hand. Subcommittees were set up by the conference, on 1) the function and mission of Bal Vihars 2) courses of instruction, according to age groups and 3) rules and regulations. The reports were submitted to the General Sessions.

The Message

In the Divine Message, which Baba graciously vouchsafed, he said, "The children began the proceedings of this conference with the recitation of the sloka:

*Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwarah
Guru Sakshath Parabrahma Tasmai Sri Guruve Namah*

Being teachers, all of you should try to understand the meaning and significance of that 'Tasmai Sri Guruve Namah'.

Guru Brahma, means that the Guru is like Brahma. The task of Brahma is to create Jivas, who are Amritha Bindus, droplets of Immortality, children of Immortality, Amrtasya Putrah. You have to recognize the children as repositories of the immortal Atma and honor them and serve them, as such. Education is a creative activity helping the Amrtattwa to reveal itself. Guru Vishnu means that the Guru helps the pupil to grow, to blossom and the Guru watches over the child and guides and guards the child, during its progress. Guru Devo Maheshwarah, means, the Guru also helps to weed out the unsatisfactory components, the undesirable habits, like Siva, the

third among the Trinity. These three services, for worldly joy and peace, are rendered by the Guru, in the aspect of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. But, that is not enough. The daily routine of living is not all.

Guru: Parabrahma

The pupil has to be given the key to liberation, for, it should not remain bound! That is why the Guru is also sung as Sakshat Parabrahma: the Guru reveals to the pupil the inner Reality, the Truth that makes the pupil free. Therefore, you must prepare yourselves for these roles by sever Sadhana. You have to plant the seed of Sadhana in the children, cultivate it and foster the sprouts and remove the thorny bushes of temptations and illusions from the heart of the pupils.

Schools Today

The government is not promoting the imparting of Indian traditions in schools; so Bal Vihars have to inculcate these ideals in the minds of children so that they may have clean hearts when they grow up. Don't try to hammer them into their head so make them learn them by heart. They must become part and parcel of their daily lives. The system of examinations is now reducing teaching, into mere cramming information and learning, into mere ramming answers to likely questions! When the examination is over, the pupil's head is empty! What you tell the Bal Vihar children must, however, be imprinted on their hearts and must transform their lives, deeds and speech.

Duties of Teachers

Do not deal with them, as if they do not know anything and are dull and inactive. Their faith and dedication are marvelous. See how Dhruva resolved to realize God and fulfill his cherished aim. You must recognize this great potential in the child and help it to develop on right lines.

I want that you should go occasionally to the homes of these children and talk to the parents also, about your work and how they could create the proper atmosphere at home, and supplement the lessons that you give. Parents set bad examples and are not competent to guide them along right lines. You may be able to impress them by telling them what ideals you are trying to instill. All this involves another duty: be yourselves what you are teaching others to be! First set right your own homes! And, then, advise the parent ion the ways in which they could make their children happy, healthy and useful children of Bharatiya culture.

Bal Vikas

The Bal Vihars conducted under the auspices of the Sathya Sai Organization has a distinctive quality of its own and so, the name is now changed into BAL VIKAS, to make this quality more patent. You should have specified hours and a syllabus and courses which are drawn up and adhered to. I do not want Bal Vikas classes on an ad hoc basis, whenever you or the children have spare evenings or holidays. I even wish that you will have tests and examinations, once or twice a year, so that you and the parents may know the progress made.

Lines of Work

Do not duplicate the school curriculum; confine yourselves to ethical, moral and spiritual guidance and teaching. Prepare the children to come and speak, on the platform on some spiritual

matters. The young boy who spoke today did very well. Teach them also how to receive elderly persons and greet them; how to revere their parents at home. They should develop a disgust for obscene pictures and posters, either in their homes or on the streets. Let the elders learn a lesson from them and improve their moral attitudes. A magazine may be published in each language, giving stories of Indian mothers, saints, sages and heroes from the epics etc., which can be placed in the hands of the Bal Vikas children

The Task

Look upon your task as teachers of Bal Vikas as a Sadhana. Remember that your role as teachers which has brought you here is a fortune which you should be grateful for. For, coming to Bombay, listening to the message, returning with greater enthusiasm infused into you and such other results are very rare chances; they are steps in your spiritual progress towards self-realisation.

You may be grateful to the Mahila Vibhag in Bombay whose sole effort has made this conference possible. They have done so well, even without the help or active participation of the Seva Samithi. The next conference will be held in Andhra Pradesh, though many other states are eager and ready. There was a suggestion that children themselves be encouraged to organize such conferences but that can be considered 2 or 3 years later when they will get more experienced."

Thanks

The teachers were all enthused by the cordiality of reception, the interchange of ideas with delegates from the far corners of India, the variety and excellence of the artistic creations of the children that were exhibited at Dharmakshetra, the entertainment items provided by the Bal Vikas children of Bombay and above all by the love, compassion and wisdom of Bhagavan, the goal of their Sadhana, of which teachership was but one phase.

Maharashtra Conference

The Third Conference of the Office Bearers of Sathya Sai Organisation in Maharashtra was held at Sathya Deep, Dharmakshetra on 13 May. Sri M. Pinge, the state president, welcomed the Office Bearers, and presented a brief report of the progress of activities. Baba elaborated on the objectives that the organization should place before itself so that it may not stray away into wasteful or wrong paths. The Samithis are not established for the sake of advertisement or for helping the Office Bearers to achieve fame or personal triumph or to put them in to positions of authority. The object is primarily to help Sadhana, to give the worker Atma-vishwas (self-confidence), so that he can secure Atma-tripti (self-contentment) leading to Swartha-Tyaga (self-sacrifice) and ultimately Atma-jnana (self-realisation).

Mysore Conference

The III State Conference of Mysore was held at Dharwar at the Karnataka University Campus on 14 May. Baba unfurled the Prasanthi Flag. Then, Dr. A. S. Adke B. E., PhD, Vice Chancellor of Karnataka University, and District President of the organization welcomed the 400 delegates and placed their homage at the Feet of Bhagavan. Three subcommittees presented reports on Seva Dal, Mahila Vibhag, and Sadhana. Bhagavan released the souvenir which contained His English Message, in which He declared, "Discipline is the purification of the

Heart, so that Truth may flash therein. He wrote, 'Fling into oblivion the little self; assert your Godhead' Baba's discourses were in Kannada to the great delight of the vast concourse. Baba emphasized that all units should follow the pattern laid at the All India Conference, and that Love and Devotion are the basis of kinship in the Sai family." On 15th May, Baba graciously granted Darshan and Prasad to the delegates and volunteers before He left for Brindavan, near Bangalore

(To be continued)

Anantapur as "Ananda" Pur

The Day had just dawned as more than two hundred thousand wonder-filled eyes were directed towards a charmingly decorated Dais erected at one end of a long line of imposing buildings on the vastly extensive college campus at Anantapur. About half of them were from the town and its suburbs, people who had watched the phenomenal speed with which the architectural marvel, the Sathya jai Arts and Science College building was emerging from the dry dusty expanse.

The others had poured into the town by rail, road and air, from all parts of the country, and quite a few from other continents too, thrilled by unique joy and expectancy to witness the formal Inauguration of a dream come true!

The proposal for a College there was announced by Bhagavan in a casual remark during a discourse delivered at the Government Girls' High School in 1967. The College was actually started on July 22, 1968, by the Education Minister of Andhra Pradesh, with Pre-university and B. A. classes the Intermediate and B. Sc. classes were added in 1969. The College then functioned in a temporary building with fabricated tubular sheds to supplement the accommodation. On 7th November 1969, the Vice President of India Sri G. S., Pathak laid the Foundation Stone of the three-storeyed Magnificence the College Building is today. The foundation stone for the imposing many roomed structure of the residential Hostel was laid by the Governor of Andhra Pradesh Sri Khandubhai Desai.

And, today, barely 18 months and more than 40 lakhs of rupees; have blossomed through the sincere toil of hundreds of devotees inspired and blessed by Bhagawan, into a bewitching structure of brick and stone, standing aloft as a Tower of Hope to thousands of students yearning for education and spiritual uplift! The many facilities and equipments include a separate Auditorium planned and finished on a most artistic and lavish scale, a separate Library hall, the like of which few universities in India can boast of, and an imposing hostel with about 100 spacious airy rooms, the very setting and environment of which will inspire and induce the progress, both mental and spiritual of the inmates.

The College Campus, once scrub and dust has now become a place of pilgrimage for practitioners of educational sadhana, for students of architectural symbolism, for aspirants who desire to translate the doctrines of religion into Service and Activity that transmute the human into the Divine.

And to those hundred thousand citizens of resurgent India assembled there that glorious morning, that wasn't all. The President of the Republic of India, the revered Rashtrapati, was coming all the way from Delhi to inaugurate this Architectural Jewel, this resplendent symbol of service and sacrifice, shining before them, festooned and beflagged, clothed in colour and bathed in sunlight, holding aloft on its 80-foot high tower the Lotus-symbol of Spiritual Achievement, and the emblem of the Sathya Sai Trust proclaiming that all Faiths are but facets of the one supreme Truth.

They were also eager to hear Smt. Saraswati Giri, a highly respected upholder of the traditional culture of Indian womanhood, whom Bhagawan had commissioned to inaugurate the college hostel, where daughters of mothers such as she would reside and learn, not just the subjects prescribed in the University Syllabus, but moral discipline, tolerance and spiritual lessons too. They were anxious also to watch the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Sri Brahmananda Reddy derive delight out of this unique gift, the State was receiving in the field of Educational Reconstruction.

Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao, Minister for Education, Andhra Pradesh, was to inaugurate the College Auditorium, where, seated amidst beauty and comfort, students would imbibe knowledge through lectures and visual aids of the latest pattern. They were eager too to see the Vice-Chancellor of the Sri Venkateswara University (to which the college is affiliated), Dr D. Jagannatha Reddy, inaugurate the College Library, a treasure-house of books and publications, covering an incredible variety of subjects.

Besides Sri, Dharma Vira, Governor of the neighbouring State of Mysore (which Bhagawan has blessed with a College for Men) was to preside over this most alluring function, the like of which Anantapur has seldom witnessed.

This joy and thrill of expectancy were redoubled when, the patient waiting assembly remembered that, in a little while, on the high decorated pedestal, along with the galaxy of distinguished dignitaries, they would have the Darshan of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself, the beloved Avatar of the Age, who, out of His compassionate will to uplift humanity through the revival of Sanathana Dharma, is directing a Course of Events in which this mighty venture is one significant Landmark.

Although the time announced for the Function was 11 A. M., eager men, women and children filled every available square inch from day break, braving sun and heat, hunger and thirst, thirsty to witness the grand Festival; that was the measure of the enthusiasm and devotion that suffused their hearts, that eventful morning.

The members of the Sathya Sri Trust and of the Managing Committee of the College were at the beautifully decorated main gate of the campus to receive the President of India, who arrived at 11 A. M. with his entourage. On alighting from the car the President was ceremoniously escorted to the College premises by the members of the Sathya Sai Trust and the Committee College with the Principal of the Sathya Sai Veda Sastra Pathashala, Prasanthi Nilayam, holding the Poornakumbham and Students reciting Vedic Hymns of welcome. The majestically caparisoned elephant Sai Geetha lent sanctifying dignity, and, with the Juveniles of the Pathashala and Bangalore College Band playing marching tunes, the procession slowly wended its way over the picturesque route designed out in colour over the path by deft hands moved in devotion to mark the auspiciousness of the occasion. The President was received at the porch of the College by Pr. S. Bhagavantham, D. Sc., Principal Anima Mukherji, and a distinguished group of educationists. After the formal opening of the Hostel, Auditorium and Library, the Rashtrapathi moved on to the Dais accompanied by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The Governor of Mysore, Sri Dharma Vira, then occupied the Chair and presided over the function.

The colourful shamiana in front of the Dais was packed with VIPs from all the States of India and many countries across the seas, who included Sri Naku1 Sen I. C. S. Lt. Governor of Goa. Hon'ble Ministers Sri G. C. Venkanna and Sri M. N. Lakshminarasiah, Sri Sankara Giri, MP, Sri Brahmananda Panda, M P; Sri Chanda Narayanappa MP, Justice Balakrishna Eradi. Justice Gopivallabha Iyengar, Justice V. Parthasarathy, Sri Vema Reddy, Chairman, Rayalaseema Development Corporation, Smt. Indra Devi from Mexico, Sri S. Sitaram from London, the Rajamatha of Nawanagar, the Rajamatha of Sirohi, Sri P. R. Kamani, Vice-Chancellor A; S. Adke of the Karnataka University, the Kumara Raja of Venkatagiri, Sri V. K Rao I C S, the M. L. A's of the Region and others who wished to partake of the thrill of the function and craved to have the Darshan of Bhagavan on the auspicious Guru Poornima Day.

After a few minutes of Vedic Recitation by Brahmasri Vedasamrat Kameswara Ghanapati, Dr. V. K. Gokak, D. Litt., Director, Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla, welcomed the distinguished celebrities. He appreciated the appropriateness of the President of India, a statesman with vision and a long career charged with liberalism and humanism; who as Governor, Vice President, and President has been and is the Chancellor of a large number of illustrious Universities inaugurating the Complex of magnificent buildings, which forms the core of what the trust hopes will soon develop into a University. He announced that the Trust has planned to start a College in every State of India, for the inculcation of Indian Culture in its essence and purity and for the development, not only of knowledge and skill but of balance of the mind and the emotions, and the development of insight, into the unity of all faiths, and into the Reality of Oneself. He drew the attention of all to the symbol of the Trust, which spoke of the composite culture of all humanity. He spoke of Bhagavan as the Trust, the Trustee, the Witness and the Doer, and acknowledged His supremacy, and the wisdom that permeated every act of His.

Dr. Bhagavantham, till lately Scientific Adviser to the Defence Ministry of India gave a summary of the Progress of the College, in Telugu. He said that history has few parallels of a College that was so well and fully equipped on the Inauguration Day, a College that was honoured by such a distinguished galaxy of learning and authority on that Day Itself. He mentioned that Bhagavan's Will has drawn together devotees from all parts of the world, anxious to promote the best interests of the College.

The Vice Chancellor of the Sri Venkateswara University spoke of the phenomenal growth of the College, in the short span of three years, since its inception and he congratulated the students who were receiving an education that laid emphasis on the universal values underlying the glorious heritage of India. Then, Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao, the Education Minister of Andhra Pradesh, addressed the gathering in Telugu. He said, "The sacred books of India proclaim that Gods are happy when women are honoured. India has always revered woman as the mother, the inspiration of the household, and the first and fondest teacher of man. When Baba establishes a College for Women we can be certain that it will not be one among many; it will be a lesson for others, a beacon, a model, a pioneer. This College will certainly shine forth as a brilliant centre of Bharatiya Culture."

The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Sri. K. Brahmananda Reddy then addressed the oceanic gathering. Speaking in Telugu, he declared that the Day marked a Festival not only for

Anantapur, but, for the entire Andhra Pradesh. In fact, it was a great and memorable day for the cause of the regeneration of Bharatiya Culture, for, Baba has, in his Compassion and Grace, taken up the task of educating women who are guardians and repositories of that culture. He cordially welcomed the President of India and Mrs. Giri, as well as the large number of devotees who had gathered from all parts of India and from beyond the seas.

Sri Dharma Vira, Governor of Mysore felicitated the Trust on the grand venture they had so successfully undertaken and while speaking on the importance of educating women to be ideal mothers said, "I learnt my first lessons on the lap of my mother; it is a source of great inspiration to me today to sit at her feet and draw inspiration and instruction from her" "The education of a man educates but an individual: of a woman educates an entire family" He felt happy that the College was dedicated to the cultivation and the development of the composite culture of India.

The President of India, Sri V. V. Giri then delivered his Address, replete with in. valuable suggestions for the guidance of educationists, born out of his ripe experience, deep sympathy and enlightened outlook. He said, "I consider it a great privilege and pleasure to be here today to declare open the new Building of the Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Women. I am no stranger to Anantapur, which is the hub of Rayalaseema. Having many daughters ourselves, Mrs. Giri and myself evince great interest in the education of women. Women have a great role to play in the regeneration and reorientation of our country. Our nation is facing formidable difficulties and the united wisdom of men and women alone can help us to meet these problems and solve them. Sri Sathya Sai Baba is not only conferring spiritual enlightenment and piety on the people, but, Social Service is his watch-word and many institutions of service have sprung all over the country due to his zeal and compassion. The mother has an overwhelmingly important role in the formation of character, whose foundation is laid in the home. The teacher has but to continue the work, in the schools. After centuries of stagnation, our people are now on the move, and the vast strides that education has made is one of our proudest achievements in recent years. We have to remember that, in respect of the status women have been assigned in society, we, in India, are more progressive than many 'advanced' countries of the West. I am glad that in this College, attention is being paid to the development of character, of integrity, by means of the discipline of body and mind".

Srimati Saraswati Giri confessed that she had not enrolled herself at any time in any college, but, yet, she knew that, more than scholarship and technical skill, what really marked the educated person was integrity of, character, discrimination and morality. She said that Bhakthi will endow one with the vision of the Right, and that it was enough guidance for the journey of life. She spoke of the role of the mother as an educationist and as an example and inspiration to the rising generation; she expressed her profound gratitude to Bhagavan for establishing an ideal College which ideal hostel facilities, as a land mark for those struggling to lead women along our ancient well-tested Dharmic path. She was happy that the town which she loved as her birthplace had the good fortune of this unique blessing of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan then concluded the proceeding with his Divine Discourse. He described the precious heritage that every child of Bharatmata has to foster and develop. He spoke of the mother and her sacred role; quoting Kausalya, Sita, Tarabai (the mother of Sivaji) and

Putthalibai, (the mother of Gandhiji) as examples of the great mothers of history. He said that the word for Mother is the first that the child learns and the last that man sighs for.

It was Guruvar (The Day of the Preceptor) Thursday; it was also Guru Poornima (the Full Moon Day of the Guru), and the President of India had opened a Gurukula Ashram, (Hermitage-Academy)! The Day was therefore thrice significant!

Bhagavan deplored that Lakshmi, (the Goddess of Wealth) had established her domain over the temple of Saraswati (the Goddess of Learning) that every College was! Money was asked for admission, money helped to grant attendance; money went a long way to secure marks; money lubricated the wheels of promotion, and money secured even degrees! The atmosphere was corrupted and befouled by the fact that education had as its aim the securing of a job, the degree being but a begging bowl. With women competing for jobs, the problem has become worse and the lot of the unemployed graduates among women was getting worse and worse.

Truth, integrity, humility, virtue, equanimity, courage—these are the qualities that have to be inculcated among the youth; this rather than employability and the capacity of jobs, should be the aim of true education. If the generations of boarders in the Hostel cherish the advice that was given by Srimati Giri, then, they can grow into ideal mothers who will rear up a new generation of god-fearing, earnest, active, skilled citizens.

This day, this land of Yoga, Thyaga, and Karma (Self-control; Self sacrifice and (Self-fulfillment) is sliding down along the road for self enjoyment, and so it is infected with the disease of civilisation, and all its morbid consequences. Mention was made of the urgent need to give every one a full meal, a set of clothes and the roof over his head; but you know that even people who have a surfeit of these do not have a moment of mental peace! What is more essential than these is mental peace, the unshakeable Santhi that can sustain man through good fortune and bad. That is the reason why I have resolved upon these colleges, where emphasis is, placed on the strengthening of character, the development discipline, and the reverence to Dharma that is universal and sustaining.

At 5 P. M., Bhagavan gave Darshan on the Mantapam like Dais, to the thousands who were anxious to pay homage to the Sadguru, who had come in human form to allay their fears and guide them to the Goal. Sri. Nakul Sea, I.C.S., Lt. Governor of Goa, who was directed by Bhagavan to address the vast multitude, said, "I am just an ordinary devotee like most of you, ignorant of the deeper truths of philosophy; I have no subtler perception or more comprehensive conception than most of you. I only know that we have with us in the Sathya Sai Form the Saguna Brahman, the all-pervading, all-powerful, supra-cosmic Consciousness. He has come in this Form, not only for the restoration of Dharma as many believe, but also for providing Love to the Bhaktas. The more we love Him, he more we know Him.

He said, "Bharatiya Culture was based on three principles and ideals, Sraddha, Samyam and. Samarpana. Sraddha is Faith, Devotion, single-pointed Adoration. Samyam is the control of the senses, the conquest of desire; and Samarpana is Dedication, Surrender, as Arjuna did on the battlefield, entitling Him to Githopedesh and Viswarupadarsan."

Bhagavan referred to the Inauguration of the College that was celebrated with boundless Ananda in the morning. The Ananda was the measure of the hope, that it aroused, as the resurgence of spiritual endeavour and the reestablishment of discipline in the perpetual fight of man against the temptation of the sensual world. Man is a social being, born and bred therein and shaped by its ways and waves. Samajam is the Sanskrit word, for society and the syllable 'ama' is its more important component each unit of society must recognise that all else are equally Divine, that God is the reality in every embodied being known by a name and distinguished temporarily by a certain Form. All have Sath-Chith-Ananda as the very core. There are two realisations, one through the mind, the other, beyond the mind, the mano-jnanam and the Adhyatma-jnanam. The first is the lower and the second, the higher. To realise the unity of all is the higher vision; to realise the many, to praise God as attributeful, to adorn and adore Him through Puja, Bhajan, Ritual Offerings etc.

The service that the members of the Seva Dal of Hyderabad, of Vijayawada, Guntur, Bombay etc., and from all the State, of India rendered on this site during these last few days gave them the chance to ignore the 'ego' and merge in the fundamental unity of all beings. Do every act as an act of worship offered to the embodiments of divinity that walk and talk all around you. Have no hate or anger against any one; every one is Divine: Krishna is the charioteer of every soul.

Follow Dharma; you will be victorious, in spite of the heaviest odds. Cultivate, as a sacred vow, from the Guru Purnima onwards, Vinaya (Humility) Bhaya (Dread of sin, wrong), Visvasam (faith in God and in the certainty of realising Him) and Vivekam (the efficacy of discrimination to sort out the means for realisation).

On this Guru Purnima Day, people generally revere and worship those who have initiated them into some Mantra, the recitation of which, it is said, confers Liberation. How can recitation grant release? They are many who pray to me, "Naaki moksham kaavaali", 'For me Liberation is wanted.'

When you receive a parcel through post, you remove the packaging, ere you earn the thing sent, perhaps as gift, by some well-wisher, don't you? Here, Liberation has come in two packings you have to remove. The first is 'Ego', as 'For me'; the second is Desire, in the form of 'is wanted'! Remove the ego and the desire—you have Liberation! Both these can be eliminated if you develop Seva-yoga, which is only another form of Prema-yoga. Fill the heart with Prema; the leaks of hate, malice envy, greed or conceit drain the precious treasure that you have earned with such Sadhana.

The cuckoo is pursued by a flock of vengeful crows; the good are an eye-sore to the bad. But, you should not deviate from the right path for fear of persecution or compromise with trust to please or propitiate any one. I have heard many declare among themselves that these buildings are grand and beyond compare; but, let me assure you that they are but poor evidences of my glory and majesty, my Power, which cannot be gauged or described. I have established these only because I desire to prove by actual practice the ideals I hold dear, for the revival of Dharma and the salvation of man.

Brothers and Sisters

(The Brilliance of May - continued)

The State Conference of Office Bearers of the Sathya Sai Organisation was held on the 16th, May, the date on which, last year, Bhagavan was present at Dwaraka, in the present Avatar. The Conference was held at Dwaraka itself.

Bhagavan sent a gracious Message, through Principal Chidanand Nagaekar, who also addressed the gathering on the Significance of the Sai Avatar. The Message reads:

"I am happy that you have all gathered in Conference. You may be thinking that I am not present there and so, you may be sad but, be assured, I am watching the entire proceedings, being present as the eternal witness. You must not think that this is a movement for any advertisement of Swami, or for propaganda. It is not for meeting the ulterior needs of any individual. The Conference is an occasion meant to bring you together and help your spiritual uplift.

Believe this and you will then observe the discipline strictly in the Organisation and in private life. Discipline will help you to develop faith, devotion and Sadhana. Rules and regulations have to be strictly maintained.

Instead of wasting time in Paraspara stuti (mutual praise) or ninda (mutual recrimination and defamation) develop Paraspara prema (mutual Love). Don't exhibit outwardly, but, practise inwardly; be like brothers and sisters, among yourselves. This will help you to be enthusiastic in your duties.

I bless the Conference and you all, so that you may develop such a spirit of brotherhood, and achieve success."

May Thy Will Prevail

Many of us who have approached Bhagavan Sai, are the distressed, or the seekers of enjoyment—yet a few are the seekers of Knowledge, and a microscopic few, are the men of Wisdom. Men approach Him, the Supreme Giver, with diverse motives. But, though they know it not, they have been irresistibly impelled to do so, as a result of the Sankalpa of Sri Bhagavan, and also as a result of their own good Poorva Karma. Bhagavan has often stated, that no one can approach Him, except it be as a result of His Sankalpa. Ahalya Devi had to remain petrified for Ages, only to be redeemed finally, in due time by the immortal touch of Sri Ramachandra's feet. Two prerequisites are necessary, the grosser art of Ahalya's Karma had to come to its predestined end simultaneously with Sri Rama's Sankalpa to redeem her had to be revealed to the world at large.

We go to Sri Bhagavan to get from Him, what we feel, 'we need.' But He draws us to His feet, to give us, not what we feel we need, but what He knows, 'we lack'. Let us never be under the

supposition that when we bow down to His feet, we are bound to get all that we are praying for. He only knows, better than all of us what is good for us, and what we really and truly need.

When we approach Sri Bhagavan, let us pray to Him in our heart of hearts, "May Thy will prevail". He knows what is ultimately best for us, and will give us what we deserve according to our stage of development. Bhagavan has often told us, "Gold cannot be fashioned into an ornament of exquisite beauty, without undergoing the process of purification through fire, and without receiving, innumerable and agonising blows at the hands of the skilled master craftsman. What is to be the final shape of the jewel is not known to the jewel, but only to the craftsman, in whose mind it has already taken shape. If the lump of gold has to be fashioned into a creation of beauty, it cannot refuse to undergo the concomitant tribulations of going through fire and being beaten into shape".

—K. P. Mukunda Prabhu

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18

They entered the Royal City of Visalapuri. That day, after partaking of the reception feast arranged by King Visala, Viswamitra described to the gathering of royal kinsmen, palace priests and pundits, his own Siddhasram and the Yaga that he had celebrated therein, as well as the heroic way in which Rama and Lakshmana stood guard, to defend the sacrificial precincts from marauding demons, intent on disrupting it. All those who listened to the skill and courage of the Princely Boys and to their antecedents were struck with wonder and boundless Ananda. They looked on them with admiration and felt that they are Nara-Narayana come again. They prostrated before them, overcome by feelings of reverence.

Since it was already late, Rama and Lakshmana fell at the feet of Viswamitra and, taking his permission, they went over to the house that was specially set apart for their rest. Even before daylight, they rose, went through the morning ablutions, performed the mutational rites, and came to their Preceptor, in good time to start on the next stage of the journey. They expressed gratitude to King Sumathi, and moved on towards Mithilapuri.

Sumathi accompanied them for some distance and then took leave of the sage and others, before returning to his capital Viswamitra walked on with his disciples and Rama and Lakshmana; by noon they reached an old park. It appeared as if once upon a time, it was well cared for, and had a number of hermitages; but, now the dwellings of the hermits had crumbled; one could see also altars once maintained with loving attention, and spots where the sacred fire was lit and fed. Rama noted that it was once a place sanctified by ascetics and sages and he drew the attention of Viswamitra to his surmise.

Viswamitra smiled, and said, Rama! How correctly you have observed! I am very glad. I shall inform you why the great personage who resided in this place left it and went away. Listen!

This is the hermitage of Gautama Maharshi. Even the gods used to acclaim this Hermitage. For many years, Gautama resided here, with his wife, Ahalya. He underwent the most severe austerities. He did many elaborate Yajnas and Yagas. This park was resplendent with spiritual grandeur; it was bright and full of peace, and, joy. Every day was a holy day for the people here.

Ahalya, the wife of the sage Gautama was a woman of great virtue, a star of beauty. There was no one to compare with her in personal beauty and charm; so, Gautama was keeping her ever under watch, and guarding her with vigilant care. One day, while Gautama was away, absent at the ashram, Indra, the chief of the Gods, came into the hermitage, in the guise of Gautama! The virtuous spouse took Him to be her lord; she served him reverentially but, the real Gautama entered and, discovering her apparent faithlessness, he recognised Indra, in spite of his disguise, and became terribly enraged. 'Evil-minded fellow! You are accepting service from Ahalya', he shouted; Indra was no longer visible. He just suddenly disappeared.

He turned towards Ahalya in his anger and roared, "You vowed to destroy this hermitage, is it? I shall not be here a minute longer. I cannot tolerate your face. Be prostrate behind some bush, living on air with no food or drink. I am off." Gautama hated the place that had been desecrated by deceit.

Ahalya wept her heart out, and pleaded that she was innocent no sin, that she was deceived by the disguise and activated by reverence towards her lord only, that she was carried away by loyalty to the husband she held his feet and prayed for pardon. Gautama melted a little at her importunities; the truth became clear to him; but since words once spoken should not be withdrawn, he said, 'Ahalya! You know that I have vowed never to act against the spoken word. Therefore, you have to lie in bush and briar, sad and starving, until Rama, son of Dasaratha comes this way and seeing you, He will shower Grace on you, allowing you to touch His Feet, and He will speak with you in great compassion; the Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashana will clean you, and you will shine forth with your real form and charm.' I shall then rejoin you. So saying, Gautama left this place and hiked to the Himalayan region. From that moment, Ahalya lost her name and from: she lived on air, and was deeply lost in austerity eager to rejoin her lord. And, this once lovely park suffered neglect.

When Viswamitra narrated this tale Ramachandra expressed great surprise. "What! You are telling me that she is waiting, for my coming! Poor thing! If you, can make me know where she is, deep in austerity... tell me where." As Rama moved on Viswamitra and Lakshmana followed him at some distance. He passed through some tangled bushes and entered a dilapidated hut.

Ahalya was until that moment immersed in austerity; she was beyond the eyes of Gods, demons and men; she had forgotten Name and Form; she had no concern with food and sleep; she was just existing as a rock! She appeared like the orb of the Moon, hidden by clouds, or sacrificial fire, inside thick curtains of smoke! As Rama neared her, his foot touched Ahalya. Ahalya raised, her head and seeing the Divinely charming Form of Ram, she held fast the Feet, exclaiming in ecstasy, "Ah! I am saved" "O God, come to save me from sin! Your heart is moved at last". She prayed and poured out her gratitude in many different forms. She rose, like the moon from behind the clouds, effulgent and light. At that moment Gautama too who was a

master of the secret mysteries of yoga, appeared before them, for he knew that Rama had come, and rescued his wife. He saw the lady purified by rigorous austerity, being blessed by Rama. Both husband and wife fell at the Feet of Rama and Lakshmana, overwhelmed by the Ananda they had. Gautama offered reverence and homage to Viswamitra. The band of disciples was amazed at the wonder that they witnessed; they looked on at the Brothers intently, with fixed gaze. Very soon, Viswamitra took leave of Gautama, and walked on, in a north-easterly direction, with Rama and Lakshmana by his side.

They neared Mithila City, by evening. The Sage pointed out the City from a distance, saying, "That is Mithila, that vast concourse of magnificent buildings! At this, the Brothers as well as the disciples of the Sage jumped with joy; they could not contain within themselves. From that spot, they walked faster. Forgetful of physical exhaustion, they quickly reached the Main Entrance of the City.

Wherever they turned, they saw ascetics, Brahmins engaged in the recitation of the Vedas, and houses where sacrificial fires were lit and fed with ritual offerings. Under, every tree, sheltering in the shade, were groups of people with the bullock carts which had brought them from the countryside. There were women and men, old and young, children, of all castes and professions, all stages of life assembled at every corner; it was like moving in a stream of joy; it was a feast for the eye. The City was packed with eager people moving crisscross along all the roads. The sage and his followers reached the embankment of a tank which was comparatively less crowded; for, they had to decide where they were to stay, and they were not quite sure where. The time for evening ablutions had drawn near and, so, they kept their belongings on the bank, took their bath and finished the rites prescribed.

Since the grand Yajna was imminent, courtiers and warriors from the palace were moving among the monks that were arriving every hour, trying to find out their names, the hermitages to which they were affiliated, their spiritual status, and the information whether they had been specially invited for the occasion. Emperor Janaka was insisting that all such information was to be communicated to him, without delay.

Meanwhile, Viswamitra had finished his ablutions and rites and he sat on the embankment, with his disciples around him, along with the Brothers, who looked like twin stars fallen upon the ground from heaven. He was describing to them the glories of Mithila to the great delight of Rama, Lakshmana and the pupils. Meanwhile, a courier from the court approached them very politely and enquired, "Master! Please tell me who you are. Where have you come from? We are messengers from the King. We are only obeying orders and carrying out our duty. If you tell us your name, we can inform the King news of your arrival." Immediately, Viswamitra told him his name.

When the messenger hurried straight to the Palace and told the Emperor Janaka that the Sage Viswamitra had arrived, he made arrangements appropriate for the reception of the great sage and sent the chief Brahmins and priests and pundits of the Court under their leader, Sathananda, to where Viswamitra was.

The group from the palace approached the embankment, reciting Vedic hymns of welcome and good wishes, and Viswamitra realised that it was coming to take them to the Emperor's Presence. He directed Rama and Lakshmana to prepare themselves soon for proceeding with them. Every one made himself ready. Meanwhile, Sathananda honoured Viswamitra in true Vedic Tradition, as befitted a great Master. He washed his feet offered refreshments consecrated with Vedic formulae and announced with exemplary humility that he had come with the others, under orders from the Emperor to accord him and all those who were with him, the most sincere welcome. They left a palanquin at the place to bring the bags and baggage, of the party and took the Sage and others into the City, preceded by bands, of musicians, playing on their instruments.

As soon as they entered the Royal Road, Emperor Janaka himself moved towards them accompanied by Ministers and courtiers and his nearest kinsmen. Janaka fell prostrate before Viswamitra saying, "Lord! I have realised today my greatest ambition. Mithila has acquired, with your arrival, a unique splendour". He then enquired about the welfare of the Sage, his pupils and disciples. Suddenly, his eyes fell on the two boys, Rams and Lakshmana. They struck him as two embodiments of solar effulgence. He couldn't find words for a few seconds. He knew not where he was at the time. With great effort, he recovered enough awareness of the surroundings to ask Viswamitra, "Master! Who are these boys? They strike me as the twin Gods, the Aswini-devas. It looks as if they have just come down from Heaven in order to confer Grace on men. They have the tender Divine charm of those Gods. Or, perhaps, they are the Sun and the Moon come in these Forms upon the Earth. How did these juvenile embodiments of beauty happen to come with you, walking the distance as members of the group led by you? Or, did they develop acquaintance with you near here and come to this place along with you?" Janaka was pouring out one query after another, as if he was talking to himself, forgetful, where he was or what he wanted to know. It looked as if he had forgotten his body and its whereabouts!

Viswamitra saw his plight and could not restrain his smile. He said, "These are the sons of Emperor Dasaratha of Ayodhya. Their names are Rama and Lakshmana. The valour and skill of these boys are amazing and miraculous." The sage desired to say much more, but, he thought it better to tell him all that, after reaching the place where they were to stay. So, the conversation was concluded at that stage. And they walked on, towards the quarters newly constructed for Viswamitra and his entourage.

It was a pretty little temple-like structure, situated in the centre of a lovely garden; it was tastefully decorated with greens and festoons. The place was thick with silence; it was as if peace fell in showers there on wings of breath from heaven itself. It was quite adjacent to the Royal Palace. Therefore, after showing them in, Janaka fell at the feet of the sage again, saying, "Your arrival has added unto me immeasurable strength and joy. I am sure this fortune came to me as a result of the merit earned in many lives. I shall now take leave. For the Yajna to begin, there is an interval of twelve days, according to the Ritwiks. Please therefore stay on in this Mithila city itself and bless me." Viswamitra assured him that he had no objection to his proposal, and removed all apprehensions on that score from the mind of Janaka; Rama and Lakshmana looked at each other, as if that was too long a time to be away!

Arrangements were made to give them rest and undisturbed sleep that night; Milk, fruits and other articles were provided for them from the palace. "I shall take your Darshan at dawn

tomorrow", said Janaka while leaving. It is not proper to delay your rest any longer, for you had a long and tiresome journey". Janaka returned to the palace, with the pundits, priests, and scholars.

Rama and Lakshmana talked among themselves about the devotion and humility of the Emperor, and the Light of Peace and Joy that shone on his face. They sat by the side of the Master and partook of the fruits and milk. Then, they departed, after receiving permission, to their apartment for rest.

(To be continued)

Bhajan

Be One

Note what happens when you do Bhajan! Your tongue declaims the words, in the tune designed for them; your palms beat the tune; your head sways in unison with the marking of time, and the glory described by the words; your mind is gushing Ananda all through your entire being; you spread joy and purity around. All this happens because the One is activating you, and helping you to achieve. A dancer too has the feet, the hands, the head, and the entire body activated in harmony, to express the mood or the melody. You too, are dancers on the stage, and you have to enact a role, dictated and directed by God. Do it well, sincerely and with Ananda, every moment. Let not a single moment pass, untitled, unused!

Inscribe the Name

Some one asked me today, "Swami! The value and sweetness of the Name of God is ignored by Man. Won't it be helpful, if the Name is printed in bold letters and in colour, and the sheets pasted on walls by the roadside so that people will not miss Seeing them and imbibing them?" He suggested that Ramanam be so printed and pasted. I told him that the name will get mixed up and smothered amidst the cinema posters, the ads, the handbills, the garish war cries that are drawn on the walls. Paste the Name on the heart; inscribe it there, I advised. Be earnest, yourselves; do not plan to make others God-conscious, before you become God-conscious.

Short-lived Elation

Now, Bhajan has no spring of yearning to feed it with joy. It is only lukewarm longing; it has to be a Tapas, not Thamas; that is to say, it should not be cold, dull, inert mummery. It has to invite active participation by enthusiastic seekers of Ananda. It is no surface activity: no part-time affair. It should take you nearer to God. Now, what happens is this: You are elated for one hour; when that is over, the disturbing influences, the discontent, the distress, the divisive tendencies that wait outside the door, overpower and gain mastery. Why, you watch the clock; for, even before the hour is over; the knees start aching! You have to change position and posture! Bhajan must be a sweet experience, for, there is nothing so sweet as God and the Name and Form of God. 'Sathatham yoginah,' always a Yogi, always yoked with God! Be calm and balanced; be loving, pleasant, full of joy.

Changes

Now, Nagarasankirtan and Bhajan have become mechanical fixed schedules, gone through because the rules say they have to be done! I am not pleased with tire mechanical repetition of kirtan or bhajan. I am pleased only when your heart vibrates with love and compassion, with Ananda and adoration. I find that most of the songs are sung in a wailing tune, in slow, dull tempo. The 'O Bhagavan' with which you start Bhajans is weak and unenthusiastic and it has to be omitted. Begin with some vigorous Ganesa Stuti, instead. Make this change from this Day—the first day of Shravan. I do not derive Ananda when you sing in sleepy, dull, weak strains. Nor

does the I (that I am) in all of you! Again, avoid the song Pavana Purusha, now sung during Arati. It is a much mutilated Kannada song, which is now neither Kannada nor Telugu, nor Sanskrit; the tune also has undergone so many modifications that the original is unrecognisable. Have Jai Jagadeesa Hare, as the Arati song, both morning and evening. Sing with energy, enthusiasm, thrill, joy, and yearning. Have Ullasa and Uthsaha, (exhilaration and earnestness). Then it will cleanse the mind and purify the environment.

—Baba: Discourse, Prasanthi Nilayam, 23-7-71

The Thief

God is called chittha-chora (the stealer of hearts). But he is no ordinary Thief. He awakens while He steals; he is loved more, if He steals. He makes people richer by His Thievery.

—Baba

Dhyana, as Continuous Sadhana

Dhyana

The question, the urge, the prompting 'Can I get happiness?' 'How can I be happy?' arises in the mind, because of the mind. The various means of happiness, like aeroplanes, steamboats, radio and even bombs are concretisations of the urge to earn happiness. The mind is generating desires, yearnings for all kinds of contraptions, which can give it happiness. Why? The entire Universe is a Product of the Divine Urge, 'Let me become many!' It sprouted in the mind, blossomed as a result of the mind. Therefore, if the mind is pure the blossom, the Jagat, will be pure; if the mind is unclean, the Jagat will be unclean. Dhyana as a Sadhana is needed to cleanse the mind and make it concretise only beneficial—objects and ideals, Dhyana is now done, during a certain length of time every day, by most of you and, when that period lapses, you relapse into the routine of envy, scandal and faction! You start revelling in self-praise and the condemnation of others. It does not cleanse or elevate; for it is not a continuous process, a constant companion, counselling, and comforting. It is a period of tension, from which you relax! It is not sweetness from which you emerge reluctantly. It is an exercise, and when finished, you feel, relieved!

A Continuous Process

Dhyana should not become a pastime, a habit or a routine discipline, a fad or fashion or a fake. Soak your mind in Divine Love, make every activity, an adoration. Every individual before you is the Divine appearing in a different costume. Recognise him for what he really is; do not confound him with his costume, and lose the grand opportunity of loving him and serving him worshipfully

You too are not this temporary house of flesh and bone; you are the 'ancient timeless principle' encased in it, that is all. Do not be caught in the tangle of want; it is like numbers, which can go on endlessly. Have One, and every zero that comes after, will go on adding to the

burden and the pile! Melt the mind in the fire of Dhyana and pour it into the mould of God; let it be transmuted into God. Have no prejudices against one and predilections in favour of another. This is the Sangha-buddhi (the tendency to see and sustain societies and groups) quite opposite to the Sama-buddhi (the tendency to ignore differences and recognise Unity).

See the One in the Many

He who sees Unity gets Grace: for He is One, and not Many. He who clings to some and avoids others does not deserve the Grace of the One. Seeing the many in the One is the machination of the mind, its mischief. It revels in the game of praise and blame, love and hate, attachment and detachment. It finds some good and others bad, some friendly, others inimical. It makes man too concerned, too much entangled in the many, to pay attention to the reality which is One.

All paths lead to the One. Myriad gateways invite you to enter the Mansion. Open your eyes and see everywhere His compassion, His Wisdom, His Play, His Glory, His Majesty, His Might. Dwell on these impressions and transmute them into the precious cargo of your life. That is true Dhyana. The other Dhyana where you sit in some Asana and try to calm the mind or empty it is usually some kind of gymnastics. You get pain in the neck ache in the Joints, and fantasy in the brain. Have Dhyana with open eyes; see God in every Being, believe that your Atma is the same Atma, that makes every other being alive and active, living and loving. Dhyana on God is not a limited liability concern! It involves unlimited liability. There is no maximum limit for your share in the process; devote yourself fully in it, with no holding back, no reservation. Your body is the temple, where God is installed; your limbs are the vestments, vessels, chalices, cups, and sacramental appliances. Your activities are adorations, prostrations, confessions, homages, and services; offer your selves in full and enrich them. Whomever you see, see him as Divine; whatever you do, do it as worship. That is real Dhyana.

He, not you

All days are holy. Every minute is an auspicious muhurta! All urges, all thoughts, all acts have the same source - God. Recognise this and the dross will fall away, the fog will fade away; the splendour and the purity will be revealed. Constant drilling will train the wayward mind to recognise this basic Truth. Who is it that sees, speaks, listens, desires, decides? It is He, not you! He is at all times, in all places, with all names, of all forms. Even the Devil has the syllable—Dev (Deva, Div, Divine) in the appellation! Have this idea firm, deeply planted in your heart. Then, you can move in the world and deal with and react to it. That is the, total Dhyana to which I am calling you.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse, Prasanthi Nilayam, 23-7-71

Eye-Openers, Two

Two books have been recently published about Bhagavan, in the West. Both are acclaimed by reviewers as fantastic ventures into Truth-telling! BABA, written by Arnold Schulman, the famous screenwriter playwright and skeptic, is published by the Viking Press, Madison Avenue, New York. It is a scintillating narrative of the writer's visits to Whitefield and Puttaparthi with

the object of writing the book and of his revealing conversations with Baba, which are authentic and highly suggestive of the Reality of Sai Baba. Baba told him, "Write your book. That's your duty, your Dharma. But, write the truth. Only the truth. How you laughed at me, hated me, that's part of it; and, if you want also, how you loved me, the few times you let yourself to love me." Therefore, Schulman has fiercely stuck to truth and the result is a fascinating, astonishing book, which grips attention from first page to last. We can note some inaccuracies that have crept in, while he describes the milieu, the people whom he came across and the incidents he heard about; but, the book is certain to arouse vast vibrant interest in the West, and guide many a seeker to the holy, healing Presence of Baba. As Faubion Bowers says, "For those who have the antennae, the book is an ultrasonic, transcendental experience."

The other book is "Sai Baba, Man of Miracles", by Howard Murphet, published by Frederick Muller, Fleet Street, London. Murphet was born in Tasmania in 1906. He served with the famous Eighth Army at Alamein and Tunis; he was in charge of the British Press Section at the Nuremburg Trials. In 1964, he came to India with Mrs. Murphet, to study Yoga and Eastern Philosophy. He says, "Our purpose was to travel through the country to discover if there was any deeper spiritual dimension in the life of modern India, any great Yogi of supernormal powers who knew the secrets of life and death. They were drawn to Bhagavan, as Schulman was drawn later, in Baba's own mysterious way. They spent months with him at Whitefield and Puttaparthi and places like Bombay, Hyderabad, Madras and Horsley Hills; they had rare chances of deriving the Ananda that he showers. Howard Murphet contacted many devotees of Baba in many parts of India. As a result, he found in Baba "Christ-like miraculous powers, Christ-like compassion and the God-knowledge that opens the door to a new vision of life." Devoted to science and logic, and versed in Theosophy, Murphet has amassed an impressive pile of meticulously assessed evidence, which must convince the hardest sceptic that Baba is 'far beyond the measurements of man'. Murphet writes, "Apart from the miracles, which show his command of nature, his power to be anywhere and know what his devotees are thinking and doing, and his ability to bring protection and help; apart from all these superhuman qualities, there is the pure ego-less love. This, above all, stands as a sign of Christ-like divinity. In man, sometimes, we see flashes of this love shown towards children the sick, the weak; in Baba it is there all the time flowing freely from the divine fount of his nature, embracing everybody, collectively and individually". The book, SAI BABA, MAN OF MIRACLES, is bound to sustain and strengthen the sinews of Faith; it will convince the hesitant and arouse the ardour of the 'rationalist' who is now, reluctant to open his eyes, lest his pet syllogistic system is damaged by the Truth.

—*Editor*

Guru

Dedicated to Sai Baba

That Light because of which
Men see the sun
Whose all Pervading Presence
None have felt.

Whose prime essential
Essence is but One
Pure Consciousness wherein
All else has dwelt.

Thou are that truth
That never can be told,
That sweetness taste can
Never hope to know,
That fragrance which no
Flower can unfold
I look to Thee,
Myself to see—and lo!

—*Henry Conyers, Santa Barbara*

Incarnate in Every Age

—*Padmasri Sri Nalinabala Devi*

Dispelling the mass of Darkness pervading the world
A Divine Effulgence illumines the land of Bharat;
The resonant OM reverberates over Earth and Sky!
The Avatar—Truth Goodness Beauty all in One, has come!
In every heart, awakening sublime deep-hued in dream divine!
By the holy Chitravathi, ever-fanned, Prasanthi Nilayam shines.
Dattatreya shines resplendent Hand assuring, 'Why fear!'
He is indeed the Trinity in One, Divine Mother in Beauty sublime.
For afflicted man, thirsting for Peace He doles out Grace
Of Love Divine; His nectarine voice rings Sathyam Sivam Sundaram.
Omniscient, He knows the hearts' craving the wordless prayer of man.
Bestows fulfillment no knowledge unravels, Bestows His Gifts
From portraits we prize: nectar, sacred ash! He does create, confer.
To take men back to Godward way! Sing the Glory of the Lord
With hearts well dipped in Love.
Pray to the Lord of your Heart, For all names are Mine!
Yearn for Me and, with you He says, I shall be in a trice.
To heal your killing maladies, anoint Body mind and soul with holiness.
Far or near, you are Mine, He says, And I am yours!
My Love shall repair, heal and save For I've come for you
As I have come in every age, says—The emblem of Infinite Love!
Showering Grace, Grace and more Grace On all who want and all who can't
Come, then, kinsmen of the world! Let us Bask in the Sathya Sai Sun!
Let us dip in the Sathya Sai Ganga!
Unafraid, let us take refuge At His Lotus Feet!

*Translated from Assamese,
by Muktinath Bardoloi
Shillong*

I, pure and simple, is different from I identified with the Body or Subtle Body or Body imagined in Dream Life. This pure and simple I, unidentified with anything, is God. This pure and simple I, is 'incessant awareness'.

—*Baba*

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19

That night, they slept well. When daylight spread slowly on the City, the music of pipe and drum rose from their doorstep. Brahmins recited Vedic hymns. Rama and Lakshmana rose and finished their bath and other rituals, and approached Viswamitra. The sage gave them cups of milk to drink, and said, "Sons! Janaka will be here anytime now. Take breakfast and be ready." Soon, they as well as the younger pupils, of the Sage repaired to the apartment and partook of fruits and milk. They washed their hands and quietly gathered around their Preceptor, and reverentially sat near him.

Meanwhile, it became known that Emperor Janaka was arriving with the Royal Purohit, in order to pay his respectful homage; for, the blowing of conches and the play of the traditional Nine Instruments heralded the approach of the ruler of the realm. Janaka entered with the auspicious sandal paste and rice grains in hip hands, while Sathananda and the entourage entered the sacred residence and with delight of gratitude, he washed the feet of the Sage ceremonially.

Then, Janaka fell at the feet of Viswamitra and stood by the side of the high seat that had been placed in front of the pedestal for the sage. As soon as Viswamitra directed him, Janaka obeyed and occupied the seat. Rama and Lakshmana sat on the carpet laid on the floor to the right of their Master. Janaka said, "Great sage! You are ever welcome. Now, what is your command? I am ready to accept and honour it. Please communicate it to me". Janaka folded his palms in prayer. At this, Viswamitra smiled, and said, "Last night, since there was no time I could not tell you in detail. I have decided to tell you now about these Princes, Rama and Lakshmana, since you desired to hear their story. If you have no leisure now, I can tell you some other time". Janaka exclaimed, "Master! What more important work have I than experiencing the ecstasy of conversing with you? This chance is the fruit of all austerities; I am filled with Ananda at the expectation that you will tell me about them; I consider it a great piece of good fortune."

Then, Viswamitra narrated the incidents that had taken place, from his appearance at the court of Dasaratha, up to the yaga and the heroic way in which the young boys had stood guard and

foiled the attempts of the demons to desecrate the rituals. He described the bravery and skill of the boys in their battle against the demons and praised their wondrous achievements. During the narration, tears of joy and gratitude welled from the sage's eyes and he had to frequently wipe them off with the end of his garment. Hearing these words and filling his eyes with his majesty and the charming loveliness of the boys, Janaka experienced supreme delight, the delight he often derived in Samadhi! He felt that the boys were actual embodiments of Divine Splendour. Though he often tried to look somewhere else, his eyes thirsted only for the sight of those charming faces. Those lotus-like faces showered Brahmic illumination! Janaka suppressed with great difficulty the outward expression of his inner ecstasy and sat, looking intently at them, with great humility and reverence. He did not feel for a moment that he was an Emperor and that those boys were the Princes of another Imperial Monarch. He had an indelible impression that they had come down from Heaven to the earth, and that feeling was strengthened and increased by the description of their superhuman might and skill, which the sage had favoured him with. He realised that they were rare Beings, akin to God Himself for, they achieved successfully, the guardianship of the Yoga, which the renowned Viswamitra could not accomplish, even before reaching teenage! What a marvel, he wondered.

Then, the narrative was resumed with the starting of the group towards Mithila. The joy that every one experienced as well as the stories related by the sage to the brothers, Rama and Lakshmana were explained to Janaka. When the story of the purification and liberation of Ahalya, the consort of Sage Gautama at the hermitage which was very near to the Capital City, was related. Sathananda was surprised beyond measure; he ejaculated, "What! Has my mother been freed from the curse? Did these Divine personalities render my mother holy, and restore her to my father? Ah! Without doubt they are divine," and while streams of tears of gratitude and joy fell down his cheeks he became so overcome with emotion that stood stiff like a pillar.

Viswamitra observed him and said, "Son! Do not be so overwhelmed with the little that has happened so far! In the coming days, many events vastly more amazing will happen; they will cause consternation, and ecstasy, by their suprahuman glory, very soon. Your parents too will arrive at Mithila City tomorrow, or the day after. You can hear the marvellous story of Rama and Lakshmana direct from them. Calm yourself."

Just then, Emperor Janaka said, "Master! How fortunate are the parents who have such Divinely endowed sons! O, how fortunate am I that they stepped into my house, quite on the spur of the thought. He turned to Rama and Lakshmana and addressed them, "Darlings! Pardon me if the residence I have arranged for you is not quite to your liking or quite in keeping with your status. If you so desire, I am ever ready to arrange alternate appropriate accommodation. If you like, I shall facilitate sight seeing, for you are strangers to us, but, ask for anything you may require without reservation; I shall then feel happy". To these words spoken with exemplary goodness and humility, Rama replied in a manner that revealed the respect he offered to Janaka.

He said, "Maharaja! We are but boys. We do not feel anything wanting in the arrangements made. We are quite happy. There is no need to take trouble arranging some where else or something more, for us. If however, you have such great affection towards us, you can fulfill one wish that we have and without mentioning what it was, he turned towards the Preceptor, Viswamitra. The sage then spoke, "Janaka! The mission which these Princes came with me was

over, when the Yaga, I had resolved upon, was accomplished without interruption or desecration: Rama and Lakshmana desired permission to return home. Meanwhile, I received your invitation regarding the Yaga you have decided upon; so, I asked these boys also to accompany me to Mithila. Then, Rama pleaded that, since his father had deputed him only for safeguarding the Yaga at my Ashram, he was reluctant to proceed further and be away from his father longer than permitted. But, I spoke to them of many divine weapons of war, objects which they are eager to know about, and described to them, the Bow that you have here, which deserves to be seen by them. I also told, them, about the glorious story of Bow. Then they agreed, to accompany me hither, longing to see the Bow. So, they have no yearning to go round the City or visit interesting places; bows, arrows, weapons, instruments which can guard the right and punish the wicked—these claim first consideration with them. While he was talking in this strain, Janaka paid no further heed. He said, "In that case, I shall make arrangements to have the Bow, brought to the Yajnasala soon," and instructed that the royal priest, Sathananda be consulted about an auspicious hour when it could be brought there.

Meanwhile, Rama asked Janaka, "Maharaja! If you can tell us how that Divine Bow came into your possession, we can listen and derive joy out of it". Janaka began to give the information, with joy. "Darlings! Six generations after Nimi, the great ancestor of my dynasty, the King named Devaratha ruled over this kingdom. The Gods placed this Bow of Lord Siva in his palace in trust. It has been with us since then; it is a weapon of the Gods and so, I can assert that it is no ordinary Bow! It has the weight of some thousands of tonnes! No one has seen it in erect position so far! For, who can lift that weight? Many times in the past, I tried to discover who could bend the Bow and use it and even exhibited it for public gaze and invited people to try. But, I have yet to see one who could do it. Every king and prince who attempted the feat failed and returned humiliated to their own place. They could neither bend the Bow nor change its position to the slightest extent.

One day, when I was turning the sod on the grounds where I had resolved to perform yaga, a vessel was revealed to view from out of the furrow. When I removed it and examined it, I found in it a charming female, child. Since the child came to us from the furrow, (sita) we named her Sita, and brought her up with tender care as our own child. She has surpassing might! One day, when she was playing with her companions the toy rolled underneath the box which had the Bow within it; the more they tried to recover it with the help of various contrivances, the farther it rolled under the box! Seeing their predicament, our foster-child Sita laughed at the discomfiture of her companions. She pushed aside the box with one hand and recovered her toy effortlessly and quickly, to the astonishment of every one! I heard about this, through the Queens who came to know of it from the wonderstruck group around her at the time.

That day, I resolved to give Sita in marriage to the bridegroom who proves himself worthy to wed her. Many a prince has since tried to lift and bend that bow, in order to win her, but, all of them had to face ignominious defeat! These mock heroes felt hurt and insulted by me and in their resentment and despair, they grouped together and fell upon Mithila City with their combined forces. The siege lasted full one year. As a consequence, all my armoury was exhausted and I had to yield to concern. I had no other recourse but austerities to win the grace of the Gods. The Gods were pleased; they blessed me with additional reinforcements of infantry, cavalry, elephantry and chariotry. That is to say, help came to me from behind the besieging forces and

when they were thus attacked, they were scattered. In spite of all this war and vindictiveness, I was able to preserve the Bow, without any harm; I guarded it like the apple of the eye. Its mysterious might is beyond description.

Rama! Ramachandra! I shall not deny you the fulfillment of your wish; if you but agree, the Bow shall be brought to the Yaga enclosure. I shall order that efforts should be made towards this. I shall also announce that any one—who dare lift and bend it can try to do so. When Janaka spoke in this authentic, authoritative manner, Rama and Lakshmana looked at each other and did not reply, for, they were waiting for instructions from the Master whom they had followed so far.

Just then, Viswamitra, who knew the might and heroism of the brothers well, said that what Janaka proposed could be done, and that he need not apprehend anything coming in his way. Janaka also announced that he would give Sita in marriage to whomsoever lifted the bow and stringed it for he had vowed that Sita will be wedded only to such a one. Viswamitra approved that procedure too.

Janaka took leave of the Sage and moved into the Palace. He set upon the task of taking the bow into the Yaga enclosure. He arranged for a Proclamation to be issued that the Bow will thus be exposed to view and communicated it to a few kings and princes. The eight-wheeled vehicle containing the box with the Bow was to be dragged into the enclosure by a large band of hefty muscular heavy-weights: but, they could not even move it a step. So, more men of gigantic mould had to be called in, to lend their hands, at pulling the heavy chains attached to the vehicle and pushing it from behind. When at last the Bow moved into the sacred enclosure, the priests recited hymns of auspicious welcome.

Day dawned. The nine traditional musical instruments raised a paean of harmony that reached the roof of the skies. Conches were blown in peals. The auspiciousness of the Day was declared through song and melody emperor Janaka entered the enclosure, accompanied by a group of priests and with attendants carrying all the materials for ceremonial worship of the Divine Bow. Long before that moment, the enclosure was filled with kings, princes, ministers, courtiers, sages and scholars. As soon as Janaka came in, the entire gathering rose up in order to render honour to the Ruler of the Realm. The Vedic pundits declaimed aloud the hymns invoking Gods to shower Grace; their voices rose up to Heaven in enthusiastic unison. Others recited passages from the Vedas. All were so filled with ecstasy that they looked on in wonder, without even a wink of the eyelids!

Janaka walked in reverence around the vehicle with the Bow, and offered floral homage to it, while Vedic chants were recited to propitiate it. He bowed before the Divine Bow, and He prostrated in front of the Divine Bow and then, turned to the distinguished assembly. He announced these words himself: "Prostrations to the Sages! My thanks to all who have come to this assembly!

"Since many years, my forefathers as well as many other monarchs, have been as you all know, worshipping this Divine Bow. Besides it is already well known that no one, be he a God or Demon, Yaksha Rakshasa Garuda or Gandharva, Kinnara or Mahoraga, no one has so far been

able to lift the Bow, hold it and string it! All who attempted have turned back, humiliated. In spite of this, this day, I have again resolved to bring the Bow into the sacred enclosure. Whoever among you assembled here, does lift this bow, or lifting, strings it, or, stringing it, fixes an arrow on to its or who can hold the weight of the Bow in their hands shall come forward and take this chance; now the Bow is before you." With these words, Janaka bowed before the gathering, with his palms folded, and sat on the Lion Throne.

At that moment, Viswamitra cast his glance, with a smile, at Rama. Rama quickly approached the vehicle and lifted up the iron cover with his left arm. And, with his right, he raised with no concern or exertion, the Bow from its box! Holding the Bow erect he looked around showering amazement on every face!

(To be continued)

The College Building

—J. C. Das

Norman Mailer, one of the most exciting and original talents, writing in America today, in his book "Cannibals and Christians" says, "We will die of anaemia of the soul; in some plenitude of electronics." He had Modern architecture too, in his mind when he prophesied thus.

Mailer writes, "Our modern buildings go flat, flat at the top, flat as eternal monotony...no one tries to do more with the roof than leave it flat." The essence of totalitarianism is that it beheads. It beheads individuality, variety, dissent, extreme possibility, romantic faith; it blinds vision; deadens instinct; it obliterates the past." "People who admire the New Architecture find it of value, because it obliterates the past". They eject into their environment and landscape the same deadness and monotony life has put into them. The new Schools are architectural horrors. According to Norman Mailer, there is only an empty promiscuous panorama, where no one can distinguish between hospitals and housing projects, factories and colleges concert halls, civic centres and airport terminals.

I was reading his comments on Architecture, when I received the July number of Sanathana Sarathi, with a picture of the Sathya Sai College. The Jewel, that the building is, assured me that Baba has come to save the soul of man from anaemia.

The architecture of the Sri Sathya Sai Arts and Science College at Anantapur is certain to instill hope and joy, on all who are saddened by this bleak blight of deadness and monotony creeping from West to East.

The College symbolises the Brahman of the Vedas, Poornamadah Poornam idam, Full-fill-ment, of the search named Religion; for, it is a Full Circle, O, and not the C, which according to Baba represents that other search named Science, which has a gap it can never fill. It is redolent with the fragrance of India's Past; it is resonant with the echoes of Sanathana Dharma, coming down the corridors of Time. It carries sky-high the Lotus (The Heart) Flower that has blossomed at the first touch of the rays of the Sun (Reason or Buddhi).

It is alive and vibrant, for the Hands of Time are ever waking, warning, and watching the process of teaching and learning which we call Living.

Also from the symbol of Faiths, the Hands of Avatars and Prophets wave mankind forward to the journey's End, where Eternal Glory awaits.

When I fixed my eyes for a while on the picture of the College, I visualised the Purushottama as Sanathana Sarathi standing on the portico of this Manoratha, leading its cargo of humanity towards the goal of victory.

Truly, this Building is the Architectural Archetype for the Sai Era in Education. To announce that this is also the Era of Dharmic Reconstruction, the idol of Saraswati, Goddess of the Learning that leads to Wisdom that results in Liberation, is installed in a Saras, at the very entrance of this Building!

Bhagavatha Gita and Bal Vikas

—Ratan Lal

Teachers of Bal Vikas classes must realise the sanctity of the Gita, and its Teachings. The aim of the Gita is not so much to teach a theory, but, to enforce the practice of Dharma in daily life.

Children who attend Bala Vikas are classed in 3 age groups; so, encourage them at the first stage to learn a few slokas by heart, selecting such slokas as are, easy to recite and remember. In the Pathashala at Prasanthi Nilayam, this is being done, in the very primary stage. Next, when we deal with children a little older, relate the story of the Gita, with examples and parables. Then, at a later stage, we should try to impart the philosophical significance of the Gita.

Sense perception and reason will give a person, knowledge of the external world; but, Gita jnana is basically different. It has to be experienced and assimilated. So, those who claim to teach the Gita should themselves, not only be acquainted with the commentaries, but implement their lives with the teachings, in thought, word and deed. The accent is on Living the Wisdom through the purification of character, aid the cultivation of unselfish Love.

Yoga is the method by which inner kinship is realised, and one's affinity with the Universal experienced. Yoga is restraint; bhoga is enjoyment. Fact is Divinity; fiction is variety. Lord Krishna says, "All Forms are Mine; I am in all." Thus, He explains in a simple way, the Universal aspect of Sanathana Dharma. "You may worship any Form and recite any name of Divinity; your devotion reaches Me." Different Forms and Names are prescribed and permitted to suit individual variation in temperament.

Today, we have the means, through science to control external temperature; but, our internal tempers can be controlled only through Gita Jnana. The Lord gives the simile of the Banyan Tree in the 15th Chapter of the Gita. The seed of the tree sends roots down into the soil, and the tree sprouts up. The branches again send down roots, which hang from the branches and finally reach the soil, so that it becomes another tree! In this manner, the Banyan grows far and wide. The Onlooker is amazed; he is unable to trace the beginning and the end. The expansion of worldly desires or attachments is compared with the vast expansion of the Banyan Tree. It is very difficult to destroy the Banyan Tree; so also, it is very difficult to destroy the attachment to the world of Name and Form. Our actions are the result of these desires; they make us go round and round the circle of Birth and Death.

Bhagavan Baba has given us an apt illustration, to tell us the means of liberation from this chain. Through faulty habits or food, you become ill and get admitted into the Hospital. After a brief stay there, you become fit and well; the doctors prescribe the food that has to be taken and the habits to be cultivated in future. The wise man avoids indulgence in the food and habits which brought about the illness and takes up the regimen prescribed. He avoids all acts which might goad him to visit the Hospital again. Likewise having experienced the world (and its objects which are all subject to change decay and death, and as such are unable to give any lasting happiness or Bliss) he should refrain from attachment.

In this connection, we should note the highlight of the leeching of the Gita:

Detachment IN action; and, not OF action.

So long as we are in this relative world, we have to be engaged in action; but, actions should spring from altruistic desire, we should be indifferent about their effects. Then, their impact will have no bearing on us. Such actions will not bind us. Those that spring from egoistic desires are bad and binding; they arise out of the wrong identification of ourselves with the Mind and the Body.

The root of all desires is the Mind. Mind is nothing but a bundle of desires and thoughts. Sublimate those desires and thoughts; get nonattached with the Unreal; and, the Mind disappears. What remains is Pure Awareness, Sat Chit Ananda!

In the 16th Chapter of the Gita, the Lord explains the nature of the God-like and the demonic mind. Divine qualities, as has been said earlier, lead to the Liberation and demonic lead to Bondage. Demonic qualities lead to the philosophy of Materialism; with the result that we believe our individual lives short, and therefore, we feel justified in freely indulging in "Eating, Drinking and Merry-making"! By believers in this philosophy the Inner instruments of Intelligence and Mind are used for the gratification of the senses, and not for their control, and eventual release from Bondage

There are three qualities (characteristics) of Prakriti (Nature): Sathwic (Pure), Rajasic (Active,) and Tamasic (Dull). Tamasic and Rajasic qualities tempt man to achieve Power and exercise Sovereignty over others. It is only through the cultivation of Sathwic quality that you can quieten and still the Mind, and thereby realise the Atmajyoti, the Illumination of the Atma. Bhagavan gives a very nice example, so that we may understand this: If you want to see the Moon in a Pond, the water in the pond has to be still, clear and pure; that is, Sathwic! If on the other hand, it is stormy and rough. (Rajasic) if the water is muddy, dirty, (Tamasic), then the reflection of the Moon cannot be seen. Bhagavan gives another example also to make us understand this: A man passing through a forest is held by three thieves—the Tamasic thief binds him to a tree; the Rajasic thief unbinds him. Then, the poor scared stranger runs hither and thither, not knowing the way out of the forest. The Sathwic thief appears at this time and leads the man from the forest towards his Home. When the Home is in sight, the Sathwic thief also leaves the man, allowing him to go back to his real Home. When you become fully Sathwic, your actions and desires will, spontaneously turn God-wards.

No More Fires!

We were returning from TIJUANA, a town on the Mexican border, 42 miles away from Tecate, my husband and I, when we saw big clouds of smoke in the distance. Alfonso, our headman, who was at the wheel, said, "Fire, on Rancho Cuchuma!"

When we drove into the gates of our ranch, we saw the wall of fire and smoke rapidly approaching the STUDENTS' HOUSE. A strong wind was blowing in the direction of the House. Firemen and people from the nearby village were there; but, they were watching the vast area of burning brush land, without being able to do anything. For, there was no water outlet, anywhere around.

"Did you talk to Sai Baba?" asked my husband.

"Not yet. i'm going to, now," i answered, running towards the main house.

"Ask him to change the direction of the wind," shouted Renia, who was living on the top floor of the STUDENTS' HOUSE, "Nothing else," she added, "Change the direction."

I went down stairs into Bhagavan's meditation room; (We also have another meditation room with a light perpetually burning in it). i lit all the candles, about 30 of them; and while lighting them i decided not to ask him for anything. Just let him know that the fire is within a few minutes of the house. If he thinks it should burn down, let it go. If he thinks it should stay, he'll protect it somehow. Then, i sent for my husband and Renia, deciding that i, should not be the only one involved.

When the three of us came upstairs we all stood still in amazement! The wind *was* chasing the 'fire wall' into exactly the opposite direction!

"There goes Sai Nilayam," i thought to myself.

i learned later that the firemen on the American side prevented the flames from leaping across the border, although everyone at the Nilayam had packed their things and sat ready to leave by car.

The Mexican workers watched the wind turn round, and exclaimed, "Milagro! Senora" (Miracle! Madam!).

Rosita (our Instructor and my adopted daughter) and Lynn (one of the participants and the only one who had remained reserved about Bhagavan; every one else became his devotee) in the Teachers' Course were standing behind the STUDENTS HOUSE, watching the approaching flames. Of a sudden, Rosita felt something happening within her. "SAI BABA" was her first thought. She turned to Lynn; Lynn gave her a strange look, saying, "SAI BABA IS HERE", and tears tolled down her cheeks.

"Look"

Lynn said, grabbing Rosita's arm. Both saw a most unbelievable thing happen. The 'running fire' stood still for a moment! And, then as if swept by the movement of an invisible hand, turned around, and 'dashed' into the opposite (!) direction!

"Do you have photo of Sai Baba you could give me? ' asked Lynn in a hurry.

"Mataji", concluded Rosita, I've "never seen such a quick change in any one, as I saw in her."

Wearing Bhagavan's ring, Japamala, and a new sari, i took the movie camera, and went to take a picture of the fire.

Later, towards, the evening, as we sit in the kitchen, with all our workers to t have some tea, Matias, our cook said, "I shall have to start believing in Sai Baba, after what I've seen today, with my own eyes". The phone rang and the telegraph office clerk said that nobody came to pick up a telegram that had been lying there for a whole week, since we had totally forgotten to send for it.

When Rosita brought it in, it was a wire from Baba(!) inviting me to come to the opening of the Anantapur College on July 8th.

"He wants you to come", said my husband, "so, why don't you go?" Three days later, i was on my way to India Oh! Bhagavan!

While leaving Prasanthi Nilayam for Tecate, Bhagavan gave a beautiful medallion of Laxmi.

"That is for the house", he explained, "for protection..." "NO MORE FIRES".

—*Indra Devi, Tecate, Mexico*

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20

The thousands who witnessed the wonder—citizens kings and princes, sages and elders—raised such an applause that the sky echoed and re-echoed the exaltation! Soon, Rama stringed the magnificent Bow! With delightful ease, he fixed an arrow! And he drew the string back up to the ear, in order to release it. At that moment the Bow snapped with a terrific noise!! Everyone around was shocked into confusion and fear by the strange, unexpected explosion. Some fainted; some cried out in terror; some fled in panic. The sages submitted prayers to God. Why dilate? The entire gathering, barring Janaka, Viswamitra and the brothers, Rama and Lakshmana, was plunged in inexplicable inconsolable dread!

Meanwhile, Janaka rose from his seat, fell prostrate before Viswamitra, and said, "Master! There is no one on earth who can claim greater strength than Rama. I am deriving supreme Ananda at the thought that such strength is not of the Earth. I shall fulfill my word, that I shall give Sita in marriage to whosoever lifts and bends this Bow".

Viswamitra replied thereupon, "Janaka! It will be good if this news is communicated to Emperor Dasaratha and the auspicious event celebrated after he comes.

"This is my desire; take immediate steps to fulfill this. Rama is such an ardent follower, of the duty of obeying the father, that he will not agree to the marriage, until Dasaratha gives his approval." So, Janaka had the Brahmins of the court called to his presence, along with some

Ministers. He set them on the journey to Ayodhya as soon as the day dawned. They sped on in their chariots, drawn by swift horses for three days and nights, and reached Ayodhya on the morning of the fourth day. They halted the chariots right before the main entrance of the Imperial palace so that there could be no delay in taking the news they had brought to the Emperor.

When the guards inquired their names and the purpose of their arrival, the ministers required them to announce to the Emperor the fact of their coming to see him. They informed Dasaratha immediately and immediately they were called into the palace and the Presence.

In spite of his old age, Dasaratha seemed to be a Divinely splendid figure, when the Brahmins and Ministers of Mithila saw him on his throne. When they stood before that bright reverend face, they fell at his feet, without any hesitation or reservation. They stood up and said, "Maharaja! We are messengers from the Emperor Janaka of Mithila. He has commissioned us to inquire and learn from you about your welfare and the welfare of your realm. We have been sent with the approval of sage Viswamitra, with the consent of our Preceptor the great Sathananda by Maharaja Janaka, to communicate to you an important announcement."

Dasaratha's face was brightened by smiles; his assurance was unshaken; he was struck by the humility and good manners of the deputation from Mithila. He said, 'O Greatest among Brahmins! O ministers of the Court! There is no defect in the administration of the kingdom of Ayodhya; no obstruction for rituals like Agnihotra; no reduction in the happiness of the subjects; no obstacle in the path of their moral and spiritual advance. The subjects are all prosperous and progressing towards the highest goal. I am glad to tell you this. I wish to know about the health and welfare of Janaka, the Emperor of Mithila, about the welfare and prosperity of his subjects and about the uninterrupted performance in his kingdom, of the religious rites prescribed in the Vedas. You can communicate to me, without any reservation, the Message you have brought with you. I am eager to hear it."

When Dasaratha granted permission so softly and sweetly the Ministers signed to the Brahmins to begin. The chief Priest rose from his seat and delivered the message thus: Great Sovereign! Mahaprabhu! Our Maharaja Janaka has vowed that his daughter Sita Devi will be given in marriage to heroic might; you must be aware of this, no doubt. You might also be knowing that a large number of princes came and returned humiliated, since their weakness was made evident. By Divine Will, your two sons Rama and Lakshmana accompanied the Sage Viswamitra, eager to see the great Yajna which our Maharaja is celebrating; it happened that your eldest son, Rama won Sita Devi by means of his incomparable valour! Maharaja! What shall we say! How shall we describe it? In full view of the distinguished gathering of sages, emperors, kings and princes, Rama, the highest pinnacle of valour, held the Bow of Siva by its middle, kept it erect and strung it! More than this, he broke, as if in play, the inordinately heavy Bow into two pieces! Since Sita Devi is to be given over to valour, the sages who had assembled, as well as our Maharaja, have decided to give her in marriage to Rama.

We have been sent to request and receive your assent, to offer you cordial welcome, to invite you, with Preceptors, Priests, Ministers, Courtiers and Kith and Kin, and attendants and followers, to the City of Mithila. Our Maharaja desires to celebrate the marriage of his daughter,

after receiving your Darshan. We are sent by him to your presence, in order specifically to inform you this.

The priests and ministers stood with folded hands, reverentially awaiting the reply from Dasaratha. But, Dasaratha rolled it over in his heart very earnestly and sent for the sages Vasishta, Vamadeva and the rest, for consultations, before speaking a word in reply. He also invited the foremost among the Brahmins of the court. When they all arrived, he asked the party from Mithila to repeat the message they had brought. When they had listened full well to the news, he wanted their comments. But, first, Dasaratha fell prostrate before Sage Vasishta and prayed that he should give his consent. Vasishta, Vamadeva and others responded with joyous acclamations, "Most auspicious", "Most auspicious! They added, "Why spend further thought on this? Make full preparations for the journey to Mithila!"

The ministers jumped in joy; news of the wedding of Rama spread in a trice all over the City and into the inner apartments of the Palace, where the Queens were. The citizens raised exclamations of "Jai Jai" in their exultation. Attendants and servants made quick preparations for the journey. Jewels silk brocades and other gifts were packed in large quantities and varieties; countless chariots were loaded with them. The Emperor, the Imperial Escort, Vasishta the Royal Preceptor, the chief Priests and other Brahmins and Pundits, ascended their chariots and took their seats. It was as if Ayodhya itself was moving out to Mithila to witness the marriage. For all who longed to join, Dasaratha made suitable arrangements. No one eager to go was left behind! The horses seemed to feel the extreme joy that filled the hearts of the inmates of the chariots; for, they trotted fast, without slackening speed, or showing signs of exhaustion. Two nights and two days, they spent on the road, and the third night, they reached Mithila!

Maharaja Janaka welcomed Emperor Dasaratha at the very Entrance Gate of his City. He welcomed the Ministers, Sages and Priests as befitted their position and status. He arranged that they take rest for the night in their residences. Immediately the day dawned, Dasaratha sent for the rithwiks (Priests who have specialised in ritual lore) the queens and the kinsmen, and alerted them to be ready and available the moment they were wanted. Meanwhile, Janaka arrived at the Mansion where Dasaratha was, and took him with him to the special enclosure where the Yaga was being celebrated. Seats had been allotted there for the Preceptors, the Emperor and the entourage as befitted their rank and authority.

When every one had occupied their seats, Janaka welcomed Dasaratha with the words: "Your coming to Mithila with these; great sages and these foremost Brahmins and kinsmen and escort is great good fortune for us. It marks the fruition of the good we have done in past lives. The joy that has filled your mind, at the valour and victory of your sons, needs no special mention. I am about to enter into relationship with the great Raghu dynasty, which is shining with the mighty boundless heroism of its scions. My dynasty is about to be sanctified more than ever before, by this kinship.' I believe, this is the result of the blessings showered on me by my forefathers.

Maharaja! This morning, the Yaga we have been celebrating is coming to its close. I have thought of celebrating the marriage of Sita and of Rama, after the conclusion of the Yaga. I plead with you to confer your assent."

Dasaratha thrilled with the Ananda he could not contain. His face was lit by bright smiles. He said, "Raja! You are the donor; elders declare that the gift is to be received at the sweet will and pleasure of the donor! So I am ever prepared to take whatever you give, whenever it pleases you!" When Dasaratha spoke with such wit and wisdom, with such heart-melting warmth of affection, Janaka was overwhelmed with upsurging Ananda.

By then, Rama and Lakshmana entered the enclosure with the Sage Viswamitra; they prostrated before their father, and their preceptors Vasishtha, Vamadeva and others. Dasaratha's eyes glistened with delight as they fell upon the sons he had missed so long. He drew them to himself; he placed his hands on their shoulders; he pressed them hard upon his chest. Seeing the Ananda of their father, his fondling the sons separated from him for some time, the Brahmins and ministers forgot themselves in the appreciation of the depth of his affection. They were lost in admiration.

(To be continued)

The four faced Divine

—Balasaheb Bharade

Facets of Reality

Two great Divine Manifestations appeared in Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra, Jnaneshwar Bhagavan and Shirdi Sai Baba. You have reminded me that I too was born and bred in that District! Jnaneshwar says, "He who goes to Vaikunta brings Vaikuntha with him when he returns; he has seen heaven everywhere". So, your good nature has made you see this good point in me, and use it to speak highly of me. But, my difficulty is, how to perform the task you have imposed on me: to speak to you of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, while I was wondering from where I am- to, draw the inspiration and the power to speak on this Avatar of the Age, I was reminded of the sage who once, when he was challenged to do so, made even a buffalo recite the hymns of the Vedas! Why should I then hesitate and feel desperate? Baba Himself will give me the needed power. He has blessed me with many hours of intimate conversation and discussion with Him. He has revealed to me some facets of His Reality and so, I am sure He will enable me to speak to you today, on the occasion of the Annual Day of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi.

Full Avatar

Whichever place Baba visits, He attracts to Himself lakhs of eager people. Why do they gather in such enormous numbers? Because. He has come for all. He does not restrain any one, on the basis of caste, creed or colour. All are welcomed and blessed. More over, though the modern world has a surfeit of things that cater to sensual pleasure and physical comfort, man has no peace within him. He longs to get it, and seeks all, sources where it can be got. The mere Darshan of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba gives every one that sense of inner peace for which he is thirsting. In this transient world of spurts of grief and pain, and short-lived joys and pleasures, only those who are always in the Consciousness of Atma can confer lasting peace and content. And, Baba is not only always in the Atmic Awareness, He is the self-manifested Full Avatar (the Swayambhu Poorna Avatar)!

Yogasiddha

We have heard of Persons who have attained mystic and mysterious powers and of realised persons, but, they have been led on the path of achievement by a Guru who was greater than they were. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has had no Guru. The wisdom He propounds and evinces, the powers He manifests, the Compassion that saturates all His acts, these have been brought from birth. They are all natural to the Divine, when It decides to manifest in human form. Some people quote the Gita sloka, where it is said, "Sucheenaam Srimathaam gehe yoga brashtobhi jaayathe" (the Yogi who trips on the path after great progress has been made is born again in the house of a pure, rich family) and they argue that Baba is an example of a yogi come again to complete the interrupted advance! This is an entirely wrong idea; for Baba is a Yoga-siddha, not a Yoga-bhrashta; He is the Master, the Ideal, the Goal of Yoga...and not a practitioner.

Universal Guru

Four paths are prescribed in the Sastras for God-realisation or, what is the same thing, Self-realisation. They are jnana (The Path of Knowledge, leading to the Highest Wisdom, or Awareness of the One that appears as Many), Karma (The Path of Dedicated Activity, where He is the Doer, Done and Deed), Bhakthi (Surrender of the Individual will to the Universal Will personified as the All-knowing. Omnipotent God), and Yoga (The Path of expanding and illumining the Inner Consciousness by the control and manipulation of the Vital Airs). Anyone of these will lead man to God; they are all interconnected. The Gita proclaims, all four are proper and valid according to the mental make-up and spiritual aptitude of the seeker. Bhagavan is able to know the progress and prospect of each seeker and he advises, directs and guides sincere seekers on the Path He selects for them.

For All, with All, in All

For He has come to ensure and establish the welfare of the whole world, and this task He is carrying out. Sadhus and seekers strive only for their individual salvation and liberation. But, whatever realised souls do will be for the good of the world. Avatars however are in a different category. They act on purpose; they have their Mission and their Message. Sant Eknath says, "No one becomes a sage by simply seeing the world as a witness; he must do good, promote the welfare. Samadhi is not mere non-action; it is positive; it is samatha and samyatha, seeing all equally as God; Seeing God everywhere, as something nearest to you" My Life is My Message, Baba says, So, we can see in Him the phenomenon of Brahmanmaya and of inner and outer Samadhi of the highest stage.

Avatar, Mission

Some people ask me, "Why does Baba establish Colleges?" I reply, "Why does a flower shower fragrance?" Having come to re-establish Dharma, His Will spontaneously carries out various activities by which the various forces that damage Dharma are weakened, and destroyed. It deals with all stages of man, from children to the old; it deals with the home, the community, the nation and the world problems. There is no field of human activity, no region which will be out of its range. Restoring peace and happiness to the good and correcting the bad are the two purposes of the Avatar.

Dharma expressed as Seva

Baba has taken the role of the Sadguru, who leads us to liberation. Baba has said that there can be no spiritual progress without strict Loyalty to Truth and the constant practice of Truth. He creates and sustains the thirst for Truth, and thus, He guides man to the Highest Goal. He is the Four Faced Divine Principle: Sakshatkara (He is God Incarnate, come before us, in concrete human form). Chamatkara (He draws us to Him and to the good and godly Life, by means of spontaneous manifestations of the Divine, called by some, for want of a better word, miracles). Paropakara (He teaches that through service alone, Prema can be expanded and the Unity of all be realised; Dharma expressed through Seva filled with Prema, is the Path He has chosen for this Kali Yuga). And Samskara (He insists on continuous Sadhana for the perfection of purity and virtue and the acquisition of wisdom, along the lines laid down in the Vedas, Sastras and Puranas of this land, its Samskriti).

Faith and Devotion

Baba emphasises Sraddha and Bhakthi, Faith and Devotion. While there were strikes marked by violence, in other Colleges, students in the Colleges of Baba were studying their lessons, which shows that faith and devotion can help real progress. Today the world is suffering for want of faith and devotion, or rather, for want of some one who can create that Faith and evoke that Devotion. Well, Baba has come to fulfill that want. Today, deceit and cleverness are hailed as laudable achievements. Baba is raising Truth to the highest level as the motive of action. His Message is penetrating every heart through His Leelas and Mahimas. He is reconstructing man through Bal Vikas, Sevalal, Seva Samithis, Mahila Mandalis Bhajan Mandalis and Colleges for Boys and Girls. He is revitalising religious life, that is to say, the good life, the progressive life, by encouraging the upsurge of Divine impulses, through Bhajan, Namasmaran, Likhithajapam, Dhyana, and most important of all Nagarasankirtan—the choral singing of the glory of God—in every village by groups of devotees in the early hours of the day. I am glad Baba's Divine Message has reached Ratnagiri and I congratulate the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi here on the good work they have been able to do.

—From Address at Ratnagiri

The Sathya Sai Banquet

At Thy Banquet I've stayed long!
And, still, Thy Bounty spreads immeasurably!
Thy Table has no end!
And, Thou hast given us a host of tongues
to taste Thy fare!

The whole earth is filled
with Thy delightful fancy—
The very air heavy with Thy fragrances!
Who could hope to consummate this Feast?
Is there no one You have not invited? Lord!

The world is greedy at Thy Table!
At Thy banquet, a glutton i have stayed long—
The hunger still burns me, Lord but i can take no more
And others are pressing for my place.

But now beneath this feast's great roar
Thy inward whisper, i do hear
"Thy hunger's not for food, of this paltry world, My Son!
If thou wouldst be filled for Evermore,
Thou shouldst not eat thereof;
thy hunger shall be sated, when
thou comest to serve but Me"

—*Philip Schwartz*

*O Mother! Play, through me, Play through
Like Krishna on the Flute
Mother! Make me, deaf and mute,
And, play through me, as on a Flute!
O, Your Songs, they are numberless,
Each one is your sweet caress!
So, Mother! Play through me, Play through me!*

—*Eddie Fleure*

Vinayaka

Vinayaka, or Ganapathi or Vighneswara as this Form of Divinity is variously called is the very first God who is worshiped invariably because He is the God of Intelligence and therefore, the God who can help overcome obstacles that come in the way of good deeds. This God has the head of the Elephant, an animal that is held as sacred, revered as Sathwic, and which is famous for its Intelligence. In Telugu, Gaja-telivi (the Intelligence of the Elephant) is recognised as marvellous, and the word is used in praise of geniuses. He is Vidya-ganapati, the God who confers Vidya (Wisdom) and so, you cannot pray to him for help in nefarious plans. He will promote the good, by placing obstacles in the path of the bad influences that wish to obstruct it. He is adored as Suklambaradharam. (Wearing a white vesture): this is to indicate Purity. He is referred to as Vishnu (Omnipresent) for He will respond, whoever calls, from wherever he is. He is spoken of as Sasivarnam (Ash-coloured, for He is having the sacred ash on His body). Vibhuti or sacred ash the colour of which is sasi, also means, Glory: Majesty. So, He is immersed in Glory and so is sasivarnam. In that famous sloka, He is described as Chaturbhujam, (four handed); the two extra hands being the ones used for Blessing and for Guarding the devotees. Lastly, He is denoted as Prasannavadanam (of bright and joyful countenance). For, He is

eternally content, and happy. Ganesa will bless, not when you adore Him, but, when you love and serve all, as embodiments of the Divine. Obstacles in the path of Love and Seva He will gladly remove.

—*From Discourse of Baba 24-8-71*

Fifth All India Conference
Of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation (1971)

Bhagavan has directed that the above Conference should be held at Madras on 22nd and 23rd December 1971.

The following procedure should be followed in respect of the nomination of Delegates to the Conference:

- (a) The number of delegates approved for each category is indicated in the Annexure and will NOT be exceeded.
- (b) The number of delegates approved for each category is indicated in the Annexure and should be strictly adhered to.
- (c) Full particulars of delegates should be forwarded in triplicate on the Performa to the District President concerned, so as to reach him by 7th November 1971.
- (d) The District President will scrutinise the particulars and forward approved nominations to the State President concerned so as to reach him by 10th November 1971.
- (e) District Presidents will also forward an advance copy of the lists sent to their State Presidents direct to

"The President,
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations (Tamil Nadu),
3, Maharaja Surya Rao Road,
Madras-18."
- (f) The State Presidents will forward the final lists from their respective States so as to reach "The President, Bhagawan Sathya Sai Seva Organisations (Tamil Nadu), 3 Maharaja Surya Rao Road, Madras-18" by 17th November 1971.
- (i) Where no District President has been appointed, the Units will forward their nominations direct to their State President.
- (ii) Where no State President has been appointed, the District Presidents will send their lists direct to "The President, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations (Tamil Nadu), 3 Maharaja Surya Rao Road, Madras-18"

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

21

Dasaratha conversed intimately with his sons, and listened to their sweet simple descriptions (if the Yajna which they guarded from desecration by the demonic forces; they told him the incidents of the journey from the hermitage of Viswamitra to Mithila City. The narrative was heard also by Vasishta, Vamadeva and other sages, as well as Bharata Satrughna, Sumanta and many ministers, courtiers and nobles. They spent the night, recapitulating the wonder and mystery that formed, the warp and woof of that narrative.

Meanwhile, Janaka was immersed, in the preparations for the marriage celebrations. He was mostly in the palace itself; he invited the Chief Priest, Sathananda, to the court, and prayed to him reverentially, to start collecting men and materials for the various rites preliminary to the actual wedding rite. The sage replied, "Maharaja! The yajna concluded just today. During the next two or three days, there are, I notice, a few hours that are auspicious for the ceremonials. I can give details, if you desire to know."

At this, Janaka said, saluting Sathananda and standing with folded hands, "Master! I received the assent of the Emperor Dasaratha, last night. This is indeed a sign, of extreme good fortune. My younger brother Kusadhwaja, is not present here now; he was very busy elsewhere, supplying provisions for the Yajna, as and when the high priests asked for them. I am reluctant to celebrate this most auspicious ceremony, without his being present by my side. He has his share of joy to get out of this festival. I have set afoot plans to get him here quickly. I feel it would be best if we fix the day and hour after his arrival."

Sathananda responded, "Good! Good! That will make us all happy beyond calculation!" With this, he left the palace. Janaka sent messengers to all the quarters with instructions that they should bring the brother to Mithila, with the greatest expedition. Some of them found him in his capital City, Sankasya, for, they were taken thither, by fleet horses which sped faster than others. They reported to him the developments at Mithila, in full detail; Kusadhwaja was overcome with the flood of Ananda that surged through him.

Kusadhwaja collected his kith and kin, as well as his entourage, in great haste; had chariots loaded with gifts and presents, offerings and precious materials. He started off that very night and quickly reached Mithila. Janaka hastened to meet him, for, he was counting the minutes that were hurrying by. He clasped his brother in fond embrace; he was filled with inexpressible delight. Kusadhwaja fell at the feet of his elder brother; he prostrated before Sathananda, and then all three sat on raised seats, in order to deliberate on the further course of action. They consulted among themselves and when they decided finally on what they have to do, they sent for the highly respected elder statesman, Sudama, and told him, "Minister of State! Proceed now to the Presence of Dasaratha and pray to him to come here, come to this Palace, with his Ministers, Priests, Courtiers, and kinsmen and others he would like to bring with him. Bring him, with due honours."

Sudama took with him, a group of courtiers anti scholars and royal priests; he got reedy tastefully decorated chariots to bring the Imperial Party and reached the Palace where Dasaratha was staying. He submitted to him, sweetly and calmly, the message he had brought, and with profound humility, invited him to the palace of Janaka. Dasaratha was ready; he moved out with his entourage and reached the Durbar Hall of Janaka, very soon. They greeted each other as befitted the occasion and their respective statuses, and occupied the seats that were laid for them.

Then Dasaratha rose and said, "Janaka! For the Ikshvaku Dynasty, the sage Vasishta is God on Earth! He is our supreme preceptor. He is our spokesman for all matters. He can speak with full authority on the traditions of our dynasty."

As soon as Dasaratha sat down, Vasishta stood before the assembly, and spoke as follows: "Royal Sage! Listen, all who have assembled! Brahman, the Unmanifested Supreme, Eternal, Pure, through the exercise of Will created Marichi; Marichi's son was Kasyapa and his son was Surya; Surya's son was Manu, Manu had a son named Vaivaswatha Manu; he ruled over the people and earned the appellation, Prajapati.

While he was king, a son, Ikshvaku was born to him; he was the first overlord of Ayodhya; and so the dynasty itself came to be called the Ikshvaku Line. Ikshvaku's son was Kukshi, Kukshi's son was named Vikukshi. Vikukshi's son was Bana; Bana's son was Anaranya; Anaranya had a son who was named Trisanku. Trisanku's son was Dhundhumara. Dhundhumara had a son called Yavanaswa. Mandhata was the son of Yavanaswa; his son Susandhi had two sons, Daivasandhi and Prasenajit. The famous Bharata was the son of Daivasandhi. Bharata's son was Asitha; when Asitha was ruling the kingdom, a coalition of the Haihayas, Thalajanghas, and Sasibindus invaded the realm and Asitha had to flee to the Himalayan region with his two queens. He took refuge in the region called Bhrgu Prasravana and passed away there itself, after some years.

Both his queens were enceinte when he died. They sought asylum in the hermitage of Chyavana, of the lineage of Bhrgu Chyavana was filled with compassion at their plight; he consoled them, saying, "Mothers! Do not entertain any fear. This is your very home. You will have safe delivery; you will have strong splendour-filled fortunate babies." His blessing came true. Within a few, days, the elder queen delivered a son named Sagara and he was installed as the emperor at Ayodhya.

His son was Asamanja; Asamanja had a son called Amsumantha; Amsumantha's son was Dileepa, whose son was named Bhagiratha. Bhagiratha begat Kakustha. Kakustha's son was Raghu. Raghu had a son Pravarddha. Pravarddha had Sudarsan as son and Sudarsana, Agnivarna. Seeghraga was the name of the son of Agnivarna. Maru was the name of the son of Seeghraga. After him, the throne came from father to son, to Prasusruka, Ambarisha, Nahusha, in succession.

Nahusha's son was, Yayathi and Yayathi's son was Nabhaga. Nabhaga had Aja as his son. Dasaratha is the eldest son of Aja, and his four sons, a precious jewel each one are Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna. Rama is the eldest of the four who raised, bent, strung and broke, the bow of Siva.

O Royal Sage! This royal dynasty is sacred and pure. Every one born in this line has earned spiritual illumination and has shone in spiritual splendour. They are rooted in righteousness, and, withal, in the front rank of heroes of might. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna are precious lamps that shed lustre on the annals of the clan. I must put forward the suggestion that it would be desirable to have this auspicious Samskara of marriage celebrated for Lakshmana also, for, he is as the reflection in the mirror, of Rama himself. Your daughter Urmila can well shine as the spouse of Lakshmana. Do not hesitate; resolve accordingly and make the necessary preparation," Vasishtha blessed the gathering and resumed his seat.

After listening to the narrative of the Ikshvaku Dynasty, from the lips of the great sage, Vasishtha. Janaka rose from his throne and said. "O Brahmarshi! When the scion of a noble clan intends to gift his daughter in marriage he has to announce the historic glory of his clan, hasn't he? I have resolved to follow your footsteps and recite the story myself, for it gives me great joy to recapitulate the names of my forefathers and recall their majesty. My birth with this body drawn through a blessings of that dynasty, will be justified and its purpose fulfilled if I describe them, while in this body to this vast gathering."

Janaka stood prayerfully before all. Vasishtha agreed and gave the permission sought. Janaka then began the narration: "Brahmarshi! Revered Preceptors! Maharaja Dasaratha! In the very distant past there was an emperor named Nimi, who adhered firmly to the path of righteousness and who was therefore famous for might and foresight. His son Mithi built this City Mithila to serve as the capital for this kingdom. He was the first sovereign of this region. His reign was very popular and his subjects were happy and prosperous under him. His son Sudhavasu had a son Nandivardhana who ruled after him. Nandivardhana's son was Sukethu and Sukethu's son was Devaratha. Brhadhratha, was the son of Devaratha, and Mahavira was the name of the son of Brhadhratha. Mahavira had, as his name indicates vast prowess. His son Sudhrthi had a son called Dhrshtakethu. Dhrshtakethu was celebrated for his unparalleled courage. Dhrshtakethu's son was Haryaswa; Haryaswa had a son named Maru: Maru's son was Pratheendhaka; Pratheendhaka's son was Keerthiratha. This Keerthiratha had a son named Devameedha. Devameedha's son was Vibudha; Vibudha's son was called Mahindraka and Mahindraka's son was Keerthiraatha; Keerthiraatha's son was Maharoma and Maharoma's son was named Swarnaroma. Swarnaroma's son was Hrsvarupa. He was a talented ruler, a strict adherent of Dharma He was acclaimed as a Mahatma.

He is my father; I am indeed very happy to acknowledge that my father was an ideal personage. The truth is: I am now ruling happily over this Mithila City as a result of the merit acquired and handed down as heritage to me by my fore-fathers.

My brother Kusadhwaja is much more to me than a brother. I revere him as a divine personality. He is more of a friend to me. I brought him up with such love and affection that I have developed great attachment to him. Years ago, when the King of Sankasya demanded that I should yield the Bow of Siva to him or else, meet him in battle I refused and he laid siege to Mithila City. This was the signal for a bitter war between us during which Sudhanva was killed and I made my brother the ruler of Sankasya. That City is shining bright on the banks of the Ikshumathi River. Seen from afar, it reminds one of the Celestial Chariot of the Gods, famous as

the Pushpaka Vimana! Let me tell you now of another auspicious idea that the Gods have inspired in me. Well.

I have brought him here today, so that he might share in the joy of the wedding celebrations. Brahmarshi! You commanded that Rama wed Sita and Lakshmana wed Urmila, the other daughter of mine. I accept the command with immeasurable joy. Sita is a celestial damsel and she will wed Rama as the Hero's Gift! I shall bow my head in all humility and gladness and giveaway Urmila to Lakshmana.

I have another representation to, make here for your consideration. Maharaja Dasaratha! You have four gems as sons, all born of the same heavenly gift of Grace. Why allow two to remain single? It will contribute to our happiness fully if they two are wedded. It is the asterism of Magha today. This is a good day to commence the rites and have the preliminary ceremonials. The day after under the asterism Uttaraphalgun, I seek your assent to gift the two daughters of my brother, Mandavi to Bharata and Sruthakeerthi to Satrugna in marriage.” At this every one in the huge gathering acclaimed the proposal exclaiming Subham! Subham! (Most welcome! Most welcome!) Their applause rent the sky.

(To be continued)

Sing the Glory

Here comes the Morning Star! The day intends to dawn!
Awake from deep slumber and sing with birds the song!
The World is Paradise now since Sathya Sai has come!
Redeemed is all mankind, from sin sorrow and pain.

He came in every age, and conferred man courage;
Let us listen to His voice! It frees, fulfils.
O God has come again, to lead and liberate!
His boundless Love does bring Him down to bless.

You and I are graced; we breathe the air He breathes
We behold; we can hold, His voice in happy ears,
We Learn what He teaches; we strive to walk
The Path he trails, to the Goal He sets.

Beside us, our Guide. He ever resides!
Call on Him 'Sai'! He is *seen* in a trice!
Act as He asks, He reacts quick!
His charm you can see in flower gem and wing!

His Love is the sky under which we live!
His Power is the wheel that moves our blood.

His Wisdom sustains the Universe from age to age!
His Grace is the treasure we must acquire.

—Vivian Joseph

Society the Reality

A Message

Wherever men gather with a purpose into a society, there, you perceive the Divine the Sath, Chith and Ananda! A personality has arisen; a clearer clash of reason is evident; a deeper joy fills the hearts. Immerse yourselves in them.

This is real spiritual endeavour; not pining in solitude or revelling in the breaking of bonds with others of your kind, priding on your independence! Be with others; in others; for others. Be, with all, for all, in all.

But, nevertheless, be unattached, be the unfailing source of Love. Therein lies success in spiritual endeavour, the triumph of spiritual discipline. Thus is the Sai in you manifested; thus is the world fostered; thus is the heart purified enough to install Sai within.

There are questions raised; of what relation is society and social ties with spirit and its glory? Of what relation is the spirit and its glory with society and its tangles and trickeries. Such questions arise from erring minds.

Spiritual endeavour must aim at individual illumination, social betterment and the divinisation of the human community. This is extremely urgent and essential. While in society, the divinity inherent in man can blossom more quickly, more widely, more fragrantly. You recognise the world, but, not God who is immanent in it! So too, you see the individual but, not the corpus that is immanent in society.

Of course, Society is not another concrete composite collective body! It is the expansion and expression of the Divine in each of its components, denotable and enjoyable as One. Society is the awareness of this cognisable Divinity. So, the one should not flee from the many; the, individual is not harmed by society. The one should rather see the many in a new light—the light which reveals that society is but God, who activates and prompts the composite whole. The one is rendered fuller by association with the many: he gains by losing himself in the many! All men are kith and kin, one family, one aspiration, one attempt at one acquisition. They are all equally Divine, all form the Universal Body of the One God. All are heirs to the Ananda that this awareness can give. Of course, Society does not happen when people gather by chance, or get together with no common goal of good. The many-faceted skills and intelligences that are contributed by the many must flow pure and clear, untarnished by egoistic desires along the channel of the spirit; then, they will feed the roots of truth and goodness; they will ensure peace. For, all ideas of high and low will disappear. This is the criterion for a stable strong sweet society; not, mere numbers. Be conscious of the God in each and in all; then, inner equality will

impress each so indelibly that the awareness will stay undisturbed. Santhi will reign in each and all.

Understand the Atma or God which is your core; that will establish Santhi in you and you can share that Santhi with others. What can you give others, if your hearts are empty?

Do you intend to be in society? Do you crave to serve it and be served by it? Then, seek the God in all; see the same in all. Yearn to worship that God by self-less service. That alone makes you a true limb of society. If you feel separate, distinct, outside and beyond society, you will run after name and fame, you will be enslaved by hate and partiality, and ruined in the end. So, cast out those evil attitudes; feel that you are giving society what is its due, offering God His own gift of skill and intelligence. Vow to serve, to dedicate. Cultivate Love; society is the reflection of the God you adore, the God whose nature is Ananda. Transform yourself into Love, and become Ananda.

Adore society as the Divine Body; that is the Truth, the eternal Vision.

—Baba

The Miracle

—Solomon Benjamin

The nature of miracles performed by an Avatar is sometimes not understood even by learned pandits and expounders of Upanishads and Gita. But, let us see if the Bhagavad Gita itself gives us any direction as to the nature of an Avatar.

The Gita tells us that God takes over a human form for establishing Dharma on a sound footing. The form God takes over is called an Avatar and thus any miracles the Avatar performs are acts of God. Is not the taking over of the human form, a miracle of the highest order? God as we know is the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer. Thus whatever the Avatar creates or does is but the natural act of God, though we call it a miracle.

God as we know is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient: so is an Avatar. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, I know all beings, past as well as present, nay, even those who are yet to come, but none (devoid of faith and reverence) knows Me." If therefore Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba tells you your past, present or future you consider it a miracle though He considers it His natural behaviour.

Then again Sri Krishna says, Who-so-ever offers Me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water. I appear in person before that disinterested devotee of purified intellect and delightfully partake of that article offered by him with love " This shows the Avatar's omnipresence. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba too appears at a devotee's house hundreds of miles away, though bodily present at Prasanthi Nilayam. We call this a miracle, though it is but His natural behaviour.

We have in the Gita an example of an Avatar's Omnipotence when He appears before Arjuna endowed with numerous arms faces and eyes and having infinite forms extended on all sides; again when He is seen endowed with a diadem, mace and Chakra, is mass of splendour shining all round, having the brilliance of a blazing fire and sun, dazzling and immeasurable on all sides. If we believe in what is stated in the Gita we cannot but come to the one and only conclusion that performance of miracles is as natural to the Avatars as eating and drinking is to us.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba tells us "Why did Krishna raise the Govardhana Hill and keep it aloft? It was to announce His Truth and His Nature, to install Faith and to implant Courage. It is just a sign as each one of My Acts is. There is no task which I cannot accomplish, remember no weight I cannot lift. You have faith in Rama and Krishna because of the books which describe a part of their achievements and the experience of the Sadhakas who attempted to delve into their mystery. You have not demanded direct proofs of Divinity from either Rama or Krishna. Have faith first and then you will get proof enough."

Let us remember that not even a millionth part of what Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba does to help his devotees or to alleviate their suffering is known to us or is on record. If you wish to experience His miracles or get his help, He needs only three things—Faith, Sincerity and Surrender. When these are forthcoming, his help is assured.

Parched Rice

Balarama and Krishna—two Lads were sent
By teacher into forest fierce—for fuel's sake.
Caught in the night, they hid and braved
Till Teacher and friend did seek them out!
I am hungry, said little Krishna; he acted well!
The friend had brought a handful or two
Of parched rice; he gave it all; He ate His fill!
Years later, when Krishna ruled the Dwarka realm
Kuchel the friend grown old and poor, did dare!
Offered the self-same stuff, one handful, now!
Krishna the Lord did relish it as of yore
And Grace unbounded the friend did win from God!

—Story as narrated by Baba

The Mother Festival

Parasakthi

"The One Parasakthi, it is said, is worshipped in three Forms, as Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati, for three days each, during the Navarathri (Nine Nights) Festival." "But, these are not distinct concrete individuals, with natures reminiscent of human characteristics, with consorts and children, and a history of mutual recriminations and conflicts, as many Puranic narratives attempt to depict! These stories bring them down to the level of human foibles; they hoist on them the yokes you are burdened with, and drag them through the same tangle of joys and griefs! Man has three Shaktis, (capabilities)—Icchashakti; Kriyashakti and Jnanashakti; these are adored as Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, and Mahasaraswati, which are propitiated and cultivated by Puja."

Bhagavan explained the significance of Navarathri from this elevated point of view in the short discourse, which he vouchsafed prior to unfurling the Prasanthi Flag on the Prasanthi Nilayam, at 7 A.M., on the 20th September. He said that the rays of the morning sun had bathed both earth and sky in golden hue, as proclaimed in the Vedas which spoke of Hiranyagarbha, as the Dawn of the Cosmos. He castigated institutions and individuals that decry the celebration of holy festivals, deride holy men, and undermine faith and charity among mankind. India which was for long the Guru of Humanity has to day fallen into the mire of falsehood and deceit, faction and fear, hatred and cruelty, because the forces of resistance keeping these evils at bay have weakened. If only man is aware that he is the indestructible Atma, nothing can disturb or destroy his peace and equanimity: nothing can shatter his courage and confidence," said Baba.

The Supreme Healer

At 5 P.M. on the 20th, the Sathya Sai Hospital celebrated its Fifteenth Annual Day, in the Divine Presence of Baba and with Dr. K Kanwar, M. B. B. S., D. C. H., M. R. C. P, F. R. F. P. S., F. I. C. A., of New Delhi as the President. Dr. Kanwar spoke of Baba as the Greatest Healer of all Times and of himself as an instrument in His Hands. He described many cures effected by means of prayer to Baba. His Grace was communicated, he said through even 'chance' remarks or gestures. Many cases of cancer, 'blue' ness of babies, and other medically incurable maladies were given by him in detail, in order to convince the listeners of the Divinity of Bhagavan. Doctors have to learn humility and reverence so that they may win Grace and be more useful for the patients, he said.

Yoga and Bhoga

Baba said that man has become addicted to medicine which makes him more and more dependent on pills, tablets injections and tonics for strength and survival. "Your life must find its finale through Yoga, not through roga (disease) contracted through bhoga (fast life)." He detailed various rules of good food habits, for ensuring purity of air and water. He quoted his own example when he recommended less consumption of food, and feeding only at regular intervals and fixed timings.

Why a hospital?

"You may ask, why has Baba established a Hospital, when He has Divya Sakthi, with which he is preserving and promoting the health of his devotees, curing as was said now, cases pronounced incurable? This same question was asked me by Page, Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and my answer has been quoted by him in an article published this month! He asked Why does Swami establish Colleges Hospitals Seva Samithis etc.? The answer is: Why does a flower scatter fragrance all around? It is its nature; it cannot but. The compassion of the Avatar affects all problems. Individuals, families, communities; states nations, the world— wherever there is any obstacle of whatever nature or dimension, to spiritual progress, the Grace of the Avatar will be administered, in appropriate measure in the most beneficial form.

Colleges

This Avatar has come for Dharma sthapanam (the establishment of righteous living), and, therefore, the field of education has to receive attention. Vidya dadaathi vinayam: Education bestows humility. Pandithaah samadarsinah: Scholars see equality. These are Vedic dicta; but, now, education breeds arrogance and scholarship only sharpens the fangs of pride and hatred. There is no Vinayam amongst the students and no samadarshanam amongst the Pandits. Reverence and discipline have fled from schools and colleges. Therefore, Vidyalayas have to be established by the Avatar to pave the way for Dharma striking roots in the hearts of youth. There is no do's and don'ts for the Avatar. He is His own will, His own master, His own Guide. To discuss why He does this or why He does not do the other thing is to announce that you have not understood the principle of Avatar-hood! The Hospital has to cater to the whims of those who have more faith in the needle than in Vibhuti.

Friend of the forlorn

Believe that God is the saviour of those who have none to console or cure them; He is the friend of the forlorn. Dedicate yourselves to God; dedicate all your thoughts acts words to God; live in and through God. Dr. Kanwar said that the doctors at the Hospital have humility and love; he prayed that I may grant him humility and love towards his colleagues and the patients who approach him for relief. This Hospital serves this purpose also; it introduces patients to the Anandanilaya, that is to say, the Ananda that the Prasanthi Nilayam confers; it introduces the doctors also to the guide lines of loving service that are in the atmosphere here."

Baba then exhorted the gathering to pay great attention to their health and physical fitness since, "you have chances to experience the supreme thrill of witnessing much grander glories of Swami in the coming year more numerous and more widespread than hitherto."

The 21st Day

On the 21st September, about ten thousand people were fed sumptuously, Bhagawan Himself serving them the sweets lovingly prepared under His Personal supervision. About a thousand saris and an equal number of dhotis were then distributed to the defective and debilitated among them, by the Mother of Baba and others, duly commissioned by His Blessings.

Yajna

On the 23rd, the Vedapurusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna was inaugurated at 9 P. M., with great élat, by Bhagavan. Scholars and rthwiks from far and near had assembled and, Baba allotted

each of them their duties in the Yajna. Baba entered the Yajna Mantapa, in procession, with students of the Sathya Sai College for Boys and their junior companions from the Veda-sastra-Pathashala together, playing the Orchestral Band, a party of musicians from Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh) playing their mediaeval melodies, the Pundits and Veda Students reciting Vedic hymns, and the magnificently caparisoned elephant, Sai Gita, leading the way. At the Mantap, before initiating the Yajna, Bhagavan spoke about the significance of the Vedapurusha Yajna to the vast gathering, so that they may better appreciate the ancient rite. "This Yajna and all other Yajnas are only symbols and reminders of the essential duty of sacrifice of Self. The recitation of the Vedas, the prayers to Devi, to Surya, to Siva and to other forms of Godhead, as well as the reading of the sacred texts are all intended to cleanse the heart. For, the mantras invite God to install Himself therein. It teaches man to engage himself in all karma in the spirit of Yajna (sacrifice).

Life as Yajna

You find here, a sacrificial altar; but, consider the physical body in which you are encased, as the altar. The material world you live on and live by is the oblation. Bhakthi and Jnana are the flames of the sacred fire that rise to receive and sanctify the oblations. The Purushothama—God in you and in all others is the adored, the appeased, the Consecrated Person. So, believe that all acts thoughts words emanating from you are oblations offered to God. Sublimate living itself into a Vedapurusha Yajna.”

(To be continued)

A Message

Time is fleeting like a fast moving wind. The Body is melting away from moment to moment like a block of ice. And, Man is discarding his mortal body without performing his duty.

If human life does no more than, being born, brought up and die, then what is its achievement? What is the fruit of all the effort? Is this the use to which the education and training that man acquires are put?

Why should one make a special effort to acquire such qualities if it is only to know what is already known. One should use one's intelligence to know what we do not know.

The beasts and the birds too eat and sleep: they express fear and love in the same manner as men do. The differences are only in appearance and in name; the desire and the passion, are the same for man and beast.

How can we then establish the uniqueness of man? In spite of the fact that wisdom and judgement are special gifts to man by God, if man does not draw upon such gifts of what use is it to proclaim the sanctity of the human species? What is the use of claiming supremacy? There is no sense in such pride. To relate one's actions with one's utterances and to relate one's utterances with one's thoughts is to be human. If on the other hand, there is no correspondence between one's utterances, one's actions and one's thoughts, the individual can be only a min in outer shade; truly, he is devoid of all title to life.

Your hearts should be filled with compassion towards all living beings. You should fill suffering hearts with Prema. You should radiate thoughts that can generate Ananda.

The heart is like the overhead tank. Actions are like taps. Whatever quality of water is used to fill the tanks, only such will flow out of the taps. Fill the heart with Prema; then, Ananda flows from the taps. It will reach the world around us.

The utterance of Tukaram, "Dil ka Ram; Hath ka Kam" should be regarded as the motto of life. Prema is the main pillar of the Sai teaching. Life should be filled with Prema. The world should be looked at with Prema. Society should be contacted with Prema. Fulfillment of one's life should trough Prema.

Prema alone is God. Prema alone is Life. There is no living without Prema. Life devoid of Prema is equivalent to death. Life filled with Prema is Ananda. Life without Prema is sorrow, Prema is festivity. Absence of Prema is mourning. Prema is fearlessness. Absence of Prema is fear. Prema is the messenger of good. Absence of Prema is the harbinger of death.

Man should aim at being Siva and not behave like Yama. Man should become himself fearless; he should not frighten all around him. To strike terror is the nature of the hunter beast! To be afraid is the nature of the hunted animal. Man is neither a hunter beast nor a hunted animal. He should neither cause terror nor lie afraid. He should saturate Life with Prema.

—Baba

Birthday Bells

Hark! The Parthi Bells are ringing
Echoing o'er land and sea and sky!

The Sun is hurrying up the hills
Lest He be late with Light;
The stars—they linger in the sky
They'd rather stay and watch!
The moon is peeping Crescent-eyes
To glimpse the Glorious scene.
The clouds are dressed in burnished gold;
The sky has chosen pink and blue
The peaks that stand around
Are happy in home-made green!

Since dawn, the lambs are frisking
And every tree is full of glee.
Each leafy twig is loud with song
E'en the lowly blade of grass
Has a lovely diamond in her ear!
Proudest of the feathered throng
Is the Dove, He frees this morn
The crow, shooed off from perch to perch
Is unafraid, unashamed, this day!
It caws in raucous joy! —Unharméd!

The bees do, take a holiday;
The morning flowers are His, untouched.
Sai Gita is full of gratitude
To the trap which orphaned her,
For she could hear the Bells today
And, bow before the Lord!

The sands do shine and scintillate
To win the tramp of pilgrim feet.
The very air is tingling
With God and Man, commingling.

—Kasturi

He Transcends Laws of Science

—Dr. S. Bhagavantham; M. A., D. Sc.

A near Agnostic

It may be of interest for people to know how a person with my rationalist scientist background and training has come to be involved in spiritual matters and come to be involved in what Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been doing and saying. I wish to tell you how I passed through various stages in my contact with Sri Baba, so that each one may judge what he or she might have done under similar circumstances. For long, I was very nearly an agnostic: that was the outer cover which I had come to wear by my education, contacts, logic and training.

Another near Agnostic

About 15 years ago, I came into contact with Sri Baba. I was then the Director of The Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. I got a telephone message from Sathavadhani Velury Sivarama Sastry an aged relation who was also a very near agnostic. He told me that he was in Bangalore and added that he was living in a small house with a great person and was under great difficulties. I invited him to come and stay with me. He replied that he could not come without the permission of the person with whom he stayed. I said, "If there is anyone in this world whose permission you would care to obtain for coming, then I must certainly see him." I knew this relation of mine never cared for any body's order.

First Contact

In that context I first went to Sai Baba with whom, my cousin was staying I spoke to him as I would have spoken with anyone else. Then I asked my cousin to come along with me. Baba said he would also come along with my cousin to my house. I behaved like an agnostic and did not say even 'Namaste'. I did not think of touching his feet, as many would do as soon as they come into his presence. My strange behaviour in Baba's presence must have made him say to himself, "I shall tackle this man."

A Thousand Suns

A year later my cousin and I happened to walk along with Baba on the banks of the 'Chitravathi! That was a full moon night. He walked and walked. Baba said, 'Shall we sit here?' I replied "Baba, if You wish." "No, we shall sit if you want to sit here," said Baba. I wondered why he wanted to make me choose the place. We moved a little further. We finally sat at the place chosen by me on the river sands. There were about a hundred devotees who followed us.

Baba, then, started telling me that scientists have a distorted outlook on life and always looked at things which are of a transient nature. He held us responsible for all the destructive weapons. He ended up with a question, "Do you believe in God? Do you believe in the Indian Traditions?" I felt provoked by Baba's remarks.

"Why should one become a Scientist to become ungodly? There are many non-scientists who are ungodly. I am proud of our traditions." I said. "My fathers and forefathers were all Sanskrit scholars and they respected Indian traditions." I began quoting the distinguished American scientist Oppenheimer. When the first Atom Bomb was exploded in New Mexico, pressmen

surrounded, him and asked to express his reaction. Oppenheimer quoted one passage from the Indian scripture, 'Bhagavad Gita'.

"It is like one thousand suns all of them shining at the same time in the sky." The light generated by the atomic explosion could be compared to the splendid vision which Arjuna had of the Lord. "Baba, if an American scientist with no Indian background quoted from an Indian text at the greatest moment of highest scientific achievement, why do you blame scientists as ungodly?"

Sand as Scripture

On the sands of Chitravati during this my earliest confrontation with Baba he questioned me, "Do you believe in Bhagavadgita? Would you read Gita if I give you one?" I said, "I would not make a fetish of reading it every day but would certainly treasure it." Baba said, "Well, stretch your hands." He took a handful of sand from the riverbank and put it in my hand. To my utter amazement the sand turned into a small text of the Bhagavadgita! You can imagine my feelings. I am a rational man, a near agnostic, I would not accept anything without a proper scientific explanation. I argued within myself that the printed text must have come out of some Press located at some place. Even in that bewilderment, I asked Baba where that book was printed. Baba replied, "It was printed at Sai Press! I have chosen Telugu script because it will be easier for you to read."

Rising Faith

He did several other things that night which completely swept me off my feet and Baba turned to me and questioned what I could say about them as a scientist. Baba knows very well that I have no belief. So he has made me choose the place on the sands. If he had chosen the place, I myself would have inferred and told every one that he had hidden the book under the sand some time ago. Baba knew my agony, because I struggled hard to find an explanation.

One day I introduced the late Dr. K. S. Krishnan to Baba and told him that Krishnan was a distinguished Physicist. Baba folded up his shirtsleeve. It looked as though Baba was going to wrestle with him! But actually Baba was going to produce some thing and present it to Krishnan. He did not want Dr Krishnan to think that he was getting it up from his sleeve, or from somewhere.

Diamond Necklace

On another occasion, we were sitting with Baba on a beach. Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, the former Governor of Kerala was also present along with a dozen devotees Baba was younger and more accessible at that time. Like a child he played with the waves and asked us to mention synonyms of Samudra. Some one said Ratnagiri and another said Ratnakara. Baba remarked "If he is Ratnakara, he must give us Ratnas." I, standing close to Baba said, "He will, if you wish." Baba smilingly looked at me, took some water into his palm from the rushing waves and it turned into a small diamond necklace or Ratnahara, I was in a mood to find an explanation for this or I must surrender.

No problem for Him

It was a critical moment. It was a small necklace and it would not go on Baba's head which is big. I wanted to create a problem for Baba, when he said, "What shall we do with it?" I remarked, "Baba you have created it and you should wear it!" It was a small necklace and at best it could go on a child's head. Baba looked at me and smiled, "You want to create a problem for me," and held it back, expanded it with the touch of his hand and put it round his neck.

He looked at me again and asked, "Have you anything to say about this?" Well, there is nothing to say about it. The most uncharitable way of interpreting it would be to say that he is doing some magic, that he has brought the necklace from somewhere. The problem I wanted to create for him was solved in a twinkle. It was my good fortune that he took me on hand and created situations that would answer all the questions which were troubling my mind and lead me forward.

Torn Poems

I recall another instance: I and my cousin (who was a poet and who is now no more) were sitting in Baba's room. My cousin was a reputed poet and he wrote some poems on Baba. But Baba did not say whether they were good or bad. My cousin felt very much hurt, as he was a proud man. While we came out he said, "Oh. Bhagavantham, this is no good," and tore off and threw away the papers. The next morning we met Baba again. He enquired about the poems.

Empty ink Bottle

My cousin said he tore off the paper. Baba said: I will dictate the poems, bring the ink bottle from the window and take down. It was intended for me, because I wondered what we could do with the empty inkbottle. It cannot be an individual illusion because both of us have seen the empty bottle. As my cousin brought the empty bottle from the window to the place where we were sitting, it started getting filled with ink! By the time he reached the place where were sitting, the bottle was filled with ink! Surely this cannot be through the process of pouring ink into it. Till then I was doubting whether Baba was bringing things from some other place. It cannot be so in this instance.

All kinds of men

On one Mahasivaratri day I stood in Prasanthi Nilayam and looked at the thousands of devotees who poured into the little village. There were people of all sorts, rich and poor, young and old, highly placed and ordinary. Some might have come to see the Tamasha. Soma considered themselves cleverer than all others and wanted to expose any humbug. I was wondering why so many people came there ready to undergo difficulties.

He knew it all

Those who could afford to stay in luxury in Bombay or Delhi came to Prasanthi Nilayam and were ready to spread their beds under the trees. As this thought passed through my mind, Baba came that way and I offered Namaskar. At once Baba remarked, "I do not know why so many rich and big people come here and face so many troubles." Baba spoke what exactly I had been feeling.

On another occasion a Norwegian and I were staying in a room. He was discussing with an Indian friend why Rama shot Vali, hiding himself behind a tree. I intervened in their discussion and said that Rama is the embodiment of Dharma. "Ramo Vighrahan Dharmaha." According to Indian traditional view what Rama does is right. Within ten minutes the meeting at which Baba spoke started; and half way through the speech Baba used the same quotation to my great astonishment.

The Jewel

When Baba performs Mahabhishekam Baba gets the idol of Shirdi Sainath placed on the platform and gets it cleaned. From a wooden vase which is empty, Baba materialises large quantities of Vibhuti and showers upon the idol. On that occasion Baba produced a jewel by the wave of his hand and fixed it on the brow of the idol. I and my Norwegian friend discussed in our room, which was two hundred yards away, how the jewel could be fixed on dry metallic surface. Halfway through his speech that evening Baba, referred to people who wondered how the jewel could be fixed on the idol's brow and said that it is not difficult for the Power that created the jewel to fix it where it pleased. How could Baba come to know of a conversation that took place in our room?

Divinity

I felt I should accept these incidents as they do not submit themselves to known laws of physics and chemistry. What I have seen cannot be explained by logic, laws, methods and methodology of Science. They are superhuman, transcendental and divine.

One cannot expound Divinity; because, one has to experience it. That experience cannot be communicated just as abstract feelings cannot be conveyed in a convincing manner. The love between a mother and son cannot be communicated with the same intensity to others. After three or four years of doubt and questioning I have come to accept Baba's actions as those that transcend the known laws of science. Though discoveries of science have added a great deal to our knowledge, they have also added to our awareness of what we do not know. The landing on the Moon has revealed that the Earth and the Moon are of the same age and both might have a common source. It is a remarkable truth that will keep us busy for years.

Soon or late a moment arrives in every man's life through shock of death of near and dear ones, disastrous disappointment of ambition or a total change of fortune, when he realises that there is a Divinity that guides and shapes our destinies. During such moments people turn to Baba. In an extraordinary way he handles people. Some nuts hard to crack go to the interview room and come out with tears in their eyes. They cannot describe what has come over them. Even when Baba grants interviews to five hundred people on a single day, even the last man comes out with supreme joy and happiness. If I interview ten people at a stretch the eighth or the ninth man will get a raw deal at my hands. To infuse joy and happiness into so many hearts is tremendously superhuman.

Priceless Gift

On one occasion, Baba created a vessel and filled it with sweet liquid. He asked me to hold it and began to distribute it to people with a little spoon. I thought it would be sufficient for fifty

people. Even after it was distributed by Baba to five hundred people, one full bottle of sweet liquid remained in the vessel and he asked me to carry it to the members of my family.

The college at Anantapur is a concrete manifestation of something superhuman. At an enormous cost of forty lakhs of rupees within a record time of ten months, Baba has reared a structure which is good enough for a University. Who did all this work? Where have the funds come from? It is all touch and go, touch and go. If you want to see divinity in action you can find a concrete instance at Anantapur. It is something beyond the pale of human reason and mortal prowess. But there will always be people who can explain away anything as due to this or due to that.

"Yad bhavam tad bhavati." We receive but what we give and we perceive what we choose to find. The achievements of Baba, his ministration to distressed hearts, his priceless gifts are beyond the normal levels of explanation.

Thy Tool

How can i thank Thee? Lord!
What will Thou accept?
Surely Thy treasures
are endless, Thy wealth immeasurable!
What would Thou ask of me?
i have no wealth, nor dost Thou
need it, ask for it;
i bear no gift; Thou ownest all;
and Thou hast claimed me long ago!
long, long ago,
Thou hast put me among
the garlands at Thy Feet!
and, my offering is Thy name
upon my breath. Use me Lord
as Thy tool for Thy unequalled craft,
work me, wear me thin
let me fade away into Thy Will.

—*Philip Schwartz*

Let us go to Parthi

Let us go where children are singing
And the mountains are echoing back!
Where the breeze of ecstasy

Is anxious to soothe and cure.
Where the Mansion of Peace and Love
Is towering majestic and high,
Where on glistening peak of grandeur
His Flag does flutter in the blue.

Let us go where prayers are winging
Through sorrow, sigh and groan
To the Feet of the Gracious Lord.
Where the charm of heaven is springing
O'er miles of flowery glade;
Where the wind, heavy with incense,
Lies dozing beneath the trees
And the path, through bush and briar,
Leads all to the Gate of His Glory.
Let us go where hearts are clinging
In tender bonds of deepest Love
Where soft, the word! sweet, the smile
And, broad the way that leads to Him.
Where the Eden air is ringing
With the music of many a land
And the roar of turbulent waters
Is stilled in turbines of might and light.

Let us go, with thousands, bringing
Damaged hearts for rightening;
Where raging waves are tranquil
And the tongues of flame are cool,
Where chains falloff the pilgrim feet
And sordid heights made smooth.

—*Taraka*

Looking Back on Puttaparthi

In the "Abode of Peace," Baba rakes your hand and guides you down the river, to his heavenly Ocean of Bliss. He initiates souls into his Garden of Eden.

So, in Puttaparthi, one sits under the green wings of a father tree, feeling the delicate love of the moon dancing through the leaves down to earth. Meanwhile, a column of women praising God in song and awakening the Light that sleeps in human hearts, glides slowly by. Whitewashed walls, swept roads; trimmed trees; song and shadow: saris and shawls; soothing the shaky senses, beautifying the timeless day that comes.

Then, the ever-faithful birds join the adoration, the flamingoes the mynahs, the parrots and the cuckoos throng around; doves coo and crows caw in joy. The crescendo of crickets herald the dawn of Love. Baba's Candle is lit in the East, and the day dons the colours of Truth and Love. The blood squirted on the clouds turns into orange and gold. His swirling Royal banner prompts His children to chant in gratitude.

The misty mauve mountain, the lilac cloud, the temple of man's heart-all have awaited the love and light of the Sun, the halo of Baba to catch the sunbeams of wisdom, to soak up the rays of brotherhood and to drink the golden purity of shadow-less Light.

And so, all wait! Waits the flower, radiant as a mirrored sun. Waits the infant, radiant with cherubic smile. Waits the youth radiant as a poem at the tip of a sage's pen.

So Baba: anoints the day, drawing the cascading streams to his ocean of goodwill and grace, making this Puttaparthi, (this ancient settlement, lost in stony wilderness, our Brindavan,) echo the far-sung flute. In Puttaparthi, Truth shines as a pillar of Light; peace reigns; Love leaps from heart. Nature is a banquet of bliss; brother-hood is the blood stream. We pray for strength and shed tears, out of irrepressible joy and gratefulness—for, Baba has made us heirs of his World of Eternal Happiness, of his garden Divine, tended by him through centuries sublime.

—Anthony

Om Tatt Sat

The driver is on the engine of the train; the engine moves and all the coaches move in the direction, at the same speed along the same rails. Write down the number I and then draw as many zeroes as you like, after that digit. Each zero has a value now.

So too, have God first, let all your acts follow that consciousness; then, the journey of life will be smooth, safe and in the direction of Godhead.

So too, pronounce the Pranava first; let all other words come after. Pranava is the sign and symbol of the Infinite Eternal Absolute. It generates happy vibrations.

Om means the Parabrahmam, the Supreme All-inclusive Soul. Thath means It, He, The Unknown and the Unknowable. Sath means Pure Existence, in which all merge and from which all emerge.

Establish yourself in this Cosmic Truth, that the Universe is He of whom you are also a wave; then, life will be one song of bliss. 'Om thath Sath' is an assurance, an axiom. Have Om first, it is a Vision of Unity, of Peace, of joy, right through. Pandits insist that Om must be pronounced first, as in Om thath Sath. But, you will hear priests in temples and in shrines of homes repeating Om at the end, not at the beginning. They say, Kesaveya namah Om! Narayannya namah Om; Madhavaya namah Om! Awareness of the Guide and Guardian must

lead, not lag behind. Pranava, at the end of the adoration, instead of at the beginning of every prayer, will result in retrograde effects.

—Baba

Others

Baba, let me live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayer shall be for OTHERS

Help me in all the work I do
To ever be sincere and true
And know that all I do for you
Must need be done for OTHERS

Let `self' be crucified and slain
And buried deep: and all in vain.
May efforts be to rise again
Unless to live for OTHERS

And when my work on earth is done
And my new work in heaven's begun
May I forget the Crown I've won
While thinking still of OTHERS

Others, Lord, Yes, OTHERS
Let this my motto be,
Help me to live for OTHERS
That I may live like THEE.

Pranam

Brindavan

Sitting on s concrete island
Held in the ceaseless traffic
The road river roars.
Streams of petrol dance and sing
Yet no crows chatter in the breeze
With the rustling silver tree
As a million suns
Reflect

In a million windows
In a million eyes
The One Crystal Sun,
The permanent pulsating procession
Of people purrs;
The river rumbles and roars
Through the chrome shimmering city sea!
Follow the signs and fences,
Follow the Ways of the Garden,
Follow the neon flashing lights
And, inherit your Own.

—Anthony, Berwick St. John

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22

When Emperor Janaka made this new suggestion about the marriages of both Bharatha and Satrughna, the sages Vasishta, Vamadeva, Viswamitra and others gathered and deliberated for a long time. They made Dasaratha assent and then, informed Janaka thus: "O King! The two Royal Clans, the Ikshvaku and the Videha are filled with holy traditions, the sanctity of which is beyond the measurement of any man. The greatness of these two dynasties cannot be calculated and described by any one, however learned or proficient he might be. Dynasties of this high status have not appeared on earth before, nor any that can be pronounced equal to them in nobility. It is indeed a very auspicious event of great augury that these two are now brought together by these bonds of marriage.

This is highly appropriate, laudable, and holy. In addition, we are glad that the brides and grooms are all equally charming and good, fit in every way for each other Janaka! Your brother, Kusadhvaja is one who knows and practises Dharma. It is really goof that he ton should become related to Dasaratha through the marital bond of his daughters. It is a source of immense joy.

Hence, we are ready to arrange the marriages off his daughters Mandavi and Shrutakirti with Bharatha and Satrughna. Our wish has been that both these Royal dynasties should be tightly bound by these marriages.

When Vasishta and Viswamitra spoke like this on behalf of the sages, Janaka and Kusadhvaja fell prostrate before the sages overcome with delight at their wish having been fulfilled. "This is no ordinary event! How fortunate we both are that we have been blessed with this consummation! How lucky that the sages agreed to this proposal and eased the path! The sages will never encourage inauspicious happenings. We shall reverentially execute your commands," they said.

Vasishtha then said, "No. Why should we postpone these two weddings to the day after or some day later? Tomorrow is auspicious for all. It will be very good if all four weddings are celebrated on the same day" Janaka replied, "I am blessed, indeed! Worthy Preceptor! Emperor Dasaratha has been since long your disciple, executing whatever you commanded. We brothers too, from this day, are your disciples. All our burdens are on your shoulders; direct us, how to proceed, how to act; we shall unquestioningly follow"! They stood awaiting his reply, with hands folded in utter humility and reverence.

At this, Dasaratha rose and said, "Ruler of Mithila! The virtues I find in you two I cannot describe in words! You have made excellent arrangements for the stay and reception of such a magnificent array of Maharajas and Maharishis, as well as of the vast mass of people who have thronged in this City. I shall go back to my residence now and carry on the rites of Nandi and Samavarthana, and see that they are done in full concordance with Veer prescription."

The brothers honoured him duly as he emerged out of the hall and took leave of him at the main entrance as befitted his status. They then went into their own palaces in order to fulfill their assignments.

Dasaratha performed the Nandi rite; early in the day he made all the four sons perform the Samavarthana rite. He fixed golden ornaments on the horns of cows and they were given away to pious brahmins, along with costly vessels for milking them. It was a feast for the eye, the scene when the boys gave the cows away! The citizens of Mithila felt as if the Deities of the four quarters were before them with Brahma in their midst; the four sons around Dasaratha appeared so to them.

While this cow-gift was going on, Yudhajit the Prince of the Kekayas arrived. He was the brother of Kaikadevi, the mother of Bharatha. After witnessing the ceremony and conversing with the elders, he informed Dasaratha that his father was yearning to have his grandson, Bharatha for some time with him and so, he had hurried to Ayodhya, where he learnt that the Royal family had left for Mithila for the marriage of Rama. His father, he said, had no knowledge of the wedding of Rama. He too had no idea that it was happening. So, he had come over to Mithila. Since he could witness the marriage and also communicate the desire of the grandfather to have the grandson with him for some time. Dasaratha was glad that he could come; he was glad that Bharatha's uncle was present, as a result of the mission on which he was sent.

That night, Dasaratha spoke endearingly to his sons and others on a variety of happy topics. No one in camp slept. Every one was impatiently awaiting the dawn of the happy day, when each could witness the wedding ceremony of their dear little princes. Each one was overwhelmed with joy as if his own son was the bridegroom or his own child, the bride: Their Ananda can be compared only to Brahmananda; that was the measure of their love towards Rama and -his brothers.

Early in the morning, Janaka proceeded to the Special Dais on which the rituals of the wedding were to be gone through; he was accompanied by the splendour showering group of sages. He then completed the preliminary rites and was awaiting the arrival of the bridegrooms

and their parents and kinsmen. Rama Lakshmana Bharatha and Satrughna had their ceremonial baths; they wore yellow silken dresses; they had silk wound, round their heads; they were bedecked with many ornaments studded with diamonds and sapphires; they held floral bouquets in their hands. Altogether they gave the impression that they were alluring, heart-captivating Gods just descended from Heaven.

The auspicious hour named Vijaya was drawing near and they approached the Dais preceded by musicians whose instruments struck up a melody that reached the dome of Heaven. The Councillors of the Court, the Feudatory Rulers, and their attendants followed them, carrying huge plates of jewels, silk clothes, gold wins, and other, auspicious articles essential for the ceremony.

The populace of Mithila gazed upon their splendour and beauty and prowess, without even a wink of the eye; they confided to each other that their charisma and dignity marked them out as Divine, and not human, as was commonly accepted. They exclaimed, "O, What Charm! What an upsurge of beauty!" Every one was filled with amazement. "They are denizens of heaven come down on earth," they whispered among themselves, as the bridegrooms passed between the thick rows of onlookers. Women swore that they had never cast their eyes on such charming princes. Every window and terrace was packed to overflowing. At last, the Princes reached the Dais and seated themselves.

Then Janaka and his brother, Kusadhwaja, brought their daughters to the Dais. They had been given ceremonial baths and elaborately and beautifully decorated as befitted brides on the wedding day; they wore veils, and followed their fathers with thousands of maids following them, carrying fruits and flowers, red and yellow pulverised fragrances, rice grains, jewels and gems. It teemed as if the treasures of Mithila were flowing silently in a scintillating stream behind the brides.

The four brides were shining like four lamps. They sat face-to-face, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna on one side and opposite them, Sita, Urmila, Mandavi and Shrutakirti. A velvet cloth was held as a screen between. The residents of Ayodhya and the nobles who had come from there sat behind Dasaratha and the residents of Mithila and those invited for the wedding ceremony by Janaka sat behind him on the elevated, dais.

The eyes of all were drawn by the elaborate artistic and rich decorations which distinguished the marriage shamiana. It was all gold, silver and flower and precious silk and velvet festoons and flags, candelabras, columns, arches and finials. One could not take the eye off any of these once it drew one's attention. The vast area was filled to overflowing with kinsmen and well-wishers. It looked as if Mithila itself was experiencing the thrill of the wedding and enjoying the celebrations as if they were her own.

Soon, Dasaratha rose and politely reminded the Preceptor Vasishta, "Why should we delay?" Hearing this, Janaka stood before Vasishta with folded arms, praying that he should himself officiate at the ceremony.

Vasishta agreed and with Viswamitra and the Court Preceptor of Janaka, Sathananda, accompanying him, he lit the sacred sacrificial Fire, in the centre of the Dais, while Vedic scholars and experts in Vedic recitation raised their voices and repeated Vedic hymns appropriate for the auspicious moment. The chant resounded from the skies.

They arranged around the altar of fire golden plates full of tender sprouts of nine species of grains decorated with flowers and sandal paste: there were incense burners, sacred spoons for offering oblations in the holy flames, golden water pots and cups, and such other articles essential for the rite. They spread the holy kusa grass thick on the floor, so that it lay level and smooth as laid down in the texts. Then, they began to pour oblations into the fire reciting the whole the hymns which assure happiness and prosperity to the brides and bridegrooms that are about to enter the ashram called grihastha. One after the other, every rite was gone through with meticulous accuracy and correctitude. The initiatory threads were tied on the wrists.

The next rite was, the rite of gifting the brides. Vasishta called upon Janaka to come forward; he came near the Sacred Fire Enclosure, dressed in regal splendour and wearing all the regal jewels.

As directed by Sage Vasishta, he held the hands of Sita, and placed them in the outstretched palms of Rama; his eyes streamed tears of joy; a coconut symbolising prosperity had already been placed in the palms of Rama and after Sita's hands rested on it, milk was poured on the hands by Janaka as part of the ceremony of gifting.

Janaka spoke these words to Rama at the time: "Rama! Here is Sita, my daughter. She will tread your Dharmic path from now on. Accept her. She brings prosperity, peace and joy. Hold her hand with yours. She is highly virtuous and true. From this moment, she is your shadow ever." With these words, he poured water on, to the hands of Rama, as a token of the gift.

Then he came near where Lakshmana was; he said, "Lakshmana! I am giving you this bride, Urmila; accept her" and, with the prescribed mantras, he completed the ceremony of gifting her to the bridegroom. Similarly, he approached Bharatha and pronouncing the Vedic mantras traditionally used for the wedding, he gifted Mandavi to him as his bride. In the same manner Shrutakirti was gifted by him with the, pouring of holy water and Vedic recitation to Satrugna.

After this, the scholars well versed in Vedic lore completed the customary rites and rituals for drawing upon the wedded couples the Grace of the Gods.

Then Janaka rose and standing in the centre of the dais, he announced to the bridegrooms, "Darlings! Our daughters are to be installed as mistresses of your households. The auspicious moment is come." As soon as he said so, with the blessings and approval of Vasishta, the four brothers held their brides each by the hand and they circumambulated first the sacred fire, and then, Janaka and Vasishta the Preceptor, and prostrated before them.

While they were doing so, showers of flowers fell upon them; joyous music rose from a galaxy of instruments. The distinguished gathering acclaimed the moment and scattered rice

grain on their heads, while wishing them, all that is best in life. The jubilation with which they cheered Shubham Shubham shook the skies. It filled the ears with delight.

The gods played divine music in heaven Elysian drums were beaten in ecstatic exaltation. The minstrels of heaven sang hallelujahs.

On the dais, court musicians sang the traditional wedding songs describing the splendour of the marriage ceremony and extolling it as on a par with the marriage of Lord Siva and Gauri. They sang it in a rich variety of ragas and melodies, filling the atmosphere with vibrations of delight.

The four brothers with their brides stood on the dais facing the vast gathering, and bowed in acknowledgement of their best wishes "May you be happy forever," "May everything auspicious be added unto you" the people cheered.

The brothers, resplendent in their natural health, heroism and beauty proceeded with their brides, into enclosures behind the curtains from where their mothers were watching the ceremonies, so that they might prostrate before them and be blessed by them. Then, they returned to the palaces allotted for the stay of the Royal Party.

From that day, for three days, there happened a magnificent variety of ceremony and festival, packed with joy and jubilee so that the people of Ayodhya who had come to Mithila as well as the inhabitants of Mithila itself could not distinguish night from day! It was festivity round the clock, without intermission.

The day after the wedding, Viswamitra went to Dasaratha and related to him that the mission upon which he had resolved had been fulfilled. He called the brothers close to him and, he fondled them very affectionately. He blessed them profusely, and turning to Dasaratha, expressed his intention to proceed then and there to the Himalayan Regions. At this, Rama Lakshmana Bharatha and Satrughna fell at the sage's feet.

Viswamitra then went to the palace of Janaka, and told him also that his resolve had fructified triumphantly! He blessed Janaka, and the brides—Sita, Urmila, Mindavi, and Shrutakirti. He announced there too that he was moving towards the Himalayas.

So, Dasaratha and Janaka and many others of Ayodhya and Mithila were in a fix; they could neither let the Sage depart, nor persuade him to stay. At last, they laid at his feet their load of gratitude and took the dust of his feet when he left, blessing every one.

The third day, when Dasaratha expressed his desire to leave for Ayodhya, Janaka did not interpose any obstacle, but made all arrangements for their departure. He gathered the courtiers and attendant maids that were to accompany the brides: he collected and provided the articles that they had to take with them; he filled many chariots with these. He gave as presents to be taken with them to Ayodhya large numbers of elephants, chariots, horses and cows. He presented to the sons-in-law jewels and precious gems of astounding, value; also a vast variety of priceless gifts that could be used in their daily lives.

With the dawn of the next day, caparisoned chariots were ready for the journey. The women of the court were in tears; to speak the truth, all the women of the City were weeping, at the departure, of the four dear, princes.

Unable to bear the pangs of separation from Sita and Urmila, many aged nurses and attendant maids broke down with grief. The mothers of Sita, Urmila, Mandavi and Shrutakirti held the hands of their sons-in-law and prayed to them to treat their daughters gently and with affection. They know no hardship or sorrow, they have grown up soft tender and bright—they pleaded in pathetic appeal. They wept as if they were losing their very eyes.

At last, they ascended the chariots.

The City was filled with gloom, as much gloom as the ecstasy it was filled with, three days previous!

The chariots drove off, one behind the other into the distance.

(To be continued)

Social Work, with a New Look

—Shudha Mazumdar, NCWI Convenor, Prison Reform

All that I have witnessed, experienced and learned since I was brought to that radiant Personality so full of love and compassion known as Sai Baba cannot be explained. I can but try to state what I have learned.

Truth is stranger than fiction. That well-known saying was amply proved to me.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba whom I was destined to meet in the South in January 1967 was then little known here in Calcutta. Now his fame has spread and many can bear witness to the truth of my statement when I say He is incredible and wonderful!

In the unhappy times we live in now, He appears to be the living embodiment of all that is Good, True and Beautiful.

He heals; He comforts; He counsels. He brings solace to countless people. He takes nothing, give everything that fills the heart with contentment and peace, and one returns refreshed, strengthened and cleaned, in fact better equipped to face the battle of life once again.

He has given me a new angle to the work I happened to have engaged myself in, for nearly half a century. The term Social Service has been given a new look. "There are no others," He

says. "It is your self you are helping, for, the one who is being helped by you is a part of your very self. One spirit pervades the world you live in, but in different forms. As gold is the meal that is made into different kinds of ornaments and as clay is the basis of moulding many forms of pottery, you are all limbs of that One Body." Then, again he says, "Work is worship. Each one of you must take up one spiritual effort to cleanse the mind of lust and greed, of envy and hate. Come out of the well of ego into the sea of the Universal Spirit of which you are a part, or engage in some work which will take you out of your narrow self into the vaster magnificence. Some task where you dedicate the fruit of karma (work) to God, where you devote your time and energy to share your joy or skill or knowledge with your fellowmen."

His discourses keep His listeners spell bound. His teachings are leavened very often with stories both grave and gay, to elucidate His points and make them comprehensible to all. Here is one from the Burden of the Badge: This talk He gave, when handing over the badges to volunteers chosen by Him to help many thousands of men women and children who assemble at Prasanthi Nilayam, during special festival occasions.

"You must have not merely the enthusiasm to serve, but the intelligence and the skill; then only can you be efficient and useful! Enthusiasm without efficiency is often a source of and grief. There were two friends who had to pit for an examination. The duller of the two wanted the other chap to supply him in the hall with the answers to the questions asked. But their seats were too far apart to permit whisperings to be heard. Hence their problem was how to cheat the invigilator and communicate with each other, without being noticed and expelled. The sharp one was at one end of the hall and the dull one at the other. So they hatched a plan, which they thought was foolproof.

The school had a cat which used to roam freely in all the halls. The answers were to be tied to the tail of the cat and the dull fellow would place some food under his desk which would attract the cat to his side. Whilst the cat ate the food and licked the floor, he could loosen the paper tied to its tail and spread it before him on his desk. The plan went through up to a point. The answers were tied; but the cat was so distracted by the thing on its tail that it scampered round and round in terrific excitement. This attracted the attention of the invigilator and that was the end of the story."

You must not be so foolish as to believe in the possibility of such a stratagem; the seva (the act of service) that is entrusted to you, you must do intelligently and to a successful finish. It does not matter if the recipient is not fully satisfied. You must have done your best."

"Let your life's pilgrimage be carried on, by lovingly treading the path of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Harmlessness. To strive is man's duty. Success and failure are in the hands of God."

Dear Baba, I do not ask that I may do great things for Thee. I only ask for a vision clear, that I fail not to see the little opportunities to do a kindly deed, to speak a pleasant word of cheer, to share with those in need.

The Grand Strategy

—Dr. Narayna Murthy, M. sc., Ph. D

The Era of Plenty

In the story of human evolution the past three hundred years have been crucial; the past three decades have especially been critical. From a long period of dormancy the human being, has suddenly acquired new tools which have given immense power which he is unable to control.

He has combated the menace of death through chemicals and antibiotics; he has prolonged the lives of many who would have otherwise succumbed to the little virus. Through the green revolution he is able to produce food to feed the hungry millions. Through the ships, the railway, the automobile and the aeroplane he has brought himself nearer to his neighbour; in fact the man living in the next house is as much his neighbour as another living thousands of miles away.

Through the printing press, the radio and the television, he has brought the world inside his kitchen. In his pursuit of happiness all these various tools have been immensely used. At no time was humanity so free from the fear of hunger, disease and lack of shelter as it is now. Yet all these have not led him to achieve the happiness which he has sought.

Disillusionment

This power has come to man too fast; he has not been able to exercise control; the acquisition of yogic powers stresses importance of character and control, and fortunately, are acquired only after great effort, ensuring that they will not be misused. Science and technology have yielded fruits which are not in the hands of people who have the requisite wisdom to use them for Lokasangraha. Hence the disillusionment of man, in spite of all the comforts which he can command.

The Challenge

At no time did humanity face such a challenge to its ability to think and discriminate. Even on the most ordinary facts of every day living it is exposed to diverse views, often distorted and man has to decide which is the truth. The radio blares forth propaganda and each group claims that the other is telling lies. Thus there are attempts at mass indoctrination, both in the democracies and the communist countries.

Man's pursuit of happiness has led him to refine the enjoyment of the sensual. Man has become the victim of self-satiation; he drinks and gorges and behaves worse than an animal.

The Shirdi Answer

Thus the setting was appropriate by the second half of the 19th century for the Shirdi Sri manifestation to start the task of clearing the mess and establishing the modes of righteous living. It was not enough if only evolved souls who had the spiritual urge sought out mahatmas to get guidance; it was necessary to pull 'all and sundry', provide them with succour and help, and "give them what they want until they begin to want" what the Avatar had come to give. Shirdi Baba appeared in dreams, helped the devotees in their 'mundane problems', drew them to Him and awakened their inner spiritual urges.

The Sathya Sai Era

The same strategy has been unfolding on an even grander scale in the Sathya Sai Era. The march of science and technology, the inevitable pride developed in man because of his ability to control his surrounding, naturally required more power. The world had to be shaken out of its arrogance by revelations and declarations. While in the Shirdi Form, the declaration of being God in Human Form was made in the privacy of conversation to a select few, in the Sathya Sai Manifestation the Declaration that He is the Sarvdevataswarupa was made at the World Conference! Thousands have responded to the call. New diseases mostly due to affluence had to be tackled; it is not therefore difficult to see why in this manifestation the emphasis has been on Sathya Dharma Santhi and Prema. To provide a haven for the hundreds who have no peace of mind, the abode of the Avatar is appropriately named Prasanthi Nilayam. If there is one malady in the world today, it is Asanthi and He has come to establish Prasanthi!

All the powers of the Avatar, omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience, have been brought to bear on the main task. Hundreds and thousands have been given intimate private instruction and sent back strengthened in the conviction that God is not remote, sitting somewhere in the heavens, but is very near and dear to us. Each person is given the specific required for the, particular 'disease' and sent out into the world.

Spreading the Message

Bhajans organised by devotees sustained by inspiration derived from the Avatar Himself singing in nectarine Voice and through records and tapes help, in bring to devotees together to hear His Names, remember His Love and march on the spiritual path. The books in English and translated into various languages carry the message for manana and nididhyasana. There are very few instances in the world when there has been so much publication activity spread far and wide by the enthusiasm of devotees on their own initiative during the lifetime of the Master! The Avatar has made use of all modern means for the spread of the Message.

Besides appearing in dreams through His will, another feature of this manifestation is the appearance of Vibhuti, kumkum, Amrith, honey and even Siva-lingas, jewels etc. in far off places, all over the world. These have naturally shaken many to the roots and made them aware that there are forces which man has not yet understood. It is these manifestations which have brought faith to hundreds. Who can resist belief when before his very eyes, streams of nectar appear from enamel and glass?

The Avatar also has appeared in various Forms including the present Form in "far off places," to many who have been devotees of neither this Form nor any Godhead; and even a few atheists. Remember how Baba appeared thrice to a distinguished Triple M.A., an Assistant Inspector of Schools in far off (?) Khonsa (N.E.F.A.), one who not only had no belief in any God but who disliked Baba's picture! Laksh Kumar's problems of translating Panini were solved, and he confesses that today not merely he, but, his three children aged (7-11) can recite the 4000 stanzas of Panini's grammar (which normally cannot be understood without a proper Guru); not only he, but the two elder daughters can explain the meaning of Panini's verses! Remember how distances are transcended and Baba appears to Charles Penn and gives him upadesha in America.

Well! These are the examples we have come to know. There must be hundreds of thousands of which we are not aware!

Baba as Guide

"Oh; now he is such a devotee! You must have seen before he became involved with Baba. He was impossible—a drunkard, a cheat!" "Believe it or not, this shrine room was originally the bar in my residence!" confesses another. "We have all changed" is the refrain. In obedience to the call of the Avatar that "Work is Worship and Duty is God" the attitude of people has changed towards their work. Officers transferred to areas where they would have normally worked under protest, do so gladly, since they believe that it is Baba's order, and that He is there to protect. Hundred of lives have been transformed. Life has become spiritualised.

Restoration of Dharma is ultimately achieved by the transmutation of individuals and that is the Grand; Purpose of the Avatar. Before our very eyes we see the transformation of people after coming into contact with this Manifestation.

We should remember that the strategy is unfolding itself gradually and the phases yet to come will unfold themselves in time.

Our Task

We who are fortunate to live contemporarily with the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, especially in India—the Punyabhoomi, the Karmabhoomi, the Yoga bhoomi—must understand the significance, of the Sai Manifestations in the individual effort of transforming our lives through the spiritual path. We are also participating in this great adventure of the spirit, the task on which He has embarked!

There is nothing I want more than to bathe in the pure light of Samadhi. I pray that Sai Baba accept me as His Disciple, that He assume my burden and guide me to the clear waters of self-awareness, of Brahma Oneness.

—Steve Winn

The Safety Pin

1966 was a verb, special and auspicious dear for us. It was the year that brought us to Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Since then, we have learnt to leave all our burdens on Him. Our lives have thereby, become enriched and secure; the future does not hold any fear or insecurity for us!

He comes to our aid, immediately we encounter difficulties. There are many instances of these outpourings of Grace. But, I like to share with you one wonderful experience of ours, where Baba came to our help as soon as we called on Him.

We were returning from His Presence on the 18th day of January 1968, from Puttaparthi to Madurai. We started our journey after the Darshan in the morning. My husband and myself, and our three children were in the car. Our youngest was three years old then.

We were about 30 miles from Salem, where we proposed to halt for the night. We were already late, since we spent sometime in Bangalore. Darkness had fallen upon the earth. Our car started giving trouble; the driver's skill and resources of intuition failed to solve the trouble. There were no houses or shops, anywhere near us. Evidently, we were stranded in a patch of deserted land. The car had come to a stop. None of the gears could be worked, in spite of the frantic efforts of my husband and the driver.

We tried to halt some passing trucks but, the drivers shouted back, that they did not know much about Fiats! Others turned their noses at us and drove past! We were resigning ourselves to a night spent in the dark with hunger and fear as companions. No. We had Baba as Guardian. We told ourselves that all will be well.

Suddenly, a white Fiat car! drove up and stopped just by the side of our vehicle. Our driver hurried out to open the bonnet and plead for help, after explaining to the occupants what the trouble was. The car had two persons in it, one whom we took to be the owner. The owner was the first to speak. He did not wait to be told what the matter was with the car. He asked my husband rather sternly for a safety pin and, when that was handed over to him, he instructed the driver—we could hear him quite clearly, his voice was sharp and penetrating—to get under the, car and fix the pin to the nipple!

The driver did what he was told; it took him only a few seconds; he was an intrepid young man. Then, we were asked to proceed to Salem and take the car to any workshop there. The car started without any difficulty and we drove smoothly on. The other Fiat came behind us for some minutes, and then, shot forward at great speed, and soon vanished from view.

We reached Salem and took the car to a workshop. There we found that the gear rod was broken in two!

Yes! Broken in two! They wondered how we could come all that distance with a broken gear rod! They took three hours to get the, thing welded!

They found no safety pin, and nobody could say where the nipple was! But Baba knew our distress and He saved us.

Now, please proclaim with us how Compassionate our Baba is.

—**Jayasri Balakrishnan**

The reason why man seeks for happiness is not because happiness is his sustenance, but because happiness is his own being! Therefore, in seeking for happiness, man is only seeking for himself.

—**Baba**

"Baba, the Gardener"

There is a wise gardener:
Hair of early morning spider's webs.
Skin of rainbow dewdrops.
Hands of sun-kissed butterfly wings.
Eyes of newborn suns.
Limbs of love,
Nose of rose.
Heart of the singing universe.
Feet of the fulfilled family.
Heaven rests on his sparkling smile.

Nails of thorns,
He weeds sunken souls!
Sows seeds.
In Truth
His garden grows.
His flowers are we
The Gardener within,

—Anthony, Malta

Good and Bad

God gave this Body so that you may use it to sanctify Time, through beneficial acts. Of course, man is ever anxious that he should get contentment and joy, as soon as possible with as little exertion as possible. But, he places more confidence on material comforts and material possessions, hoping that they can yield joy and content. There is no effort by him to ensure being born in good circumstances and surroundings. Goodness is natural to man; it is his nature, when it is untarnished. But, man relishes the tarnish, not the pure core. Falsehood with all its enticements is liked more than truth which wears stoic habiliments only.

Consider this: Milk and curds are sold in the streets by vendors who shout about the excellence of their ware, but, no one runs to open the door, call them in and purchase the health giving nectar! Toddy and arrack are sold far from the village bounds; but, yet, people tramp the distance to where they are available, pay the price with no bargaining and consume the poisonous stuff, which robs them of all dignity!

This is the tragedy! Good counsel though given with love is seldom listened to. Bad talk attracts people so much that they walk miles to listen to scandal and abuse

The essential nature of man is Divinity; his strength is that of the unconquerable spirit. But, this hero has reduced himself to a zero, and is groveling in fear and falsehood! To achieve his nefarious plans, man is demonstrating courage and confidence. Once his mind is set on vengeance or crime, man becomes a fierce animal, ready to inflict wanton cruelties.

Or the heroism is channeled into mountain climbing, deep sea diving or walking on space, or other adventurous acts.

But, the most heroic adventure of all, the conquest of the senses and of their pulls, is yet beyond him. When the senses challenge him he yields, instead of challenging them in return and overpowering them. Consider only the masters of their own impulses and passions as Heroes! And, no other.

Look at Valmiki. He was brave dacoit; he was an intrepid highway robber, dreaded by all who journeyed on that road. One day, the Seven Sages happened to pass along that fateful road; they revealed to him how wicked his actions were, and painted before his mind's eye the horrors he was becoming heir to, as a result. They told him that those who now enjoyed the fruits of his robbery will not be sharers of those horrors, for, he alone was the culprit and he alone will have to suffer the punishment.

That was enough to open his eyes; he left off his evil pursuit and forsook family, profession and wealth. He retired into the jungle and plunged into the severest austerities. He became a New Hero, the hero of a new type of adventure. He became a great sage, honoured by posterity as the First Poet, the author of the Ramayana.

He gave up toddy and arrack, that is to say, the senses and their intoxicating poisons; he developed a taste for milk and curds, the Satwic virtues. Mastery over himself, the victory that confers the Highest and the Purest Joy.

—Baba

Namasmarana

Adi Sankaracharya, who undoubtedly occupies the foremost place of eminence and honour amongst the great Vedantins and Jnanis that Bharat has produced finally realised in his later years that in this age of Kali (Kaliyuga) the only sure and safe path along which humanity can successfully reach the Supreme Goal is that of Bhakthi developed through Namasmarana. Hence he proclaimed:

The Divine Name of the Lord Hari and that alone is my support and refuge. In Kaliyuga there is no other effective path for salvation.

He proceeded to compose and give unto the World many devotional hymns like the famous "Bhaja Govindam" for fostering Bhakthi in the hearts of men.

In the World of to-day, our environment and conditions of life are such that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to pursue properly the practice of rigorous 'Tapas' or to follow the intricate paths of Rajayoga or Jnanayoga. The All Knowing Lord, in His Infinite Compassion, has therefore declared in the "Gita" and in "Srimad Bhagavatam" that during the Kaliyuga period He can be easily attained through Nama-Sankirtanam.

The nine progressive steps in Bhakthi sadhana have been explained by Prahlada as Sravanam, Keerthanam, Smaranam, Padasevanam, Archanam, Vandanam, Dasyam, Sakhyam and finally Atmanivedanam. Namasmara combines in itself the first three steps of Sravanam, Keerthanam, and Smaranam and it will rapidly lead one past the next five steps to the final stage of complete surrender and merger with the Supreme.

'Namasmara' literally means remembrance of the Divine Name of God. In practice, this sadhana may take any of the following three forms viz., Japam, Dhyanam or Sankirtanam. Each of these methods has its own distinct advantages but all the three paths, whether pursued severally or conjointly, will certainly enable man to be rid of the evil qualities of lust, greed, anger, jealousy and egoism and to develop the purest form of Prema and thereby achieve Santhi leading to supreme and eternal Bliss.

'Japam' consists of the simple process of chanting the Divine name of God or reciting some sacred mantras, the mind being kept absolutely pure. The great advantage of this method is that it can be practised at any time and at any place or even in the midst of the routine activities of one's mundane life. The chanting or the recitation of the Divine Name, if performed with faith and devotion, automatically makes one's mind dwell on the form and glory of God. When such a state of God consciousness pervades one's mind there is no longer any room left therein for bad thoughts and evil instincts. The 'manas' gets purified and thenceforward life becomes a dedicated journey on the God-ward path. The importance of this method has been stressed by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita wherein He has declared: Of Yajnas, I am Japa Yajna.

'Dhyana' which is another mode of Namasmara consists of the process of concentrated meditation on the Lord's Divine form and glory. By practising this sadhana of single-minded meditation on the Paramatma, the mind, which is by nature wayward, gets harnessed and ceases to run after sense objects. Once the sensory cravings are banished from the mind, the worries, miseries and sorrows arising from worldly attachments will all disappear and one is enabled to gradually attain Satchitananda. However, in the set up of living that obtains to-day, it is seldom possible for one to spend long hour in Dhyana and hence it would be preferable to combine the methods of Japam and Dhyana, in which case most part of one's day can be utilised for such Sadhana.

'Namasankirtan' means the loud singing and recitation of the Lord's Name and Glory. Though this sadhana can be performed all by oneself, it is more effective when it is done conjointly in the company of other sadhakas. Then, it is commonly referred to as Bhajan. If performed with discipline and devotion, Bhajan offers the easiest medium through which one is enabled to spend sometime in communion with God rising above all the cares and anxieties of worldly life. The ecstasy with which Bhajan can fill our hearts can only be experienced and is not susceptible of apt description. Another great advantage of participation in Bhajan is that it

helps one to get rid of one's ego which is the main obstacle in the path of all spiritual progress. What is more, while performing one's own spiritual sadhana through Bhajan, one is simultaneously rendering service to the entire people of the locality also, because the vibrations caused by the chanting of the Lord's Name, with sincerity and devotion, spread out far and wide and sanctify the atmosphere of the entire locality.

These beneficial results are even more pronounced in the case of 'Nagarsankirtan'. There, groups of sadhakas go round the streets in the early hours immediately preceding day break, melodiously singing the glories of God. The message of Namasmarana is thus carried to many homes in the 'Brahma muhurta' period. Nagarsankirtan, if performed regularly and properly, helps one to completely eliminate 'Ahamkara' (egoism) and elevate oneself spiritually and it also simultaneously awakens in the God consciousness, the spread of which is so essential for the welfare of humanity.

Has not Lord Krishna declared: One who constantly chants aloud My Names without any sense of shame, not merely attains oneness with Me but also brings along with himself crores of others to My Feet?

One often hears 'Kaliyuga' being described as a bad and inauspicious period. What a thorough misconception it is! Whatever other defects Kaliyuga may have, it offers to mankind, more than ever before, the most precious opportunity of getting God-realisation through the facile and safe path of Namasmarana. Are we not the most fortunate amongst the entire human race, that has existed since the beginning of time, to have been born during this period of the Kali Age when the Divine has again incarnated in human form, more resplendent than ever before and to have been blessed with the unique and precious chance of having His Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan? Unlike during the time of the earlier Avatars we are also being mercifully given the great privilege of participation in His Divine Mission of Dharma Samsthapana. Let us fully utilise this rare chance that has been bestowed on humanity after many a Yuga.

Swami has again explained to us the value of Namasmarana and given detailed directions as to how the said sadhana should be performed. We need only earnestly devote ourselves to a strict observance of these Divine directions, and if our endeavours are sincere, He will certainly guide us on our journey to His Lotus Feet.

—Justice V. Balakrishna Eradi

Prasanthi Nilayam

Personality and places cast considerable influence on the shaping of human character and atmosphere of a person living there. Living under healthy conditions of life and wholesome atmosphere, one enjoys sound and sturdy health. On the other hand a man is sure to get infection if he lives in a place infested by diseased persons. This principle is true physically, mentally and spiritually. Almost the entire human race has been diseased in this sense and diseased conditions are prevailing all around the world wherever human habitations are there.

Man is proud of the medical achievements and has constructed huge hospital buildings, dispensing varieties of medicines through physicians with University degrees. The science of therapeutics has improved as much as to change the form or fury of diseases but does not change the fundamental character of the malady nor wipe out the diseased conditions of life. Human miseries, therefore change appearance like clouds of autumn sky. We have thousands of physical and mental hospitals to get relief and sanatoria to get speedy physical and mental recovery but the: a is no place to bring about spiritual recovery, to cure the whole being of a man in all respects.

Prasanthi Nilayam is the only one spiritual Sanatorium with the Divine physician Sri Bhagawan Sathya Sai Baba. The Divine personality in the place creates such an atmosphere that hundreds of patients pour into the place daily for physical, mental and spiritual cures. It is not possible on my Part to discuss the medical contents of Baba's 'Vibhuti' the panacea for all diseases but personal contact with the Divine physician, loving Him and living under his guidance and basking under the Sai-Sun-Shine, I believe any disease what-so-ever will fade out and the Divine in one's being will bloom.

Fortunate are they who have visited Prasanthi Nilayam, fortunate are they who have come in contact with Baba but most fortunate are they who have dedicated their lives to live under His Grace.

Prasanthi Nilayam is now a sacred place of pilgrimage having a purifying effect on all persons visiting there. The degree of purification that is brought about on the persons depends often on the period that he has passed there.

Hundreds and thousands of people visit there in order to get blessings from Baba but besides the blessings with which the visitors are sent they return baptised more or less under the silent influence of 'Baba'. Mysterious are the ways and means by which the changes in persons are brought about.

I have no power to see into or analyse his ways and actions. But conditions prevailing in the Ashram cast the following positive influences on all those who live there and stay there for some days. 1. Surrender, 2. Silence 3. Self-reliance.

The sense of surrender comes immediately as a visitor arrives, nay, from the moment he proposes to come to Prasanthi Nilayam.

All the burden of responsibilities of one's health, home, business, office are kept aside and un-burdened; he steps into the Ashram with the single aim and object for the Darshan and Blessings of Baba.

If he suffers from physical or mental pain he gets relief and his pain will be no more. The poor, decrepit and disabled do think that they have landed at a place of safety and security, where 'Baba' lives and grants His Grace. He does not think of anything so material or important, as much as, to get His Grace, an interview. On his getting the interview only, he returns home.

Visitors are not afraid of their life and property as long as they stop in the Ashram. The visitors are provided with accommodation within open sheds. They live there with all their belongings without any fear of theft or loss.

The Sense of Surrender is therefore always with almost all the visitors as long as they are inhabitants of the Ashram. This sense of surrender has to be rooted deep enough in their hearts so as to be kept firm and steady even when the visitors return to the world to live in storms of life.

"Sadhana starts with Silence," that is the lesson. This doctrine is practised in the Nilayam very regularly. The persons visiting there or living there have few personal weaknesses and failings. Strength is to be cultivated by constant Sadhana. Baba works silently. His incessant work to bring about change for the welfare of His creation is performed silently. The dignity of Silence is therefore adored. The inner workings of head and heart are expressed only to Baba who gives the required advice. He is the in-dwelling spirit of all and the propeller of every action. Talks and Speeches are therefore discouraged and are made as short as possible by visitors just to communicate thoughts to each other. Hundreds and thousands of persons live and move about but hardly does one hear a loud whisper.

Only one speaks and that is 'Baba', on Special Occasions and His thoughts are noted in books to be studied meditated upon or to be practised.

Only 'Namasmarana' is made by the devotees three times a day, in a loud harmonious chorus. 'Baba' prefers silence to the disharmonious song by any individual devotee. The precept and practice of silence, the first step of every Sadhana should be taken up by every visitor returning from Prasanthi Nilayam.

Self-Reliance: In the present day world people are becoming more and more money conscious. The world tends towards a sort of money-civilisation. People run to cities and towns where there, are all amenities of life to make themselves comfortable. They earn money in plenty so that they will be able to spend lavishly to live, to move, to see, to hear and to eat and drink. To be more civilised and sophisticated and artificial is deemed to be more forward. So money is spent profusely for all sense gratification and enjoying the varieties of pleasures with which they are surrounded. But how long? People will get fatigued sooner or later.

Pleasure seekers do not come to the Nilayam since they cannot expect any of the pleasures which they are accustomed to in the Cities They turn to such a place only when they will be exhausted or fatigued of the fast-life in Cities.

In Prasanthi Nilayam all visitors live in natural environment. Plenty of pure air and sun-shine is the asset of the Ashram. Water is brought up to the surface and the supply has been regulated. The premises are neat and sanitary. Man is here self-reliant, self-regulated and God-dependant. There is plenty of scope for man to become a natural being than to be artificial and egoistic. The Greatest Common Disease of man is egoism. It is the greatest impediment in the way of realisation. The world and social life help the growth of egoism around every individual self. Unless the shell of egoism is cast off the, inner self cannot get the light of the Lord.

Self-purification is nothing but freeing oneself from egoism, which can only be effective practiced in a natural environment by Namasmarana and Meditation.

My notes mould be incomplete if I do not mention the dedicated souls working selflessly. They work to please Him for the good of all.

What can otherwise be a better Sadhana than to surrender one's life and all activities to His will! To live is itself a Sadhana in this world. To labour and live for material gains will only achieve the temporal comfort of life. But to live and be loved by Him needs disciplined practice, Grace and His constant guidance.

—Bansidhar Baksi, Dhenkanal

Rama Katha Rasa Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

23

Janaka's Grief

Janaka found it hard to take leave of Sita; he tried his best in various ways to curb the flow of tears; so Janaka accompanied Emperor Dasaratha for some distance describing to him the virtues of Sita and pleading with him to treat her with loving tenderness; with tears in his eyes, he prayed that he may be informed frequently of her welfare and happiness. He spoke also of the other brides and evinced great anxiety on their behalf, too.

Dasaratha responded most sympathetically; he spoke soothingly, trying his best to allay the agitation of his mind. He said, Janaka! We have no daughters of our own. So, these are the daughters whom we longed to fondle so long! They are both daughters and daughters-in-law for us. There will not be anything wanting for them; all things necessary for their joy and happiness will be provided. Do not worry or grieve in the least. Return fully assured of our love and affection for them.” Thus saying Dasaratha ordered his chariot to stop.

Janaka alighted from the chariot of the Emperor and approached the chariots, where brides were seated with the bridegrooms. He counseled them in various ways to bear the pang of separation from the home in which they were reared so lovingly. He imparted courage, and quoted many Dharmic texts which enjoin loyalty to the husband and the husband's kith and kin. He reminded them how they have to treat the servants of the household to which each of them were now going, as a member. He accepted their respectful prostrations and caressed them once again and blessed them. When he turned his back on them to proceed to Mithila, he burst into sobs but, nevertheless he ascended his chariot and moved towards home. The chariots sped Ayodhya-wards and Mithila-wards and very soon they were miles apart. Janaka reached Mithila, quite soon.

Mithila was a City of Grief. The inner apartments of the Palace were empty, with no sign of life, no shine of joy, no sound of elation. He could not be there even for an instant.

Consolation

He sent for Sage Sathanada and the Ministers and in order to free his mind a little from the upsurge of sorrow, he had a number of items of business discussed and settled with them.

In the midst of the discussions, his mind would wander into the sadness again; he used to give replies unrelated to the problems raised. At this, one minister said, 'O King! The separation from Sita seems *to* have caused incurable grief in your heart. No father can escape this separation and this grief. Once she is gifted to the bridegroom, the father's duty is to reduce attachment gradually; this is matter not unknown to your Majesty.

And, you know that Sita is no ordinary maiden! She is a Divine Angel. So, separation from her must cause you greater agony. O King! The daughters are Divine; and, note, the sons-in-law too have Divine Splendour! They appear to have descended from Heaven upon the Earth. In Mithila, every one, young and old, had that feeling, and that reverence towards them. I have heard of this experience with my own ears.

It is really a wondrous coincidence that such bridegrooms have been wedded to such brides, worthy in every way, in physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual characteristics, in status, wealth, power, family honour, dynastic sanctity and religious faith. This cannot happen to all. Therefore, the daughters will have happiness, without the least diminution. Their lives will be filled with greater and greater joy as the years roll by." They recollected the grandeur and ecstasy of the marriage celebrations and calmed the agitated mind of Janaka. They engaged themselves in consoling him and restoring his equanimity and mental peace.

Frightful Omens

Meanwhile, Dasaratha was proceeding to, wards Ayodhya, with his sons and daughters-in-law, the sages and scholars, army units of infantry, elephantry, cavalry and chariotry, and citizens of his empire. Suddenly, they observed certain bad omens and they had a premonition that something serious was about to happen. Dasaratha approached Vasishta and consulted him, "Master! What a surprise is this! The clouds are thickening and howling; the beasts on earth are tramping around us full circle.

They should not behave so, isn't it? What can be the reason? What does it indicate? I am getting nervous about these ominous signs." Vasishta, immediately, saw through them by means of divine insight; he said, "O King! These are signs of some terrible event nearing us. The clouds are roaring so frightfully. But, considering the fact that the beasts on earth are circum-ambulating our chariots, this much can be inferred: the disaster that threatens will be averted. Therefore, you need have no anxiety on that point." Vasishta put faith and confidence in the mind of Dasaratha, and they awaited events.

Suddenly, the wind grew into a monstrous cyclonic surge! Even as they were looking on, giant trees were pulled by their roots and they fell with alarming noise and confusion. Even the mountain peaks rolled one over the other. Thunderous explosions rent the air, as if the earth itself was breaking into pieces. Those in one chariot could not see the chariot before or behind them; so thick was the dusk that rose all around! Horses, sad elephants started running wildly in panic. Foot soldiers dropped unconscious; others stood petrified by eerie fear.

The Flame Again

Vasishta, Dasaratha and the four sons were the only persons who were unafraid, in all that huge concourse! All the rest were drained of vigour and vitality. And for good reason, too. For, earth and air were enveloped in darkness. The darkness was heightened by blinding flashes of sharp thrusts of light. And, a fierce individual, with terror-striking eyes, stood before them.

His head had a crown of thickly matted hair. He had a double edged axe on his shoulder. He had hung on another shoulder a bag of arrows that shone like lightning. He appeared to them like the forehead-eyed, Siva on His way to destroy the mighty demons rulers of the Triple Fortress! As soon as he came to view, Vasishta recognised him as Parasurama. But he wondered, why he way so fierce with anger that day, even though all his against the Kshatriya clans had long ago subsided as a result of many successful campaigns in which he had destroyed them. He tried to discover what could have roused the flame once again from the cooled embers.

Vasishta himself moved towards Parasurama, with the traditional signs of welcome, like inviting him to wash his hands and asking permission to wash his feet. But, though he accepted these marks of good will and heart-felt reception, Parasurama was staring at Rama with eyes like glowing cinders!

Rama was however replying with a charming smile, a smile which only fed the fumes of his anger! He raved loudly thus: "O Son of Dasaratha! I have listened to your exploits being praised by a thousand tongues. I heard also how you broke the Bow of Siva, as if it was just child's play. But, all that is hearsay not directly seen. I have come now so that I can personally see your valour."

I have brought a divinely consecrated bow. It belonged to jamadagni, my revered father. Show me your might, by stringing it and fix an arrow on it. Or else, come! engage me in a fight!" He challenged Rama in this manner, in passionate anger.

The Cool Smile

Rama was not at all affected by all this demonstration of anger. He kept on smiling coolly. "O Bhargavarama! I thought vengeance you had nursed against the Kshatriyas had ended long ago. I had heard so. Why this relapse? Why this downfall, this absurdity?" he asked. Just then, Dasaratha bent low and in plaintive tones, appealed to Parasurama thus: "Bhagavan! You are a Brahmin. You have won great renown. My sons are tender teenagers. Why develop vengeful hatred against them for no reason whatever? This is unbecoming for the high status of your lineage. Your forefathers studied the Vedas without inter. mission and performed various rites and ceremonies with elaborate attention. You yourself declared that day, when you entered on the Chandrayana Ritual that you will not handle a weapon thereafter; you said that your desires have been fulfilled; you did this, before no less a God than Indra, granting all the territories conquered by you, to Kasyapa, yourselves resolving to spend the rest of your days in the performance of righteous deeds and the gaining of equanimity.

You were so long engaged in austerities on the Mahendra Peak! And, now quite contrary to your declared intentions, your mind is set upon destroying my dynasty and family. Isn't it

terrible sin, to act against the given word? After this breach of promise, of what use is any more austerity? There is no God higher than Truth, is there? You are challenging only Rama and you say you will fight only with him! If anything injurious happens to that one single son, my entire family will be plunged in dire calamity. Our lives will end the moment danger harms him. A Brahmin like you should not become responsible for the loss of so many lives! It is not only a sacrilege on Brahminhood; it is a terrible sin.”

Parasurama paid no heed to the words of Dasaratha. He didn't give ear to them. He was casting his looks only on Rama. He said, "The Bow that you broke and this one, both, have come from Heaven; Viswakarma the Divine Artificer made them both. One was offered to Siva, for use against the Demons of the Triple Fortress; the other was entrusted to Vishnu. Once the demons were destroyed, Siva sent it to Emperor Devaratha, with the arrows that were used for the fight. Perhaps the bow had become frail and feeble, since the purpose for which it was offered had been accomplished. It is no proof of might and heroism if such a bow is broken.

This bow has work yet to do, and so it still retains its vigor and vitality. This bow is surcharged with efficacy and power. Take this, string it and break it as you did the other. That is the way to prove your strength and heroism. Do not strut about in pride that you have broken the Bow of Siva! Break this and write your name in the annals of the brave.”

The Bow of Vishnu

"You may doubt my words that this is the Bow of Vishnu." He continued. "Vishnu Himself kept this in the custody of Hrshika a great sage. He handed it over to his son, Jamadagni, by name. That Jamadagni is my father. He was the repository of tremendous merit acquired by austerity; he was so pure hearted that that he had no trace of hatred or vengeance in him. My father had renounced the use of weapons; yet, Karthaviryarjuna the wicked, killed him. It was a crime that had not been committed so cruelly by any one so far; no one had killed another so atrociously. I decided that I should not show mercy; but I had to teach him a lesson; I vowed that I will destroy not only that monster, but, kings of unrighteousness. From that day, I have been cutting to pieces and playing ball games with the heads of kings, and scions of the kingly race. This Bow was with me in all those campaigns. I killed many wicked monarchs. I brought under subjugation the entire world.

My anger at those who had killed my father cooled a little with this. I gave up the vendetta, and started celebrating a Vedic sacrifice. I invited Kasyapa for that yajna, since he was a great saint and a sage immersed in meritorious activity. I gave him the earth I had conquered as dakshina (ritual fees) for supervising the Yajna. Since then, I have been spending my days on the Mahendra Peak, with my mind immersed in peace and my intellect shining in spiritual splendour.

Your father asked me why I have again taken up this weapon and put on a challenging face, in spite of my having renounced the path of vengeance and hatred: I shall answer him, now.

Rama! Two bows were created in Heaven and came upon the earth. You have broken the Siva Bow. This alone remains now, intact. If this too is broken, (it doesn't serve any purpose being with me, for its work is over) then, my renunciation will be complete; so, I wish that this

too is broken by you, or retained by yoga. I was waiting for this moment, and for this consummation. The moment has come; I am determined to utilise it fully, rather than let it go by or allow it to be misused. Perhaps, you doubt whether fighting is the best use that time can be put to?

The Challenge

The significance of the fight has to be looked into; it may be for the progress and welfare of the world; it may promote the suppression of the unrighteous and the encouragement of the good. You cannot pronounce war as undesirable, judging from a superficial point of view. Analyse the purpose; then, the external activity can be understood. When a knife has to be sharpened, one has to hone it on a grindstone. No one will condemn the process as injurious to the knife. If the body must derive strength from food, the food has to be placed between rows of hard teeth and ground into paste, mercilessly. No one can condemn this process as violence exercised on the material. It may become necessary in order to provide Satwic food (or Dharma) for either the Body or the Body Politic, to have recourse to struggle, conflict and the apparent infliction of pain

Well. We are in middle of the road. It is not proper to indulge in talk, standing here. Let us get to action. It is imperative we should start straightaway. Come on! Draw this bow and break it in the process or fight a fist-cuff duel with me!" This was the call from Parasurama.

Lakshmana was fuming with anger, while listening to the challenge of Parasurama; he was about to intervene with a hot retort, when Rama quietened him, saying, "This is not a matter concerning you. For the questions asked of me, I myself have to answer. It is against good manners for you to come between; leave me to handle this situation." His affectionate and soft counsel made Lakshmana desist from interference. But, when Parasurama started laughing at Rama and ridiculing him for not accepting his challenge as soon as it was thrown, Lakshmana could not control his reaction of resentment.

He shouted, "O Bhargava! This isn't much of a task for Him who broke the Bow of Siva! To break this little bow, why do you challenge Rama only?"

(To be continued)

Sai Krishna

It is said that when Lord Krishna as a boy with His enchanting flute was with Gopis on the banks of the Yamuna, soon the Gopis felt that each one of them had Him by her side, at the same time. This individual personal attention to each devotee can be witnessed even now when we see Baba moving among the devotees. His devotees feel that He belongs to each one of them and often talk of "my Swami" and "our Baba". Everyone feels that he has a right to demand from Baba personal attention, and Swami Himself often says, "You have a right, why are you afraid to ask?" Yes we have a right to ask; but what shall we ask for? For worldly impermanent things? No; for that which He wants us to ask!

Swami, You have told us the story of Krishna's headache and how it was cured when dust was collected from the feet of Gopis willingly given by them when everyone else refused to incur a sin by giving the dust of their feet. It is that simple and unquestioning faith of the Gopis, we ask for, so that we can enjoy the Bliss of total surrender at Your Feet.

Baba! You have told us that all creation is feminine and the Lord is the only Purusha; that we are like actors in a drama staged in a girls' school where some dress up as males. Make us understand this great truth fully, so that we can love You with all our hearts and obey Your commands.

Swami, You have been teaching us, like small children, the great spiritual truths illustrated with short stories! We learn from You that once when Krishna stole the butter and was being chased by His mother, one Gopi offered to hide Him in her heart, since that was the darkest place she could find to shelter Him! Lord, our hearts are equally dark; come into it; not for Your sake, but for our sake. Once You are in, we will take Your help to churn up the butter so that You can steal it, to Your heart's content.

Lord, we read that You once blessed one with an opportunity to listen to the Divine Muraligana, emanating from Your chest. We are like empty reeds lying on the roadside. Do not allow the reed to lie idle; pick it up and blow Your Divine breath into it so that everyone of us may become a Murali in Your hands and Divine, Celestial Music may flow out of it.

Swami, we have heard much of Your role as Sarathi for Partha on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Our need to have you as Sarathi in our hearts is equally great, now. It is not an eighteen days affair; it is a constant battlefield. Not a hundred Kauravas but thousands of them are waging war inside us. Unless You take command of this battlefield we have no chance of survival. Take complete control of the reins of this chariot; let it move in whichever direction you want it to move. You have proclaimed Yourself as the Sanathana Sarathi. Make us understand the full significance of this proclamation so that we can imbibe the true meaning of the Sai Gita.

Baba! You remind us constantly that the world is a big stage and we are all actors on it and that we should play our allotted parts, as per the commands of the Divine Director of the play. No, Swami, we do not want to be such actors, since the actors on a stage are often prone to disregard the instructions of the Director and act on their own. We prefer to be like the dolls in a puppet show.

Lastly, Lord, when You were in Your Previous Sariram, You used to say, "I give My devotees what they ask for, so that they may learn to ask what I want them to ask for." Please give us that intelligence and Power of discrimination to ask from You what you want us to ask for.

—Dr. M. Balasubrahmanyam, JIPMER, Pondicherry

Sivam

This is a great Day, a Holy Day. It is the Monday of the Kartik month. It is the customary this Day to take a bath in sacred rivers and undergo ritual fast. This Monday has another significance too, for, according to the Hindu calendar, this is the Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. And, we have this day the unique good fortune of being able to bathe in the stream of Bhagavan's Love. Baba has told us often that Fast or Upavasa means that we should hold fast the Feet of the Lord, that we should reside (vasa) near (upa) God. We can celebrate the fast or upa-vasa also this Day in His Presence and at His Feet. This is the most precious Upa-vasa of our lives. It is indeed a rare chance, the consequence of merit earned in many previous lives.

Baba is now laying the Foundation Stone of the imposing, inspiring, charming, building planned to be built on this hallowed plot; the building has been named already as 'SIVAM'. It will be the centre of the spiritual activities of the various Sathya Sai Seva Units in the twin Cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. It will facilitate spiritual Sadhana by the atmosphere of peace, and holiness that will pervade within its precincts. We must build within ourselves, too, the 'Sivam' that will rise up here. The structure that is planned at this place is but an outer concretisation of the inner aspiration that urges us on. We have to endeavour, for attaining the faith and devotion which will transform our hearts into Sivam.

In the centuries gone by, the rulers used to install a big bell before their palaces, so that any one with a grievance could pull the rope, awaken the king into the awareness of his duty to relieve the afflicted. This building-Sivam will be a Bell, which the afflicted can have recourse to, so that they can be relieved by the Darshan, Sparshan and Sambhashan of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Baba has named the building, SIVAM. His life is Sathyam, Sivam Sundaram, These three attributes and adjectives are inextricably intertwined. They mean: Truth Goodness Beauty. Truth alone can confer beauty; falsehood is ugly, even a trace of it mars the beauty, defaces and degrades. Beauty is Truth; Truth, Beauty. Whatever is True and beautiful because it is True, is also Good. How can we name any thing good if it is ugly and false? Sathyam is Sundaram, is Sivam. Sathya is the Path, Sundaram is the experience, Sivam is the Goal; Sundaram is the Path, Sivam is the experience, Sathyam is the Goal. To remind us of all three, to prompt us to live beautifully and reach the Truth through strict adherence to Goodness, this Building is planned and will be consummated by Bhagavan.

—Justice V. Parthasarathi

The Great Master

I come from a staunch orthodox Christian family. I have studied Judaism which is the basic foundation of Christianity. I have gone through the Hindu sacred texts, the Sruti (the four Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads) and the Smriti (the Codes of Law) and the Epics and Puranas. I have also read the Agamas and the Darshanas of Hindu Philosophy. I found

the Upanishads great mystic treatises, revealing higher truths which are supremely authoritative, but highly abstruse. Only a great Master like Baba can enlighten us on them.

I want my Christian friends as well as Hindu friends to read this article for, I find that Christians have crucified Jesus, and the Hindus too have no appreciation of the excellence of Sanathana Dharma.

The aim of all religious teachers has been to establish peace and good will among men. They have come, taught and withdrawn. But, everywhere there is mental unrest. Man is running after he knows not what. Everyone wants peace; but, who can establish peace? The earth is now ruled by a few barbaric personalities.

Contemplating all this, my faith in God, Prophets, Saints and Seers was shattered, and I became a fatalist. I visited Prasanthi, Nilayam and contacted Baba a year ago. His greatness was not clear for me, then. But, my thoughts roamed round Him, now and then.

A few days back, I was in Calcutta. I felt suddenly as if some one was dragging me; without the aim being clear to me, I somehow, reached Madras! From Madras, I proceeded to Anantapur! Baba had predicted that I would be arriving at His Place, giving even the date. I came to Puttaparthi, on that very date! Baba's will led me to Him from a distance of 2000 kilometers!

I had His Darshan; I had an opportunity of speaking to Him. How well He knows me I wonder! He saw into my very soul!

The realisation that I was totally blind came to me. My inward eyes were opened. Light began shining; tongues of fire began swallowing me. I have been transformed. Is it metamorphosis, or is it Divine alchemy?

What sorrow, what delusion, can affect a man who sees the One-ness of all things here? The seers of the Upanishads say, "Lead me from the unreal to the real; Lead me from darkness to Light; Lead me from death to Immortality".

Baba preaches Unity in Diversity. The world needs a Great Master like Baba to establish Peace and to preach the doctrine of Love. Jesus preached the doctrine of Love and was crucified. The very tenants of Christianity are warmongers, now! We want not peacemakers, but Peace. Only people like Baba who knows the psychology of withering humanity can establish peace on earth.

How loving Bola is! Love is all we need; with Love comes everything. How kind His looks are! How loving are His tender hands! How like the Lotus are His Feet! There have come great Masters, Saints, Prophets, Seers etc in history. But, who has been as kind as Baba? His very look changes iron hearts into golden hearts. He never angers. To Him, all are one—the sinner, the saviour; even as the Sun, He shines equal over all.

Trust in Him purges one's foul with the Fire of Love, and, Peace dawns. Baba made me realise that if a man has no self-control, he can have no comprehension. Nor can he have the

power of contemplation without which he can have no peace. When he can have no peace he can never be happy.

Many, many gather round Baba from over the world, and believe in Him. It is my belief that, if the present rulers of the world come to know Him, there will be peace and tranquility in the world. For, as Lord Krishna has said in the Gita, "Whenever there is decline to Law and an outbreak of lawlessness, I incarnate Myself." In fact, God never comes to man in all His Glory and splendour. He comes only in a human form! He assumes human form; when He assumes form, fouds disregard Him, not knowing His higher nature that He is the supreme Lord of all beings.

Loving the Lord and loving one's fellow men is the surest way to reach the kingdom of God which is within us, says Jesus. Now, I see the same doctrine preached by Baba after so many centuries. I wish His mission of Love spreads like the roots of the banyan tree all over the confusing contradicting feverish fretting fighting humanity.

—A. Dayanand