

Happy Birthday

"The same Divine Compassion that blessed Dhruva, saved Gajendra, restored Kuchela, and stood by Prahlada has come on earth as the Refuge of the refuge-less, as the Lord of Peace, Harmony and Righteousness, as the Lord of all the Worlds, as the Sat-chit-Ananda-murti, as the Puttaparthi Sathya Sai Sat-chakravarti—the King off Kings."

How fascinating is the face of the baby, resting in the lap of the Mother! It has no fear in its eyes; it has joy on its lips; it is full of peace. It is unaffected by those evil forces that rob man of his peace and joy—envy, greed, anger, hatred. It has no egoistic desire, no anxiety to impress others and show off. It has no plans for the future, no regrets for the past. Its faith in the love and strength of the Mother is so unshakable that even if the sky collapses and falls, its calmness cannot be disturbed. Why is it that, when the baby grows into adolescence and manhood, this calmness and this joy disappear, giving place to fear, anxiety and hatred? The reason is to be found in the increasing mastery of the senses and their clamour for being catered to. Again, the grown person sees only the 'many'; it leaves aside the vision of the One. It encounters, as a result, competition and conflict, and lives its days in sorrow, disappointment and despair.

As the child gathers more information and experience, and becomes more learned and intellectual, it sees the world as a battlefield of opposing forces and armies and therefore, it struggles for victory by devious means. Each head has its own thoughts, says the Shruti (Munde munde, mathir bhinnaah). No two agree; differences breed disputes; and finally, life becomes an arena where ego fights against ego. The situation is as bad as in the medical field, where specialists who can diagnose and deal only with the illness of the eye, the nose, the throat, the stomach, the liver, the heart, the skin etc, forget that these are all unified by the organism called body, and that it is not advisable to study them separately as many distinct, parts. The Universe, the Individual, the Paramatma are all inseparably unified. Scientists parade the little peeps they have of the Truth as big victories. Even the technology that Science has encouraged so far is fraught with danger to mankind. They cut up the Cosmos and the Forces behind it and specialise in minute parts and thus present false pictures of Reality.

Devotees are also caught in this game of seeing many where there is only One. They seek the path that is popular, that will bring them fame, rather than the path that can ensure liberation and illumination. They place their own idea of God in the forefront and fight for precedence and support. The Vedic Sutra—Ekoham, bahusyam—I am One, I shall be many—is ignored. It is the One that pretends to be many. So, one has to feel the impact of the One, rather than of the many, while moving in the world.

Faith is very essential for the pilgrim on the Adhyatmic path. Man is now caught up in temporary and trivial pre-occupations in the too short interval between birth and death, and he deceives himself by placing faith in these, rather than on truer and more lasting realities and experiences. He does not hold on to discrimination and deeper realities; so, he is carried away by every gust of doubt or disappointment.

The baby is calm and unaffected on the lap of the Mother, since it has faith in the Mother. The mother points out to someone as its Father, to another as its Grandpa, to another as its Sister or

Brother and the child accepts these statements without question. The Mother creates the Faith in the Father for the child. So, too, Mother Nature proclaims that there is a Father, who has designed and who is energising and motivating these worlds; but, man does not accept it, for he has lost the capacity of Faith. Faith is the basis of every act; you do not run away from the barber because he is armed with, a sharp razor. You place faith in him and allow him to give you a haircut, quietly submitting to his idiosyncrasies. You give away costly clothes to the dhobi, since you have the faith that he will return them washed and ironed. You have faith in the driver of your car, in the engineer who built your house. So too, believe in the Inner Motivator, the Atma within, the voice of God. People are going about now, advising that one should believe only things that one has 'seen' and 'experienced'. Something happens somewhere and the news is published in the papers. It is believed without question. So too, believe in the experience of seers and sages, who had no other purpose than discovering the Truth and sharing it with others who are unaware of it. In India, we have had millions who believed in God and in the seekers after God, and who have themselves realised the Truth of God. This has made their lives happy and contented.

Of course, the seeker has to encounter many obstacles, both inner and outer. But, each one of them is a challenge, which must bring out his latent faith. Where there is no darkness, there can be no appreciation for light. Without the pangs of hunger, no one will seek food. It is the possibility of death that makes even the mother love the child and deal with it affectionately.

That is the reason why one saint advised his followers, 'Do not ask God for anything. Let Him deal with you as He wills'. Did Jatayu ask that Rama should come to him and perform the last rites? Did Sabari plead with Rama? Earn the qualifications -holiness, purity, faith, universal Love; He will approach you on Foot to console, comfort and save! Purity of heart, mastery over the senses—if you have those two, credentials, Grace is your right. Imagining that Bliss is available in the outer world, men stray away from the inner path and are caught up in misery. They seek it in the family—the wife and children—and, to keep up a standard of living for them, they take to evil ways. The fundamental flaw is their belief that the Body is the be-all and end-all of existence. They ignore the Indweller, who has to be recognised, revered and responded to.

The Avatar is the Atmashakti, that has put on the raiment of Kriyashakti, and Yogashakti. Generally, Avatarana or the process of Incarnation, is described as a 'coming down' from a higher status to a lower one. But, no. When the child in the cradle weeps and wails and clamours for help, the mother stoops and takes it up in her arms. Her stoop is not to be described as a 'coming down'. The aeroplane has to fly up above; it cannot move along the road. But, it does not fly all the time. It comes down at the airport, because there are persons there who have purchased the tickets which entitle them to journey in the plane. If you earn the credentials, the Incarnation will come and save you. If on the other hand, one multiplies one's demerits and descends lower and lower, how can he be saved? Have Love and Ananda your heart. Ananda comes from pure sight, pure hearing, pure speech and pure actions.

The Day you establish yourselves in this Ananda that Day is My Birthday for you. I must tell you another fact. Swami's birthday is being celebrated at Puttaparthi, because so many thousands are coming from far-off places, in spite of great difficulties during the journey and the expense. Do not be under the impression that Swami's Birthday is being celebrated and therefore, you are

coming. I have no desire to have My Birthday celebrated; such trivial thoughts can never enter Me. My only desire is to share My Ananda with you, to encourage you to lead lives full of Ananda. My Birthday is when you get Ananda. My mission is 'Lokassamasthaa Sukhino Bhavantu'. May all the worlds be happy and prosperous. Become aware of the unity of mankind; promote by love and service the joy and contentment of every one on earth; fill your hearts with that yearning. Then, it becomes verily, the Sai Mandir. From that moment I am where you are.

Since this morning many people have come to me with the greeting, 'Happy Birthday!' No one need wish for happiness for me, since I am always happy, everywhere. For Anandaswarupa why talk of happy birthday? You too must be happy, all through and not wait for the Birthday to recur every year, to accumulate Ananda.

—Bhagavan's Discourse. 23-11-78

He too is He

People hope to accumulate merit by charity; some feel that asceticism is superior; some adhere strictly to what they believe Sanathana Dharma to be; they think that is a better way to secure Divine Grace. But, these and even the highly praised path of Truth and Dharma are not as fruitful as the path of Seva. This sacred land of Bharat has earned great renown in the world through her consistent practice of this ideal of Seva through sacrifice.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Siva is omnipresent; He is the inner motivator of all beings. He is ever present, everywhere, in our inner realm as well as in the realms around us. This fundamental truth has to be firmly believed in, by every Seva Dal Member, and, realising this, he has to be humble and full of reverence towards all. You have to encounter various contrary gusts of passion, emotion, impulse, and intellectual doubts. Nevertheless, bear them bravely; overcome them through prayer and meditation.

The Lord, too, will provide many tests to ensure that your faith is made firm; and that your spirit of Seva is full and universal. The weaker practitioners of this Seva Sadhana will soon be shaken by these tests, they stray away from the right path, they lose their grip over themselves, and so, the enemies that lie in wait to foil their Sadhana—namely the gang of six: lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and hatred—overpower the inner urge and make them slaves of the mere physical and material. The Seva Dal member who shines in the splendour of the faith that "God is in himself as well as equally so in all," can transform the members of his family, his neighbours, the society in which he lives and moves, and the entire country to which he belongs. His Love and light will bring him, unasked, a great deal of respectful attention.

As a preliminary to Seva, you have to win purity of heart. You must examine your motives and skills, your intentions and qualifications and discover for yourself what you hope to achieve through the Seva. You should ferret out any trace of egoism, or even the hope of fame and of being able to be near Swami. If you have an irrepressible urge to possess things that contribute to

your comfort or sense of superiority over others who are your friends or kith and kin, then the sooner you leave the Dal the better.

You have heard some basic directions that I have been continuously giving. I have been telling you to deal with them, as directions for life. "Duty is God; Work is Worship." and, another dictum, 'Heads in the Forest, Hands in Society'. Do such deeds as are holy and beneficial, untarnished by ego and the greed to benefit. Start on the sacred pilgrimage to the Divine Goal, and make every minute of your life holy and purposeful. Then, surely, this earth, your field of work, will be transformed into a Karmakshetra and a Dharmakshetra. While judging the Seva done by a member of the Dal, it is not the quantity or number of individual instances that matter; they do not count at all. Judge rather the motive that led him to serve, the genuineness of the Love and compassion with which the Seva was saturated! You may give as explanation that it was your duty and so, you had to do it; you may say that it was a responsibility which was imposed on you by the scarf and badge. But, the explanation that appeals to Swami is that you did the Seva, with no taint of ego, and that you derived surpassing Ananda as a result. Preliminary to any Seva work, you have to uproot the egoistic tendency, get rid of all sense of mine and thine, and burn into ashes the pride that comes of the feeling that you are offering service to some one, poorer and less fortunate. I find that the members of the Seva Dal have seldom attained this stage. They are still growing the thorny bush of ego in their hearts. And, the thorns are bound to hurt them, more than others. The feelings of I and mine are at the root of all the misery in the world.

Do not hesitate to practise humility and obedience, discipline and compassion. Give up pride at your status, wealth, scholarship, or official position. "Can I a big officer, a rich merchant, a great scholar, a man highly respected in society descend to this level of chumming with this sorrowing man?" Do not ask such silly questions. Every one of these qualifications of which you boast will disappear with death, or sometimes, sooner. The Ananda that you give, the Love that you share, these alone will be your lasting possessions.

Others not motivated by the spiritual urge might ridicule you, caricature your activities, and even put obstacles in the way. But, do not lose grip over your courage. Do not also hate these traducers. Do not yield to anger. Watch for the Divinity that is latent in every man; that will give you peace and fortitude. Pay attention to the ONE that is the truth of the many. You have met state-wise in groups and arrived at certain conclusions about the types of Seva. These have been presented now. Rajesh Khanna from Delhi showed you that mini-first-aid-box that each Seva Dal member can carry in his pocket so that he may be ready at any moment for any eventuality. It is indeed a good idea which can be taken up by other States. Health is the primary requisite for all activities, physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual. Any injury or illness that affects it adversely has to be attended to with loving care. But, more essential than these aids, is another type of Seva. Carry in the inner pocket (the heart) a box, with a few tablets of "Discrimination", an ounce or two of "Sense-control" and a few packets of powder prepared as the mixture of Prema and forbearance. Use this box to infuse courage and in others and in your own self.

Sense-control will guard you against a host of evils. Do not believe that you are equipped with them and so, nothing harmful can happen through their free exercise. You have your car, registered in your own name, and you are driving it yourself. But, if you do not apply the brake

in time, accidents are bound to happen. Your body can be compared to a car. Your eyes are the lights; your stomach is the petrol Tank; your mouth is the horn; the mind is the steering wheel; the tyres are Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The air within the tyres is Faith. Intelligence or Buddhi is the switch.

The worship of Jivis, which is the other name for Seva, can be done with some little gain, only when the heart is pure. All the various types of service that you now write and talk about are mere empty boasts, if the mind of the Sevak is not pure. With a heart bubbling with Ananda, and a mind saturated with Love, do any tiny bit of self-less Seva. That will win Grace much more than huge projects undertaken in pride and pomp.

Nowadays, faith in God and Goodness has declined. The means have become subordinate to the end. Success is sought by fair means or foul, foul means are the first resort. Misuse of official position, terrorising ignorant and innocent people to get one's way, creating situations of fear and despair to undermine the moral strength of people—these have become respectable Tactics. Victory won through questionable means is as shameful as defeat; defeat, while pursuing honest and compassionate means is to be welcomed as victory. When you do not stray from the straight path, when you hold fast to truth and when you do not lose courage, your failure is as creditable as success. Seva Dal members should not become machine-minded and mechanical. They must have faith not in Yantra, but, in Mantra, and they must consider each man as an impersonation of God. You select a bamboo, which is straight and long. But, when selecting a cane, you look to the sugar-content. So too, do not select Seva Dal members for any other qualification than the Sadhana by which they are aware of the Divinity in each individual.

I advise, through another slogan also. "Even if you cannot oblige, you can at least speak obligingly." This means, you have to cleanse your speech of cynicism and satire; be sincere and sweet. You may differ from co-workers on methods and programmes, but, this should not leave a scar on your heart or on theirs. Office-bearers in this Organisation are leaders who bear the brunt themselves, guides who walk along the path they wish others to take. They shall not command or punish; they can only persuade and advise. The name of Sathya Sai is attached to each wing of this Organisation. It is Sathya Sai that inspires each activity of each wing. This fact has not been taken to heart by many of you. Sai is the inner inspiration and light for each worker. The sections should not feel free to act according to the whims and fancies of the members or office-bearers. Each is dependent on the other. When a thorn pricks the foot, the eye sheds tears. There is a Divinity that moves and motivates the entire system of physical, mental, intellectual activity in the body. Antar bahischa that sarvam, vyapya Narayana sthithah: Inside and outside, all that is, is saturated with God. When one organ is happy, all are happy. When one limb is affected, all are in misery.

The five parts of the Organisation should act and co-operate like the fingers of one hand. The Samiti is the thumb; the Mahila Vibhag is the 'pointing finger'; the Seva Dal is the middle finger; the Bhajan Mandali is the ring finger and the Bal Vikas is the little finger. Note that when you admonish some one with a gesture of your hand, you shake the flat palm at him the little finger then leads the rest in warning and counselling. That is what the children in their innocence and faith have to do, for, the atrocities of elders are clear to their unprejudiced minds.

The name Dal that you bear has another great significance. Dal means, the petal of a flower. The lotus has as many as a thousand petals. They all emanate from the central Karnika or pericarp. Each petal draws its strength, sustenance, colour, fragrance, and charm from the Karnika. Detached from the Karnika the petal cannot survive. That attachment and that affection can be secured when the petal clings to the ideals of Sai and the lessons of Sai. In My Message to you, there is no scope for your seeing differences or distinctions among those you serve. Lokassamasthaa Sukhino Bhavantu. Every being in all the worlds must be happy, that is My Wish and Blessing.

Cultivating Prema is the one and only Sadhana that can endow you with this outlook and faith. If there arises in the Samiti or Seva Dal or Mahila Vibhag, any feeling of hatred between members, clash of opinions, or envy against some other member, treat It as a serious sin. It is a sacrilege, an act of treason, against the Organisation itself. Well. Past is past. The past we cannot recover; the future is not ours; the present is fleeting fast into the past. Let us not brood over what has already happened. From this moment, give up envy, pride, and hatred from your hearts, and plant therein, Prema and Mutual Help. Give up the pernicious habit of seeking faults in others; seek the faults in yourself. You discover faults only because you have those faults. Faultless people can never find faults in others.

We have here 10,000 Seva Dal members, trained and dedicated for Seva. I have doubts whether you are doing your duty to yourself and others—the duty you have taken upon yourselves, voluntarily. From the Reports that you read, I understand that as part of rural service, you go into the villages adopted by the Samitis, and repair roads, clear drains, give some medicines conduct Bhajans and deliver lectures. Is this the work that the Sathya Sai Seva Dal has to do? Suppose you have a glass which you use to drink water from. Is it enough if the glass is cleaned on the outside? Inner cleanliness, inner health, inner illumination—these are far more important and the Sathya Sai Seva Dal has to take it up, in a big way. Find out how many families are in misery and poverty on account of the evil habits of the bread-winners. Drinking, gambling and other vices have to be tackled with humility and love, and through persuasion and even personal submission. The Government builds hospitals, provides roads, arranges for water supply, and improves the outer forms of living. It is only a spiritual band of Sadhakas like you that can succeed in reforming their habits and bring them on the path of peace, prosperity and harmony. Every effort to give the villager a few more coins through employment will only make things worse if their moral calibre is not made strong enough to overcome the temptations of drink and gambling. Lead them slowly and surely along the path of God and these habits will drop off one by one.

Do not hope to gain Grace by looking down upon brother man and looking up at Sai. And, remember that your dress, style of walking, manner of talking, and even style of looking will reveal your character and attitude to others. Have always sweet soft words on your tongue; cast your eyes only on holy sights. Wear clean, simple, dress. Do not imitate those who are fascinated by the latest fashion in dress and hairstyle. How can you do Seva, when you move away so far from the common man? I advise you to `Follow the Master. "By `Master,' I mean the Conscience within you, the Voice of God. Then you can face the Devil and escape from his temptations, unharmed. And, you must be ever vigilant that old habits and past attitudes do not come home

again. So, the third rule is, Fight to the End and then, you gain the victory in the fourth round. Finish the Game.”

From the moment of birth, your breath has been proclaiming your Reality, for, it repeats incessantly the mantra, "Soham", I am He, I am Sivam. Be conscious of this and you can never be wrong. You can never injure or insult any one, for, he too is He. Once that repetition of the Soham stops, man is reduced to Shavam—a corpse. Therefore, cultivate the Divine qualities of Love, Compassion, Humility, Reverence for all living Beings, reverence towards the Earth and all the other elements. You can thus draw upon yourself the Grace of God and render your lives beneficial and fruitful.

—Bhagavan’s discourse-IV all India Seva Dal conference, 22nd November 78

Letters to Baba

Many people go to Baba and see only his beautiful form and incredible miracles. They are interested only in his physical presence, in a personal interview and a miracle. They take very little of Baba's message. Baba has told us that these miracles are not important in themselves; they are only baits to catch our attention, so that we will listen to the message he has come to Earth to give.

He has also explained that he is in each and every heart which thinks of him. There is no need for a personal interview or for him to speak to you or look at you or even for you to go to India. You merely have to open your heart wherever you are to realize he is there. So many have experienced this truth through dreams or meditation or in times of crises when they could see or feel Baba's presence.

We mention this, because we occasionally found at "Prasanthi Nilayam" emotions such as desire, anxiety and even fear, envy and hatred over whether or not Baba showed attention to one or one's neighbour. Of course, these emotions are perfectly normal considering our upbringing and ignorance of what we "really" are, which causes us to constantly look for approval and acceptance from those on whom we have high esteem.

But we need not have any fear, as universal love knows no attachment and no aversion. Ignore the physical drama and know that Baba loves all equally. In his own words: "I do not discard anyone. I cannot, it is not my nature to do so; have no fear, I am yours—you are mine.”

The main physical means of communication with Baba is through letters. These letters can be of a wide variety: asking for interviews, requesting healing for a long standing or difficult illness, asking for advice on a material or spiritual decision—and who knows what other requests are hidden within those thousands upon thousands of letters. The letters may be sent to Baba from abroad, passed on to him by a friend who is going, (or, in the event that you Yourself are blessed to be there,) you can hand it to Baba directly during "Darshan".

It is not my opinion that these letters are "read" in the physical sense of the word. In fact, I don't believe the letter even has to reach Baba. He is omnipresent—he knows all and everything past, present and future (as such it is determined). So, he is aware of our question or request, the moment we pose it in our minds. The giving of the letter is all for our own feeling of security and satisfaction.

Letters may be written in any language for his mind is beyond the veil of languages. He will speak to you in Greek or English or any other language if necessary.

Therefore, we do not expect a "physical letter" back. We may receive our answer indifferent ways. Baba may speak to us physically (if we are there), in a dream or in meditation. We may pick up a book and the answer will be there or a conversation with someone may illumine us. If there is an illness involved, it may simply begin disappearing or we might become aware of what we must do to become well.

We would urge anyone who needs guidance or help of any variety (no problem is too material, too spiritual, too easy or too difficult), to write to Baba, physically or mentally and have faith in your overcoming this obstacle.

—*Helianthos Yoga Union, Athens*

My Unsent Telegram

I am writing this from Brindavan. I came here from California about a month ago. In that time, I feel like I have died and been reborn!

To explain: Let me go back to about a year ago, when I was here last. At that time, when I took leave of Swami, He gave me permission to return to India for a prolonged stay, starting this October. "You come then," He said, "I will have some work for you to do." I began planning for a Sabbatical from my teaching duties at an Institute in California.

But then, during the Summer, serious illness struck. The diagnosis was a probable cancer in the liver area. Tests indicated 'positive'. A biopsy and liver scan were recommended. But, I had heard of a metabolic therapy called 'Gerson Therapy' that was effective against all types of Cancer. So, I went to Mexico and commenced this very intensive cancer regimen. For two months, I battled the illness. All thoughts of the Sabbatical in India vanished as the available energy was directed towards staying alive.

Even though the body was very sick and oftentimes the mind got discouraged and was ready to give up, yet the inner man never doubted that Swami was with me, that He knew of this illness, and that, in time, He would pull me through.

After two months, the therapy took hold and I felt very much better. I knew then that I must go to India, if only for a short visit to thank Baba and re-dedicate my life at His Lotus Feet. I couldn't stay in India for more than a few weeks, since the therapy needed to continue for several months more to make sure there could be no relapse.

I wrote to my aged parents (my father is 88 and my mother is 85) who live on the other side of the U. S. Continent, that I planned a short visit to India, to see Baba. They got terribly worried. "You are not well enough to undertake such a trip. They are having floods and epidemics there. There won't be any good food for you," they wrote back. "Why don't you telephone Him, instead of going; it will be much better for your health and cheaper too," they suggested.

I got their letter on the 10th October, the day before Yom Kipur, the Jewish high holy day. They are devoted Jews. In honour of them and ingratitude to Swami for my new feelings of well-being, I decided for the first time in many years to observe this Jewish holy day of Atonement, by fasting and immersing myself in prayer. This was the first interruption in two months of the therapy, which called for hourly feedings of specially prepared juices and medications. I asked my nurse-helpers to take the day off. I felt I had only one duty to perform that day, and that was, to write to my parents and wish them the very best for the Jewish New Year and also to explain to them that it was not possible to telephone Baba, but to make them happy, I would at least try to send Him a telegram, and ask for His directions.

As I went to the Institute Office to mail the letter to my parents, I thought about what I might say in a telegram to Swami. While absorbed in these thoughts, I heard my name being called by the Secretary, who had seen me approaching the Office. "Al, there is a long-distance phone call for you from the International Telegraph Office, in San Francisco."

I very rarely receive phone calls in the Office since I am there so infrequently and I have never received a telegram before. So, I was startled, to say the least. The operator on the other end of the line relayed the telegram message to me, it is from Prasanthi Nilayam, India. It says, "Please come immediately."

I couldn't believe my ears. "My God! Is this real?"

Up to that moment, I was immersed in my life at the Institute, teaching, keeping up with the rigorous demands of the therapy, and all the hundred daily involvements and chores that we have in our home setting. Now, everything changed instantly. I was galvanised into action. I didn't know when I could actually leave, but, I ran home and started packing. Some friends heard the news and came over to help. One called the airlines to find out what flights were scheduled that day. Another offered to drive me to the nearest airport at Monterey, 75 kilometres away. Another got together some food for the long journey ahead, since I was on a restricted organic diet. Another brought me 600 dollars in cash, with the statement, "You'll need money for the trip. , You can pay me back when you return." Another, a Catholic sister studying there, gave me her treasured Cross to take along to ask Swami to bless it. Still others came by just to give their well-wishes for a safe journey and asked to be remembered to Baba.

It was as if Swami's Shakti and Prema had suddenly crystallized in this remote place. Busy as I was with packing, I choked up at this unfolding scene of love. In no time, the packing was done, and all the other matters, related to my house and classes, and the people helping me with the therapy, were taken care of.

Within less than two hours of receiving the telegram message, I was on my way, on a 13,000-mile journey to Swami. A new non-stop service from Los Angeles to London and London to Bombay which was leaving within an hour of the arrival of my connecting flight in Los Angeles would get me to Bombay in record time!

Coming to that first small airport at Monterey without reservations and learning that the various flights were all fully booked, posed no real, problem at all for me, since I knew that Divine Energy was fuelling my present journey. Somehow, a seat always appeared. I made good my promise to myself that day to take no food or drink for 24 hours. Somewhere over the North Atlantic, I untied the food basket that my friend had fixed, and, closing my eyes, offered a shiny, juicy apple to the Lord. Then, opening my eyes, I looked around the darkened aircraft. I remember the sense of awe I felt at finding myself in these surroundings as I broke the Yom Kipur fast. A sweet sleep followed, high up at 40,000 feet. Soon enough, we were in London and 12 hours later, at Bombay.

I had no visa; but, the Customs Official decided that last year's visa would do. I didn't argue! Collecting my luggage, I ran for the Indian Airlines flight which was to take off for Bangalore in 30 minutes. Of course, it was full; but, as with the other flights, space became available. Anyway I landed at Bangalore. It happened that the Chief Minister of Karnataka was on the plane. A driver who was a Sai devotee had delivered someone to the Bangalore Airport. Hearing that his Chief Minister was aboard, and curious to see him, he hung around the airport, until my flight landed. Coming out of the terminal, I connected with the driver, just as he was about to drive off to the West End Hotel, where he was stationed. "Sai Ram. How about taking me to Prasanthi Nilayam?" I asked him.

"Yes," he said, "but Baba is supposed to be coming back to Bangalore tomorrow," he replied. Let us go, anyway," I told him. "O.K. We can stop at my place on the way and I'll tell my wife I won't be home this evening" "Good," I said. I felt at peace inside; the journey was coming to an end.

Three hours later, we were at the Darshan Line and my heart rejoiced as I again saw the Lord. He greeted me, with, "Achha! When did you arrive?" I knew was home.

That is really the end of the story. Baba stayed for a week more in Puttaparthi and then, came to Whitefield, Bangalore. At the time of this writing, the daily Darshan has been continuing for three weeks and a half, and my heart is filling up as I sit happily at His Feet basking in His Grace. Can you now see, why I said I feel a little like I died and was re-born?

Swami has given me permission to teach at the College in Brindavan. It looks like the Sabbatical has started after all, although under totally unexpected circumstances! Even if He tells me to leave tomorrow there is never really any return to the previous life.

Every time one comes anew to Baba, one's life starts anew. Clearly the illness was a purification that He sent. Baba told me during the interview that the body was now healed. "I am always with you. I never forget you for a moment. I am in your heart; and, you are in mine," He said.

When our beloved Sai says that, to us what else is there to do but to fall at the Feet in gratitude? What a wonderful good fortune we all enjoy to be alive in this time in the presence and knowledge of the Yuga Avatar, our dear Swami.

He says He never forgets us even for a moment if only we would follow His lead and never forget Him even for a moment. Truly, what other Sadhana is there for us, but to steadily and constantly love Him, love Him, love Him?

—*Alvine Drucker*

Readers of Sanathana Sarathi

This tantalising true-false 'world' does not know, even to the smallest extent, how to distinguish the true from the false, the eternal from the temporary. It has to be instructed in discriminative detachment and attachment.

It has to be informed that the essential teaching of all religions, the central core of all systems of philosophy, and the final goal of all codes of morality can be declared as just this: the awareness of the Self, the Atma. The world has to be inspired to accept, as the key to success in spiritual endeavour, philosophical speculation and moral advance, Truth, Righteousness and Fortitude.

The Divinity latent in Man has to be induced into patent activity in daily life. Man has to be prompted and encouraged to transform his 'daily living' into 'truly living'—without getting entangled in the coils of cleverness and the meshes of logic, and without getting involved in dry Vedantic dialectics.

Moved by these needs, and the desire to cool the hot conflicts in your brains, and quench the agonising thirst in your heart—see! —here it comes, streaming from Parthi, wave after wave, with the Sanathana Sarathi as the bridge between you and me, emerging, on the holy festival day of Sankranti, the SATHYA SAI VAHINI!

—**Baba**

The Four Blemishes

Education must provide illumination; the darkness of ignorance and the dusk of doubt have to flee before that splendour. Then, it is easy to cultivate good thoughts, feelings and impulses in the brightness of the heart. Or, as some perverted persons do, bad thoughts, bad feelings and bad impulses can be bred in the original darkness itself. The first is the Rama Path, the second, the Ravana Path.

Education does not end with the accumulation of information; it must result in transformation of the habits, character and aspirations of the individual. Knowledge has to be tested in daily action. Now, man has no information on the most precious heritage that he has within him. He is interested in everyone except his own self. If only he becomes aware of his self, he can have vast strength, deep peace and great joy added unto himself. Now, he is like a man standing under a blazing sun wailing, "O! I am in the darkness, I am caught up in the night." He is like the man standing on the bank of the Ganga, and crying that he is having unbearable thirst. He has in him the very embodiment of Peace, Bliss, and Love. But, he has no knowledge of this. He lives out his days in fear, hatred and sorrow.

Science has provided man with the radio, the television set and the film. They are each useful and productive of good, if each one is manipulated by persons with a pure social consciousness and with love in their hearts. But, they are now in the hands of people with no high moral standards, who find in them tools for amassing money and so, they have become enemies of human progress. The tender minds of growing children are polluted by these media of communication.

Man has to cleanse his mind of four blemishes before he can overcome the disaster that is fast overtaking him. They are Ashraddha, Krodha, Avishvasam and Chinta, that is to say, want of steady application in work, anger, faltering faith in oneself and a perpetual sense of worry. First—Shraddha or Steady Interest and application in the discharge of one's duty. It is said that the person endowed with Shraddha gains Jnana. How can Jnana be won by half-hearted dedication? Youth today is very flighty; they are carried away by fantasies, whims and fancies. They are reluctant to dive deep into the truth of themselves or the outer world. They run after the sheets of water they perceive in mirages; can glow-worms light a lamp? Frivolities and fancies cannot grant peace and happiness; what is really worthwhile has to be discovered first; then, steady effort must follow to gain them. Krodha or Anger is deadly poison. It affects others by its fumes, manifested through the eye, the tongue and the hands. The seed of a poison tree sprouts into a poisonous plant and when it becomes a big tree, its leaves flowers and fruits will be certainly poisonous. So too, the person addicted to anger can only emanate poison, through thought, word and deed. An angry thought is like a pebble thrown into the calm waters of the Manasa-sarovar, inside man. It creates a circular effect which spreads through the entire lake. Anger is very injurious to the progress of youth. Strive by all means to prevent the poison entering your mental make-up. Cultivate Love, Kindliness, the spirit of Seva, and encourage all thoughts of co-operation with others. See the Divinity in each one, as you must see it in your own selves.

The third handicap is Avishvasam, or weak faith in oneself. Now, you have faith in the body and its appurtenances and not in the Inner Motivator, the Charioteer. That is why faith falters when some minor calamity happens. Contemplate on the impermanence of wealth, fame, worldly friendship, etc. Youth today have faith in unreal, transient, momentary pleasures and pastimes. They have no knowledge of the eternal, the changeless, the ever-blissful. Precious years of life are thus wasted in worthless pursuits. Cultivate faith in the value of Seva; believe that Love can overcome hatred. Have faith in righteousness and the moral life. This is called Dharma, since, dhara means that which is worn, that which envelops, that which protects etc. Do not stray into wrong paths, enticed by sensual desires and plans for self-aggrandizement.

The next attitude to overcome is 'chinta' or the habit of sliding into worry and despair. Once this weed takes root in the mind of man, it assumes many forms to assert its hold. Every stage of life is fraught with anxiety; every step in the progress of man is a cause for worry. In fact, birth, death, old age, illness, every one of these multiply worries of their own. How to get sleep is a cause for Worry; how to get up from the bed is another worry! Today admission to Colleges causes worry; admission to the hostel is another worry; the examination causes worry. But these are matters that are not essential. They need not cause so much heart-burning as the problem of removing the fundamental error in the thought process—the ignoring of the Divine that inspires and guides you always and for ever.

Jnana is usually associated with two ways of acquisition—the worldly or the material and the Spiritual or Brahma path. The worldly path is like a pair of scissors. It cuts knowledge into pieces. The Brahma path is like a needle—it makes the separate parts One and indivisible. The Sadhaka must be aware of both. When you declare a person to be a Jnani, he has passed through these two stages.

Science or the study of observable sensory matter, of measurable and calculable items can give only incomplete information. The sea has pearls in its depths; but, you have to dive into it to secure them. The waves throw out only shells. You are celebrating Swami's Birthday today in this College. It is only when brotherliness, devotion, dedication and discipline are cultivated that Swami can be installed in your hearts. Do everything to develop that Love with all, especially with the villages from which you come and take up projects of bettering their moral and economic condition.

—Baba (7-12-78)

The Search for the Soul

—B. Srinivas Murty

(Continued from Previous Month)

The Self Is A Supramental Catalyst

The human body undergoes uninterrupted biochemical and metabolic changes. Metabolism includes the processes of anabolism (the creation of new cells) and catabolism (the destruction of

old cells). All the cells, tissues and fibres of the human organism are turned over and replaced periodically. The living body is a self-regulating cybernetic organism, which goes on destroying and re-creating itself. But the biological gestalt or the unified structure of the physical frame is held together firmly although its biochemical ingredients are in a state of perpetual flux. Body and mind are held together in a stable dynamic equilibrium until death disintegrates them. What is this force or energy which holds together in its physical frame bodily cells, tissues and fibres subjected to continual metabolic and biochemical changes? The microcosmic container called the human body does not change its essential form although its biochemical contents go on changing continually. It is the nonmaterial self which preserves body and mind in their physical frame. The self itself remains unaffected by the integrating and disintegrating forces acting on the body and the mind. The self may be regarded as an asomatic or supramental catalyst which survives the death and dissolution of the physical body.

The Self And The Human Aura Interpenetrate

The phenomenon of the bioplasmic human aura, which can be experimentally investigated with the aid of high voltage Kirlian photography, is a manifestation of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness interpenetrating the self of the individual.

The universe, from the standpoint of modern atomic physics as well as the perennial philosophy of mysticism, is in a state of dynamic equilibrium, an interminable and eternal Heraclitean flux. Everything is evanescent and nothing is permanent. The universe is an interrelated, interconnected, and interpenetrative web of events, processes and situations in the space-time continuum. The individual self is exposed to the unpredictable centrifugal and centripetal forces of the universe. It is a divine spark of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. As long as the individual self remains attached to the physical body it retains its human aura.

The Soul Is The Disembodied Self

Human life is a finite series of situations. We always find ourselves in one situation or the other, throughout our lives. We can exercise our freedom of choice and either put up with a situation or avoid it. We may even create a situation or alter it to our advantage. But, there are some unpredictable, unavoidable, irreversible and uncontrollable situations from which we cannot escape. They are the ultimate situations of birth and death. Our parents have been chosen for us without our consent. Nobody can escape from the ultimate and inexorable situation of death. Life is an interlude between the two ultimate and irrevocable situations of birth and death. The soul is embodied at birth; the disembodied self is the soul and the embodied soul is the self.

The Soul And The Self Are Gestalts Of Creative Cosmic Consciousness

The scattering matrix theory of modern physics recognizes certain recurring patterns of change which retain their identities. These are gestalts, unified structures, coherent patterns of unique architectural configurations of energy particles. The individual soul or the disembodied self is a unique gestalt of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. The soul retains its identity through the eternal cycle of births and deaths.

`Knowledge Of' And `Knowledge About'

Two modes of knowledge have been recognized: knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance. The latter is preferable and superior to the former. Knowledge by acquaintance is immediate or intimate as distinct from knowledge by description. It is 'knowledge of as contrasted with 'knowledge about' Knowledge by acquaintance is subjective, personal, genuine authentic and self-certifying. For example, knowledge of the sweetness of sugar cannot be acquired by an assiduous study of the chemical formulas of sugar given in a treatise on organic chemistry. Any amount of objective scientific knowledge about sugar will not enable us to acquire personal, subjective knowledge of the sweetness of sugar. We have to taste sugar in order to know its taste.

Self Knowledge Is Knowledge By Acquaintance

Similarly, self-knowledge is a matter of knowledge by acquaintance, that is, knowledge gained by introspection and intuition. One who denies the subjective reality of the individual self and substitutes a bundle of sensations or a procession of perceptions for it, will be in the position of a person who has lost sight of the wood searching for the trees. The unimaginative and unintuitive sceptic knows all about sensations, perceptions and conceptions but refuse to integrate them into a coherent individual self.

The Mind And The Self

The mind and the self are ontologically interrelated. The mind is a subordinate form of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness interpenetrating the body which is a grosser materialized form of the same cosmic energy. The mind may be regarded as the conscious and rational element in man. It is man's entire psychic experience and adaptive behaviour.

The Self Is A Gestalt Of Creative Cosmic Consciousness

The individual self or the embodied soul is a unique gestalt of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. Since a gestalt of energy retains its identity, the self which is also a unique gestalt of energy preserves its pattern of individuality. It is immutable. It survives the decay and death of the physical body with which it interpenetrates during the interlude between birth and death. Metempsychosis, transmigration and reincarnation are possible, because the soul or the disembodied self is an immortal, immutable and imperishable gestalt of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness.

Self-Knowledge Through Empathy

The vast interpenetrative and labyrinthine web of the universe is the Self-regulating macrocosmic organism. Man is a self-regulating microcosmic organism. The Universal Self and the individual self are the total and partial gestalts of the same pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness, from which all ents and entities and existents and subsistents have evolved. Thus, the Universal Self and the individual self are ontologically identical. Nevertheless, this indirect inference is tantamount to an objective and intellectual justification for the subjective and self-certifying validity of the mystical revelations vouchsafed to saints, sages and seers. Philosophical analysis and metaphysical speculation provide 'knowledge about' and not 'knowledge of the identification of the individual self with the Universal Self. Philosophical analysis and scientific method can acquire knowledge by description in contrast with knowledge by acquaintance. They are only inferior substitutes for the personal, genuine,

authentic, unitive, direct, immediate and firsthand knowledge of mystical insight. Philosophers and scientists can only accumulate objective, impersonal, vicarious or second hand knowledge of ultimate reality. They can acquire intellectual apprehension of reality by 'sympathy' and not by 'empathy' or self-identification with the total comprehensive reality. The mystical approach to absolute knowledge is total comprehensive reality. The mystical approach to absolute knowledge is total 'empathy' or self-identification with the ultimate reality. The intellectual approach to knowledge is external, objective and impersonal. The intellect can never gain a total comprehension of reality because of its inherent limitations, the insurmountable epistemological barriers of empiricorational thought.

Mysticism Is The Science Of The Soul

The difference between intellectual knowledge and mystical revelation may be exemplified by means of an interesting analogy. The spectator in a cinema theatre derives only second hand vicarious excitement when he sees the pictures projected on the screen. A mystic is a scientist of the soul. He is an active participant in the eternal pageant of the dynamic equilibrium of the universe. A thinker is only a passive spectator of the passing panorama of the restless universe. Though intellectual apprehension is inferior to mystical insight, it is certainly superior to ignorance, apathy and indifference to the omnipresent reality of the Universal Self.

Body, Mind, Self And Soul

The material body is known through sensations and perceptions which are empirically verifiable. The nonmaterial mind is rationally deducible from our knowledge of the various natural and behavioral sciences. It can be interpreted as a gestalt of a grosser form of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness. It may also be regarded as a gestalt of the subtler and dematerialized form of energized matter. The personal self is an intuitively apprehended supraspatiotemporal gestalt verifiable by the self-certifying validity of subjective research. In other words, we are intuitively aware of our personal selves, although they are neither rationally demonstrable, nor empirically verifiable. The personal self is a dynamic entity deriving its sustenance from the Universal Self with which it is identical. Tat Twam Asi. (That thou art). The intuitively apprehended personal self is a bridge between the rationally deduced mind and the mystically comprehended soul.

The Self Is An Integrator Of Body And Mind

The self underlies a person's subjective experiences as an unchanging entity. It is a cohering, integrating and organizing principle behind the individual. It controls all physical and mental processes. It is a psychic totality encompassing the conscious, unconscious and super-conscious, elements, the normal ego, the subego and the superego.

The Soul Is A Gestalt Of Cosmic Energy

The soul (or the disembodied personal self) is beyond all sensations, perceptions and conceptions. But, a glimmering vision of the soul is vouchsafed through self-knowledge. The soul is the disembodied and unattached self. These irreducible asomatic elements may be physically visualised as unique gestalts, unified structures, coherent patterns, or architectural configurations of the subtle particles or ineffable waves of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness, which is rationally deducible from the basic theories of modern theoretical physics.

All Men Are Embodiments Of The Divine Atman

The search for the soul is a spiritual sadhana. It is a mystical revelation vouchsafed to sages, seers and Sadhakas. Bhagavan Baba regards every human being as a potential embodiment of divinity. He addresses us as embodiments of the divine atman. Although we cannot become mystics, we can at least intuitively apprehend our personal selves and realize the omnipresent and immanent divine reality through introspection. Empirico-rational knowledge is tautological but spiral. We end where we start, but always at a higher level of intellectual illumination and supramental reality.

'Gnothi seauton' (Know thyself)

If you know your soul, you need not search for it.

If you do not know your soul, you cannot search for it.

Life is a pilgrimage, where man drags his feet along the rough and thorny road. With the Name of God on his lips, he will have no thirst; with the Form of God in his heart, he will feel no exhaustion. The company of the holy will inspire him to travel in hope and faith. The assurance that God is within call, that He is ever near, will lend strength to his limbs and courage to his eye.

—Baba

A Lovely Event

Early this morning I was in the kitchen rinsing off the breakfast dishes before going to work. A thud against the back door caught my attention and I went to investigate. Lying on its back on the sidewalk was a young bird, its feet in the air.

I picked up the downy creature to see what could be wrong. Some misplaced feathers on its head indicated that the bird had no doubt flown head on into the plate glass window, the impact knocking it unconscious.

My first thought was to apply some of Baba's Vibhuti. I quickly carried the bird to the living room to the altar where the Vibhuti is kept. The little bird's head had already fallen over to the side, as if lifeless. However, I applied the Vibhuti and rubbed some into the feathers, admiring the young mockingbird's coloring. The back was a soft muted brown, the breast white speckled with brown. The open beak was still yellow. As I tenderly held God's small creature I began to feel a stronger heart beat.

Since the bird had to be protected from two cats until sufficiently recovered to fly again, my brother thought of the travelling cage for the dog and cats and fetched it from the garage. As I placed the little bird on the floor of the cage it toppled and fell on its side. There was nothing more to be done. I went to my room to dress, as I had to be at work within thirty minutes.

Just before I left the house curiosity prompted a peep inside the cage to see how my little friend was doing. The bird was balanced on its feet, at the rear of the cage-some progress had been made.

An hour later the office phone rang. My brother was on the phone. Jubilantly he reported, "I just took the cage out of the house by the azalea bush and opened the door. The little bird flew up and out and away..."

Oh, what a LOVELY thing happened this morning!

—*Esther Howarth*

A Message from Baba

"You have come here from all walks of life and from many different directions and some from great distances. Now that you have arrived you should know that this is no ordinary meeting place. You are here to become spiritually inspired. The ground you tread on is now as Holy as at Brindavan and Puttaparthi for whenever you are in the Divine Presence that place is hallowed.

"Cast off your past and do not delve into your future. Participate in this Retreat with quiet simple reverence. Here you retreat from what you have become accustomed to, to a place where God alone can be found. Every part of your being, at every moment, must be controlled if you

hope to enjoy spiritual growth during this period. Joyfully experience the SAI-lence that is being manifested here. To understand SAI-lence one must experience it.

"There is another word that you are more familiar with and it is Santhi. The simple meaning is peace, but, it also has a much deeper meaning. First Santhi has to be earned and then it will be felt in your being. Its discovery is made only after great yearning for God. Santhi is next felt outside of you, in your place of prayer and meditation. Finally the inner peace becomes one with the Universal Peace. That is Santhi.

"And so with SAI-lence this is much more than just quietness. Your Divine Self has grown and you become That. Such inner quietness requires even greater steadfastness. The outer world noise is like thunder that has to be quelled. Few are able, in this lifetime, to live fully in the SAI-lence. The world's torments are all too severe for most to be ready to accept it. That is why I am here to encourage you—To be with you as you walk over the Plains of Sorrow and Discontent! as you walk down the Valleys of Greed and Falseness! As you climb the Slopes of Encouragement!

"I will walk beside you and guide. Your Inner Ear of Perception must be attuned to Me forever to reach the Summit of the Mountain of Consciousness. But I have for you this assurance. You are never alone for how can I forsake you. How can I be away from you? Only you are unaware of our ONENESS."

—Communicated by Charles Penn

People aspire only for the fruits of authority, they shirk the responsibility that authority involves. Do not think that this is so only in India; it is the attitude of aspirants all over the world today. Power is sought, but the burden that comes with power is not welcomed. The chaos and misery of the world today are the creation of persons who have climbed to positions of authority but, do not discharge the responsibilities of those positions. No one is entitled to such positions who is unable or unwilling to shoulder the responsibility inherent in it and who does not discharge them sincerely. Whatever their status, however deep their scholarship, however rich they may be, they do not deserve the position they crave for, or hold.

—Baba

Baba and the Moon

Often as a child I had heard about the "Man in the Moon" but was never able to discern any such person no matter how hard or how often I looked.

Then one evening in Hawaii in 1975, while my wife and I were walking together along the ocean beach, discussing a recent trip that I had just returned from India, I looked up and with utter astonishment saw Bhagavan Baba looking back at me from the moon. It was unmistakable and I was in utter amazement to the point of being put into a stupor. I said to my wife "Honey,

Baba is giving us his Darshan, I can't believe it." She asked where and I pointed to the moon. She looked up and she too in utter amazement said "My God."

What was such a shock to us on that full moon night turned out to be an ever-present physical phenomenon that occurs with every moon. It is constantly a delight to see the waxing and waning of Bhagavan and his full portrait on all full moon nights. It is particularly beautiful on those certain full moon nights when the moon comes up and he is facing us directly rather than at an angle and especially on certain mornings in the United States when the moon is still up at dawn with Bhagavan Baba looking straight at us in all his Godly splendor. The Lingam outline of his hair is unmistakable and takes up the top part of the moon and the rest of his features are more or less strongly fixed depending on the weather and my own heart.

We have come to expect Bhagavan Baba in the moon as such a natural occurrence that we hardly think about it except on those few occasions when we may be speaking to another devotee on a night when the full moon is up and look at the moon and say to the devotee "Oh, Bhagavan is giving us his Darshan again," and are quite surprised when the devotees will say "where" and for the first time see his magnificent presence.

I have always been slow in expressing those things that seem so natural to me but have realized that it is time to share with everyone the constant evening Darshan of our beloved Lord as another one of his Leelas. He is constantly looking after us and shining his Darshan onto the whole world whether we believe or we do not believe whether we know of Him or do not know of Him. His face, His features and His portraiture covering the moon are undeniable.

—Robert D. Silver, Attoreney At Law, Ventura, CA.

Culture of Feeling

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, there is a section (II, 5), where Yajnavalkya tells Maitreyi in overflowing ecstasy of the sweetness of the world around and within. He says that the earth, water, fire, wind, the sun, moon, lightning, everything is sweet honey. Iyam prithvi, sarveshaam bhoothaanaam madhu; asyai prithivyai sarveshaam bhoothaanaam, madhu, etc. This beautiful passage is more poetry than philosophy. Indeed, all the Upanishads and a good part of the Vedas are reminiscent of this madhu-vidya. It is the product of a highly refined culture of the intellect.

The culture of the intellect has created what is called the 'cellulose civilisation'. The cocksure faith in continuing progress of this civilisation has been eroded recently all over the globe. For more than a hundred years what might be called 'industrial humanism'—the dream of total progress through science and technology resulting in more and more production and distribution has held sway all over the world. But, today, the rational, impersonal, dehumanised approach to the problems of earthly existence is being rejected by masses of people, in every country.

"Seeing is believing," but, feeling is Truth, adds an old proverb. Truth is not veracity, an equation or formula, but, an experience of bliss at the heart of things. The much-maligned

`counter-culture' which has burst upon the world has, within it, the seeds of a new awakening, a new culture of feeling, which harp upon approaches to Reality, more satisfying than those provided by logic, grammar and dialectics.

In fact, a new Bhagavata movement is enveloping the world— Yoga, Japa, Bhakti, Dhyana, Seva, and Sadhana. Bhagavan is the guide and guardian of this movement, in India and through India, to all humanity. The students of the Sathya Sai Colleges growing in the light of His Love and soaked in the immemorial culture of India, as delineated in the Vedas and Upanishads are bound to be the pioneers in purifying and strengthening the culture of feeling, this grand new Bhakti or Bhagavata movement. The boundless Love of Bhagavan will percolate the hearts of youth and set the world on an even keel, pretty soon, pretty soon.

—*Dr. K. Bhaskaran Nair, M. A., D. SC.*

Hijackers Defeated

For the past four years many people have urged me to write an account of the hijacking my husband and I experienced on our way home from a visit to Baba in March of 1974, to illustrate how lovingly he takes care of us when we remember to call on him for help.

It was our second visit to Baba, and on our way home we planned to stay for two or three days in Bombay, in order to visit the parents of a young Indian friend who was a student in the States at that time.

We had reservations on a plane leaving on Saturday March 2nd, for London, where I was born and where I was to visit my elderly mother.

However, we heard that Baba was arriving in Bombay that Saturday night, so I suggested to my husband that we try to change our reservations to leave the following day, so that we could have one last Darshan before leaving.

We were able to change our tickets, and drove out to the Dharmakshetra in time for the Sunday morning Darshan. We were seeing this beautiful place for the first time and were most impressed by the design and particularly Baba's quarters, which were pointed out to us.

There were crowds of devotees gathered there, but we were seated close enough to where Baba stood as he came out, for me to receive his smile of recognition, which seemed to me to be the perfect way to end our visit, and we left happily to board the plane to London.

The plane put down at Bahrain and Beirut for refueling, and at the later city, as we were going back on board, I remarked to my husband that the check I had just been through was such a farce that we could easily be hi-jacked; prophetic words, though I certainly did not realize it at that time.

After dinner had been served and the trays cleared away, we became aware of a group of first class passengers headed by the captain moving back into the tourist section, where we were sitting.

I commented on this to my husband, and he replied that we could be about to hit bad weather, and perhaps this was a precautionary measure to shift the weight.

As the captain passed us we asked what was happening, and he told us that we would hear shortly.

As soon as they were all re-seated a harsh voice came over the loud-speaker telling us in very broken English that we were being hi-jacked, but that if we co-operated no harm would come to us.

Then two of the toughest looking characters came out of the cock-pit, carrying machine guns and pistols which they held ready to shoot at anyone who might attempt to resist them in any way.

As I look back I recall thinking that if actors were being selected to play the part of hijackers in a film, none could have been found who looked more the part than these two. They were like caricatures.

They enlisted the services of an Arab-speaking passenger, who was told to collect all our passports which we were to have ready to hand to him.

Then we were told to hold our hands up over our heads, and neither move nor speak.

One of the hijackers checked through the pile of passports, separating them into the various nationalities.

Most of the passengers were Indian, English and Arab, with a small handful of Americans: so we concluded that we few would be taken as hostages.

Next, all of our flight bags were collected, emptied, and re-filled with dynamite, and placed at strategic points through the plane, particularly outside the toilets.

We were then told that we could use the toilets only with a stewardess escorting each person there & back, one at time, while one hijacker pointed his gun at the bag of dynamite to insure good behaviour.

Naturally, everyone needed to use the toilet, as fear has that effect on the physical body.

It certainly looked as if our end was near and logically I should also have been filled with fear, and extremely agitated at the thought of leaving our two daughters so suddenly.

But miraculously, I had absolutely no fear; and moreover, I was completely certain that we would be saved, and told my husband that he must not entertain any other thought than this.

This made no sense to me, and I searched for the fear which should have been present, not wishing to delude myself, but there wasn't a shred in me.

I had, as soon as I realised what was happening, taken out of my hand-bag a picture of Baba and some Vibhuti, and a ring he had materialised for me on our first visit to him the year before.

Placing these in my lap, out of sight of the hijackers, I started to call Baba's name in my head, visualising him in his apartment at the Dharmakshetra in Bombay, which had so recently been pointed out to me.

Meanwhile, one of the hijackers began wiring the plane in preparation for blowing it up, ostentatiously working on the escape hatches, with a lighted cigarette hanging out of one side of his mouth, and his gun under one arm, the very image of bravado.

After this was completed he had the stewardesses bring all the bottles of liquor and perfume from the duty-free supply, and he proceeded to break the bottles and spill the contents up and down the aisles, obviously to feed the flames when they set fire to the plane.

At the very start of all this activity, as I was calling on Baba to help us, I heard his voice in my head distinctly telling me to *send love to the hijackers!*

I was completely taken aback at such a suggestion, especially as I watched them at their destructive work, and saw their faces filled with fanatical, almost ecstatic gleeful hate.

My first reaction was, "Oh Baba, how can I send them love?", but quickly added, "Please love them through me, as you alone can be the God within them."

I then leaned back in my seat and felt Baba's love flow through me, directed to those two men, and was fascinated to watch the effect.

The one how was scattering the liquor and perfume in the aisles became visibly nervous, and cut his wrist on one of the broken bottles and had to stop to bind the cut with a handkerchief.

From then on, both of them became more nervous, and lost their former air of bravado.

All this time none of us had any idea of the direction in which we were flying, let alone what they planned to do with us, but later we were informed that their first plan was to land the plane at Athens, there to exchange some of us as hostages for Palestinian prisoners being held there.

However, they were not permitted to land there, so we flew on to Amsterdam, where they were also refused permission to land.

They then decided to fly the plane over the North Sea there to blow it up; but the co-pilot informed them that there was not enough gasoline to take them that far.

They then called Amsterdam again, explaining the lack of fuel, and this time were allowed to land.

As we knew none of this at the time, we were most surprised when one of them announced that we were about to land, and that we would have 2 minutes to leave the plane before they set it on fire.

They continued to instruct us to take off our shoes and hold them over our heads, leave all of our possessions such as coats, hand-bags, hand-luggage etc., and to move in to the aisles and towards one exit.

They warned us that they would shoot if anyone did anything suspicious.

They let down a plastic chute, and pandemonium broke loose, as everyone pushed and jostled to get off before they set fire to the plane.

Unfortunately I was pushed sideways down the chute in the excitement, and landed on the base of my spine, and could not stand up.

I was pushed aside, and my husband and another kind man carried me free of the plane before it started to burn.

Buses were rushed out to pick up the fleeing passengers, and we boarded the last bus.

Imagine our horror when our driver, catching sight of two more people standing by the plane, wheeled his bus around to *pick them up*.

We could speak no Dutch, so my husband banged on the window screening us from the driver, and screamed, 'Hi-jackers' pointing to the two men he was about to bring on board with us.

He finally understood and turned back to the airport, leaving them *standing there dejected and limp, as if all their energy and determination had drained out of them*, as they looked back at the smouldering plane, somehow symbolising their defeat.

Later we heard that one of the food handlers had been paid \$400 to take the guns and dynamite onto the plane in the food containers; and place them under two seats reserved for the hi-jackers.

At the time I felt profoundly thankful to Baba for saving us, as I knew without a shadow of doubt that our release was entirely due to his help, but it was not until a whole year later, on our next visit, that we, were able to thank him in person, though, I had written to him as soon as we returned home after the hijacking.

At our first interview I started to say, "Thank you Baba, for saving us," when he interrupted me by saying, "Yes, Yes, I know! I heard your voice calling, Baba! Baba! Baba! mimicking my voice perfectly, with the slight English inflection which returns when I am excited.

Later, at our final interview he smiled and said, "There will be three seats on the plane this time, one for each of you, and one in the middle for Swami," indicating with his hand a space between us at shoulder level, as if he would be perched in the back of our seats.

Now, looking back over four years, I understand much more of the deeper learning contained in the experience.

Baba has said that we must remember to call on him. In other words, we have free will, which not even he will over-ride, so it is always our personal responsibility to ask his help.

He has also said that those objects which he materialises for his devotees, such as rings, pendants, etc. are, not of value in the usual sense as jewelry, but are links to him, so that when we call on him to help, there is a flash before his eyes which alerts him to our cry for help.

But perhaps the biggest lesson, as least for me, is that he needs us to be willing and available for him to use in situations and with people, as he used me to allow: his love to flow into the hi-jackers, which was the power necessary to divert them from their plan.

We so often say, "Baba, do it for me," but we must be willing to do our part, as it is Baba working through us that is effective, and this verily is a mighty partnership.

The secret is 'remembering', and how often we forget! but if we do as he advises, and practise repeating his name daily, it will be on the tip of our tongues in time of need, and then we have nothing to fear.

—*Phyllis Krystal*

I S A

The followers of each religion call upon the One God, who is Omnipresent and who listens to their prayers from whichever clime or clothed in whatever language; but, it is the same God who confers upon all mankind, health, prosperity, peace and happiness. Each religion has no separate God, showering Grace upon those who profess to abide by that faith alone! It is the destiny of man to journey from 'humanness' to Divinity, as he has already journeyed from 'animal-ness'. In this pilgrimage, he is bound to encounter various obstacles and trials. In order to smoothen his path and help him overcome these troubles, sages, seers, realised souls, divine personalities and Incarnations of God appear among men, and illumine the path. They move among the afflicted, the seekers who have lost their way or strayed into the desert, and lead them into confidence and courage. Certain personalities are born and live out their days, for this very purpose. They can be called Kaarana-janmas, for, they assume the janma or birth for a Kaarana or cause or purpose.

Such guides, exemplars, and leaders appear among all peoples and in all lands. They inspire faith in higher ideals, and teach, as if their voice is the voice of God, counselling from the heart.

Of course, there are many aspirants who by their devotion, dedication and disciplined lives attain the Vision of the Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient ONE. They are content with the bliss they have won for themselves. Others, there are, who long to share their bliss with those beyond the pale; they guide and lead and are blessed thereby. They teach that multiplicity is a delusion and that Unity is the Reality. They instruct others that each one is really three in one: the one, he believes he is, the one others believe he is, and the one he really IS.

Jesus was a Kaaranajanma, a Master born with a purpose, the mission of restoring Love, Charity and Compassion in the heart of man. He had no attachment to the self; he never paid heed to sorrow or pain, joy or gain; he had a heart that responded to the call of anguish, the cry for peace and brother-hood. He went about the land, preaching the lesson of Love, and, poured out his life as a libation in the sacrifice to humanity.

Like most seekers, he searched for the Divine in the objective world in Nature, but, he soon realised that Nature is a kaleidoscopic picture, created by one's own imagination, and sought God within himself. Here, his stay in the Himalayan monasteries, in Kashmir and other centres of eastern asceticism and philosophical inquiry, brought him greater success. From the attitude of being a Messenger of God, he declared that he was the Son of God, after returning from the East. For, the old attitude meant duality, a master-servant relationship. One could not then move beyond the orders of the Master, or the Prabhu. One had to carry out the duties laid down in the scriptures of the faith. This he found too irksome and he felt he was the prathibimba or image, while God was the original or Bimba. The bond of relationship increased; the I was no more in some distant light or entity; the light became a part of the I. With body-consciousness predominant, you feel you are a servant or messenger. With heart-consciousness in the ascendant, you feel nearness and dear-ness and so, the son-father bond seems natural at this stage. Later, as the Atma-consciousness became stabilised, Jesus could declare, "I and my Father are One," just as one states, I was in the Light, then, the Light was in me, and now, I am aware that I am the Light.

Jesus could assert that his life was his message, for, he lived among men as he advised them to. Every one has to start his spiritual pilgrimage, proclaiming that he is a servant of God or a messenger of God and trying to live up to that high and responsible status. This is the Dvaita stage. Then, he progresses to discover the Divine within himself, and realises that God is his precious heritage, which he must claim and utilise. That is the Visishta-advaita stage. That is the stage when one feels he is a son of God, of the same nature as God. Finally, he merges in God-consciousness and the salt-doll has dissolved in the sea. This is the essence of all religious disciplines and teachings.

Jesus was the name he was known by; he was honoured by the populace as Christ, for, they found in his thoughts, deeds and words no trace of ego. He had no envy or hatred; he was full of love and charity, humility and sympathy. The name Jesus itself is not the original one. He was named Isa, which with the sounds reversed, is Sai. Isa or Sai both mean "Ishwara", God, the Eternal Absolute, the Sat-Chit-Ananda. In the Tibetan manuscript at the monastery where Isa spent some years, the name is written as Issa. The name Isa means the Lord of all Living Beings.

When Jesus proclaimed that he was the Messenger of God, he wanted to emphasise that every one is a messenger of God and has to speak, act and think as one. This is the true Karma Kanda of the Vedas, the Sadhana of Work—of Japa, Dhyana, Seva. When progress is furthered, Jesus asserted that each one can recognise all as Sons of God, Children of God, brothers and sisters of oneself and so, deserving of worship; the Upasana Kanda is the scripture in Sanathana Dharma for this stage. Finally, knowledge ripens into wisdom and the goal of Jnana Kanda is reached, when each one realises "I and my Father are One."

The Birthday of Jesus must be celebrated by all mankind, for, such Kaaranajanmas belong to the whole human race. They should not be confined to a single country or community. Jesus found that scholars and ritualists had befogged the true religion. He engaged himself in teaching both spirituality and morality, for, education is the very Light of Life. Jesus found that people were running after glass beads and imagining them to be diamonds, were attaching great value for them. He went round the holy shrines and discovered that they had become bazaars where Grace was being bargained for and commercialised. He condemned the priesthood which tolerated and encouraged these practices. So, he drew upon himself the anger of the heads of temples and monasteries. They tempted one of the disciples of Jesus, with 30 silver pieces, to betray him, into their hands.

The Roman rulers were told that Jesus was attempting to assert himself as King and so could be punished for treason. Their insistence made the Governor order his crucifixion. When the nails were being driven into him to fix him on the Cross, Jesus heard the Voice of the Father saying, "All life is one, my dear son! Be alike to every one," and he pleaded, that those who were crucifying him may be pardoned, for, they knew not what they did. Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind.

Carols and candles, readings from the Bible and acting out the incidents that surrounded his birth are not enough to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus said that the bread taken in the last supper was his flesh, and the wine was his blood. He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are to be treated as he himself and that no distinction should be made as friend or foe, we and they. Every body is his body, sustained by the bread; every drop of blood flowing in the veins of every living being is his, animated by the activity that the wine imparted to it. That is to say, every man is Divine and has to be revered as such.

You work as a messenger or servant; later, you worship, as a son does his father, and finally, you achieve the wisdom, that you and He are One. That is the spiritual journey, and Jesus has shown the way, in clear terms. He announced, very early in life, that he had come to illumine the spiritual path. Even as a bud, it emitted fragrance. He had the Light in him, or else, how can the tiny glow-worm light a lamp?

To elevate man, to raise the level of his consciousness, He has to incarnate as Man. He has to speak to them in their own style and languages, he has to teach them the methods that they can adopt and practise. Birds and beasts need no Divine Incarnation as birds or beasts to guide, for, they have no inclination to stray away from their Dharma. Man alone forgets or ignores the goal of life.

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2

Every living being refers to itself as 'I', 'T'. 'I am Ramayya', 'I am Krishnayya', 'I am Sita', 'I am Radha'—thus, each one, assumes the 'T', as his own, and uses it whenever he has to designate himself. If only birds, beasts and other living things could speak, they too would have behaved likewise and referred to themselves as 'I'. Why? Besides these, even mountain peaks, hills and trees might announce themselves as 'I am hill', 'I am ant-hill', 'I am tree', if only they could speak.

When we spend some time thinking over all this, it will be clear that some great mystery is embedded in this expression, I. The illiterate boor uses this expression; the sage who has secured the Divine Vision uses it; even God, it is said, announces Himself as I. Nevertheless, who probes into this mystery? And, among those who have dared probe, how many have succeeded in unravelling it? And, even if there are a few who have unravelled the mystery, how many among them have used the discovery to transform their lives? Have the celebrated intellectuals, the Pundits, the Paramahansa even, succeeded in delving into the meaning and significance of this mantra. 'I'?

No. Let us see whether the exponents and commentators of the Bhagavad-Gita, who can reel off the eighteen chapters and the seven hundred slokas in one continuous stream, have grasped the full implications and importance of the word, 'I'. In the Gita, the declarations by Sri Krishna—"Aham thwaa mokshayishyaami—I shall absolve you," "Maam ekam saranam vrja—Come to me, the One, for refuge," "Kshetrajnam cha api maam viddhi—And, also know Me, as the knower of the Field" and the like—He refers to 'I', does He not? So, this expression 'I' is clearly omnipresent; it is the sign and symbol of all Jivatmas; it has unlimited forms and appearances. Like the string that passes through the rosary beads, it interpenetrates and holds together the names and forms.

However transient and changing the names and forms might be, the 'I' persists without being affected. Therefore, one has to understand this omnipresent 'I', so that one can understand all that has to be known. He who has known it is Jagadguru, (the World-Teacher), the Viswaguru (the Teacher of all Beings) the Sadguru (The Teacher to be followed).

The body is but the container, the Upadhi, the sheath. But, imposing differences and distinctions based on physical characteristics and material considerations, some are elevated as 'touchable' and some condemned as 'untouchable'; some are classified as 'high' and others as 'low'. This attitude is not a sign of an intellect deserving honour. Intellect cannot claim honour, and persons cannot claim to be Pundits if studies are directed to the amassing of money or

earning wherewithal for a comfortable living; nor can skill and excellence in argumentative scholarship be worthy of reverential mention. Really, the word 'I' leads you to the Supreme Godhead, when you dive into its significance. 'That is you', 'That is I', 'I and That are One', this what the great Vedic dictum, "Tatt twam Asi—That you are"—declares. That is the core of all teaching, the grandest of counsels.

This sacred principle embodied in the 'I' principle should not be sought by even the most learned scholars, by means of a lone inquiry, independently of guides and helpers. Only, the guides have to be those who are aware of the Truth and who are earnest in living the Truth. It is beyond the reach of scholarship, logic and grammar. Note that these are the warnings administered by the Shrutis and the Smritis.

Well. When one intends to learn in a general way about this 'I' and its implications, he can be told the secret in just three sentences: "I am active in day time, when I am awake; I sleep at night; I experience dreams when I sleep. Thus, acting and experiencing both day and night, I die." When one considers these statements of the individual, one can conclude that they are based on the individual's knowledge gained from this life. "The I begins, when I am born," he believes. But, did this 'I' exist before birth? Had it existed, how can an existing thing be said to be born? Even if this objection is ignored, how did it exist and where? Was it in a disembodied form, apart from name and form? Was it beyond the pale of the senses? Doubts such as these pursue the seeker in waves. It has to be understood clearly that the 'I' is not related or affixed to one object, thing, or being, to one name and form. Remember this when you identify and recognise the 'I' or arrive at the true answer to the question, 'Who am I'? You have identified and recognised the entire Cosmos and its mysteries.

It may be asked, what exactly is the urgency to understand the meaning of this 'I' when there are an infinite number of topics that call for study in the Universe? One can well try to unravel the secrets of the Cosmos, cannot he? Or, attention may be paid to understand what is meant by 'jivi', or, by 'deva' (God). When such profound subjects as the Universe, the Individualised Divine, the Divine itself—subjects that are of incomparably important standards—are clamouring for attention, why give them up and investigate the meaning of an expression used by common folk and ignorant children, this 'I', 'I'? Of what benefit can it be? People may ask.

The expression is simple, of course; but, its implications are infinite, and fundamentally satisfying. This is the reason why all great teachers exhort the seekers, "know thyself", "Inquire into yourself", "That alone can give you release." The Sastras too confirm this exhortation. "Yad Vijnanena sarvam vijnatliam bhavati—That which when known, everything becomes known." The Sastras extol the importance and value of this inquiry, and command man to follow the advice. They make it clear that the inquiry into the Atma is essential. The assurance is given that the Atma is you, yourself, as in the sacred axiom, Tatt Twam Asi. That thou art.

Therefore, to fulfill your yearning, you have first to inquire into this mystery, who you are. You can then realise that you are nitya, eternal, beyond the boundaries of Time. The Sastras will help you to cast away the Ajnana, the dark clouds of ignorance that now hide this Truth from your awareness. Then, you can delight at the experience of the awareness of your genuine Nature. The awareness comes when the Truth is revealed with the dawn of light. But, the Sastras

which guide man into the knowledge of these great mysteries and into the region where such bliss can be secured are not studied; instead, man pursues with blinkered eyes his silly notions. How then can he attain the Atmic Principle? How then can he reach the very embodiment of Ananda?

Mere worldly scholarship cannot delve into the meaning of the Shrutis. The Grace of God has to be won by devotion and dedication, and that Grace alone, the compassionate Glance of the Eye of God alone, can instill into him the real meaning of the Shrutis. Only persons who are embodiments of Divine wisdom and Compassion have the wisdom to decide what exactly is helpful to the spiritual progress and well-being of man. Others can only flounder. They will find it impossible to cope up with the task. For, how can Gurus who fail to save themselves, help in saving others? The Gurus of today endeavour to cleanse society while their own houses are unclean. The number of such Gurus is increasing and, so, faults and failures are multiplying; their ways are being justified and explained away, in various ways, and so the confusion grows worse. As a consequence, endless argumentation ensues and the Reality is lost to view. These Gurus interpret even the Sastras to suit their own prejudices and partialities, making instruments for their own aggrandizement.

Under these distressing conditions, the Grace of God is the only hope of man; that is the beacon illumining the path. That is the compassion which rewards man for his spiritual struggle. That is the strong steady ship that can take him safely across. Many preceptors and teachers declare that the path of inquiry into oneself is the path of liberation for man. But, do they make any independent effort in this direction? "Swa vimarso mokshah—Self-inquiry leads to Liberation" is the assurance. What does this statement mean? "That is the Atma; that is myself," "I and the Atma are not different." "The Atma and the Paramatma are not separate." The yarn 'I' is both warp and woof, of the cloth, the Atma. When the 'I' yarn is drawn into different bodies and feels that in each body it is different from the rest, the Atma cloth can be said to disappear; but in both yarn and cloth, there is one substance ever persisting, in spite of how each feels—and that substance is 'cotton'. So too, the Paramatma persists as the only Truth, in the 'I' and the Atma. Without the cotton, Paramatma, there can be no 'I' yarn; without the 'I' yarn, there can be no Atma cloth. These three—Paramatma, Atma and I—are only forms and names for the ONE—the Paramatma, the ONE Atma, the DIVINE Atma.

(To be continued)

The Faltering Steps

—C. P. K. Nair

'The Lord rushes towards the Bhakta faster than the Bhakta rushes towards Him. If you take one step towards Him he takes a hundred towards you.'

Coming as it does from Bhagavan Baba the Avatar of the age, this assurance constitutes the greatest strength to the spiritual aspirant in his progress towards his goal, in the realisation of his

Divinity. The all merciful Lord has, in every age and in every incarnation held out the same assurance to humanity. Sri Krishna, the Lord of Bhagavad-Gita, gave the very purpose of his incarnation as the protection of the righteous and devout and repeatedly assured His Grace to Arjuna and through him to the stricken world: 'As men approach Me, so do I accept them' (IV-11); 'Out of compassion for the same (devoted) ones... I destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of wisdom' (X-11).

We have faith in Him, or, at least we feel so; why then do we hesitate to take those few steps which would bring the Lord rushing to us? Why do our steps falter? We try to find an excuse for our weakness in the predicament of Arjuna, the representative of man, in his doubt arid discomfiture, in his Vishada (depression). But was not the Vishada of Arjuna, a spiritual craving—Vishada yoga—a craving for that Union, for Self-realisation? And when that craving was satisfied his life was also fulfilled. Despite being one of the greatest among men (purusharshabha) Arjuna was stricken with the weakness of sentimental pity in a moment of crisis. His mind was bewildered about his duty; but in the true tradition of disciples in the spiritual path he surrendered to his Guru (shishyastheham), the greatest of all Gurus: 'Teach me who is seeking refuge in Thee!' (II-7). And thus Arjuna took the first and best step of surrendering to the Lord, and the Lord unhesitatingly and with His divine compassion took him in His care and blew away the ashes of ignorance which covered the latent fire of Divine Knowledge in him. He rose up with his delusion destroyed and recognition restored (nashto moha, smritir labdhvaa). Why then should you doubt, O man, about the Lord's Grace and why should your steps falter?

The doubting mind questions the wisdom of going after 'the two in the bush' leaving the 'one bird in the hand'—going after the bliss of the Promised Land leaving the pleasures which are at hand, here and now. But these pleasures of the world are but intervals between spells of pain, agonising pain. We are mistaking such pleasures for happiness. Happiness, true and abiding, should be a state, not a fleeting experience. That state is of Being, not of Becoming. That is the destination of true Sadhakas, the state that the Lord expects man to reach and to which He guides and leads him. All species except the human, stand at the end of evolutionary blind alleys. God has given man the will, the intellect and the power of discrimination for realising the Supreme Good. Conscious of the Divine purpose he has to exercise them. As in all other things of the world, there is duality in his nature too: his desires and attachments pulling him down to bestiality; his will, intelligence and discrimination elevating him to Divinity, which is his true nature. Which will he choose? Will he follow his own shadow, the shadow of his physical accoutrements and move away from the source of Light, or will he turn back and go nearer and nearer the source of Light? Will he listen to the Lord's loving words and retrace his steps: 'Move forward towards the Light and the shadow falls behind; you move away from it and you have to follow your own shadow. Go every moment one step nearer to the Lord and then Maya, the shadow will fall back and will not delude you at all'. Eckhart is undoubtedly correct in saying, 'The swiftest horse that bears us to perfection is suffering'. But should we necessarily be chastened by miseries and hardships so as to deserve the ecstasies of the Divine Life? No, says the Lord. Fixing thy thought on me, thou shalt, by My Grace cross over all difficulties'. (Gita XVIII-58), and vouchsafes to man even the gift of that concentration: 'To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I grant the concentration of understanding by which they come to Me' (Gita V-10). Why then do our steps falter?

It is totally wrong to imagine that in pursuing the spiritual path the aspirant is getting isolated from society. True, the large majority are deaf to the call of the Divine, and those who aspire for the Supreme state are indeed few. By the very nature of Maya, it is only the few who take to the path of perfection. Impelled by their desires, and caught in the net of sense-pleasures the large majority struggle until discrimination dawns in them and with the Grace of the Lord they too, by and by, take to the path of Wisdom. Even in the world of names and forms, the Sadhaka does not get physically isolated. He is very much in it, but not OF it like the others. His personal existence or social relations are not impoverished, mutilated or narrowed. He lives and acts in the world. At whatever stage he may be in his evolution, he has to engage in activity. That is the very purpose of creation and that is His decree too: 'Thou shouldst do works also with a view to the maintenance of the world' (Gita III-20). With a spirit of detachment to the result and dedication to God he has to engage in action. He accepts things as they come and is unconcerned about the results. How can the results accrue to him, when his actions are but the offerings to God? His life is a prayer and work is worship. His happiness arises not from the gains and successes; for, he never seeks them. His happiness is from sources other than worldly from the bliss of surrender, from the feeling of the constant companionship of the Lord. He is in the world, but not of it. 'He sees the self abiding in all beings and all beings in the self; everywhere he sees the same' (Gita VI-29). The society is closer to him, and he is closer to his fellow beings and to the society. There is no fear since there are no two. He is all and all are himself.

Numbers do not count in the spiritual evolution. The Lord Himself has said: 'Among the thousands of men, scarcely one strives for perfection and of those who strive and succeed scarcely one knows me in truth' (Gita-VII-3). The Sadhaka is the one in those thousands. The goal may be at hand and may be reached in this very life; or, it may take thousands of lives. Spiritual evolution is not time-bound since time itself is of the material world. What is important is the desire for evolution, and the striving for it. What is needed is the courage to sacrifice the lower for the Greater. 'This self cannot be gained by one who is devoid of strength, who is without earnestness and without the right kind of austerity' declares the Upanishad (Mundaka).

The steps falter, perhaps because the existence of the goal and the efficacy of the means have not gained the recognition of science. Science reports what it discovers; but to say that there are no truths other than those of science is itself not a scientific truth. Even the truth of the physical world which science seeks to discover is still not within its grasp. There are serious limitations on our knowledge even in respect of the world of objects. Man's senses are incapable of disclosing the world even as it actually is. The senses tell me that the chair on which I sit is solid. But science says that it is compacted power or a hive of activity with electrons vibrating with incredible speed. Our senses may serve us, but in the process they also deceive us. The world is Maya, it is an illusion. But let it not be understood that it does not exist at all. Maya only signifies that the world is not the same thing that it presents itself to our senses. We should not credit our sense perceptions more objectively than they deserve.

It is well that science has advanced. By its discoveries it stands both elevated and humbled. It stands elevated since it has been able to state that there are realms beyond its ken which cannot be known by human intelligence, a domain much greater than it is concerned with; it has been humbled by the realisation that it is concerned only with the ways things are seen and there are

far greater things that the intellect cannot grasp. Eddington admits that science gives us 'knowledge of structural form and not knowledge of content'. We are after the content. Huxley gives it a more positive explanation: 'Once greater fulfillment is recognised as man's ultimate or dominant aim we shall need a science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psychosocial evolution that lies ahead'. That evolution is the evolution of the spirit, the evolution of Manava (man) to the state of Madhava (God). The knowledge that we acquire from the physical world does not help us in the process. It is a knowing that is needed and not knowledge. That knowing is what Saunaka sought in the Mundakopanishad: 'That which being known, everything else is known.'

Rationalism and logic likewise have no relevance to the Divine wisdom. Their findings only manifest the depth of ignorance (Avidya) that we are steeped in. While the ordinary man, with his humility and with his willingness listens to the subtle whispers of the infinite, the rationalist and logician surrendering to their ego, refuse to admit that there are things and powers other than what the human intellect can grasp, and in sheer frustration exhibit their ignorance through condemnation of the Inscrutable. The despair of the logician is however the glory of the humanist. The former lives in the balloon that his ego has inflated and he cannot see more than what is inside it. He forgets that his balloon itself is held high by the winds of Grace. He is first a man and then a rationalist. He can recognise in him only the latter, because that satisfies his ego. If he recognises the man that he primarily is, he will have to admit the Divine consciousness which lights his intellect. Forget him and be yourself. 'All that imagination can imagine and reason conceive and understand in this life is not and cannot be a proximate means of Union with God' (St. John of the Cross). The scriptures declare that spiritual understanding cannot be obtained by tarka or logical reasoning.

Why then should our steps falter? Are we wondering how far the destination is? Kathopanishad defines it: 'Beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is the intellect, beyond the intellect is the Great Atman. Superior to the Great Atman is the Unmanifest. And verily beyond the Unmanifest is the all-pervading Purusha devoid of all distinctive marks, knowing whom the knower is emancipated and he attains immortality'. But this distance between our sense-life and life eternal need not deter us or make our steps falter. Far though He is to the one who is of the world, He is nearer than the nearest to him who has developed wisdom and discrimination. 'The Atman, smaller than the atom, and greater than the Cosmos, is ever present in the heart of the creature' says the same Upanishad and again 'His form is not to be seen. No one beholds Him with the eye. By controlling the mind, by the intellect, and by incessant meditation he is revealed'. (VI-9). The distance is in terms of the Vairagya (detachment) and Viveka (discrimination) which we have developed. It is just the distance at which we have chosen to place ourselves from the Lord: 'You are as distant from the Lord as you think you are, as near Him as you feel you are... The distance from Me to you is the same as the distance from you to Me... But you complain that I am far away from you though you are approaching nearer and nearer. How can that be? I am as near you as you are near me.' says Bhagavan. The fact, we should admit, is that we are not approaching him. It is only our physical frame that we take to him. Desire, doubt, fear-these assail us and make our steps falter.

Nothing stands between us and the Lord except our own mind. 'The self alone is the enemy of the self' (Gita VI-5). Wealth and progeny cannot help us in self-realisation. The sense life has to

be surrendered for life in the Self. Every religion recognises this. In 'Imitation of Christ' the Lord says, 'At all times keep your attention fixed on what you are doing and saying and let your whole aim be to please me and please me alone, not seeking of desiring anything outside met. And the Lord of the Gita enjoins, 'He who does work for Me and who looks upon Me as his goal, he who worships Me, free from attachment, he who is free from enmity to all creatures, he goes to me O Pandava' (XI-55), And today Bhagavan, the Divine incarnate, the Guru of all Gurus is with us and in His infinite love for humanity gives us the great call which should leave us in no doubt about our goal, our dharma (duty) and His abiding Grace: 'Yearn for the enthronement of the Soul as the unquestioned Monarch of the Universe; celebrate your triumph over the foes within, that hamper you march to victory. Acquire ME, as the charioteer. I shall lead you to that consummation.'

The call is loud and clear. We have only to surrender ourselves to Him, as Arjuna did. Our steps should not falter anymore. We steadily move towards Him with His name on our lips and with this prayer in our hearts:

Lead me from the unreal to the Real,
Lead me from darkness to Light,
Lead me from death to Immortality.
(Brihad. Up.)

The Vedas as Ramayana

—Prof. R. G. Kulkarni, Sri Sathya Sai College

The attempt to explore the Ramayana and discover in it the veins of the Vedas has a long history. Modern research has encouraged scholars, trained in methods approved by contemporary standards, to proclaim that the "Moola" or "Base" of the Ramayana is only the story of a hero and the obstacles he encountered. But, adherents of the tradition that has come down from Madhwacharya speak of a Moola Ramayana and a Moola Rama, a Rama of the Four Yugas of Time, worshipped by Brahma Himself. The adherents of Ramanujacharya tradition also adore Rama as Narayana or Vishnu and Sita as Lakshmi. Swami has said that when Rama is adored, the object of adoration is Atma-Rama. 'Rama' means the source of delight' and Atma is the never-failing source of full delight. Swami says that controversy or even inquiry about the historicity of Rama is not essential or relevant. The Ramayana is the symbolic revelation of the manifestation of Atma-Rama in every man, in all the Yugas of Time. The intention of the seers of this land has been that, amidst the trials and triumphs depicted by Valmiki in the epic, the reader should not ignore the Atma-Rama. When such 'modernism' veils the Atma-Rama from attention, a new and revised version appears in order to correct the vision. For, as Atma-Rama of the four Yugas, in the Krita Yuga, Rama is the treasure gained by Dhyana, fostered by Dharma. In the Treta Yuga, He is the treasure gained through Tyaga, as manifested in Yajnas and Yagas. In the Dwapara Yuga, the treasure Rama represents the steadiest loyalty to the highest Dharma. And in the Kaliyuga, the treasure has appeared as Patita Pavana, the refuge of the fallen and the faltering, which can be won by Namasmara and Seva.

When Swami declares that the Ramayana has in it the essence of the Vedas, He is not asserting as many commentators and some authors of 'revised' versions have done that it reveals the viewpoint of one particular Vedic Darshan—Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa or Uttara Mimamsa. The Purva Mimamsa declares that the Vedas lay down Dharma; the Uttara Mimamsa (as defined in the Brahma Sutras) lays down that the Vedas expound Brahman. The Avatar occurs when harmony is urgent. So, Swami has said that Dharma, without faith in the all-pervading Brahman, is ephemeral and barren. The Brahma sutras according to Swami, had to reveal the basic importance of Brahman, since Dharma was sought to be interpreted as rituals, rules and regulations by which the earth can be made into heaven and men can dwell, after death, in Heaven! The Brahman principle is all-powerful and all compassionate and can appear in human form to move men into the path of liberation. The persons who revere the Ramayana as a holy book of daily prayer believe that when Rama was born in Ayodhya, the Vedas came again into the world, as His story. In this sense too, the Ramayana has the value and validity of the Vedas. The dualists of the Madhwa school of thought have the Vedic vision of unity. They treat all Avatars of the Lord as Eternal and seek the basic Ramayana behind and beyond all.

The vision is evident in the Rama-katha-rasa-vahini. Swami denotes Vali as a Satwic and as one of the dearest devotee of Rama. This statement is a proof of the conti and basic unity, declared in the Vedas, as Ekoham Bahushyam. For, Madhwa in his Mahabharata Tathparya Nirnaya, points out that Vali became Arjuna, during the Krishnavatara. Each individual that gets the impact of the Avatar has his own inner progress in view. And the Avatar grants him a role which can help him to move forward.

Versions of the Ramayana or of some sections of the Ramayana, like the Yoga-Vasishta, the Adhyatma Ramayana, the Ananda Ramayana appeal to votaries of the Attributeless, Formless, Brahman, but just as all Darshanas acknowledge the Vedas as their source, all these pay homage to Valmiki and can offer gratitude to Rama-katha-rasa-vahini.

Swami has revealed in the Rama-katha, that Ravana was ruined because he longed to appropriate Prakriti (Sita-Shakti) to himself and discarded Purusha (Rama-Siva). There is a story that he asked for Parvati (Shakti) as a boon from Siva, when Siva offered to grant him whatever he asked, since He was pleased with his austerities. When he led Parvati home, she turned into Kali and Ravana was shocked into sanity. Prakriti or Shakti is depicted in the Tantra-Sutras as in the centre of the triangle of fire in the Mooladhara, which is enveloped by Kama. She is called Sri Tripura Sundari. Lanka is described as Trikutachala, the mountain of Three Peaks. Meaningfully, the term Trikuta is found used as a technical term while elaborating on the Sri-Chakra. Sita is the fire-principle in the Trikuta of the Chakra; Lanka was consumed by that fire. The element of fire has its characteristic form, Beauty, Charm, and Sundaram. Swami says that both Rama and Sita have association with fire element—the Payasa brought by the God of fire was the source of the Rama incarnation; Sita was found in the furrow of soil, being prepared for the sacred Fire-Ritual of a Yajna. The Shakti and the Siva are both propitiated in the Sundara Kanda. In the Ramakatha, Swami gives accounts of the Discourses from the throne with which Rama instructed his subjects and one of these deals with the identity of Siva and Kesava, in the basic Atma or Brahman. Rama has thus asserted that though He is for some purposes treated as

an avatar of Vishnu, He is also the Siva aspect, with which is incorporated Shakti, as Sita is incorporated in Him. Madhwacharya describes Narayana (Vishnu, Rama) as Swaramana; the Dualists accept Narayana as Feminine-Masculine. The worshippers of Shakti believe that the essential teaching of the Vedas is of Shakti. This may well be the reason why orthodox reading or recitation of the Ramayana is begun with an intermediate Kanda, the Sundara Kanda.

Swami has said that the predominant Rasa is Karuna (or pathos) but He means by Karuna the Supreme Compassion of the Lord and not the pity evoked by incidents. In His Inaugural Address to the Ramayana festival at Bangalore, Swami announced that the attainment by man of the four traditional goals—Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha—is only half of the battle; winning of the Grace of God is the other equally important half. Madhwacharya, while interpreting the opening axiom of the Brahma-Sutras, "Atha-tho Brahma Jijnasa" "After this, inquiry into Brahma," says. "After this" implies "After achieving the Grace of God."

Swami has also referred to the tragedy mentioned by Valmiki that happened while Rama was ruling the Empire—the untimely death of a child! The bereaved father laments over his fate before Rama. But, Swami does not trace the source of the calamity to a Sudra who dared practise Vedic austerities. In fact, Swami writes, "Rama heard the wailings and sought within himself how the boy could have had his career closed so early. He decided that it was not caused by any administrative fault. He found that it was the consequence of evil thoughts. So, he ordered that such thoughts do not lay hold of the minds of men and pollute the atmosphere." Swami has rejected the absurd story of Rama killing the Sudra ascetic. The entire society is responsible for the individual's sin.

In various ways, by open declarations and hidden hints, the Rama-katha-rasa-vahini has revealed its Vedic Authenticity and Affiliations.

(From Article in Kannada)

Announcement

Bhagavan was in Madras during the Pongal festival. Later, he visited Hyderabad also. On 29 January, he flew to Mangalore and immediately motored to Alike, the educational campus, H. Q. of the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust. On 30, He visited Puttur, Chokkadi, Mangalore and reached Manipal. On 31 Jan, he returned to Bangalore. Details of Bhagavan's programme at these places and of the Divine discourses with which He blessed the vast gatherings will appear in our March number.

—Ed.

This is The Face, I Shall Always See

O, God! Into your precious Presence, I come
Hoping I am sufficiently humbled
And worthy to be at Your Feet
To bask in Your Radiance and earn Your Grace.

I already have Your Love, for, I am Your child,
Your image incarnate,
And, I await the moment
Of complete Union with Thee, in all dimensions,
That I may serve You more completely.

I am the breath of Your Breath;
The Light of Your Eye;
I am the sum-total of all your dreams for me
Though not yet totally fulfilled
Totally aware, totally consumed by the Flame,
Yet, I know, the moment approaches—
When I stand before you naked in the Flame,
For the moment of total fusion
With Your Divine Energies
With Your Divine Self.

O Sweet Lord, beckon me to come to You
That I may sit at Your Feet
And breathe Your Fragrance
And hear Your Words, and know Ecstasy...

O Sweet Lord, Emit the thought Divine
That will bring me into Your Presence
Even as You are always in mine.
O Sweet Lord, make me an Instrument of Thy Love
That I may more ably serve You.
O Sweet Lord, into the essence of matter
You cast me, in Your Image
And, so I formed, time and time again

Honed on the stone of Life, to a fine edge,
Molded by tides of ego like fine clay
To emerge—in Your Time, in Your Presence—
A rare jewel, a fine porcelain,
That I may grace Your BEing,
And, be exceedingly pleasing, to You.
O Sweet Lord—thank You, Thank you, Thank you.

At the Foot of the Lotus, I take my place
And, looking up, I see Your Face.
From this moment on, for all of me,
This is the Face I shall always see.
The eyes with which you look into mine
Reinforces my life Divine.
And, Oh, the smile upon Your Lip
Puts me firmly into Your grip.
If this is all I'll ever see
Then, let it be, Lord, let it BE.
For, though I smile and laugh and jest
Within the Sight of You is best!

I close the petals of this flower
For it has known its final hour.
When next I bloom, with blossom bright,
I'll radiate within Your Light.

—*Dawn Godes, San Bernardino, CA, USA.*

A Vedic Scholar is Inspired

The occasion was Christmas Eve of 24 December 1977. The place was the Sathya Sai Mandir in Brindavan, Whitefield, near Bangalore. The assembled audience consisted of a group of students and faculty members of Sri Sathya Sai College as well as a number of visiting devotees. It was in the glorious presence of Sai Baba himself that a great Vedic scholar Pandit Sri Ghandikota Subrahmanya Shastry, was inspired to announce Sri Sathya Sai Gayatri—the mystic formula devoted to Sri Sathya Sai. This reads as follows:

Sayiswaraya Vidmahe
Sathyadevaya Dheemahi
Thnnassarvah Prachodaayath

The meaning of this is:

"I know through Gurus and Sastras (and by direct experience) that Sai is God himself; he is Bhagavan and Easwara. I meditate on this form in my heart with all my mental faculties. He is the embodiment of truth, divinity, universal consciousness and one who pervades all the worlds. I pray to such a Saiparameswar to direct our intellects to engage in auspicious and righteous activities. I meditate on this great form."

This Sathya Sai Gayatri, like other Gayatris, is on a par with Veda Mantra or mystic formula. It has 24 letters; it consists of three lines, each with 8 letters. Such a composition has unique properties. According to Maharshi Vararuchi, the numerology of all letters adds up to 109. That is why recitation is to be done 108 times; to realize the full effect of Siddhi—which is signified by the 108th number, i.e. the Meru or the tassel of a rosary or Japamala. Ashtottara Sata Nama—the 108 name chantings lead to the realization of God, which is the goal.

Every Gayatri Mantra has a revealing prophet or Rishi and a presiding deity Adhishtana Devata, who is the subject of the Mantra. This Mantra is expressed through the inner workings of Sathya Sai through the mouth of Pandit Sri Ghandikota Subrahmanya Shastry in the presence of Sri Sai Baba. Needless to say that Sai Baba himself is the presiding deity of this mystic formula or Mantra.

Sri Subrahmanya Sastry expressed the essence of the Sathya Sai Gayatri in a verse of metrical form, Anushtup Chandas

Yo Devassathya Sayi nah
Buddhim Dharmadigocharaam
Prerayeth thasya yath Thejah
Thad Varenayamupaasmahe

This verse means:

"Let the effulgent energy of Sathyasai which exists always in my heart as pure consciousness enveloped by the body direct or influence our mind—intellects to take the path of Dharma-virtue; Santhi-peace; Sathya-truth and Prema-love."

That same morning Sathya Sai graced the author and his family with very valuable teachings which are summarized in translation from Telugu:

The purpose of performing Karma is only to get rid of Ahamkara or Mineness; Karma or Work, offered for the love of God comes back as grace. This is the strategy of escaping the bondage of Samsara. One must persuade the heart to meditate; persuade the heart and you persuade the people." If you do wrong, your heart feels it. The heart is a witness. Move from the gross to the subtle, from the senses, the mind and the intellect, getting closer to the Atman. The effulgence of Atman transcends the senses, whose nature is fickleness. The senses do not have the capacity or power of decisiveness. Karma and Upasana are the two wings which enable us to fly upward to God—Karma is for disciplining body, mind and intellect; Karma is not slavery to senses or fate; life is a long journey which is helped by Yantra, Tantra and Mantra; these make the journey easier. We must reduce our luggage. Being detached in Samsara like mascara in the eye, like Ghee on the tongue, one need not leave the worldly activity. The journey should be continued till the end. Don't get off the train in wayside stations. One should pursue one's Swadharma, one's own calling, till the end of the journey. One should reach the real destination with enthusiasm and animation, with a pure heart. Your pole-star or light is the name of God; that supreme light is the light of life, Jivanjyoti.

The performance of duty by the God—given body is essential. Man's accumulated blemish or sin is washed away by such action. Karmakanda, the field of action, is like the flower from which follows the Upasana Kanda, the field of spiritual practice, which is like the raw fruit. This subsequently ripens into a sweet fruit of Jnana, knowledge.

The One Supreme is described in different ways by the wise, Ekam Sat: Viprah Bahudha Vadanti. The Puranas and the Vedas contain the knowledge about Nature, Prakruta Jnanam. They teach the path of subtle action. They teach that immortality is the fruit of sacrifice; the path of enjoyment, Bhoga, leads only to illness and suffering, Roga. It is often said one cannot cross the path of Karma on a dusty road, it is only when you stop the moving vehicle that one is overtaken by the trailing dust. So long as you keep moving or performing Karma in a detached way, you are not overtaken by its bondage. Narada, who is omniscient, did not leave the field of action or Karmakanda.

There are really two aspects of conduct, good conduct and bad conduct; with egoism it becomes bad conduct. Ahamkara, mineness or selfishness, is the crown of all bad qualities. Wearing such a crown, even such notable personalities as Kamsa, Sisupala, Danta Vaktra, Vishwa Mitra and Sathyabhama came to grief.

All the lights of life are lit up on Divali Day; so light up the darkness of the past, which enveloped the Light of the Real Self in the past. The technique is to remove the threads of attachment one by one; at the end, the "cloth" disappears and the mind is clear and pure.

The mind is a bundle of desires. It is necessary to live in seclusion in order to avoid the wrong paths. Thereby one avoids the five wrongs or blemishes of sight, speech mind, action and intellect. Moksha or liberation is nothing but Mohakshaya, the depletion of infatuation of the mind. One should engage in spiritual practices, Sadhana, to the extent feasible. Strength and

support are gained thereby for the performance of one's own duties and actions. Imitation and invidious comparisons with others are harmful and weakening.

Pursue the 5 F's in life:

Follow the heart, the conscience, the Atma in the heart.

Follow an Adept in Spiritualism.

Face the Devil or Evil without fear or favour.

Fight to the end and

Finish the game of life with success and liberation.

Daily life is Tapas. Tapas is devotion to the living gods—father and mother. Sadhana is the cultivation of special attention to one's true self. Sankaracharya expressed it in a paradoxical manner: "I have committed three sins, Oh God! By my pilgrimage to Banaras, I have offended the principle of God's all pervasiveness. (2) By meditating on You, it seems as though I have confined you, who transcends mind, to the mind. (3) By praising you, I have committed the sin of limiting You, who transcends speech, to my words."

—A Brief Report By G. V. Subba Rao

Faith and Patience

It was October 1976. I happened to take out from the library a strange type of Telugu novel named 'Prasanthi Nilayamu', in which most of the incidents and unravelling of plots happen in and around Prasanthi Nilayam, amidst the thousands of devoted pilgrims, so that the author gives vivid descriptions of the place. I was thrilled by these narratives and I realised that the holy place was only within 50 miles of Anantapur. I had a friend who used to visit that place and who was a devotee since fourteen years. I resorted to him, off and on, whenever I had a little time to spare, with a plea to tell me more and more of the place and Person who had rendered it internationally famous as the Centre of a world-wide spiritual revolution. Later he came to my place every evening and spoke on his experiences, sometimes for three hours at a stretch. We listened with awe and reverence. He also gave us some Telugu books about Swami and I devoured them with avidity.

On the 1st day of January 1977, I had the first Darshan of Bhagavan. It was New Year Day for Christians, Vaikuntha Ekadasi for Hindus and Moharrum for the Muslims! So, the entire area was packed thick with men and women of all faiths from all parts of the world. I had in mind a great desire to ask Swami, one question that was haunting me, "Why is it, Swami, that Nature destroys in one sweep the crop that we ryots raise with so much love and care?" But, when the Darshan of Swami itself was so difficult, how could that question be presented to Him and an answer obtained?

That evening at 5 pm, Bhagavan addressed the gathering and moved along the line where I was seated, so that I could imprint Him on my heart. It was a great gift. Swami also referred to the sudden upsurges of natural forces, which, to man, appear as calamities. A speeding car

cannot be suddenly stopped—for that would bring on disaster. Nature has to obey the laws laid down. Man performs his duties and carries out his professions with care but he forgets to pray to God in thankfulness for all the facilities and forces he is awarded. Thus my question was answered by Bhagavan and I was free from disappointment.

From that day to this, my crops have never suffered loss through the anger or indifference of Nature. In 1978, I was even awarded by the Government Agricultural Department the title of 'the best farmer of the district'. The prize was a beautiful idol of Muralidhara—I firmly believe that Swami willed He should come to me in this form.

In January 1978, Swami appeared in a dream, and said, "Are you willing to go out of the country for four months for training in farming methods?" "I have no political leader to recommend me," I replied. Swami replied, "You must know I am the one who confers boons on all created beings."

In February 1978, my sister, absolutely on her own, sent me application forms and other necessary literature directing me to apply for being selected for foreign training. Her letter came to me on Shivaratri Day and I welcomed her proposal as a result of this co-incidence. The officer who had to receive and forward it discouraged me and said, "This scheme has been there since 30 years. Almost all the influential farms of this District have tried. But no one has succeeded hitherto. Your application will certainly be rejected." I sent a telegram to Swami that I had sent in my application with no sponsor, except He. I was called for an interview in May but until the 3rd May there was no news from Delhi. The month of June rolled by. So, I decided I could not be included. I inferred that the dreams where Baba appears and communicates are merely the fabrications of our own minds and that I should henceforth attach no importance for them. If Swami wanted to direct us to do something, He would order us, direct, not through dreams.

Who can describe my joy when on October 7th I got my order selecting me as one of the trainees and asking me to be ready to start for Houston, Texas, on the 21st October. Now, through Sai's Grace, I am writing this letter from 14,000 miles away from Prasanthi Nilayam, but with Sai right beside me. Faith and Patience are the two paisa, which, at Shirdi, Swami asked for from everyone. They can bring us direct rewards.

—G. S. V. Prasada Rao

The ideal of a high standard of life, instead of a high level of living has played havoc with human society. A high level of living insists on morality, humility, detachment, compassion; so, the competitive greed for luxury and conspicuous consumption receives no encouragement. Now, man is the slave of his desires; he finds himself helpless to conquer the thirst for pleasure and luxury; he is too weak to keep his nature under control; he does not know how to arouse the Divine Consciousness that is latent in him. Mere moral practices or instructions cannot help you to achieve Divine Consciousness. It can be done, only by Spiritual Sadhana. For it is a basic transformation. It involves the elimination of the Mind, which is the arch-obstacle in the path. Grace of God, if invoked and won can endow you with the power. And the grace is available within you, awaiting the call.

—Baba

Idol Worship

"There is only one God and He is omnipresent." True; but to concentrate on the omnipresent, some fixed point or preliminary form is needed. And to conceive of the Divine as present everywhere at all times the mind of man is to be clarified and purified by means of certain psychological processes called Sadhanas. This is the reason why not only among the followers of Hinduism but even among Christians and Buddhists, regular rituals are prescribed for the worship of idols of God. Cynics question the validity of the type of adoration and say that will only confirm faith in a superstition. "Can God be a stone or a piece of paper?" They ask. This attitude is not correct. By adhering to the traditionally laid down ritual worship, many aspirants have attained the vision of the omnipresent, and stayed in that incommunicable bliss.

In fact, Puja (formal worship, at regular hours, with the recitation of hymns and songs) is the very first step in the spiritual pilgrimage. Many seekers have undoubtedly achieved an awareness of God by years of asceticism among jungle caves. But, starting early with Puja and continuing with scrupulous care, the rites of Archana, Bhajan and Aradhana (offering of flowers with the repetition of God's name, Singing His Glory, and adoring Him as a Living presence) are more fruitful and satisfying. Meerabai, Sakkubai, Surdas, Kabirdas, Sankaracharya, and many other saints and realised souls have proved in their lives that the time, attention and energy spent in these religious practices are well spent. They were able by Aradhana only to visualise the Divine in the specific form which they used as the instrument.

The entire English literature is made up of permutation and combination of the 26 letters to the alphabet. The Puja, Japa, Archana, Aradhana are as the letters of the spiritual alphabet. The collection in time of the various items necessary for the worship (the lamps, the camphor, the flowers, the plates, the cups, the bell and the book) needs hours-long concentration on the Divine. The Puja itself may take another hour or two of concentrated and purificatory attention, and the performer rises up, after the recitations and the meditations, a stronger and steadier pilgrim on the path.

The Omnipresent is not absent in the icon or the picture. We do not reduce God and shut Him up in a stone image; we affirm and realise that He is in the icon also. We raise the image to the dimensions of the Absolute; we expand the picture far beyond its frame and through the processes of sadhana; we become aware that the picture too can be made a tool for the mind to escape from its limitations.

When the Maharaja of Alwar in Rajasthan argued before Swami Vivekananda that God can never be perceived in a picture drawn by an artist, Vivekananda called upon the Prime Minister who was standing reverently by, to get the Maharaja's portrait down from the wall and spit on it! He said, "You need not hesitate. The Maharaja says it is just a blotch of colours on a bit of canvas and that he should not be confused with the idea that it is the Maharaja." But, everyone at the Durbar withdrew in fear. The picture of Maharaja was for them an object worthy of adoration.

The sixteen modes of worship laid down in the Sastras to make the aspirant aware that he is in the very Presence and that every gesture and movement of his has to be motivated by devotion and dedication ensure the purification of the mind of man from ego and all its brood of blemishes. This is *Chitta-Shuddhi*—the cleansing of all levels of one's consciousness.

The basic Chitta has to be freed from down-dragging impulses. Of what good is it to cook a rare and costly dish in a vessel contaminated by dirt? Of what good is it to plant a precious seed in rocky soil? Puja or Archana offered without a purified heart is sheer waste of time. But, even a short sincere session of Puja spent in Divine Awareness yields much fruit. Thiru-thondar, a Tamil saint has confessed that he engaged himself in the worship of the Lord's idol in order to cleanse his mind. Care has to be taken that you do not notice the stone; for, that instant, the Divine will disappear from view. The material and the Form are inseparable, but, the seeker must dwell on the Form which he desires to be manifested in all its glory rather than the material. He must dwell long and deep over the thought that God is found through every particle in the universe, that He is not bound by any limitations of space and time.

Ceaseless effort is necessary to gain and possess Chitta Shuddhi. One has to be ever in Satsang and in activities devoted to the service of God in various human forms. In the Gita, one can notice Krishna addressing Arjuna as "Kurunandana"! The usual meaning given by Scholars to this appellation is "the Scion of the Kuru clan" but it has a much more profound lesson to teach mankind. Kuru means in Sanskrit, "do"; and Nandana means, "he who takes delight in." So, it means Krishna is appreciating the transformation in Arjuna from inaction to action—Arjuna is the one who takes delight in having some work to do. He is the one who is sad and dejected if he has no work on hand. For most of you, Sunday is a holiday which gives delight but for Arjuna, the Day which He can devote to God's work is indeed a Holy Day.

You must have been told that common people in India believe that, when thunderclaps are threatening overhead, the recitation of Arjuna's Nine Names in a row will save them from a bolt falling on them. This is proof of the power that not only the names of God but also of His devoted adherents—ever pure and ever in contact with the Absolute—has over the elements; that is the reason why Aradhana or worship of the Presence is offered even to great devotees like Thyagaraja and Kabir. They have no identity of their own, they have become one with the limitless, through the worship of the limited.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse, Brindavan 6-2-79*

Love on the Move

Uttarayana Punyakala or Makara Sankranti or the Pongal Festival is in Tamil Nadu the most popular national festival of the year. Therefore it was special act of grace that Bhagavan decided to spend the Festival days at Madras. The Tamil Nadu Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations had arranged elaborate Bal Vikas and other programmes so that Bhagavan may bless the workers.

On the 14th January, the day of Pongal, Bhagavan gave the most inspiring discourse, to the huge gathering of thousands on the grounds of Sundaram. 'Pongal means "spilling over"—the spilling over of milk when boiled on that auspicious day, indicating the spilling over of delight in the hearts of the people'. It is also a Festival of the Cow. When a special reverence is paid to the provider of essential foods, Bhagavan stressed on the fear and anxiety that overpower the mind of man and explained that the reason lies in man's meaningless pursuit of sensory pleasure rather than of the spring of ecstasy that lies within him. The meaning of Pongal—He explained, namely the spilling over of Joy can be realised only when that joy comes from within and He wanted that everyone should dedicate himself to this task of inner sadhana.

On the 15th, Bhagavan addressed a gathering of District Presidents and other office-bearers of the various Branches of the Sai Organisations assembled from all parts of the State. He spoke to them of the need of eliminating the ego by means of a little inquiry on how little one single man can do to achieve even the smallest success. It is the inflated ego that inflames anger and produces the many disastrous consequences. He also wanted that every worker should develop more faith in himself and in the Sai who is his inner motivator. If this is done there will be no cause for worry, disappointment and sense of defeat.

Returning to Bangalore, Baba proceeded to Hyderabad and was there for a few days. On the 29th, He flew to Mangalore in South Kanara district, in Karnataka State, with a few devotees. The purpose was to visit the Head Quarters of the newly established Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust - a unique educational complex of institutions run on moral and spiritual lines. The Trust has already been registered, but the parent complex at Alike—a village, hidden among clusters of hills and green plantations of coconut and areca—had not been blessed by Bhagavan's Presence. Indeed, the District of South Kanara was awaiting the Day with dedicated yearning for more than two years. Baba drove straight to Alike—30 miles from Mangalore—along a road that meandered among the hills and brimful on both sides with villagers eager for Darshan. Noticing at Bantwal, a disciplined gathering of 1500 doing Bhajan, He spent some time moving among them and blessing them.

The students of the Primary and Middle school sections, the orphanage, the High school and the Junior College—more than a thousand in all—and their parents from all parts of Karnataka received Him with a vociferous welcome. Baba occupied a house built for Him on the crest of the highest hill, and hoisted the flag. He held a meeting of the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust. In the evening, He addressed over thirty thousand devotees who had gathered to share the joy of the memorable occasion. He spoke on the ideals and sacrifices of the Late Sri Madiyala Narayana Bhat and of the large band of devoted and dedicated teachers (more than 60) whom he had inspired with his example for lifelong service in the field of education. He exhorted the students to learn at the campus not only the subjects of the curriculum but the spirit of humility, reverence, and selfless service that animated the teachers. Baba witnessed a few items of entertainment which the students desired to be blessed by His presence.

On the 30th January, Swami with the party of devotees went around the extensive campus graciously giving suggestions and directions at every place He visited—the Hostel for primary and middle school boys, the hostel for girl students, and for the high school boys, the clinic, the

Press, the Post Office, the co-operative stores, the high school, the junior college, the cattle-shed, and the most important of all, 'the very heart of the complex'—the 'Prem Kutir' where the dedicated teachers spend their time in study, sadhana, and meditation. At 11 a.m., He addressed the students and their parents and blessed each one moving along the lines distributing Prasadam.

Swami left for 'Madiyala'—the house of the late Sri Madiyala Narayana Bhat and blessed his mother and other relations. Then he joined the Main road to Vittal and Puttur. At Puttur, He laid the foundation stone for the Bhajan Mandir; then He proceeded to the village of Chokkadi and showered his grace on the thousands gathered in that isolated area, soaked in Sai devotion. He laid the foundation for a Bhajan Mandir here also. He wanted that the Mandir should be completed before the rains came by the Shramadan of the devotees.

He then proceeded towards Mangalore on the way. Every few minutes, He stopped. His car to receive the floral homage of the villagers who were singing Bhajans until they got the coveted Darshan. At Mangalore He had a hectic programme of more than 10 visits to the homes of devotees so that with a short halt at Mulki he could reach Manipal only at about 11 a.m.

It was surprising to find that a gathering of about 15000 was waiting for Him since five hours and would not leave without Darshan and Sambhashan. Therefore, Swami spoke to them for about 20 minutes and gave them Joy.

On the 31st, He reached the Mangalore Airport by 10. 30 a.m. He graciously moved along the lines of devotees outside the Airport Building. He emplaned for Bangalore at 11 a.m.

This visit removed the pall of gloom that had set upon the District of South Kanara. Every household was thrilled with a new joy and strengthened by a new inspiration. The Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust with its educational institutions at Alike, and at Muddenahalli near Chikballapur now comes into the mainstream of the Sai Educational Revolution. The impact of the dedicated spirit of the teachers and the sense of discipline being implanted in every student by them will necessarily have a profound effect on other educational institutions seeking Bhagavan's Blessings.

—*Ed.*

Lynn

The Bal Vikas Child (Santa Barbara)

Lynn-The child

When I think of our daughter, Lynn, a mosaic of bright images comes to mind... Lynn, the child of whimsy improviser of games and stories which delighted her friends. As one of them would later say, "Wherever Lynn was, there was laughter." ...Lynn, the true Bal Vikas pupil who loved to show reverence for her parents ...serving me breakfast on "Mother's Day" and tenderly caring for her father as he recovered from surgery ...Lynn, the honor student, who loved school,... Lynn, the child who at 14 when other girls of her age talk about boys preferred to sing Bhajans and yes, climb trees... and most of all, a Lynn who loved Baba with a devotion which

would awaken an introspective quality in her and a desire for solitude in which to write poems and thoughts of Baba in her diary. Indeed, her intensity of devotion would draw her two younger brothers and her parents closer to God.

Lynn and Holy Company

It was in the winter of 1974 that I prayed for holy company. I know now it was Baba who answered my prayer; for, soon afterwards, through a dear friend, we learned about Him, and Lynn and I began coming to Bhajans at our Santa Barbara Sai Baba Centre.

It was Lynn, who, after seeing our first Baba film at the centre, said, "Mummy, we must have our own meditation corner." She promptly removed all the books from a recessed book-case in our back hall, and thenceforth it was our altar where we meditate daily.

My hopes and unspoken prayers for the children's spiritual education were quickly answered by Baba, when, shortly after joining the Sai family, our head of centre formed a Bal Vikas class. Thus, at Thursday, evening Bhajans and again on Sunday at Bal Vikas Class, Lynn's devotion had precious opportunities to grow and to flower.

Indeed, she was the only child present at the daily celebration of Dasara and was proud and happy when asked to participate in the reading of the Chandi, on the culminating evening of Dasara that fall of 1975 I remember seeing tears of joy in Lynn's eyes as she offered a flower to the Mother. And, at Shivaratri, some six weeks before her passing, while many adults were too tired to continue, Lynn's ardor sustained her (as it had the previous year) through the night-long vigil of meditation, prayer and Bhajan.

At times like these my pride in her devotion was tempered by occasional thoughts that perhaps her zeal was being guided tenderly by our Lord and prepared for the culmination of her short life.

Lynn seeks the Lamp of God

It was Thursday afternoon, ten days before Easter, the all-important date on the Christian calendar which commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. School had finished for the day. Lynn had gone to the park, and I knew she was heading for the tall pine, her favourite climbing tree. I remember watching from the kitchen window as she darted off, calling in her sweet voice for our dog, Jupiter, to follow.

Only 45 minutes later a neighbour came to tell me that Lynn had a fall. In her haste to help her brother, David, who had been bitten by a strange dog and was crying, she had stepped on a broken branch and fallen some 12 feet to the ground.

As I ran, I heard Lynn call, "Mommy!" Mommy!" And as I reached her side she seemed to know that I was with her. She lay quietly and did not seem to be in pain; though I had no idea she was so near death. I prayed earnestly as I held her hand, "Baba, please be with Lynn, please be with Lynn..." An hour later, in the Catholic hospital nearby, a priest was administering the last rite's as she quietly passed on.

Numb with grief, I asked Baba for reassurance. The first thought that came was: Why, it is Thursday, Baba's day. Indeed, two short hours after Lynn's passing, Bhajans and prayers of our Santa Barbara centre were lifting her spirit.

That night I could not sleep. I was tormented by the knowledge that Lynn, stunned by her fall, had perhaps been unable to think of Baba at the time of her going. The next morning when I went into her room, Baba had already answered my anguish. There on Lynn's desk were her last words, written just before going to the park. They were a fateful synthesis of the morning prayers: "O, Lord, I rise now from the womb of slumber. Before I plunge again into the daily routine, Let me pray most earnestly to Thee, omniscient Self, and SEEK THY LAP, which confers on me restful sleep and blesses me with eternal peace and everlasting bliss."

Our minister was so struck by the event that he would open the memorial service for Lynn with these very words:

Lynn and her dear, dear brother

The prayer had been written in her favourite purple ink, ready to be inserted into her new Bal Vikas notebook, which her teacher provided the day before her death. The notebook was to be a replacement for one David had lost on the way to Sunday morning Omkar at the centre two weeks previously. (Now I know why David lost the notebook. It was all a part of Baba's design.) At the time, I had marvelled at Lynn. She did not get angry with David. She had simply said, "Well, Mommy, since our centre leader is moving to a new house I shall start a new notebook." I told her how happy I was that she did not get angry with David, "You see now Baba is answering your prayers," I said. She had often asked Baba for help in dealing with, as I told her, very natural feelings of sibling rivalry with her younger brother. But Lynn, ever the perfectionist was upset by her occasional negative feelings toward him, and she had often prayed to Baba for help. That's why I now know that the way Lynn, died was also part of Baba's design: for she fell in the act of hurrying to David's rescue. Thus her last act was a selfless one.

Lynn's favourite Bhajan

Late Saturday we learned that Mr. Vimukta, distinguished musician from Bangalore and former atomic scientist, just happened to, be visiting friend near Santa Barbara when the news came of Lynn's passing. He wished to play the Veena at Lynn's memorial service.

The morning of Lynn's service, Palm Sunday (one week before Easter), dawned fair and sunny after a brief shower of rain which seemed like a touch of grace. Well do I remember the tangible aura of peace in Lynn's room that day. Later, after the service, friends would remark on it with a sense of awe.

The service was a beautiful one consisting of prayers, readings from the Bible and the Bhagavad-Gita, and Lynn's own poems. And the high point was Mr. Mukunda's Veena solo which he concluded by leading us all in singing Lynn's favorite Bhajan, "Jai Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati..."

How, grateful I was to Baba for Mr. Mukunda's presence. It was as if our Lord had blessed the event to be one of celebration rather than lament.

After the service, friends who did not know of Baba came up to us with grief in their faces. How could I tell them, and yet our friends in the Baba family understood-that our daughter had been blessed in her short life to come to Baba in her heart, to love this Avatar, who had now raised her pure spirit to Him. The tears in my eyes that day were tears of joy and reverence. Only much later would the very human emotions of missing her dear presence occur.

Lynn's Grandmother

Shortly after Lynn's death a friend and adopted "grandmother" added another bright image to Baba's tapestry ...Three weeks before Lynn's passing, during a special function at our center, we had seen inspiring films of India, and on the way home that night Lynn had asked her, "When do you think I shall go to see Baba? I want to so much." That very night our friend told me, she had a dream in which Baba came to her and said, "In 21 days she will come to me..." At the time, our friend was in very poor health and she thought Baba meant that *she* was to die in three weeks. Then, after Lynn's death, she suddenly realized that He had actually referred to Lynn in the dream, for it was indeed 21 days after, that Lynn was to fall from the tree.

As our head of center remarked, every one in our Sai family was deeply affected by the love Lynn left behind; a love she had quietly and undemonstratively exhibited as a participant in our worship. Her going made each of us re-evaluate ourselves and perceive how vital each individual is to the life of a center.

Lynn and her Gift to her Father

And finally, as a legacy of Lynn's passing, her father who was once an atheist, is now himself on the spiritual path. The poetry of paradox was again clear: We usually consider death a tragic event, and yet in this instance, as a dear friend would say, Lynn's life and death were a beautiful solo in Baba's cosmic symphony. Indeed, Baba sent my husband a vivid dream which pointed out to him that our child had given him the key to a priceless treasure, the awareness of divinity within...Some months later he would say to me, "Lynn's death has been a gift to me...I am now a believer."

Lynn's Vision

I will close with Lynn's own words, composed on a family camping trip:

The golden sun climbs up from behind
a round, green hill.
All the sky is blue, cold and open.
Sai Baba stands on a single rock,
smiling *with the glory of dawn*
and Wish.

And this poem, expressing her yearning which our Minister shared at her memorial service

To Baba, who sits on a golden throne;
Surrounded by snowflakes and frothy sea foam
COME INTO MY HEART

Remove with your touch the tears of my heart
And replace them with a blissful song....."

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3

"The Hindu religion authorises the worship of a variety of Gods; this has resulted in sectarian feuds and factions which fill the land with fear and unrest. All the in-fights and agitations in the country can be traced to this one basic defect"—this is the unthinking verdict of many observers. But, this judgment is not correct. It is a flimsy flight of fancy, indulged in by persons devoid of the faculty of reason.

In the West, the inhabitants of all lands are, more or less, adherents of the Christian religion. Though all of them adore one God, they have been slaughtering each other by methods far more horrible than wild animals resort to. In the name of patriotism, do they not wage wars in which peoples remote from the scene of conflict including innocent women, children and the aged are wiped off the earth by merciless firepower? Is their religion the basic cause for such heartless, disgraceful, stupid, and demoniac devastation and fratricide? Of course, they belong to one religion and they adore one God but, there must be some poisonous trait lurking behind the facade of adoration, polluting the entire personality. Religion cannot be the cause even to the slightest extent, for factions, fights, and wars.

Germany had no place for caste groups and sectarian conflicts. It had achieved extraordinary progress in science and technology. It shone in the forefront of nations by means of its strength, courage and heroism. Such a nation was cut up into four bits by the four victorious nations each bit being ruled by a separate nation! Japan which has no problems of religious differences and sectarian conflicts has had to suffer the vengeance of the nations for some years! What was the reason? For the downfall of nations, religion alone cannot be the cause. This is the lesson that Germany teaches.

No one can imagine a world in which differences do not exist. Differences are born from the inner springs of intelligence and the cumulative educative effect of impacts. Each life of every being is the external expression of this intelligence and this effect. All inert as well non-inert entities are but manifestations on different levels of this 'intelligence'. The parrot casts its eyes in a distinct way; the crow does the same, quite differently. The jackal reasons out situations differently from the dog. The nature of animals is of one type; the nature of human beings is of another type. Between man and man, there are differences in the knowledge gained by each. Not only in knowledge but even in physical characteristics and personal charm, there are countless variations. Their likes and dislikes, their thoughts and feelings are shaped in diverse ways by the knowledge they have and the professions they are engaged in. We have no need to go so far. Even twins growing together in the same womb are not often identical; they manifest different

natures. What is the reason for this? The reason lies in differences in the development of the intelligence (Buddhi).

Therefore, at no time can mankind be free from differences, universal equality can never be witnessed. It is an impossible aspiration; the desire to have it established on earth is a fantasy, it is the search for flowers in the sky.

The animal lives with the awareness that it is an animal, the bird has the consciousness that it is a bird. A woman engages herself in the activities of the world, conscious that she is a woman; so also does man. The consciousness one has until sleep overwhelms continues without change after waking from sleep. The living being continues its activities as before sleep. Man continues his activities where it was broken off by sleep; so too, man continues in this life, the activities broken off by death, from where they were ended. "Yam Yam vaapi smaran bhavam, thyajathyanthe kalebaram. He gives up his body at the end, remembering the feelings that moved him ever so strongly." And, in the Gita, "Tham thamaivathi Kauntheya, sadaa thad bhaava bhavithah"—He attains that status itself to which his feelings were all the while directed." The nature of the next life is in accordance with the feelings which occupy the mind when man casts off his corpse. For, those feelings will only be in accordance with the feelings that motivated his living days. On deeper thought, it will be evident that the basic truth is just this: everything depends on the progress attained in the sublimation of intelligence.

Though in outer form, a certain uniformity may appear, there exist vast and varied differences in inner nature. A genus or species is mainly decided on outer characteristics, which are really the manifested expressions of the inner Intelligence. An individual is primarily a form. Man, Tree, Hill, Sparrow, Fox, Dog, Cow, Snake, Scorpion—these 'sounds' denote members of the species with these forms. The Individuals may undergo destruction; but, the species will continue. Men many die; but, mankind will persist. Trees may fall and be reduced to ash or dust but the genus cannot ever suffer destruction. The living genus is eternal; total destruction can never happen.

If we analyse and inquire into even the small things that we experience in our daily lives, these truths will be clearly evident before us. We know that every one in the human species has human characteristics but when we evaluate one person, we pay special attention to his virtues and habits, present status and future prospects.

Cows—all of them—belong to one species. But when we desire to purchase a cow for our house, we try to find out its parentage. We look for auspicious marks on its body. It must give us copious milk; it must be a pretty little quiet animal. We purchase only cows with these desirable qualities. We are not attracted by the fact that it is a cow like all the rest of the species and led to purchase a barren cow or a wild unruly cow. Therefore, though all men are more or less uniform, he is to be evaluated on the basis of his qualities only.

When an inquiry in depth is made into another topic, it will be clear that feelings of difference between high and low are natural reactions. Though urine and faeces are uniformly unclean, the urine of the cow alone is treated as holy. Sanctity is not attributed to the urine or faeces of other animals; these are definitely unholy. Take the instance of fire, Agni. Fire is fire, in whatever

form. We light lamps at home; we have fire in our hearths. We have the sacrificial fire, rising up in flames. This Agni is revered and worshipped; people prostrate before it. But, the fire in the lamp and the hearth are not evaluated so high. When fire is raised to burn a corpse on the cremation ground, the flame is not considered pure enough for any other use, No one will bake 'rotis' over it; no one will revere it or offer prostrations before it. For, it is treated as 'low', 'unholy', 'polluted.'

Similarly, though men have the same physical form, the peculiarities of each body and of the other sheaths in which he is encased, and the nature of his qualities and activities, distinctions among them have necessarily to be made. Some must be treated as "high" and some, as "low". Electric bulbs do not all emit the same quantity of light; some are bright and some dull. There is the same current in every bulb though some express it in full strength and others are not able to do so.

In conclusion, we have to note that for the world to evolve, levels of awareness, stages of excellence, distinctions like high and low, holy and unholy, religious and irreligious are essential requisites; they are inevitable. They are designed by Divine will.

(To be continued)

"The Communicator"

—Dr. P. R. R. Sinha

Acting Director, Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, Singapore.

During my 25 years of career in the communication profession, I have learnt that the entire communication process can be summed up as "who says what to whom under what conditions and with what effect?" While all the elements are important, the two key elements are 'who says' and 'to whom'. In other words, the communicator and the communicatee or the sender and the receiver of messages are the most vital elements in the communication process.

In recent years, the importance of communication towards furthering the cause of growth and development is being increasingly realised by all. According to experts, the citadel of development hinges primarily on the socio-economic and political facets of the people and the countries and communication plays a significant role in accelerating the pace of growth and development. However, its importance in the field of moral and spiritual developments is still a far cry. This is evident from the lopsided development of the individuals and the societies. Be that as it may, even in fields of socio-economic development, the means of communication is not very effective for various reasons.

One of the most important reasons has been the inability of the communicator to communicate well with the audience. This in turn, adversely affects credibility. The communicator also sends messages to the audiences without having proper knowledge and understanding of their needs, values and aspirations. Again, the mechanism of feedback is deplorably inadequate with the

result that the communicator is invariably oblivious of the reactions of his audiences to the messages passed on to them. Such is the state of hundreds and thousands of communicators engaged in the profession throughout the world.

Let me try to describe with the help of my little knowledge, the effects and effectiveness of The Greatest Communicator Sri Sathya Sai, the world knows of.

After having come in direct contact with The Communicator in physical form only last December at Brindavan, Bangalore, I was hoping to be at the Holy place Puttaparthi on 7 March on the occasion of the Shivaratri festival. It so happened that on the 23rd February, one of my colleagues advised me to postpone my programme and stay in Singapore because I had recently taken over the new post. I was in a fix, I could not decide what to do. The same evening, I prayed to Sai Baba to advise and lead me to kindly light. And to and behold! The same night my whole family and myself were with the Bhagavan in dream. The following morning, I had the message—do not come at this time, come with your family. And this time, I am here with my wife. After a few days of this event, I learnt from a friend of mine who lives in Hyderabad that our Bhagavan would not be at Puttaparthi this year on the Shivaratri Day.

Now, can any science of communication explain this phenomenon of inter-personal communication? Is it possible for any communicator to get the message so fast thousands of miles away without any mechanical and electronic devices and respond immediately to the prayers of a devotee? But there is only one Communicator who does this, not only with one person at a time, but with millions of persons at the same time.

The acid test for the success of communication is in its impact on the receivers or audiences. The effectiveness of communication is crucial to its continued efforts towards changing the behaviour complex of the people. Here again, I would, with due apology, describe my personal experience. When I was blessed by my Guru and God on the 21st December, 1977 at Brindavan, He told me not to worry too much, everything will be all right and His Blessings are always with me. Believe me, this single message has completely transformed my entire ethos and philosophy of life. I have read that thousands of devotees have undergone similar transformations in their lives after receiving the blessings from BHAGAVAN. Can there be a better example of perfect effectiveness of communication? Is it humanly possible to achieve so much results (by way of changing the behaviour of the people) in one act or many acts of communication? Certainly not.

We all know that there must be a message for the communicator to communicate with audiences. Quite a few persons have proclaimed rather vociferously that their lives are their messages. But have they stood the test of time? How often they have failed miserably in proving that their lives are their messages? Our Bhagavan also says "My Life is My Message." Has there been any gap between what He says and what He does? The way He meets and treats people, the way He fondles them, the way He consoles and clears the doubts, the way He speaks and behaves, all make an indelible imprint on our head and heart and motivate us to act according to messages received.

His messages know no physical barriers and transcend all cultures, all religions, all faiths and all beliefs throughout the universe. Be it Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Sikh, all

without exception, take to the messages of the Bhagavan as if they emanate from their own Gurus or from The Communicator who is the God of all Gods and Goddesses. His message of the Seven principles of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi Prema, Devotion, Duty and Discipline, is so effective that it touches the very heart of mankind. Then there are messages tailored specifically to the needs of the individual human beings. They touch the innermost feelings and emotions of the individuals which have snowball effects on their behaviour. We know of only One Communicator Whose selection and treatment of messages are so incredibly perfect and effective.

Like message, language is another key element in the communication process. Communication scholars have come up with a number of factors leading to the compatibility of the languages, in the absence of which it is hard to achieve desired results in the thinking and doing of the recipients of messages. There is only One Living Communicator who communicates through the "Language of the Heart." The myriads of people who have directly or indirectly come in contact with The Communicator would vouchsafe that the best language for total effectiveness in communication is and will be for all times to come, the Language of the Heart. People from all parts of the world have had the fortune of being blessed by the Communicator in private interviews. It is a sight to see their faces completely transformed, lit fully with satisfaction after the experience with the Divinity. How effective is the message when the Lord says to the people all over the world, "My place is in your heart; I want your love." One has only to physically experience the total impact of this message which is communicated through the language of the heart.

Examples abound in to indicate the manner and speed with which He gets a feel of the needs and aspirations of the people and also feedback of His messages. This again knows no geographical boundaries. He can and does communicate and receive feedback from His devotees from all parts of the world at the same point in time. The Greatest Sender of messages is also the Greatest Receiver of messages. It bates all calculus of communication to find various elements of communication intimately immersed in The Communicator Himself. His Life is the Message, He is the Channel, Medium, Language and is also inseparable from His Audiences. This communication phenomenon cannot be explained either by the present or future science of communication.

UNEXPECTED JOY

Unexpected Joy in my lifetime
Unexpected Joy of my ashramas
Unexpected Joy of my seasons
Unexpected Joy of my days
Unexpected Joy of my hours
Unexpected Joy of my moments
the Surprise of Your Ananda reality!
—the great antlered deer on the night forest hillside

with sharp hooves clears away the leaves
and earth, and bright water wells up,
flows; eternal spring ever growing
Unexpected Joy of Your Ananda presence
Unforeseen ecstasy ambushed by Your beauty

Unforetellable rainspontaneous giftings
Those who know You
 know they don't know You
 though You
 are all they want to know
You are Light
 not seeing You we're blind
Your name is the vibration
 that tunes us
bereft of it we're cacophonous
You are ananda
 without You we're miserable
 and nothing is right
Delicious to the heart's tongue
Delicious to the eye's taste

OM SRI SAI RAM

Delicious to the soul's appetite
that voice so delicious to the ears

OM SRI SAI RAM

If You give ashes they are sweet
You leave a breeze of fragrance
 where You've been
We can find You anywhere
red robed blood through each
 heart that beats

OM SRI SAI RAM

I see Your face on the other side of death
sense Your presence as the Being of Light
the special guide full of love and acceptance
asking us to review our lives and conscience
Fun to be with, wise, concerned with our learning
caring for our heart ...how we hate to 'leave' You
but back we come to live some more

I want to be so close to You
You never go away
—always my forehead on Your feet
I wish again for ecstatic tears, heart
throbs seeing Your face
—always Your smile perfectly sweet
I'd like my mind dwelling on Your radiance
to melt right into You
—always my forehead at Your feet
OM SRI SAI RAM

—*Bill Jackson*

With a Group of Scientists

"The atheists wish to say GOD IS NO WHERE, whereas, the theists wish to say GOD IS NOW HERE. The beauty is that both state what they wish to say by using the same words, least realising the fact that they are doing so, just by associating the letter with either the word NO or with the word HERE" said Bhagavan on Sunday the 21st January 1979 at Brindavan during an interview that He graciously granted to a group of scientists. Who are the lucky few that got this rare and precious opportunity to sit in the presence of Bhagavan is not important; but what is important is: What message did they receive from Baba? To reproduce verbatim what Bhagavan said is like trying to build a bridge across the ocean. We shall endeavour to present what He told this group in summary form; we hope readers of Sanathana Sarathi will benefit from it.

It was Sunday; about 15 of us gathered in the Bhajan Pandal of Brindavan and we were asked to sit together so that we could move enbloc if Swami gives the green signal. At about 9 AM Bhajan started and the crisp and cool winds in Brindavan were soon carrying the devotional music to the nooks and corners of the world. Soon the Bhajan tempo increased and suddenly every head turned towards the main building wherefrom, like the rising Sun, Bhagavan made His appearance bringing joy and light to the hundreds of devotees gathered in Brindavan.

After giving Darshan to the many devotees who were waiting near the gates of the main building, Bhagavan made His way slowly and steadily towards the Bhajan. Soon He was standing in front of us and enquired whether all of our party had come and when the answer was in the affirmative, He told one of the volunteers to guide us to the room where the interview was to be held. We waited for some time outside the room while Baba completed His meeting with other devotees. After sometime the room was opened by Baba Himself and He asked us to come inside. He addressed everyone as "Bangaroo" and He admitted us into that room, extending to us the most affectionate welcome that we have ever witnessed in our lifetime. All of us were overwhelmed. With the last man in, Baba moved from the door towards His chair and suddenly He called the name of one of us as if He had known him for ages. Naturally the concerned person was overjoyed and he prostrated before the Lotus Feet of Baba. Then Baba asked the people to raise any subject they choose.

Some people put questions relating to their personal affairs and Bhagavan answered them most affectionately. In fact Bhagavan assured that He would meet us individually to listen to personal matters some other time, thus suggesting that we better concentrate during this interview on more general matters. Of course, even after this assurance, when some of us persisted out of genuine anxiety in asking questions about our personal matters He did not dissuade us at all; on the contrary He tried to comfort us by pouring love and affection. We realised that for the Anandaswarup it is but natural to comfort, console and protect those in distress. Baba, however, utilised the opportunity, while answering some personal questions, to bring home the point that one should not get overjoyed while experiencing pleasure and get depressed while experiencing pain. He pointed out that between two pleasures there will be always pain and vice versa. One should experience both pleasure and pain with equanimity. Also He emphasised that all a

humans being the children of God, are inherently Good and Satsang (Good Company) is the elixir for the growth of goodness in a person. That is why He often says: Do Good; See Good and Be Good. As is characteristic of Baba, He explained the meaning of all His statements with examples from daily life.

Continuing on the theme that human life is precious and unique and that pleasure and pain are integral parts of life, He extolled the virtue in being a human by saying: "Humans and animals are equal in all respects except for the difference that Man has been endowed with the capacity to think and reflect." He told us that He addresses everyone as *Bangaroo* because He knows that all humans are as precious as Gold. But then, Gold has to be heated and treated in order to be converted into jewellery. Man also must undergo similar processes in order to become useful to himself and society.

Baba stressed the importance of the quest through Sadhana for self-realisation. There are three important stages in the process of self-realisation and they can be considered in terms of Dvaita, Advaita and Visishtadvaita. To illustrate these three aspects He gave three different but very striking examples. Each of you is three persons, not one, He said, "What you think you are, what others think you are and what you actually are."

The first stage is as Jesus said, the Dvaita "I am the servant of God." The next one is the Visishtadvaita stage: "I am the son of God." At last the Advaita stage, "I and my father are one" is reached. So too the sadhana stages: I am in the light, The light is within me, I am light.

Baba explained with more examples how the endeavours of self-realisation get constrained or hindered by the growth of attachment to the material world. He emphasized that everyone should try—by cultivating proper methods of Sadhana—to reduce his attachment and allow the growth of an attitude of detachment towards worldly things. He pointed out that attachment to worldly things is the single source of unhappiness for the human race. Baba explained that Man, because of his attachment to the material world, tends to get distracted from the path of Dharma in order to amass wealth. What a beautiful couplet he devised to condemn the blind rush of Man to amass wealth: "Money comes and goes; Morality comes and grows" He said. Further He said: But still man prefers money to morality and discipline.

Bhagavan emphasised the importance of Mauna (silence) as one of the constituents of Sadhana for self-realisation. He pointed out that it is not Mauna if one keeps his mouth closed but has the switch of the mind 'ON'. Actually the real state of Mauna is when you shut off the wandering mind. This is very important because it allows one to cultivate the all important habit of concentration. From concentration one graduates to the stage of contemplation and finally to the stage of meditation.

At this stage, one of us asked: How can one make his Bhakti grow? Bhagavan said Bhakti can be allowed to grow by Sadhana and conscientious effort, like any other trait of human being. One can increase his Bhakti, quantum by quantum through disciplined behaviour and attachment to God.

Then the discussion turned towards the Scientists and question was asked: Are we trying conscientiously to orient our educational methods to turn out scientists who perforce should disbelieve and deny the existence of God? Bhagavan replied that while there appears to be that sort of a trend now-a-days, He does not believe that there is any atheist. It is His assertion that a man may choose, for material reasons to play the role of an atheist; but every man knows in his heart that he is the son of a supreme father and hence he must believe in His existence. It is becoming a fashion to call oneself a rationalist. But science and spirituality are like the two halves of a circle and one is incomplete without the other. Baba emphasized by giving Einstein as example, that an accomplished scientist will be humble enough to accept the necessity of spirituality and the existence of God.

At this juncture someone said: Swami! I could not understand what you have said. But in summary you seem to say Science is a tool. If we use it with love it is good. If we use it with ego or greed it is bad. Am I right? Baba replied that it is right not only in the case of scientific endeavour but true in the case of all human endeavours. In fact love is everything and all problems of this world could only be solved through Love. He said: How can Peace be established if politicians talk about Peace with bombs in their hands, which the scientists have helped them to possess. There are many ways through which a scientist can utilise his knowledge for constructive purposes such as improving the health, sanitation and nutrition of our people. Every man (be he a scientist, an artisan, a farmer) has a role to play in promoting the welfare of society and he can play this role effectively if he cultivates Love towards his fellow human beings and treats them as his brethren.

Baba closed the interview, saying: "There is only one caste and that is the caste of humanity. There is only one religion and that is the religion of Love." Thus came to an end the most memorable interview with Bhagavan. Then He distributed Prasadam. We all came out wishing that the interview had never come to an end.

—Prof. S. V. Pappu, Indian Institute of Science

Be Good, Do Good and See Good: That is the Way to God

—By A Sadhaka

"Be good, do good and see good: that is the way to God" is one of the many Sathya Sai Sutras which Bhagavan Baba has given us in His various discourses. Sathya Sai Sutras are like the cryptic statements of great power and potency which is in the tradition of the ancient Upanishadic seers, who gave sutras and Mahavakyas in Sanskrit. True to the spirit of the Age and also His declaration that He has come to transform Humanity as a whole, Bhagavan Baba does not see any distinction between language and language; for one who has declared that there is only one language, the language of the heart, what is important is that the meaning of His declarations goes to the heart. All languages are His; so He does not make any distinction and hence many of His sutras are in English.

The sutras are cryptic and contain the essence of Baba's teachings and must be understood in their fullness if one must derive benefit from them. One of the dangers to which Baba's devotees fall a prey is to repeat these Mahavakyas parrot fashion without understanding their full implications, make placards out of them, hang them in Bhajan Mandirs and forget about them. The Mahavakyas of old have been thought of in great depth by seers and intellectual giants of the past who have written great commentaries on them helping the readers of less calibre to comprehend in fullness what they understand to be the meaning. Unless each of us does this in respect of the great utterances of Baba, we are likely to miss the essence of the sutras. This requires Shravana, hearing it directly from Baba, Manana, introspection and Nididhyasana, understanding the full implications and relevance to our own living and sadhana.

The sutra which is under such introspection has many dimensions, which we must now attempt to understand. The important word is obviously the key word "good". We must understand clearly what this word means. When we start thinking about it we will find that it is not as simple as it might appear. Let us see how good is defined in the dictionary: "good"—1. normally excellent, virtuous, righteous, e.g. good man 2. satisfactory in quality or quantity or degree, excellent; 3. close, warm: e.g. a good friend; 4. well behaved; e.g. a good child 5. competent or skillful, e.g. a good manager." Thus we see that the word good has a strong moral basis and this means a strong moral character, which cannot be divorced from the term. The opposite word "bad" is defined as one looking in or characterized by a lack of moral qualities; it also means disobedient, naughty and misbehaving."

The other aspect which becomes clear when we try to understand this sutra is that all the attributes of good mean two things; it requires the possession of certain qualities and attitudes within us; in fact this will mean elimination of the opposite qualities. This also means that we must first of all try to understand what qualities are bad and this involves developing the qualities of discrimination between good and bad. In fact the first step in sadhana is cleansing of the impurities and they are nothing but tendencies or Samskaras which lead us into either good or bad behaviour.

These are excellently described by Baba in Rama-katha-rasa-vahini, in reply to Bharata's question on how to distinguish between the men who are good and those we have to shun as bad.

Rama told him "Brother! The qualities that mark out the good are endless in number, as the Vedas and Puranas say. The distinctions that separate the good and the bad are as wide as that between the sandal tree and the axe. Note this: even when the axe cuts the sandal tree, the tree confers on the axe the fragrance it possesses. The axe is killing it but, the tree does good only to the executioner. Hence the sandal is appreciated by all. ...wicked persons cause grief to good men in this manner. But the good always wish well and do good to the wicked, whatever harm is done to them. And what is their gain? They certainly attain heaven. That is to say they are in constant bliss. The bad persons on the other hand will be constantly struggling in sorrow and discontent. That is to say that they will be subject to hellish agony. Though they may appear happy to observers, they will be tortured inside by the infamy and the hatred they invoke."

"I shall tell you the characteristics of good men. Listen. They are not fascinated by sensual pleasures. They possess all the best virtues and modes of behaviour. They will be happy at the happiness of others; they will be sad when others are sad. They look upon all with equal affection. They have no enemies and they are not bothered by foes. They are endowed with wisdom, knowledge of the world and a deep sense of detachment. Their hearts are tender; they have great compassion towards the weak and helpless. They adore my feet with purity of thought, word and deed. They delight in serving me. They have no concern with fame or infamy, honour or dishonour. They are always interested in serving others; they never yield to the urges of selfishness, even in dreams. Their actions are transparently simple, their hearts are very cool and unruffled. They yearn for opportunities to renounce; they are every moment soaked in joy. For them praise and blame are the same. Brother! Whoever has these characteristics in him take it that he is of my nature. Why should I say of my nature? He is myself, I am himself. Take that to be the truth."

"Now, I shall tell you of the qualities of bad men. Listen. You should avoid their companies by all means. Grief will descend on you as a result of their companionship. Their heart will be pained at the prosperity of others. They will delight in scandalising others, as if they have come upon a fortune. The six foes of good men—lust, anger, greed, desire, pride and hatred are fostered by them and they are ever at their beck and call. They move about and act according to the commands of these six. Pity and charity are absent in their make-up. They pick up quarrels with others with no reason or provocation. They develop enmity even towards those who do good to them. Their actions are false; their advice is false; their dealings of give and take are false. Their attitudes are hard; they have hearts of stone. The peacock is charming to behold; its cry is pleasant to hear; but it kills snakes. So too wicked men are ready to harm others, and craving for other's wives. They relish damaging the reputation of others. They revel in evil; they are evil-minded all the time. They are the meanest among men. They have no fear of retribution. When they see or hear about the progress of another, they are possessed by envy so much they are afflicted with unbearable headache. But when others are caught in calamity they exult over their sufferings. When others are suffering they are elated as if they have been kings of the realm. They are dominated by the ego; they do not have any thought of helping others, even in their dreams. Their hearts are the birthplace for lust, anger and other passions. They have no consideration towards parents, preceptors or elders. They feel disgust at the very mention of 'good personages' or "God".

Through the words of Sri Rama, Baba has clearly given an exposition of what is good and what is bad, of good and bad people and their characteristics. With this background it will be simpler to understand the significance of the Sutra. Now let us come to the operative terms, "Be", "Do" and "See". The term "Be" means to live or exist. There is no use having a textbook definition of what is good and what is bad. There is no use being able to recognise good and use them for selfish ends, as it often happens; we all avoid bad people since they will hurt us! This will not by itself make us good. We have to live the life of a good man as has been clearly delineated by Baba. This is a life-long process as we can see from the description by Sri Rama of what are the qualities of a good person. We have to eliminate so many bad qualities, if they have to be substituted by good qualities. This needs effort, conscious effort, since the mind is likely to lead us to the bylanes of bad qualities.

Next is to "Do good". This is to show goodness in action. Once we know what are the good qualities to be practised we must act according to them. We should be happy when somebody succeeds. As a first step, as Baba often reminds us, we should refrain from doing bad things even if we cannot do good. And in course of time, we may get into the habit of doing good, especially when we realise that it yields better dividends than if we do bad deeds. Gradually we must realise that the real joy is in the act. Every good act we do will give us a sense of satisfaction; self-sacrifice leads to self-satisfaction.

The next part of the sutra is "see good". This is a little confusing; the question will naturally arise how we can see good when we know that the other person is bad. This might also appear contrary to the advice given by Sri Rama of the description of bad people and how it is important to avoid them. The inner meaning is that very often we see bad because our mind is full of bad feelings. What we see outside is often a reflection of the feelings inside. We feel that the other man is bad, because we attribute motives coloured by our vision. We see in others what we want to see. "Yad bhavam tad bhavati". Whatever feelings we have that becomes realised. It is the mind that colours our vision and how often friends break up their friendship merely because they have mistaken things or deeds and attribute motives.

Once we understand that the mind can play tricks, then we will be in a position to see even the good points in the person whom we do not like. Because of our egoistic tendencies, we often dislike an individual and condemn him as bad merely because he has hurt our ego, wittingly or unwittingly, and our entire attitude to him will be coloured by this single act. When we get the spiritual feelings awakened in us, then we will develop the attitude of forgiveness; very often the bad behaviour of persons is the result of factors over which they may have no control; it may be due to quarrels at home, some calamity, or some problem that is bothering the individual. We will be able to see good once we understand the significance of this part of the sutra.

Really we will then come to the conclusion that no man is permanently good or bad. How can we do good and see good unless we have love in us. How often we condone the mistakes of our children, mistakes for which we would have taken strong exception if they had been done by somebody else. The reason is that we love our children and it is that love that makes us view the mistake with less harshness than otherwise. When we cultivate this love to others then we will also develop this attitude of forgiveness. In any case, when we attempt to correct them, we would develop an attitude of understanding helpfulness which alone can have any effect on the

other person. Otherwise, he or she will only justify the mistakes, even if they know it is a mistake.

We will in due course realise that both good and bad are relative terms. What is good at one time appears bad at another time. That unless we go beyond good and bad, we cannot really have peace of mind. Only such a person will be good all the time; "satatam yoginaha" as Baba often repeats. They will be in equanimity all the time. Once the individual has reached this stage, he will be able to see the divine spark in all, even though it is masked by the sheaths of ignorance, anger, envy and greed. At that stage he will not be affected by even such bad people. God, as Baba has so often reminded us is not some person living in some far off place. He is the inner core of all of us. He is the Antaryamin. We will then realise that by being good, doing good, and seeing good, we have shed our veils and then He who is within all the time stands revealed. That is what Baba means when He says, "BE good, Do good and See good; that is the way to God!" By bursting open and shedding the shell of the ego represented by the additional "O" in the word good, we will reach God, who is within and without. That is liberation; that is merger. That is the significance of this Mahavakya!

Become Dearer and Nearer

Where had the little honeybee flown from so early in the morning? Dawn was just breaking in the Southern California desert not far from the Mexican border. Mysteriously the news of springtime had reached this lone scout which must have flown in the dark in a beeline towards this spot.

Delicate petite flowers formed a lovely creamy carpet which wafted a rare perfume towards the Gods in the heavens. The flying wonder must have sensed that here was a special ingredient which needed to be added to his queen's store of amrita. With ecstatic loud buzzing, the sound he had made which first attracted my attention, he hovered over his find. He seemed to be assessing the field, perhaps trying to decide how many workers would be needed to 'transport this delicious food for the queen.

How blessed were the myriad of dainty little white flowers with golden centers to have these flying wonders perform their ceremonial-like task of polliniferous activity to prolong the specie. This was truly a labor of love by the honeybees which would devote their lives to transporting the store of golden liquid over the torrid desert and then fly high to cross the surrounding mountains to reach their hives.

As I was quietly pondering the lifetime work of the honeybee, I soon discovered that I was listening to the sweet words of my Beloved. This is His message which I felt was directed to all devotees

Seeker of the Divine Sweetness of Me, arise early in the morn and devote your time to Me and My Service. Gather unto yourself My energy and deliver Divine Love to all you meet. Garner

unto your Heart of Hearts the fruits of your tasks and offer them to Me. In exchange for the sweetness you distribute each day, I will reward you with My Love which will sustain you throughout all Eternity. Wherever you perform My Work as I watch over you, hold within you the knowledge that I am always at Home awaiting your return.

Question not the purpose of each task I have you do. Carry out My Work with all sincerity. You will always have My Blessings along the road. The work you do for Me will always succeed; some endeavors may not always result in achievements of your understanding. As a child of My Sai Family, know that I am always with you, beside you, in you. You are never alone. I will always give you the Divine Power needed to carry you over the mountain.

After the honey from the Divine flowers of life has been gathered and offered to Me, I take it drop by precious drop and give it to those needful of My Grace. Your whole lifetime is to be spent in the labor of Divine Love. With each "flight" taken each day, you become dearer and nearer to Me, for you are truly My Beloved.

—Charles Penn, California, U.S.A., 14 November 1978

Bhagavan Darshan

Calm, serene, clear the air
Majesty, beauty, purity stands before
Harmony of devotion, patience, discipline
Marks the congregation around
Eagerly waiting for HIS Darshan
 Distracted soul of mine
 What else you need
 To turn your mind
 And turn all thoughts to HIM
A glimpse of saffron robe comes in view
Silence is deeper, yearning is keener
The graceful FORM is now clear
Moving gently closer, closer
Oh! the enchanting smile
The compassionate eyes
 HE comes forward so gracefully
 Blesses all with lifted palm
 Love flowing in abundance
 Touches the core of all souls
 Devotion fills agitated hearts
Palms get folded
Eyes fill with tears
Lips quiver silent salutations

Oh 1 my LORD is here
The joy, the bliss and thrill
All devotees share
—*Sukomal Roy Chowdhury*

Padanamaskaram

When I bow down at Thy Feet
O Lord of the Universe,
Let Time stand still and
Eternity be packed into that moment
Of rapturous ecstasy
When I at Thy Lotus Feet,
Drink in the nectar of Thy Grace
Ocean of Bliss Infinite!
The touch of Thy Divine Feet
So silken soft,
Transports me to worlds of bliss sublime;
And my heart, all evil cast away,
Fresh blooms—a pure white lotus
Wherein Lord Sai shall ever abide;
Forever in my heart shall His Temple be,
Till my ego vanquished,
I merge in the Cosmic Sea.

—*Chamantha, Weerakoon*

Do the Plants Complain?

Formerly, from about 1969 to 1974 I was very plump and fat, owing to some kind of over secretion of the Lymphatic gland or something like that. I could say with shameful pride that I was a "fatty". Apart from attributing a kind of social untouchability, usually meted out to fat boys at school, I was intensely suffering a kind of gravity and weight in the chest, etc, which sometimes was suffocating. I felt I was a giant and moved about with considerable difficulty.

Around this time, I also got the bad habit of unnecessarily uprooting and "trans-planting" the plants in the garden outside our house. It seems I was having my anger thrust upon the innocent plants, for no fault of theirs. But I did not give a moment of thought to this at that time.

Once, I asked Swami, why I had to suffer so much from breathing trouble, etc. (I did not have asthma at that time). Then of course, because of childish courage, I had not realised or felt any fear towards Swami. I was thinking just that He was one of our "best friends", knowing all the

while He was God. I was asking Him so many things inquisitively, without any trepidation, and which I would not dare to do now.

And Swami's answer was quick. "You are making the plants in your yard to suffer so much. Do they complain?"

Though I stopped the plant business immediately, it is only last week that I began to realise the great significance of this philosophy.

Firstly, it is poignant that Swami was able to point out a "devilish" habit, to which we did not attach much significance, and correct it. This shows the SARVAJNANI aspect of Swami, and also shows He is the "best teacher" we can get. His simple sentence purged me of a habit, which though trivial, was not good.

Finally, it proves how Swami is resident in the heart of all beings, and even non-beings. His sense of identification even with plants is complete, for He is in all. Since then, I try my best not to cause harm to any creature, even accidentally. Swami's philosophy of AHIMSA extends to the lowest of creatures.

More deeply implied are Swami's Doctrine of Necessity and Doctrine of Purpose. As He says, He does or says everything with a Purpose and never wastes anything. He uses something only if it is absolutely necessary. Hence Swami does not blame the farmer who cuts and binds the corn, not the people who eat it. Swami does not find fault with the spider who kills the mosquito, because this is the very basis of its sustenance. But he scolds me, who caused harm to plants unnecessarily.

—S. Sankar, *Summer Course Student 1978*

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4

For the consummation of human evolution, and the realisation by man of his highest goal, religion and spiritual discipline are very essential. Religion is the link between the individual and the Universe, between JIVA and DEVA. If that does not exist life becomes chaos. A cow caught on a hill wanting to go to the hill opposite, but confronted with a flooded river in between, needs a bridge between the two. That is what religion is. From the hill of individual life to proceed to the region of the Universal, there is in the middle the flooded river of Nature, with all its confusion and complexities. It is difficult to discover where it comes from, how it accumulates, and that uproar and where it ultimately ends. But fortunately, we have in every human community bridge-builders, who help people to cross.

We may have more than one bridge, but the purpose is the same. The bridge built by the sages and seers of India is known as the Sanathana Dharma bridge. It is called so because it is an

eternal, everlasting bridge based on the ageless foundation of the Vedas, and can be reliably used by all, in all countries at all times. That is why it is sometimes called the Vedic bridge and the Vedic path; also by the name, the Aryan path. All attempts to trace those who have laid this path have failed. This is the reason why they have given up the search in despair and characterise the path as "akatha" or undesigned. They assured themselves that the Vedas or in other words the Lord himself has been the designer.

All religions and spiritual Paths laid down throughout time are indeed sacred, but they have all been designed by Messengers of the Lord, chosen because they are the foremost of men. Buddha, Jesus Christ, Zoroaster, Mohammed—names such as these are known world-wide. Their doctrines, ideals, thoughts, have all become so valid for their followers that their names themselves have been identified with their religions.

Since the ideal religion at that time was believed to be the Message from God and since that Message was communicated and spread by Jesus Christ his name was given to it. So also the Buddhist religion was named after Buddha, since it was intuited and spread through him as the Divine instrument. Mohammed who came on the Message of God laid down doctrines and disciplines and those who follow them are said to belong to Mohammedanism, since his name was given to it. Therefore it is not wrong to say that all these religions are products of the foremost among men and the most ideal Messengers of Lord.

Divine Intelligence is universal and all comprehensive. Human intelligence is confined within narrow limits. Its range is very poor and the scriptures deal with only one goal but since they indicate different paths to reach it, each path could be constructed as a definite religion and its doctrines and disciplines considered different from the rest. However, the statement that Rama, Christ, Zoroaster, Buddha, Mohammed, and others are one, is not valid.

Do not the teachings of each one of these deal with one topic throughout? In the Christian religion, it is stated that individual beings were created as they are. It is said that Allah did the same. Even Zoroastrian and Buddhist religions describe creation more or less on the same lines.

But, the Vedic religion has a different version. The individual is as eternal as God. He is a spark of God. If there are no jivas (beings) there is no deva (God). This is specially emphasized in the Vedas. Followers of other religions are in recent times recognising this truth. The present life of each is only one interval between the previous and the future lives. It is but a step towards the next. This is indicated in the Vedas. The Vedas instruct about the relationship between the previous and future births. No other religion however, has made known so much about previous and future births.

Another point: Among the four objectives of life Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, various religions describe the stage of Moksha or liberation in various ways. Each one lays down some doctrine and insists upon faith in that doctrine. And therefore there is no agreement for identity between the experiences they describe. The Hindu description of the experience can however be gained by followers of all religions. There may be agreements in the details of the descriptions in various religions. But the total experience is not described in the same manner.

The reason is the Hindu religion which has come down from the timeless past is really supreme. Other faiths are only based on some of the doctrines of Hinduism selected by them and developed in accordance with the traditions and culture of their own region and peoples. Therefore Truths inherent in the Hindu faith may often appear in those other faiths. That does not authorise us to assert that they are the same. Hinduism and Hindu culture have been flowing as one continuous stream.

In the Hindu religion rituals and ceremonies have been laid down to be observed from sunrise to nightfall without any intermission. Many of them are elaborate Yajnas, Yagas, and sacrificial offerings to Divine Powers. Not being content with this much, beginning with auspicious rituals and dedicatory ceremonies appropriate to the baby growing in the womb until death and the subsequent attainment of the person of the higher worlds, elaborate disciplines have been laid down. No other religion has so many and so elaborate rules of living.

Therefore, it will not be correct to declare that all religions are the same. They might have adopted a few or many of these from Hinduism since Hinduism has from the beginning laid emphasis on them.

In order to carry out this heavy schedule of Karma or rituals, man must have Bhakti, Jnana and Yoga-Faith, Understanding and Self-control. Dharma is the taproot of the great tree, religion. It is the eternal source of its strength. It is fed by waters of Bhakti; the leaves and flowers are renunciation and other virtues, and the fruit is Jnana.

In these stages of growth, if there is any interruption or deficiency, that is to say even if any regulation is missed the fruit of wisdom or Jnana which the tree yields will be affected adversely. Such a strict plan of spiritual progress can be found in Hinduism only and not in any other faith. For Hinduism is the nectar churned and prepared by the ancient Rishis out of their own genuine experience. It is not put together out of things available or sold.

It is not proper to anyone to adopt whichever faith pleases him most. For such people there is no place for religion at all. They believe that life is a matter of just three days. Then what is the need for morality and self-control. Life is along journey through time and religion confers peace for the present and encouragement for the future. We must believe that we are at present undergoing the consequences of our own activities in the past.

It is a great source of peace that people can be content with their present conditions because they know they themselves were the cause and to know that if one does good and meritorious deeds now, it is possible to build a happy future. This is great encouragement. It is only when life is run on these two lines that morality and self-control can have a place in life. The power to adhere to these two ideals consists in the encouragement and the enthusiasm given by religion.

We cannot determine the origin of religion or its end. So also it is difficult to declare the origin and the end of the individual or the Jiva. According to Hinduism a Jiva is timeless, the present life is but the latest of the series brought about by its own; thoughts and acts. The Jiva has not come now, as a result of either the anger or the grace of God. They are not the cause of this present existence. This is the declaration made by the Sanathana Dharma.

(To be continued)

Some Teachings of Sai Baba

—Selected by Mr. Justice James Walter Davy Ambrose, Singapore

My Mission

I have come to carry out the supreme mission of spirituality regenerating and uniting mankind.

I shall leave the world only after completing my mission.

I have not come to propagate any particular religion.

I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts.

All religions are based on universal love.

Practise your own religion with faith in the divinity within.

Express the Divine Love, which is the divinity in you, in thoughts of compassion, words of sympathy, and acts of service.

Then there can be no hatred in the world.

Be an example and inspiration to all.

Cultivate Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love.

If you do so, you are close to Me and I am close to you, and everything will be added unto you.

Nearness to Me is not acquired by physical nearness.

I am the Divine Spirit dwelling in every heart.

Atma

The Atma, Divine Spirit, shines in man as a spark of the immortal flame.

The Atma is the source and sustenance of every being.

The Atma is God, the Supreme Consciousness in your own heart.

The Atma is your True Self; The Atma is Truth.

Be always conscious of the innate divinity, your Lord.

That will give you unshakable courage and strength.

Bring your thoughts constantly back to the Atma.

Peace is the very nature of the Atma.

Without Peace, there is no happiness.

Man is weak and miserable because he is ignorant of his True Self.

Self-Realisation

Life should be spent in realising the divinity in the innermost being of oneself.

Righteousness and devotion to the divinity within, will bring about self-realisation.

The easiest path to self-realisation is the surrender of the ego.

Contact the Atma; power, wisdom, vision and liberation will be added unto you.

Merge in the Atma; that is the duty of man.

Avatar

Every one of you is an Avatar.
You are the Divine encased like Me in flesh and bone.
Only you are unaware of it.
You have come into this prison of incarnation through the errors of many lives.
But I have put on this mortal body of my own free will, to lead men towards God.
I have incarnated to bring the message of Love, to uphold Righteousness and Truth, and to make people realise their Divine origin.
I have come to show you the way to Peace and Bliss.
I have come to give you liberation.
I am always aware of the past, the present and the future of everyone of you.
I grant you worldly boons so that you may turn to God.

Love

Love is God: God is Love.
Love more and more people.
Love them more and more intensely.
Transform the love into service.
That service is worship.
Start the day with Love.
Live the day with Love.
Spend the day with Love.
End the day with love.
This is the way to God.
If you love Me, you will love all.
If you treat anyone harshly, you are treating Me harshly.
If you insult anyone, you are insulting Me.
Love makes you humble.
Tolerate all kinds of persons and opinions, all attitudes and peculiarities.
When you love, you have no fear. Fear begets falsehood.
If you have no fear, you will adhere to Truth.
Love is Truth.

Egoism

Love removes all egoism.
Egoism is the greatest obstacle to doing the will of God.
The ego is the false self.
The aim of all religions is to kill the false self, and let the True Self, the Lord, reign.
The senses rule the mind.
Let discrimination save the mind.
Fill your mind with thoughts of God.
Then it will serve God's purpose instead of the senses.
Running after external things produces discontent.
Give up attachment to sensory objects if you want lasting Peace and Bliss.
Man can liberate himself from bondage to the senses by cultivating indifference to material objects and physical pleasures.
You decide your own destiny.

Success or failure is your own making.

Purification

Hear good, see good, think good, do good. Then all evil tendencies will be uprooted.

Watch your words, actions, thoughts, character and heart.

The purpose of discipline is to purify the heart.

Seek out your faults but not the faults of others.

Your duty is to purify your heart.

Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love will extinguish lust, anger, greed, attachment pride and hatred.

The recitation of the name of God is the best method for cleansing the mind of all impurities.

Devotion to God purifies the heart and draws the Grace of God.

You will find strength and joy welling up within you.

Faith

I have come to restore faith in the divinity within man.

The Atma has been forgotten.

Hence the unrest, confusion and lack of righteousness.

The chief cause of ill-health and death are fear and loss of faith.

If you meditate on the Atma, you can conquer death.

You will be rewarded by vision of the divinity within, if you bear in mind that the innate divinity is a witness of every act of yours.

When you become what you are, your True Self, joy wells up within you and floods you.

Liberation From the Wheel of Birth and Death

Annihilate the false self; otherwise you will return to this transient world.

Liberate yourself from the wheel of birth and death by serving God.

Surrender to God; then God will guard you from sin and liberate you.

Offer all activities to God without any egoism; this brings liberation.

Give devotion and receive liberation; this is the most profitable activity.

Meditation

Meditation is raising the mind above the level of the senses and sensory objects to the level of the Divine with one-pointed devotion

Meditation is the way to realise the Atma.

The Atma can be realised only by a sharpened intellect and a pure mind.

The intellect is sharpened by discrimination between the impermanent and the eternal.

The mind is purified by feeding it with thoughts of God instead of thoughts of sensual pleasure.

Meditate on the Name and Form of God chosen by you, or on the formless God, with love and faith.

If you are meditating on the Divine Light, the first stage would be: I am in the Light.

The Second stage would be: The Light is in me.

The third stage would be: I am the Light.

Then you merge with the Light and only the Light remains.

By meditation, one's lower nature is destroyed and burnt to ashes.

Meditation will cure illness without drugs.

Recite the name of God when facing grief, loss, adversity, slander and ridicule.
It does not matter which name is chosen.
The greatest of all mantras is Om.
Om is the best and most effective symbol of God.
A mantra is a word or sentence of power.
The recitation of Om produces great harmony in body and mind.
When the Atma is realised, everything else is known and the oneness of everything is experienced.

Practice

Practise what I teach: that is all I ask.
Practise righteousness, faith, discipline, meditation and humility.
Laziness prevents the practice of discipline and meditation and must be eliminated.
Learn to like doing what you have to do.
The Sai devotees have to be pioneers in new revolution.
They have to fill themselves with Love and radiate it to extinguish the anger, hatred, fear and anxiety that are consuming the world today.
Love is the way to gain Peace.
Meet obstacles with courage; this makes you tough.
By making spiritual progress, you get the Grace of God.
If you dedicate yourself to the Lord the Lord will look after everything.
If you place complete faith in the Lord at all times, you will receive His Grace.
Grace takes away the pain of Karma.
The Lord can save man completely from Karma.
Live in God, for God, with God.
You are fundamentally Divine.
The more you manifest Divine Attributes of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love, the more Bliss you will be able to enjoy and impart.

Generally man seeks only happiness and joy; under no stress will he desire misery and grief! He treats happiness and joy as his closest well-wisher and misery and grief as his direst enemies. This is a great mistake. When one is happy, the risk of grief is great, fear of losing the happiness will haunt the man. Misery prompts inquiry, discrimination, self-examination and fear of worse things that might happen. It awakens you from sloth and conceit. Happiness makes one forget one's obligation to oneself as a human being. It drags man into egoism and the sins that egoism leads one to commit. Grief renders man alert and watchful. So misery is a real friend ...So troubles and travails are to be treated as friends, at least not as enemies. Only it is best to regard both happiness and misery as gifts of God. That is the easiest path for one's liberation.

—Baba

Timely yet Timeless

When one studies Bhagavan's discourses a number of striking features impress the mind: the mastery of metaphor which uses a perfect symbol to simply express a situation and its resolution; the charming wealth of folk expressions and perennial wisdom; the deepest spiritual perspective which gives proportion to all else. If one reads the first discourse in the Sathya Sai Speaks series, volume one, delivered when Baba was 27, one finds the same truth as now, over 25 years later. If Baba annually changed his outlook the teachings He gives us by talks and example would not be classical, but shiftingly modern. But His discourses are all timely and timeless, for He is the Sanathana Sarathi, the Timeless Charioteer.

Sri Sai Baba advises us about our expressions, that "the impression will be changeless and permanent when a good subject is clothed in a fitting style and presented with appropriate feeling on the basis of actual experience." (Prasanthi Vahini) And with this in mind we think of such expressions as bhajans or devotional songs in English we can understand better the technical side of their composition, which is second only to the inspiring love which is their source. "New" bhajans too, should share in timelessness.

Sometimes one hears voicings of an attitude which assumes that, "new bhajans" make previous ones outmoded. This view forgets how we sing Shankara's songs of centuries ago, and how Baba is present in other places in the world and is sung in all divine songs old and new. If a song is sung with true devotion it is timely and timeless whether composed anciently or today. The desire for one-up-manship, for being more up to date, cannot share the spirit of devotion, which actually often comes more easily and naturally to an "unfashionable" villager than to a stylish city-dweller. Old and new don't matter to the heart: pictures of Swami taken any time in his life—at 14, 27, 54 all show the same majesty and charm.

It is spirit-renewing to learn new bhajans and to read new discourses, but that does not mean that the "old" ones (or that the Gita and other traditional scriptures) are passe. The mentality of obsolescence, one-up-manship and conspicuous consumption have no place in the field of Bhakti. Tradition is what is worthy of transmission; what passes into the enduring flow is valuable this means it is more than an ephemeral newspaper. A truth of 5000 years ago is still true, a song sung with devotion, composed last week of last decade is a fresh and fitting vehicle to the divine, if the intention is right, if we can taste the nectar.

If the new songs and discourses are valued at the expense of the ones that went before, the tradition is undercut. That the new is inspiring does not make the old less so. The conflict of modern versus old-fashioned is an essential part of the secular world-view, but it is not fitting in a scheme that tries to find the timeless truth and sing the universal heart's melody. The attitude that those in other parts of the world who do not know the current songs which Swami is singing and so are behind the times is a limited one which fails to recognize the perpetual song in the heart of each devotee, the timeless quality of Baba's spontaneous yet classical message, and the fact that each of us must be an instrument for Swami's ever new and ancient song every second of our lives.

We are harmonizing with the primordial Om, not keeping up with a top ten hit parade, and we are finding Swami's special presence in the enduring values of the "past" as well as in the freshly

unfolding present. Tasted anywhere and any-when this nectar is equally sweet, satisfying and sustaining.

—*Bill Jackson*

What is Spirituality?

—*B. Srinivas Murthy, Sri Sathya Sai College, Kodugodi*

'Tat tvam asi'
(That art Thou)

Spirituality is the perennial philosophy of mysticism, the highest common factor of all varieties of religious experience, the eclectic essence of all faiths, and the summum bonum of all *Srutis* and *Smritis*. It is a ceaseless *sadhana* for acquiring immediate and unitive knowledge of God and for achieving unity with the Divine. It is the attainment of the highest level of consciousness in the hierarchy of the various ways of knowing like sensationism, empiricism, rationalism, intuitionism and mysticism. It transcends all sensations, perceptions and conceptions. It is the merging of knower, known and knowledge. It has been succinctly summed up in the Vedantic formula: 'Tat tvam asi'. (That art thou)

‘That’

'That' represents the intuitively comprehended Cosmic Self sustaining the dynamic equilibrium of the multidimensional universe of life, mind, matter, energy, space and time.

‘Thou’

'Thou' represents the personal self-comprehended through individual intuition. Its supra-spatiotemporal existence cannot be denied even by the most uncompromising sceptic. In fact, its sceptical negation is tantamount to its logical affirmation. "Cogito ergo sum", (I think, therefore I exist). The personal self coordinates mind and body. It preserves the internal structure, the external design, the persistent pattern and the architectural configuration of the human body despite its incessant inner flux. It correlates all physical and psychic processes. The human soul is the disembodied individual self.

Cosmic Self and Personal Self

The universe is the great macrocosm. Man is a microcosm. The finite but unbounded universe is a Self-regulating cybernetic organism. Man is also a self-regulating cybernetic organism. The Cosmic Self and the personal self are ontologically identical as they are both *gestalts* or unified structures composed of the subtle particles or ineffable waves of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness from which all thoughts and things, *ents* and *entities* and *existent& and subsistents* have evolved.

Creative Cosmic Consciousness

This pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness is not an empty metaphysical concept. It is a superphysical entity logically deducible from modern physical theories. It is a necessary corollary of the physical principle of uncertainty or indeterminacy.

Divine Afflatus Through Love

The intellectual identification of atman with Brahman cannot be regarded as a satisfactory substitute for the direct unitive and immediate comprehension of the Cosmic Self through mystical revelation. But, all of us cannot become mystics. We can however follow the alternative path of selfless love and implicit devotion for experiencing a similar divine afflatus.

Limitations of the mind:

Moreover, the empiricorational human mind is so inextricably involved in the egocentric predicament, the primary and secondary dichotomies of thought, the relativities of the space-time continuum, and the phonemes, morphemes, vocabulary, inflexions, syntax structures of ordinary language that it cannot comprehend the immensity and totality of the universe, the transcendence and immanence of the Cosmic Self, the divinity and singularity of the personal self, and the ubiquity and subtlety of the pure primordial energy of creative cosmic consciousness.

Loving is Knowing

Love is not only an intuitive feeling but also a mode of knowing. The physical phenomenon of attraction between material bodies is the anthropomorphic projection of human love comprehended through individual intuition.

Extended Egoism is Altruism

When egocentric love is humanized and its perimeter is enlarged, it is transformed into anthropocentric humanitarianism. Similarly, when the orbit of humanitarianism is further extended to the entire creation, it is transmuted into theocentric altruism. Humanitarianism and altruism are sublimated forms of enlightened egoism extended to mankind in particular and to all living creatures in general. Reverence for life is devotion to God. Passion for all is true compassion.

Love of Humanity is Love of God

Since all human beings are tiny sparks of the Divine Effulgence, love of humanity is love of God. Social service is an important aid to self-fulfilment and self-realization through charity and compassion.

Spirituality and Love are Complementary

Spirituality and social service are not only intimately connected but are also complementary to each other. Social service without spirituality is soulless and spirituality without social service is loveless. In other words, social service should be impregnated with spirituality in order to achieve self-fulfilment and attain self-realization.

Service To Humanity Is Service To God

Bhagavan Sri Sai Baba treats all of us as 'Premaswaroopulu' and 'divyaatmaswaroopulu'. All men and women are embodiments of Divine Love and the Divine Atma. Baba is never weary of reiterating the Telugu proverb: 'Manavasevaye...Madhavaseva'. Service to humanity is service to God. Social work undertaken in spirit of Love, humility, simplicity, self-sacrifice, dedication, duty, discipline and devotion leads to social progress as well as spiritual advancement.

'Tat tvam asi'
(That art Thou)

What is Vidya?

Students: Remember that with the result of the merit that was accumulated by you during many lives that you have been able to join these Sathya Sai Loka Seva Educational institutions. What does the word student mean? It means a person dedicated to study. He is called Vidyarthi because he seeks Vidya. What does Vidya mean? Vid-means Light and ya-means that which gives light. Of course our eyes give us light because they are blessed by the Sun. They make things in nature clearer and clearer. Thus we have 5 senses which collect information about nature and place them at the disposal of the mind. The mind has got a master namely the intellect which discriminates between the good and the evil and encourages you to accept the good and reject the evil. But as the basis of the intellect or Buddhi there is the Atma which gives you the experience of the Ananda, whenever you are aware of truth, goodness or beauty. Beauty is not to be mistaken for physical charm which is temporary. Vidya means proceeding from darkness to light that is to say from ignorance of the Atma to the awareness of the Atma. People do not seek the Jyoti that can lead them from Tamas into wisdom. The reason is they have no steadiness in their Sadhana. They pay more attention to material pleasure and the earning of money by any means to have what they hope will give happiness in the future. Steady effort in these directions is simply running after a mirage. All efforts must be directed towards the realization of the truth, goodness and beauty which are latent in us as the Atma.

Now you are not able to understand the Atma because your effort is not sincere and steady. You feel that there are more valuable things which can be got from the outside world by fair means or foul. But pure and lasting bliss which will not cause harm to anyone can be got only from the inner search.

When you run after temporary pleasure any disappointment or obstacle will produce anger and hatred. The angry man is blind and temporarily mad. The saint Durvasa who is the personification of anger is called so because he was full of dur (bad) Vasanas (tendencies). Anger is the worst exhibition of the ego.

In order to realize the Atma you must have faith in your success and in the fact that the Atma exists and that it can be brought into consciousness all the time. Faith is essential for success in any undertaking. However little, you can progress in education only if you have faith in your abilities. Of course, the material education you are trying to get is necessary for material ends but it cannot give Santhi and Ananda. When success comes your way you become proud and uncontrollable; when defeat encounters you, you become dejected and desperate. It is only spiritual education that can tell you that both success and defeat are inevitable in life and both must be faced with an equal mind.

Material education leads to desires and attachments. Spiritual education leads to peace and detachment. Material education develops the ego. Spiritual education surrenders the ego at the

feet of the Lord. The Yadavas had an egoistic attachment to Krishna. They thought of him as a kinsman belonging to them specially; as a result they had to end their days before the passing away of Krishna fighting among themselves. But the Gopis had surrendered their ego and merged their individuality. So their Ananda was not disturbed. Here in the Lokaseva schools you are introduced to this essential spiritual education as tender plants. You help to cultivate duty, discipline and devotion and grow into straight and steady promoters of the spiritual culture of India.

The new born child asks the question "Koham" who am I? That is the meaning of its first cry. Of what avail is human life if the answer to this question is not discovered by man. Of what avail is an electric bulb which has no current to illuminate. Man should not live like dogs and jackals. He must realise he has god in him in the form of Prema which draws him to every living thing. Then he will get the answer to question with which he was born: "I am love, I am God." You must all be disciplined and devoted. Duty is God. So attend your classes and learn your lessons and be true Vidyarthi, seeking Vidya or light. Have prayers to the Lord morning and evening. You have all taken great trouble to clean with extra love every square inch of this huge campus. I know how much time and energy you spent for this and I am sorry I cannot now stay longer with you. I wish I could come once again very soon and spend more time with you.

—Bhagavan's Discourse to students at Alike

Why Fear

"Why fear when I am here" is one of the many gems of Sai which we quote very often. Pictures of Baba have this quotation, as well as that of His earlier gem in the Shirdi Form when He had told the devotees, "If you look to Me I shall look to you. We have these gems printed into placards which we display in Bhajan Halls. These Sai gems must be reflected upon, if we must derive any benefit from them in achieving the process of transformation from Manava to Madhava for which Baba repeatedly declares He has taken advent in the Human Form.

The other day, while sitting in a Bhajan Hall, this gem "Why Fear When I am here" caught my attention. I suddenly realised that "Why" is a question! It is not an assurance! Baba does not say "Don't be afraid; I am with you, although in private interviews, out of sheer compassion He says you need buy only one ticket, but I am a ticketless traveller going with you!" But the provocative, question is "Why fear when I am here?"

This is a perennial question, which we should ask ourselves whenever, the ever lurking feeling of "fear" tries to overpower us. During the course of our daily living there are hundreds of occasions when we are seized with fear. We certainly remember Baba when we are in trouble and pray to him for guidance, and remember His assurance that He is with us, implied in the second half of the quotation. This gives us courage to act, since we then feel that Baba will help us to come through.

Recently I had the good fortune of listening to an event in the life of a Sai devotee. He is the acting Principal of a College notorious for the "rowdyism" of its students. Anybody who gets posted there, manages to get the transfer order cancelled. But our Sai devotee is correctly and appropriately the "acting" principal, not the "Inactive Principals" most people, who have no faith in a higher power, tend to become. But our friend has no fears, because he told me that Baba is the Principal and he is only acting as His instrument. Recently he had to face one of the many student troubles which have become chronic in the country today. The President of the students' union behaved in an obnoxious way and the devotee told me that the young fellow in his rage slapped a member of the staff in his very presence. This was gross indiscipline and the acting Principal consulted Baba in the inner recesses of His heart: Baba told him "Why fear when I am here? Go ahead. You do your duty!" The acting Principal had to act without fear and enforce punishment, if there had to be any semblance of discipline. His fearless mind was clear. He called the boy, "Look here! You have broken the codes of all discipline! You have slapped a staff member! I have no choice except to suspend you!" Imagine any Principal, "acting" or "otherwise" having the courage to tell a student leader that he will be suspended! But Baba was telling him "Why fear, when I am here?" The incredible happened! The student broke down in tears and profusely apologised for his misconduct! Our friend then told him, "Look here! I am glad that you have repented; repentance must be enough to forgive your irresponsible act. But, I must also act, as per my responsibility. I will have to issue the suspension order. But if you give me your apology in writing I will withdraw the order after a day!" The student leader gave him the letter of apology; the acting Principal issued the "suspension" order. He closed the college for the next day as a precaution. Nothing happened! He was not gheraoed in the only room where he lives! The following day the College reopened; he withdrew the suspension order! All was quiet and peaceful. Then he informed the "higher ups" about the incident, his actions and the reactions. They were surprised at his courage to act in this fashion! He told them that he has his God who gives him courage. "He must be really a powerful God!" confirmed the "higher ups"!

I also heard of another person for whom this Sai *mantra* "Why fear when I am here" has given courage. This person became blind early in his life; he was brilliant and passed his M.A. He became a great scholar; he could recite the Gita and what is more, expound the significance of each of the verses for an hour. He is Baba's devotee and he takes study classes. It seems when he was being interviewed for a job as a teacher, the Committee members asked him "These days student trouble is rampant and it is very difficult to control them even by those who have their eyesight. How can you, a blind person, hope to control the students?" The answer to this question was very easy for our friend; Baba was prompting him and giving him courage, "Why fear when I am here?" Our 'blind' candidate for the teacher's post answered them with no hesitation: "I have one power which others may not have. I have faith and courage because I have faith in God. Besides I love students, and I have no fears that in my class there will be any student unrest or rowdyism!" They believed him and gave him the job. It is now several years since he has been in his profession. He has had transfers and no trouble. He is a very popular teacher. He has no fear, because he has faith in Baba's assurance "Why fear, when I am here!"

I have another interesting "story" of a Principal, a Sai devotee who acted without fear when he was faced with a crucial decision. There was a boy who was a rowdy of rowdys and a goonda, and yet he was doing well in his class. He had in fact been involved in fighting with groups and he was a terror. He passed his B.A. and now came the question of his admission to the M.A.

Class. The Principal was the chairman of the Board, and even before this boy was called in for interview the board members were against his admission. The Principal, a Sai devotee was now being put to test! Baba was prompting him, "Why fear when I am here? Fill the day with love, without fear!" The hero was ushered in. The Principal spoke to him with love and reminded him of his reputation as goonda. He also told him of his having been involved in a violent attack on a fellow student. It would be difficult to select him unless he mended his ways. Then he told me, he called the student to his side, held him closely and asked him to see the picture of the student's Guru on the wall and repeated "You are a good boy. You were misled into indiscreet acts. Now promise your Guru, if you have faith in him that you will no longer commit such rowdy acts. Pray to him to pardon you for your past acts. He will pardon you! Pray! Pray!" The other members of the Board were taken by surprise by the sudden change of events. They watched when the "goonda" suddenly broke down, shedding tears and touched the Principal's feet. There was no need to get a letter of apology. The other members agreed to the Principal's advice to give this boy a chance. The Principal told me that this event transformed the boy and he became one of the best-behaved boys of the College.

"Why fear?" is a question which all of us, especially those who claim themselves to be Sai devotees, must ask. If this question was asked every time we are faced with a situation in which we have to compromise our principles, then Sai will answer from within "I am here." If we had this conviction then, we should act with courage, speak out with conviction from the depths of our heart where He resides, and will not be afraid of consequences. Ultimately human values can be upheld only if we act with this courage, born out of a conviction that Sai is ever with us.

That is why, the famous statement is a question and not a mere assurance. Endowed as we are with discretion, we have to make use of it from morning to evening and we have to act with courage, very often and this nation of ours, and the humanity at large will not be what it is if we asked this question, "Why fear?" more often! You may be afraid because you think you are a mere mortal with no support from a higher power. When we have this conviction, then why should we be afraid, of our "bosses", big or small, and of the proverbial "Four" people, most of whom turn out to be imaginary, and alibis for our cowardice?

Interestingly, Baba had said the same thing in His previous incarnation. "If you look to Me, I shall look to you" is also conditional. The crucial factor is that we should learn to look to Him. Then only will His Grace flow. Man looks to God out of fear, but ever since the dawn of Civilization in this holy land, the saints, sages and seers have cried out "Abheeh! Abheeh!" "Abheeh!" "Be fearless! Be fearless! Be Fearless." We can become "Madhava" the controller of the greatest of wealth, viz. fearlessness, only when we heed Baba's question and make it as our *sadhana mantra* and act with courage. That powerful *mantra* is "Why fear when I am here?"

—**M. V. Narayana Murthy**

Man loses his joy, his peace, his freedom by his own cleverness and craving. He devises stratagems in order to escape being entrapped by others but he is trapped, nevertheless, by his own tactics to catch blindfolded in a dark room the black cat which is not there. That is life, for most men. They won't believe wise men when they warn or convey correct information.

In the Divine Path, there is no chance of failure; it is a path in which every milestone is a monument for victory. For it is the Path of Love.

—Baba

Dharma and Suffering

"If I am in the right, why should I suffer?" People often ask. They seem to believe that to be in the right is synonymous with to be in comfort, to be ever in success or victory; which means, according to them, 'rightness' is an assurance for happiness. Working on this hypothesis we all question the value and validity of Dharma and declare if Dharma cannot safeguard our interests it is a misnomer.

Let us enquire into the problem of suffering. Suffering can come to us from three sources. We may suffer because of others. Secondly we may cause suffering to ourselves. And the third, the most mysterious source of our suffering may be the unaccountable Destiny or as they say a 'malignant heaven', or Dharma itself. In the last case, we may not fix up responsibility anywhere, yet go on suffering for apparently no fault of our own.

When suffering comes to us from others, the only logical way of defending ourselves from this onslaught is, if we prefer to be in the right, to repel whatever may cause it by the might of right. This should be most satisfying for most of us. Now, we can raise a question at this point. Does Right express its might in suppressing the unrighteous or surpassing it? The essential qualification of the Right is to prove impregnable to all provocations of the unrighteous, to refuse to be drawn into the whirlpool of the unrighteous involving the individual in greater and greater consequences. Dharma or Righteousness does not plunge into the arena with a vow to uproot and exterminate the unrighteous from the face of the earth for good. Had it been the objective of Dharma, God might have come down once for all and establishing the Kingdom of the Right retired to His abode peacefully! So Dharma does not suppress the adharma or the unrighteous, it surpasses it.

Then we come to the second source of suffering, that is ourselves. We suffer mostly from unfulfilled desires, from jealousy, greed and anger. We find in our day-to-day world the unrighteous thriving and the righteous courting countless distress which generates in us a sense of frustration. We begin to doubt our own stand and suffer. We rail and rant against God against Dharma and insist that neither God nor Dharma ever exists. But we complain not because we are distressed, but because others are rich, not because we are ailing, but because others enjoy good health, not because God did not look at us, but because He smiled at 'him' or 'her'. So we suffer from jealousy. We are jealous of others, not zealous of their health and happiness. This is all the game of the ego. When the ego feels slighted, it can cause us untold suffering. But 'to be in the right' is not to felicitate the demanding ego, and dwell in what you think you are or others think you are, but exploring what you really are. In such a state suffering is a misnomer.

In the third state, where we cannot divine the cause of our suffering we are all the more depressed. For, we feel, to be in the right is to invite great grief at the hands of an unrelenting and unscrupulous power, call it destiny, heaven or God; and Right is its instrument of punishment. But if we examine it rather closely we invariably find, just as our suffering is mysterious, this Dharma, or the sense of the Right is also mysterious. Just as we cannot divine the one, we cannot describe the other and we begin suspecting some unknown forces might be playing foul with us. So we may not look upon Dharma as a protector, but certainly we cannot treat it as an enemy. I am talking of the common man's stand.

In all these cases, we conveniently lay all the responsibility of our grief on Dharma. 'To be in the right' is ever 'to be in the fright' we say. Rightness and suffering become part of each other and an unwelcome stranger in our lives. Faith in a value declines, we begin to worship might instead of Right, life becomes a short-term expediency rather than a long-term investment. Gradually the root withers away and cut off from the source of all life man sees evil in everything, is alienated from everybody, and pines away for something he knows not. The eternal in him clamours for eternity, for the ultimate; but since he has educated himself to believe that life is only a bubble in the sea of time, insignificant, unnecessary and a useless appendage, he goes through life with a nameless agony. While something in him insists on living, he fails to see the good of it. The day he persuades himself to believe that there is no sense of Right in life, life itself becomes dull and drab.

The cause of all this lies in a very simple fact. Our basic approach to these two vital problems of life is topsy-turvy. We think Dharma is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Dharma has to be used for higher attainments like comfort; security, prestige, wealth, success and so on. Dharma climbs down to a secondary place in our life. Happiness and not Delight becomes the objective of our life and Dharma which means to give Delight is expected to confer happiness on man. Even if we take Dharma to be secondary and happiness primary, how can the primary be attained by means of the secondary? As light cannot be reached by darkness, truth through untruth and purity through impurity, the primary cannot be attained through the secondary. Therefore, Dharma cannot be a means to happiness, nor can it cause suffering.

Since Dharma cannot be taken as a means to an end, it is the end in itself. What does it mean? We very often forget that life is a process, not an unrequited purpose. Life is redeemed in living, not in stagnancy. Life must be a continuous flow, an ever growing, widening, expanding, experience, the Becoming. The Being is redeemed in the Becoming and the Becoming is meaningful in Being. So Dharma is the process of life, the expression of the Being in the Becoming. It is the growing of life, the meeting of the immanent and the imminent until both lose themselves in the permanent.

So Dharma is not a guard against suffering, not a cause for suffering. An understanding of it may come through suffering. But when we understand it and live for it, express it through the process of living, right living, it assumes a new meaning. It becomes inevitable for life, not external to it. Just as fire and the power to burn go together, water and dampness become synonym for each other, life and Dharma become one and the same. Only then is Righteousness fully redeemed and suffering seems petty, non-existent. The human soul lives in such an exalted and exulted mood, that all seem to be rolled up in a timeless Delight, never failing, never feigning, and ever throbbing with Life Eternal.

And the expression of such a state is so simple, serene, and beautiful that man wonders why should he not become that. He feels an inherent identity with this, falls in love with this pure delight which is an expression of Dharma in its fullness and begins striving towards it. Then suffering is no more suffering, disease and death are no more terrible for him, for, even in disease and death, he is lured towards the Pure Delight. Failures and successes lose their sting and a new alchemy of Love gradually transforms his heart and mind. The process starts, the

journey begins and as he holds on to Dharma, Dharma looks after his becoming. Through a series of eliminating shocks he shakes off the stronghold of the rotting stagnancy of life, comfort, pleasure, security, prestige and such, opening up to the creative consciousness, the Dharma itself. Through particular Dharma he journeys to the Universal Dharma. Thus is the statement "Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah" fulfilled.

And this is our beloved Sai, the pure Delight, the Creative Consciousness embodied, the simple, serene Sathyam-Sivam-Sundaram, the all anointing Love in the heart of the creation. Thus are we attracted to Him. In Him is the full and free expression of Dharma—both Becoming and Being—fulfilling each other. He is the "Saswata-Dharmagopta" of the Vedas who comes often; and often "Dharma Samsthapanarthaaya".

—B. K. Mishra, Cuttack

Farewell to an Old Friend

Habits die hard! that is the famous saying. Smoking is one such habit that overtook humans all over the world.

The writer was subjected to this nasty habit for about 25 years, It all started as fun and continued to stay. Consumption which was originally 3 to 4 cigarettes a day slowly increased to 20 to 30 a day.

The D-Day was a Thursday, 21st September 1978. It was my beloved Swami's Day. I just then (it was about 11.20 a.m.) bought a pack of Cigarettes and smoked one, as usual, and went straight to my friend who is also a Devotee of Swami and my well-wisher.

He asked me to sit down before him and told me, that he had a vision of Swami that morning, while doing Puja and Swami told him to tell me, that I should give up smoking forthwith. This was my beloved Swami's command, and as a Devotee, I am bound to obey it implicitly. I told my friend that I will not touch a cigarette from that moment if it is Swami's will.

I prostrated before Swami's photograph in my Puja room next day, and requested Him to kill the instinct in me and I will succeed. The next few days that followed I need not describe the mental torture and uneasiness I had to undergo. Smokers know it better. With Swami's grace, I did it. For one full week, it was really mental agony and a vacuum. The world seemed to have lost its charm for me without my good old friend the Cigarette.

Temptation- Frustration- Anger- Confusion, all of them overtook me. I resisted... At one point at the end of that week something in me went to the extent of defying Swami. I resisted. I never yielded to pressure. Prayers to Swami continued unabated. I prayed to Swami intensively. Prayed, Prayed and Prayed.

I succeeded. Swami's Grace has won. Today 21st March 1979, it is full six months since I bade farewell to my friend. I have passed all the Danger zones, and there is practically no chance for me to start smoking again.

What a relief? ...How much of money saved! What an improvement in Health! Last, but not the least what a smile on my wife's face.

I and my family thanked Swami with all our Hearts.

I will be the happiest person in the world, if at least one of my brethren among the devotees, who is chained to this habit of smoking, gives it up immediately, after reading my experience.

Do not lose heart, Swami is always with you. He answered my call when I was struggling. You will succeed. No doubt about it. That is my humble request to all who smoke.

—*T. Santhanam*

Fostering of Golden Age

In the Sai Age hundreds of thousands of human servants of humanity know the actual touch of God-not for a few moments during a spiritually rousing religious revival, not for fifteen minutes a day during meditation, not in a groping metaphysical way as many priests and the devout often do, but in physical form through all the senses and planes of existence on a constant minute-to-minute basis.

Powers of concentration, levels of devotion, breadth of real experience leading to qualities of character, perfection of conduct, relaxed and lovingly manifested even mindedness. Life free of prejudice is sculptured by Divine Love. The jewel of Divine Love held in the setting of Divine Love, radiating Divine Love to all without exception.

These elevating characteristics grow and show to some degree in all who touch Sai. Godly qualities come into being in their most pure form in the Sathya Sai Baba College students who gather around to live in constant readiness for the Avatar's call. They are intelligent, serene-faced, hard working, disciplined not only in body but in mind and heart. Not harsh but ever gentle in the execution of an appropriate request, exceptionally dutiful without being militaristic.

Swami knows now where these students will be as adults. So he prepares them thoroughly for their Destiny of service. These youths who come from normal Indian homes are being transformed into sterling examples of Love, Wisdom and Divine Duty in Man. Yet Sai will not stop at this. In the next forty-two years of His current incarnation He will groom two more generations of Godly servants of mankind.

What will be the qualities of a human born into two successive generations of Sai homes and held in Sai's hand for fifty collective years? These, one would think will surely be paragons fit to nurture the long promised and prophesied Gold Age.

Yet true though this may be, Sai will reappear to continue His Mission of glorifying Earth and Mankind as Prema Sai.

Shirdi Sai Baba purportedly lived into his nineties. Sathya Sai predicts that His current body will be maintained until it is ninety-six. If we take these as typical we can expect Prema Sai to shower love on Earth through his physical form for ninety years or more. The Prema Avatar we may project could culture another five generations into pearls of Divine Wisdom.

What will an eighth generation Sai-enlightened being look like? How will he act? With what radiance will his heart, eyes and hands glow as he projects Peace and Love into the World he has learned so well to see as a Manifestation of God Himself?

Can anyone say what the full beauty of the rose will be by examining its bud? Let us look further. Can we adequately visualize the rose in all its splendour by looking carefully at its leaves, stems, thorns or roots? Can we take a lump of rich soil inter-laced with living roots and see the glory of the blooms that will appear? Can we see the flowers on the upper-most branches of the trees which will surely grow from these roots if properly cared for?

Few knew of Rama's Avatarhood while He lived on Earth. Krishna we are told was rarely recognised as Divine. Buddha's missionaries uplifted most of Asia. Jesus' twelve were examples of Divine Life in Africa, Asia and Europe for a few short years.

What will the combined effect of nine generations of God-contacted humans be on this small planet? Who will be able to escape the Touch of God? Who will fail to blossom in the light of the Love-illuminated Eyes of so many successive generations of the Avatar's Children? What will be the full impact of the Sai Avatar? What will be the true nature and extent of the Sai Age?

Human Destiny

—Dr. M. V. N. Murthy

The Human Predicament

The human predicament resembles that of Arjuna, who with the vision provided by the Lord saw the Cosmic Form—the Vishwarupa. What is striking of the cosmic vision is that Krishna gave Arjuna the ability to no riot only the four dimensions, but the fourth dimension of time was accelerated so much that he saw, "As the moths rush in headlong into the blazing fire for destruction, so do these heroes in the mortal world enter Your flaming mouths"; "Seeing this marvellous and dreadful Form of Yours, O Mahatman, all the three worlds are trembling with fear." This is exactly the plight of humanity as a consequence of the "accelerative" thrust of change, the future shock.

Jonas Salk, the well known research-physician biologist in his book "Man Unfolding" says, "Although man's physical evolution has its own natural pace, man has so accelerated his cultural evolution as to make it seem that physical and cultural evolutionary processes are now taking place at intolerably different rates... In a world in which change has accelerated from its natural tempo to one in which man has made change the order of the day, change itself has become man's principal problem."

Arjuna, like the three worlds which trembled at the sight of the Cosmic Form, was also tormented with fear and he appealed to the Lord to have mercy on him and show him His former Form. Is it any wonder that Oppenheimer, the famous nuclear physicist, who was responsible for the eventual manufacture of the atom bomb, remarked on seeing the first test bursting of the atom bomb that it looked like what Arjuna saw when he witnessed the Cosmic Form? "If there be the effulgence of thousand suns bursting forth all at once in the heavens, even that would hardly approach the splendour of the mighty Lord." Oppenheimer must have trembled with fear at the unleashing of this fraction of tremendous power imprisoned within the atom. Humanity is waiting for the Lord for assurances which He gave Arjuna: "Seeing such a dreadful Form of Mine as this, be not perturbed or perplexed; with a fearless and complacent mind, behold once again the same Form of Mine, which drove your chariot."

Arthur Koestler says: "Science turns out to be the most glorious achievement of the human mind-and its most tantalising defeat. We have become a good deal cleverer since Picodella Mirandola, but not much wiser in knowing what it all means." He concludes, "The limitations of biological equipment may condemn us to the role of Peeping Toms at the keyhole of eternity. But at least let us take the stuffing out of the keyhole, which blocks our limited view" says Koestler. Koestler speaks of the evolution of man and his brain, he says that man has three brains, reptilian, mammalian and neo-mammalian. "The rise of the human cortex is the only example of evolution providing a species with an organ which it does not know how to use. The actualisation of its reasoning potentials has been obstructed, throughout by the effect based activities of the phylogenetically older structures in the nervous system. Inadequate co-ordination between old and new structures made man's instinct and intellect fall out of step. The wide range of intra-specific differences between individuals, races and cultures became a source of mutual repulsion. Language increased cohesion within groups, heightened the barriers between groups. The discovery of death by the intellect, and its rejection by instinct became a paradigm of the split mind. Nature has let us down, God seems to have left the receiver off the hook, and time is running out."

The Human destiny

It is against this background that we must understand the significance of the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the spiritual revolution which He is spearheading. In His message to Karanjia of the Blitz, He declared "Millions of years of upward struggle have produced the present human society; thousands of seers and sages in all lands have taught man to see the Truth that underlies the panorama of Creation to adore the Creator and to practise the virtues of humility, equanimity and service so that the spark of God that is enshrined in his heart might reveal its full Glory. But man has brought human society to the verge of total destruction. He has used his intelligence to pollute the land he lives on, the air he breathes, and the water that is the very source of life. He has turned the mind which is the instrument of liberation into a chain that

keeps him in bondage. He has used the methods of Education, Codes of Law, Systems of Politics, Modes of Commerce and the Results of Science to imprison himself in prejudices, creeds and nationalities. The World is becoming smaller and smaller with every increase in the speed of communication but neighbourly Love is nowhere evident." Baba has confirmed what all the great thinkers have struggled to express.

The cure for the ills of humanity lies in the inevitable culmination of this process of shrinking of the world when mankind will be knit into one, when knowledge will percolate through all types of barriers, because we will reach a stage when there will be no barriers. Who can control mass communication when the satellites transmit television pictures all over the world? For the first time humanity will become aware that the only security lies in accepting each other as neighbours and that national barriers, and all barriers of caste, creed or language will be irrelevant and invalid! What humanity is now witnessing is the death-pangs of outlived modes of exclusive thinking, and the dead shells of rules and regulations which were relevant to the pre-Atom bomb era. We see the last struggles of organised theocracy trying to chain segments of humanity by slogans and labels, empty shells from which the living force of the great Truths have disappeared.

Sai has come to redeem humanity at this crucial stage in the Ascent of Man. He has come to liberate man from the tyranny of organised religious institutions which bind him in rituals and dehydrated institutions! He has come to declare that there is only one religion, the religion of humanity. He declares, "The individual and society are intertwined inextricably. There must be illumination for both. Ananda must surge out of the individual and fill the lakes of 'society', and thence stream into the Ocean of Grace. Society is just a name for a group of individuals but, it has no corporeal body. Individuals are the limbs, that nourish and support the 'corpus' called society." He explains the role of Society as follows: "Society shapes the individual, provides the arena for his development and sets the ideals he should plant before Himself. When the individual is stronger, more intelligent, more service-minded, and more efficient as a worker, Society benefits; when society is more aware of its role and of the need to cleanse that role with humility and wisdom, the individual benefits."

In the interview given to Karanjia, Baba spelt out the nature and role of the Avatar in the transformation of the World. He emphasised the basic tenet of Hinduism, which is universally acceptable. Individual Karma is also bound with the Karma of society and today when we are moving towards one society of mankind, the individual Karma is bound up with the Karma of the World as a whole. Thus the operation of the Karmic law is an essential basis for shaping Man's Destiny. But Destiny is not an iron chain from which there is no liberation, because man shapes his destiny through the power of discrimination with which he is endowed, and this acts also on group Karma and consequently group destiny! The destiny of a nation will thus depend on how individuals shape their individual destinies and in turn help to shape that of society. The crisis of choice is what affects individuals, big and small. The small men succumb, while the great ones defy the temptations of power. If society has more and more people who will rise above the temptations of the world then that society will certainly lead. This is the role that Baba assigns to India when He declares, "India was for centuries teaching the world ideals of Unity, Peace and Tolerance, and once again she has to take the lead in this Spiritual revolution."

"A Revolution-more powerful and pervasive than any that man has undergone so far-neither political, economic, scientific nor technological, but deeper and more basic is now on. It is the Spiritual revolution. It sharpens the inner vision of man so that he can see his Atmic reality. Its impact will surely envelop and enrich all human communities and transform mankind into a stream of Sadhakas flowing smoothly to the limitless sea of Destiny."

In the Blitz interview Baba further elaborated the strategy of His Mission. After detailing the dangers of an instant solution by using His Sankalpa Shakti, He said: "The other and more effective alternative is long-term whereby the Avatar leads the people themselves to a higher level of consciousness to enable them to understand the truth of the spiritual laws so that they may turn towards righteousness and steadfastly work for better conditions. This will relate them back to nature and the Karmic law of causation. They would then transcend the cycle of cause and effect in which today they are involved as victims and thereby command and control the, natural forces to be able to avert the calamities you mention (earthquakes, floods, drought, famine and epidemics)... Therefore Man has to be UN-MADE and RE-MADE, with his ego destroyed and replaced by a transcendent consciousness so that he may rise above the Karmic cycle to command nature and avert the calamities. This is the work of the Avatar which I am presently doing."

The methodology for transforming the individual and society is through Love. "Love is my instrument and merchandise, whatever I do in the field of sociology or economics is sought to be done by and through love. Both the wealthy and the poor who want me can come to me only on a basis of equality and I use them to synthesise the existing socio-economic contradictions into co-operative brotherhood."

Economists the world over are worried about the future of our non-renewable resources and make forecasts that it may last a hundred or four hundred years. Humanity does not seem to realise that it has no right to squander away the Earth's resources for fulfilling the insatiable desires created by man's technological inventions. Jonas Salk has stated the problem as follows: "Desire is an instinctual force which propels man to experience, discover, and test extremes. Reason, based on knowledge and memory, acts concurrently as a moderator ...Man often, becomes a battlefield when these opposing forces confront each other. The problem we face in many respects of life is that we do not know what we want. In other aspects the difficulty is in knowing and not being able to attain. Since desire is often more compelling than reason, it is important and necessary for man to know and manage his desire" (p.9). Baba says, "The existing doctrines of equality, socialism, etc., have not succeeded in achieving equality of distribution of wealth and property. The difficulty is that you can equalise wealth, land and property by legislation, but can this law bring about equality in the desires of the people? This requires the healing touch of spirituality." Baba's final summing up spells out the real challenge before humanity: "It is here that our insistence on a desireless life in which human wants are reduced to the minimum needs comes to the rescue as the only possible way of restoring the social and economic balance. Curb your desires, reduce your wants, live in spiritual austerity, and the available material will be sufficient for all humanity. More than that, the tensions of a competitive socio-economic system will be dissolved and peace of mind will be restored."

This is possible if man understands what Baba has been advising us: "This is the true function of Society-to enable every member to realise Atmic Vision. The men and women bound by various ties in society are not merely families, castes, classes, etc. They are knit by the closest of family ties; they are bound, for all MANKIND is ONE *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, as the Sastras declare; the whole world is one family. "Man truly lives when he feels one with all."

Baba has declared that the destiny of man is to transform himself from Manava into Madhava, from man to Godhood. This is possible only through raising his consciousness, a task on which Baba, as He Himself has declared, has embarked on. We must allow ourselves to let Him transform us. We must have full faith in His declaration: "Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting the entire mankind, as one family through the bond of brotherhood, of affirming and illumining the Atmic Reality of each being in order to reveal the Divine which is the basis on which the entire Cosmos rests, and of instructing all to recognise the common Divine Heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal and rise to the Divine which is his goal." "What I will, must take place; what I plan must succeed. I am Truth; and Truth has no need to hesitate, or fear or bend."

Limitations of Science

—Dr. K L. Bhatnagar, M.Sc., Ph D., F.I.P.S. Indore

Science is defined as "Systematic study of Nature." It is the quest of truth about nature. The general method of the study of science is to collect data about the natural phenomenon, classify it into various categories and then try to find "How and Why?" about it. This is the way of science. The scientist cannot deny the occurrence of a phenomenon. He has to record it and accept it as it is. The scope of science is to find "How and Why?" about it. The scientific views about phenomenon in nature are dynamic and what may be considered, as the final word (or theory) about a phenomenon today may have to be modified in the course of time. Science is thus a dynamic subject, not putting a full-stop to any problem forever. Without such an attitude there could have been no progress of science. Every scientific law or concept has passed through the process of modification with time. The atom at one time was considered to be indivisible, but today we are cock-sure that it has its own constitution, consisting of Protons and Neutrons in the nucleus and electrons revolving around it in definite orbits. Atoms of all known or unknown elements are today known to consist of these three particles. I say today with stress only because it is the only scientific way to make statements. Tomorrow what may happen to this concept cannot be foretold. Similar is the story of the law of conservation of matter and the law of conservation of energy. At one time it was known for definite that matter and energy are separate entities independent of each other and according to the two laws mentioned above, either could neither be created nor destroyed. This concept remained established till Einstein made the bold and astonishing statement that Matter and Energy are inter-convertible. He reached this conclusion only on the theoretical grounds and there was no experimental support to his statement. He also gave the relation $E = mc^2$, known as Einstein's mass energy equivalence relation, wherein E stands for the energy equivalent to mass m and c is the velocity of light. At this point, it is of interest to set down here Sir Isaac Newton's prophetic words of some two hundred and fifty years

ago, "The changing of Bodies into Light and light into Bodies, is very conformable, to the course of nature, which seems delighted in transmutations." Although this statement of Newton may have passed unnoticed for all this period and only a few so-called scientists may even be aware of such a statement, the statement is no record (Ref. An approach to modern Physics By E.N. Da C. Andrade, E.L.B.S. "Science Today" series 1962 pp. 160). Such a statement may also appear baseless, but the scientist is an analyser of facts and a thinker too. Analysis without due thinking on the subject does not make science. Thus a scientist is essentially a philosopher with equipment and temperament to test his contentions or beliefs. However, in due course of time experimental evidence in favour of the inter-conversion of matter and energy has been gathered. But a large-scale conversion of energy into matter and vice-versa is not so common in the laboratories. But the fact that matter and energy are inter-convertible is accepted scientifically. This appears to be at the base of creation of material objects from nothing but space by Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He appears to convert by His Will energy into matter of any form. The fact is that matter is being created apparently in the name of Bhagavan Baba, since energy is not visible. How is this possible? This is the main challenge to meet. Can we do similar things in our laboratories? If we cannot do it or not conceive of it, it is Divine and is beyond the scope of our subject i.e. Science or nature.

Secondly, when we object to a miracle taking place we forget that we ourselves have done a number of miracles during the whole history of science, and are proud of all that. The flight of an aeroplane, which is so common a phenomenon today, had appeared as an 'Impossible' to the people of the time of Wright Brothers, who were mocked at in their attempt to fly by all in their own times. Similar is the story of communication of messages by radio waves. Is our safe landing on moon not a miracle of its own kind? Of course, all this has been possible only through patient efforts of the last so many decades. Today we, the scientists are able to guide the motion of a car on the surface of moon from earth with the help of developed interstellar communication techniques. What is the tool—It is the electro-magnetic radiations. The use of electro-magnetic radiations is at the base of all such techniques or activities. A similar phenomenon is reported in the form of miracles by Yogis and also by Bhagavan Baba, of controlling actions at a distance or transporting of matter. We are also quite familiar with the 'Halo' around the faces of all the prophets and saints throughout the world. All this need a little thought. Is the halo a part of the photograph? If so, it must be due to light radiations emanating from the face. Is it a reality? Can a human body or body of an animal be a source of electro-magnetic radiations? If the human body may be the transmitter of radiations, it can be a receiver too. We know that bats travel safely without striking against the obstacles during night, with the help of the electro-magnetic pulses emitted and received by them, on the lines of a Radar. If animals have this characteristic, how can the rational animal, the man, may be denied to possess the same faculty. This appears to be an answer to all the phenomenon relating to telepathy. Yogis are said to have awakened (or activated) the "Kundalini Chakras" and are capable of performing the telepathic feats popularly called as miracles. The challenge to science is to investigate the phenomenon from this point of view. "Kundalini" means a coil and appears to be an equivalent of the L-C circuit, the radiating and receiving component for the electro-magnetic signals. It would also be worthwhile at this point to refer to a report in "Science Today", April 1975, Page 7, where under the title "Animals may communicate by Microwaves," it has been reported that animals have the faculty of communicating with each other by means of R. F. Signals generated in their bodies. This has been experimentally established. Thus if at all investigations in this direction are to be made, we

the scientists have to make electronic instruments more sensitive to very low intensities hitherto thought of as useless for any practical applications and to all the ranges of very high and very low frequencies unattended so far. It would be more scientific to probe into the telepathic miracles from this angle.

However, we need not forget one thing and that is the scope of our subjects. Science is the study of nature. If we come across some supernatural phenomenon of more frequent occurrence, we need not be hasty in making statements without due investigation on the subject. Science is the pursuit of truth with patience. If we lose patience, we fail to be a scientist. The miracles of Bhagavan Baba are amazing and people from all walks of life have accepted them as true. They have been observed, witnessed and accepted by the most inquisitive sort of person also. They appear to be the manifestations of the Divine. In our language of science, they are the manifestations of energy (the electro-magnetic radiations), which is all pervading. The whole universe is full of energy, which manifests itself in various forms. Nature also has the characteristic of being regenerative and there is an automatic balance provided in all its processes. All this is managed by some involute power, the master of all energy, the 'Adi-Shakti', which manages all the activities of the universe. If Bhagavan Baba manifests himself in all such actions called miracles, He can do so because He is the Primordial-energy, the "Adi-Shakti" incarnate in human form. He is, therefore, the source of all energy in the universe, right from that provided to the electrons and the nucleus to spin to the bright shine of the Sun. May He Bless us all.

Sai Baba, Television and the Future

My wife Tata, our friend professor Preben Plum and myself—Danes all of us—arrived to Prasanthi Nilayam late December 1978 and were received and taken care of by Samuel Sandweiss.

We had an unforgettable week in the Abode of Peace.

The very first morning after our arrival, Swami invited us to an interview. What more could we demand?

Swami blessed a8 international television project, Tata and I are working with, and it already seems that invisible push-buttons around the world have been touched in favour of this project.

Since there is a close association between Swami and all he stands for, on one hand, and our TV project on the other, we want to inform the readers of Sanathana Sarathi that this project concerns a campaign for the survival of mankind, or in other words, for the planning of a better world for our children and grandchildren to live in.

The idea is to get a number of television organisms, national and private, together in a chain of mutual co-operation. Let us suppose that twelve TV bodies around the world are interested in participating; each one of them would produce one programme about a universal problem per

year and telecast both this programme and the ones produced by the other eleven partners—that is, twelve programmes per year, or one per month.

We would co-ordinate and supervise production and telecasting.

Here is a tentative list of subjects the programmes will concern:

The population explosion
Shortage of food
War danger
Science without conscience
The threat of technology
The ruthless exploitation of natural
resources: Energy, minerals, arable
land, forests, water, animals
Pollution of air, water, land
The ecological disasters
The crisis of human values
The decadence of family life
Terror, violence, criminality,
alcoholism, drug abuse, stress
The worship of speed, efficiency,
wealth, useless gadgets
Individual happiness—a chimera?
Is man a machine?
What is before birth and after death?
Religion and science
Sai Baba-his miracles, his educational
programme ...and himself...

But this is only scratching the surface. The fate of humanity is a fascinating drama which will provide material for countless inspiring TV programmes. You may even say, although it sounds like a bitter joke, that the survival of mankind is a matter of high "entertainment value".

We who are fathering this campaign are not prophets and we do not know the answers to all the great questions about the fate of mankind; but we are absolutely sure that they should be asked and debated much more extensively by the mass media; we feel they are more important than most other current TV programmes, like football, fiction based upon violence, sex, nationality, etc.; and we know that TV is the most powerful means of mental influence that exists in the present world. So a regular debate in this forum would be of immense value by opening people's eyes to what is *really* important in life, and to motivate them to appropriate action.

The book SAI BABA AND HIS MESSAGE, by Dr. S. P. Ruhela, Dr. Duane Robinson and others is a rich source of inspiration for this TV project. Each one of the chapters *Building a World Community*, *Building the Sai Community*, and *The Sai Programme of Higher Education* could provide a basis for a marvellous TV programme.

By the generous help and hospitality of Mr. Narendra, we visited the Sathya Sai College in Whitefield and we were deeply impressed by the high standard of human material which is being developed there. Many of these bhajan-singing boys, we thought, will in ten years be key persons and leaders of supreme quality, desperately needed in a world on the verge of suicide.

As a professional film production team, Tata and I did some shooting at Prasanthi Nilayam and Whitefield. We got beautiful shots of Swami at Darshans and together with Sai Gita the elephant, we filmed interviews of Dr. Bhagavantam, Dr. Sandweiss, Mr. Howard Murphet and others who gave us fascinating testimonies about Swami. We hope we can make a TV programme, or a documentary for non-theatrical purposes, out of this footage. Spirituality is extremely difficult to market in this world of hard-headed materialists; but since Swami has blessed our enterprise, we feel confident that an outlet will be found so that news about Sai Baba and his message can be spread.

If (when) our international TV campaign for the planning of the future one day becomes a reality, our Prasanthi Nilayam and Whitefield footage will probably find a natural place in that context.

We would certainly like to survive these undertakings economically, but we have no ambitions whatsoever about making "big business"; our hope is that we can be used as pipelines to lead the flow of love and wisdom into a world short of both. This, of course, involves co-operation with private people of good will around the world, and with international organisations like UN, UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO, WHO and the like, plus relief organisations inspired by religious creeds etc.

But Sai Baba's blessing is essential.

—Hagen Hasselbalch—Denmark

Sai Family News

Tanzania: There are 8 Sai Centres in Tanzania-3 in Dar-Es-Salaam, the Capital City and one each at Mwanza, Mbaya, Tukuyu and Arusha. At Arusha the Service Centre is a hall named Sai Nilayam." The Vice-President of the State of Tanzania, Mr. Ndingu Abude Jumbe has had Darshan of Bhagavan in India and he has invited Bhagavan to pay a visit to Tanzania.

Hollywood: A ten-year-old Bal Vikas pupil named Bindu of the Sathya Sai Baba Centre at Hollywood, California wrote this poem:

"Let me hear, Oh God, words that are good and sweet;
Let me see beautiful things that will fill my heart with joy;
Let me have a strong body to sing your glories and devote my life to Your
Work;

Let a balmy wind, that soothes the body and mind, blow over all the world, all the time.”

—Ed.

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5

Religion cannot be, at any time, a mere personal affair. It may be possible to assert so, since each one's faith is rooted in himself and since each one expresses that faith in his own behaviour and actions. But, how far is that statement valid? So far as he does not transgress the limits set by Sanathana Dharma. It is not valid to assert that there is no God or religion or Varna (caste), as many intelligent people do to their own satisfaction. We find a large number of such people proclaiming the non-existence of God and declaring that directions to guide and sublimate one's activities laid down in all religions are superstitions.

These persons are not ignoramuses. They are not persons without education. When such individuals characterise beliefs and practices as superstition, what importance are we to attach to their statements! If they but entertain such convictions in their hearts, society need not complain, for it suffers no harm. But, they do not stay quiet.

An example may be given here. Intoxicating drinks like toddy, brandy, etc., when indulged in by others—can they be dealt with as if it is a personal affair? Do others feel happy over it? They do not, don't they? However emphatically the matter is declared 'personal', this evil habit does affect society subtly and openly in various ways. It demonstrates its nefarious effects, in spite of everything.

When ordinary persons indulge in such harmful habits, the danger is not so considerable. But when elders who have won a name in society do so, the common man too follows the evil path.

The works of Vyasa and Valmiki are very ancient. Such writings of past ages are aptly called Puranas. But, though centuries have flown by since they were born, old age is powerless to affect them. Had it been otherwise, they would not be loved and demanded even today by people residing all over the land from the Himalayas to Setu. The texts are so young and fresh; they are unaffected by the passage of time. Whoever desires Ananda at whatever place, whenever he needs, can get himself immersed in it.

The Manu Dharma Sastra is unique; we have no text to compare with it in any country throughout history. Can anyone create a book of the same type at any time? The doctrines of the Hindu faith and the Sastras which enshrine them do not offer homage to material sciences. These do of course, progress from day to day but the theories honoured one day are condemned the next day and new theories are brought up to explain the same phenomena. How then can the eternal and ever-valid truths of the spirit honour and be guided by the material sciences? The scientists of today call this attitude 'blind faith'; they want it to be discarded. They want every

subjective and objective fact to be examined and put to rigorous tests. They confuse themselves when they consider this as an independent path to the discovery of reality. But, it is not correct. There is no need to dig up and lay bare new doctrines. Every principle and path is readily available. Understanding is the only thing we have to do.

Western philosophers from Kant to Spencer have, in fact, only dwelt upon some facets of the Dvaita, Advaita and Visishtadvaita schools of thought. Hindus have long ago delved into these matters and reduced their understandings into doctrines and principles.

Hindu Dharma and its rules of life are based on Varna and Ashram. Well. Let us take first the principle of Varna in religion. The word Maya used in Vedanta discussions has generally been the target for indifference, neglect and criticism. So too Varna. Varna and the distinctions based on it are condemned as the artifices of man. Maya is condemned likewise as against all reason, for it disregards the world as illusion. The Smriti declares, "Chaathur varnyam, maya srshtam" (the four Varnas are created by Me); the Shruti says, "Brahmanosya mukham aseeth; baahoo raajanyah krthah etc." (The Brahmin emerged from the face, the Kshatriyas rose from the arms). It is clear Varna is created by the Lord. Nevertheless, if it is propagated that the Varna system has brought about disastrous distinctions the fault lies in misinterpreting the word.

Are there in society now genuine Varnas? What exactly is Varna? Is any attempt made to discover that fact? No. Varna is just a word; every word has a meaning and Varna too ought to mean something; should it not? To prove that trees exist, the word 'tree' is enough. A word is just sound but it indicates something existing. The sound 'elephant' is the proof of the existence of that animal. So too, when the sounds "cat", "dog", "fox" are heard, the forms of those animals present themselves before the mind's eye. The sounds were there even before us. We were born into the tangle of sounds. We did not originate them. We require a group, doesn't it, if there is a wish to originate round and shape it into a meaningful word. So, for every current word, a meaning must adhere. We cannot impose on it any meaning we choose. The words with their implications are there already even before our birth. We just use them, whichever we want, whenever we need.

Word involves speech. It means Pada, in Sanskrit. Every object in the world is called in Sanskrit, a "Pada-artha", "word-meaning". The hill is the heap of earth indicated by the word "hill". Similarly, the word Brahmin and Sudra inform us that there were persons answering to those words. The questions "Who is a Brahmin? Who is not a Brahmin?" are irrelevant now. Now, what is being made known is only the conceptions of 'word' and 'meaning'. The entire Cosmos is subsumed under "word" and "meaning"; it is sheer Name and Form (the Name being the Word, and the Form, the Meaning).

Even the Shrutis (Vedas) declare so. "Vaachaarambhanam Vikaaro Naamadheyam". This statement means that Name and Form are one single indivisible unit just as Siva and Parvati; Active and Inert, Object and Image, the Moon and Moonlight. Yet, for dealing with the world, the Word is all-important. The word arises from thought; thought is shaped by experience; experience depends on desire and desire springs from Ignorance, Ajnana, Maya, Avidya or Prakriti, which is fundamentally based on the Divine.

Since it is based on the Divine Lord who is the Splendour of Wisdom, the repository of Innate Splendour and Glory, the darkness of Maya, Ignorance, Avidya Prakriti should not overpower us. Where light is present, darkness has no place. The Lord declared, "I shall become Many" and that Will resulted in the Cosmos and is directing It forever. Therefore, Name and Form are the results of that Will, and not of any human will. It will be an absurd claim if man pretends that he originated them. The All-powerful Lord alone has willed so. That is the reason why He is designated as the Supreme. To the question, "Does God exist?" the existence of the word God is the indisputable proof.

(To be continued)

Temple Entry

This is a story about the mystery and miracle of Bhagavan. I am an American attending the University of Madras. Some days ago, a classmate and myself went to the Kapaleesvara Temple here in Madras. After one passes through the huge gate of the outer temple walls, one's attention is attracted to the various signs which say 'Non-Hindus not allowed'. I had heard about such signs, but in all the years that I have been in India, I had never encountered one. I told my friend to go on inside and that I would wait outside. Soon thereafter, an old man approached me. He said, "Please do not feel offended nor think badly of these people. This is merely the custom here." As I silently held my peace, he went away. I began to talk to Baba in my mind thus: "Will this custom prevail forever? You, Yourself are Siva and though I've come to have Your Darshan, I'm forbidden to enter inside. Is not the Lord everyone's"?

As I was mentally conversing with Swami thus another old man came up to me and said, "Come". My righteous pride rose up and I remained where I was. Twice again he repeated—"Come". So I followed him inside. As we began to circumambulate the Holy of Holies, he moved his hand and it was full of Vibhuti. He smeared it all over my forehead and then reached over to a Goddess carved into the rock and removed some kumkum which he also applied. We continued around and as we approached Lord Kapaleesvara he said, "Look". I beheld the Linga to my satisfaction and then he led me to the consort of Lord Kapaleesvara for Her Darshan. Then he said, "Now, go."

The next day I was on my way to Puttaparthi. Here is the mystery. Baba enquired if I had enjoyed the Darshan! Some people call 'this' the miracle—this transcendence of space and time. But to me the real miracle lies in His infinite care. As quickly as one turns towards Him, He is there with His compassion ready to respond. Such a small, simple act and yet to me it represented His greatest miracle of all—His Love.

—John Grimes

Do Karma, but do not hanker after the fruit. Do not complain that you did not get public recognition for the donations you gave to some trust. Fruits, whether good or bad, yourself have to consume; so the best means of liberating yourself from the consequences is to ignore the fruit, and do karma, for the sake of karma only. You will not be burdened with either papa or punya, if you act so. If you crave for the profit, you will have to be prepared to accept the loss also. If you

construct a well where four roads meet expecting to get merit for slaking the thirst of men and cattle, you cannot shirk the demerit you will be credited with when some one falls into it and gets drowned. If you fan a person out of love, you can leave off when you must; but a punkawallah accepting wages has to continue whether he likes it or not. Give up the desire for remuneration and you are free; accept it or ask for it and you get bound. That is the secret of karma-phala-tyaga.

—Baba

The Meta-Scientist

—Dr. P. Ramamoorthy, *National Aeronautical Laboratory*

I was one of those lucky 'Scientists' who were blessed with Bhagavan's audience on 21 January 1979 and of whom Prof. S. V. Pappu has written in the recent issue of Sanathana Sarathi (No. 3, Vol. 22, March 1979). This was in response to the prayers of many of us who were waiting to get His blessings in person.

Even though Bhagavan wanted us to get clarifications regarding science and religion from Him, many of us were in no mood to waste the precious time in empty discussion. At least for me religion is suprarational and starts when science stops. I was sitting before the greatest scientist, the METASCIENTIST. In this connection I am reminded of a beautiful statement made by one of my class-mates who works at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR). He had said, "If you want to know the theories of matter come to TIFR; but if you want to know the nature of matter go to Sri Sathya Sai Baba." He might have made this statement jokingly but it is very profound. On another occasion one of the Directors of a CSIR Laboratory, while talking at the Institution of Engineers, mentioned the possibility of the interchangeability of matter not only with energy but also with information. After the lecture I went up to him and said, "Sir, if you really want to see the interchangeability of matter with information you should go to Whitefield and see how Baba can materialise things by His mere Sai Sankalpa." He just smiled. Our scientific knowledge is acquired from books and skin-deep whereas Bhagavan is Science (knowledge) personification.

That Bhagavan is omniscient was soon evident to me as he started throwing glance at me whenever He was mentioning something in His discourse that was relevant to my past. He also showed this faculty at that meeting in other instances also. That Bhagavan knows the past and future of all of us is beyond doubt and science, as understood by us, cannot do this. Calling it by telepathy or by some other word does not mean anything; naming is not explaining.

In the same meeting Bhagavan materialised Vibhuti, a ring and a pendant and presented to some of the scientists. One has to see this phenomenon to believe it and I was reminded of my TIFR friend and the CSIR Director mentioned above.

It so happened that I scribbled some notes about this interview in my native language, Telugu after I came back home. When I saw the report by Prof. Pappu in Sanathana Sarathi I wanted to

share with other Sai devotees some of the teachings contained therein. I hope Bhagavan blesses this effort. What follows is a small report of the salient teachings of Bhagavan as understood by me.

Love (Prema) at first is confined to a small region of me and mine like the air contained in a balloon. But it starts expanding as you blow it more and more and ultimately merges with the surrounding air when it bursts. Similarly love merges with the Divine Love (Viswa Prema).

Man should learn the art of giving. Do we not exhale air every time we inhale? You dare not keep it inside permanently. Similarly does not the food get out of our body in the form of excreta? So we should cultivate charity (Dana) and should not hoard money.

Atma is very precious. I remember an occasion when Bhagavan said, "Since Atma is precious we keep it inside the body and throw out cheap articles like name and form (Nama and Rupa). It is like putting precious articles inside a safe locker and throw out broken mud-pots and torn mats."

Science investigates only those phenomena that are nearer to our senses; on the other hand Vedas investigate that which is beyond senses and 'far' from us. In order to go to the world of spirit from senses one has to develop a bigger abstraction; it is something like crossing a mysterious barrier.

Leaves and fruits, ripe and unripe, all originate from the seed. The bitterness of an unripe fruit itself changes to sweetness of a ripe fruit. Similarly the same riotous and negative emotions themselves turn into noble emotions like kindness (Daya) and charity (Dana). These are the different aspects of one and the same Jivi that originates in the Atman.

So long the husk is covering the seed it would sprout even if it is preserved for years; remove that protective cover and the seed never sprouts. So long the Samskaras and Vasanas linger in the Jivi it is bound to be born again and again. If the Jivi overcomes these Vasanas it is no more born.

Desires are natural and every Jivi has these. Jivi plus desires is Nara and Jivi minus desire is Narayana. The Jivi should try to reduce them. What is important is that one should not allow the body to follow the promptings of these desires. On another occasion Bhagavan had graphically described this in the following way. "Let the monkey (meaning the mind here) run; you keep quiet where you are; do not let the body go along the monkey-mind" Tell the mind, "I shall not give you the body as your servant."

What is Love (Prema)? It is Bhakti. It is the result of Anurakti. A mother has a son 20 years old and another two hours old. Her sorrow is beyond consolation if she loses the former than the latter. Why? This is due to Anurakti.

We enjoy eating food so long it is rice only; even a single small stone is enough to spoil our mood. Similarly time passes fast when it is pleasurable but even a little misery looks too much and too long.

Do not talk much. You will go down in the eyes of others. You will unnecessarily waste your energy which could be profitably used for other purposes. Further you avoid bickerings and quarrels. On another occasion Bhagavan had said, "Avoid talking too much; desist from statements; talk only when the talk is most necessary. Talk sweetly and without any reservations or circumvention."

When the interview was over Bhagavan started distributing Vibhuti packets to all of us. One should have seen it to believe the way these "Scientists and Professors" behaved. They were just like children flocking around the mother asking for this and that. No wonder Sai Mother is the Greatest Prema Murthy!

The "Sai" Dream

I have some kind of disbelief in the dreams I see of Bhagavan. Still, I am inclined to view half-heartedly and suspiciously, the veracity of such dreams, unless confirmed by Him (in which case I ask no questions!).

One simple reason for this is that most of the dreams have been unfulfilled. So, I convinced myself that the dreams I saw (those of others may be different) were merely those of wish-fulfillment and no relevance whatsoever to the reality.

Another reason is that most dreams have soothed me and comforted me, that is, they occurred in the way I would have wished them to occur. So I was further convinced, this was only a manifestation of my own dream-consciousness, asserting its authority in the dream-world, though it could not move a blade of grass in the sensuous world.

Moreover, a good part of my consciousness was filled with Bhagavan, and, so, if I had to dream, the probability of dreaming about Him was high. Such dreams would be natural phenomena, and not explicitly the result of His Sankalpa.

But another thing which struck me very much, and which, I discovered to my great discomfiture only recently was that I never could dream without 'myself' being present in it, in some form! Either I was present as the central figure, (as in most cases) or at least as a spectator.

However, I am yet to come across a single person, who has dreamt—without being present, in some way, or without being connected in any way—in the dream. That is why Bhagavan has said: 'I' is the identity that PERSISTS in sleep, dream and waking. And since Patanjali has called Samadhi, "experience without dreams" it is well nigh impossible, and if ever it occurs, it would be in the highest stage of spiritual elevation, and I am not in that, I know only too well!

The same thing also happens in our thought, sleep...etc. I can't visualise anything in the cosmos without ME! Either as spectator or as something else, because 'I' am the identity that will

PERSIST everywhere, at all times! This is also a sign of the ego or whatever may be left in us, of it, after having been cut to size by HIM.

However, I did dream another one last week, which I was forced to believe because of its extraordinary nature. I will 'censor' the "wish fulfillment" part which in any case will centre around my EGO, and tell you the more interesting part.

Though I have always been speaking, thinking ...of Swami for nearly 9 months, (after the summer course), I never had a Sai dream, not even one of wish fulfillment during this period. On the particular day, I was not quite well, and so, incidentally, I had less time to think of Swami than on other days, comparatively. Yet, the dream did come after 8 months nearly.

I saw amidst other things, Bhagavan, on the first floor of our house, in my "study-cum-Puja" room. He was sitting on my chair, besides my table which was full of papers and trash. I was standing up. The first question I asked Him was: "Bhagavan when I am with you (i. e., in Parthi), I am alright, but, when I come here (to Trivandrum) I am not at all well. See the state of table, dirty and disorderly, could you not find a way out of this impasse, please?"

Bhagavan: "Yes, Yes, that is why I have come"

Myself: "Bhagavan, I have composed so many songs on you. What is your opinion about them, are they good?"

Bhagavan: (Love is vibrant in His voice, to quote Mr. Murphet) "Why are you asking such a question? Was it not I who gave those songs; to you? Then what is the meaning of your question?"

(I am silenced for a moment)

Myself: "You seem so close to me now, and so loving, but when I come there, sometimes you do not see me, you are so neglectful, why do you do this?"

Bhagavan: "Why do you ask such things? How can I neglect anyone'? After all I and you are one and the same. Then is it proper to speak of neglect here? Do you think so?"

(Baba continues) You must know to discriminate between the real and the unreal. Now, there is dream. As a dream, it is real, but as otherwise, it is not. This is relative reality, as distinct from original reality (Probably the word was absolute reality). You think the world you see around you is real. No, it is only relatively real. The true reality can be perceived only by the ATMA. Remember.

I must confess I cannot disbelieve such dreams easily, because of the depth of thought involved therein. Moreover, this dream's course was not charted by me, it went in a surprising direction.

—S. Sankar. Summer Course Student (1978)

"Ekam Sat"

We in the United Nations have been accustomed to calling the sixties and seventies the first and second decades of development for the developing countries. In fact, it is more true to say that these years have been decades of development for the wealthy, the might and the powerful. But development of nations, as much as of individuals, should be comprehensive and integrative to be truly fundamental; it must encompass physical, material, social, cultural, as well as moral and spiritual aspect of life. It must encompass all sections within and among communities, societies, body-politics and the community of nations. Otherwise, conflicts and contradictions, tensions and wars erupt and disturb the peace and harmony at the individual as well as national and international levels. The wealthy have often, to come back to the global picture of realities in a relative sense of the term, developed life-styles bordering on the wasteful and even the vulgar, indirectly at the expense of the vital needs of the poor. The mighty and the powerful have sometimes prevailed over the rights of the weak, the meek and the impoverished.

These decades have also witnessed—now and then—bouts of violence by the strong and the arrogant, lacking restraint and purpose. During these years, the meek and the weak have been far from inheriting the earth, although they have started laying some reasonable and sometimes not so reasonable claims to it.

The meek and the weak cannot put the blame entirely on the aggressive and the strong. They have been only aping and imitating the external forms of life of the rich and the power intoxicated. Action by the so-called right is unfortunately followed by mirror reactions by the so-called left.

The enjoyment of human rights has become the monopoly of the few, the affluent, the elite, the powerful and the strong, both within and amongst nations. Might was, has been and is still very much the right. But one cannot speak, in all honesty, of human rights without human duties, whether rich or poor, strong or weak. But those who think they have the right to appropriate the fruits of the earth must yield also to their duty to share their gains as much as possible with the rest of mankind, without discrimination. Otherwise, the world balance is likely to be upset sooner than later, resulting in disorder, conflicts, and even wars.

In the United Nations, as the Secretary General has so aptly put it, "the search for the vital balance is in terms of the practical and feasible attitudes dominated neither by idealism nor cynicism." Conflicts and contradictions are said to be the stuff of practical life. These conflicts among nations, as much as amongst individuals, are both external and internal. Conflicts amongst countries or classes can assume antagonistic, hostile and inimical forms. Or they can be managed to be less antagonistic by the use of reason and restraint, or by countervailing power or by a sense of humanity.

All these require codes of conduct containing not only a bill of rights but also a set of duties for everyone, but most particularly the rich and the powerful. In the final analysis, these rights and duties can be judged in the case of individuals by their inner perceptions and moral consciousness processes which take place in the heart as much as in the mind. The implementation of the code of conduct of corporate bodies and groups would have to be judged

by their public accountability and social responsibility, as well as by their net social contributions, and not merely by private profitability. In the case of nations or groups of nations, more civilized codes of conduct imply their willingness not to multiply armaments and overkills, their restraint not to prevail over the meek and the weak, but to begin to share the benefits of the world's resources and technology-the heritage of mankind-as much as of their accumulated wealth.

In the case of the international community such a code of conduct implies reforming or restructuring itself—not necessarily restructuring its own bureaucracy in order to provide an equitable, just and efficient forum for purposeful discussions, dialogues, negotiations and agreements and, more important, its implementation.

It is here that institutions-national or international, spiritual or material, psychic or mystic, have a great integrative role to play. They are the linkages of the individual and personal with the collective and impersonal, the micro with the macro, the pluralism, diversity and multiplicity, on the one hand, with the underlying harmony, integration and unity or one-ness of the human kind and even the cosmos, on the other.

Conflicts and contradictions, expressed or unexpressed, are basically internal in origin; as the saying goes, wars (and consequently armaments) begin in the minds of men. The root cause is selfishness, aggrandizement, exploitation and arrogance at the individual corporate, national and multi-national levels. Sin is another name, according to eastern philosophy, for egoism and selfishness. And this is precisely the area for spiritual regeneration, a cultural and ethical revolution. Individuals as well as nations can make abiding progress only when they transcend their immediate selfish interests and attachments, free from the duality of the opposites, of subjective likes and dislikes, of cliques and counter-cliques, of aggressive alignments and bloc alignments, the pursuit of short-term selfish gains and the avoidance of longer term disciplines of the body, group, or the body-politic, as the case may be.

It is here that Upanishadic Vedanta philosophy can be useful. To start with the Vedanta axiom "As is the microcosm, so is the macrocosm." The smallest and the largest are vitally linked. The vital connections and balances have to be worked out.

Just as in mathematics, where we speak of the gradations of equality, in society also we can use such concepts as (1) "equal" in the sense of democratic equality; (2) "Similar" in the sense of similar economic, social and cultural opportunities and benefits; and (3) "congruent" in the sense of basic identities of soul or spiritual potential. Similarly, in Vedanta the goal of self-realization and self-development is explained in terms of the Supreme Being BRAHMA and of the congruence of Self-Consciousness with Social Consciousness, Global Consciousness, Cosmic and Divine Consciousness. The eternal truths of Self-realization are explained by the vision and direct experience of the Supreme Being; this is stated to be "Subtler than the subtlest" and "greater than the greatest", and is "immanent as well as transcendental" in respect of all perceived and perceivable entities.

These great truths are revealed in the direct experience, in realization through meditation as the basis of all action, of the identity of the individual soul, JIVATMA, with the Supreme Soul or PARAMATMA as stated in the four Upanishadic aphorisms:

- 1) "The individual and the Universal are the same—Thou art that", TAT TWAM ASI.
- 2) "All indeed are one BRAHMA", SARVAM KHALVIDAM BRAHMA;
- 3) "By knowing oneself as Brahma, one becomes Brahma," BRAHMAVIT BRAHMAIVA BHAVATI;
- 4) "I am one with the SUPREME BEING" AHAM BRAHMASMI.

The same one entity—Self—`Atma' is in all; it is ever present and is everywhere present this conviction is the basis of that equality or Samatwam, which is the hallmark of the spirit of democracy, humanity, internationalism and universality. The Vedanta philosophy interprets this metaphysical fact in terms of the divinity of man and the unity pervading all diversity.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba repeats frequently the Vedic statement, EKAM SAT; VIPRAH BAHUDA VADANTI: "*One that alone is*" can be cognized by each from his own viewpoint; hence paths to God are many but the goal is the same." Baba has explained the uniqueness of Indian spiritualism in terms of the *one in many* in his incomparably crystal clear exposition in BHARATIYA PARAMARTHA TATWA VAHINI. "The most astounding of the basic truths of Indian spiritual seers and masters is that the Soul, by its very nature, is Purity, Fullness and Bliss." "All Beings are in God and God is in all Beings." "One blood stream circulates through all the limbs: one Divine principle circulates through all the lands and peoples."

This truth is expressed in different ways in different religions. In Islamic terms, it is "the immanence of all in all' in each and every thing." The Bible speaks of it as "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." The Jewish Talmud says "No atom of matter in the whole vastness of the Universe is lost; how then can man's soul, which comprises the whole world in one idea, be lost?" The great prophets, sages and gurus—men of true vision and messengers of love and brother-hood—have spread the doctrine of unity and goodwill amongst all human kind.

Last year a great gathering of the world's political leaders took place at the United Nations in order to discuss disarmament and over-armament, which are virtually linked to the fate of mankind on this earth. It is perhaps not in-appropriate to reflect some of the deeper factors of 'unity in diversity', of the relationships between Self-Consciousness and Self-Development, on the one hand, and social and global harmony and development, on the other, and of the basic interests of mankind as expressed by practically all the world's great religions. In this context, it is not perhaps impossible to envisage a time when the United Nations could play host to a similar conference of spiritual leaders of the world on global, ethical and spiritual issues and values to save humanity from destructive orgies of violence and nuclear holocausts.

As Baba put it, "nations talking aggressive language with the mouth and brandishing atom bombs with the hand while trampling the meek and the poor with the feet do not certainly advance the cause of peace and happiness on earth. This is not culture. It is the culture of the Asuras."

—G. V. Subba Rao New York U. N. O.

"No Desert Sandstorm"

My LORD,
At last I come, and on bended knees,
I have searched out every windmill.
Rode my horse
till weariness forced us to
rest in strange deserts.
And prayed for water
To quench an unknown burning thirst,

And now I rest in face of you, my LORD
Glad, that I need not chase windmills
this coming season.
Glad, that you have summoned me for
work unknown.
In bliss because You call my name.
In bliss because I know your name.
In bliss because No desert sandstorm
could keep, me from your feet,
My LORD,
my life is yours.

—**Jacqueline Adler,**
San Diego, California U.S.A.

A Prayer

O My Beloved! Let me wake up in `your
consciousness', from this long drawn out
Dream!

In this dream I have laughed and wept,
I have suffered and enjoyed.

Moments of Ecstasy and moments of
crucial pain have been my share, in this
feast of life. They came and passed by,
like an escalator which is moving on and
on while I stand and watch it!

When I was on the escalator, I was
swept away too, but with Your Grace, I have

learnt to stand as a witness, apart and aloof,
for moments at least, to watch it moving,
moving .

Teach me to see everything as a part of
`Your Glory', to see only the Beautiful that
is `You' even in the seemingly ugly, petty
and obnoxious! Let me remember that
this too emanates from `You' as there is
nothing else but `You' only `You'.

My name is Atmanand
My work is Brahmanand
My Home is All Universe
All are One, All are One.

—A. K. Varma

Sai Surya

As usual the day began with Omkar and Suprabhatam in the Sri Sathya Sai College for Women's Hostel at Anantapur. The Omkar vibrated all round the Hostel. As I chanted the Omkar I felt as if I was being elevated into a higher plane wherein there was only Bliss to experience. After the Omkar, the Suprabhatam started and I could picture in my mind the beautiful Form of our most Beloved Lord. Then I looked at the sky and suddenly I felt that I should go up to the terrace and watch the Sun rise! The sky was red at the horizon and I lost myself in witnessing beauty: Sundaram! As I sat watching, the red colour changed to orange, then into yellow and then into whitish blue. The Lake and the Lion Mountain looked very beautiful. The Lion Mountain is a landmark and somehow I felt happy and proud to look at it. At this distance I felt the coolness and the calmness of the Lake, which made my heart cool and calm! The Lion Mountain somehow reminds me of Bharat and the thought, that I am one of her daughters made me feel proud. How often Baba has reminded us of our good fortune in being born in Bharat!

Suddenly I realised something! Why has Swami brought me here into His College! Surely it must be with a purpose. Well! What is the purpose? Swami brings us here, moulds us, transforms us and puts us in the right path, the Path of Sai! The drama that I had just witnessed in the sky changing from red to white also aroused in me an idea. It seemed to symbolise what happens to us who come to His College. We come here 'red' with all sorts of impure, Rajasic ideas. Swami turns us white with pure ideas in us.

Just as I was lost in these thoughts I saw the Sun God peep from between the peaks in the mountain! As I watched, He rose slowly, slowly in the blue sky. Automatically I bowed from within and offered my salutations to the Great Sun God-the Giver of Light! The beautiful and glorious sunrise made me think again and a new idea dawned on me. Once we have been transformed by Sai from "red to white", then Sai wills it and slowly the Light of knowledge starts rising in us. The Sun of knowledge must rise in the blue sky of our heart. This is the actual sunrise that all of us must experience in our life, i.e., the Dawn of Sai Surya.

I hope and pray to the Lord that He may shower His Grace on all of us so that we may experience this Sunrise in our lives making us worthy of being Sai Instruments! Then the Lord will make use of us and we will be able to work happily in His Great Mission for which He has descended on this earth. May Sai Surya awaken our intellect!

—Kumari Ranjini Sarma,
Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur (student)

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6

The world consists of multifarious objects and each has a name. No one has discovered how or why these names got attached to these objects. Nor is it possible to explain the how and why. Even if an attempt is made, the result can be only guesswork and not the truth. So it is best to conclude that it is divinely descended. Words used between birth and death, or current before birth or after death, words indicating the mother and the children, or words like Righteousness (Dharma), Unrighteousness (Adharma), Heaven (Swarga) and Hell (Naraka) are certainly not human artifices but divine dispensations. The Vedas are the authority for this declaration.

Let us consider one point. Can any one quote a single instance either in this world or some other of a mere word which does not convey a meaning? No. It is impossible. Each word has a meaning; that meaning denotes a decision by God. It is only when this is recognised by men that they can grasp the mystery of life.

So when it is declared that the Brahmin manifested from the face (Mouth) "Brahmanaasya mukham aaseeth" or that the four Varnas have been created by Me, "chaathur varnyam Mayaa Srshtam" does it not also posit that there must have been Varnas which are denoted by the word and persons who could be described as examples or representatives of that word? Do not these declarations make plain to us that the very God who created them grouped them on the basis of their tendencies and activities? It is also plain that the groups are related to Varnas.

So the word Varna can be understood in all its bearings if only deep inquiry is made and clean thought is directed on it. The meaning of Varna, most common among the people and most current everywhere, is "colour". But, how that word came to be attached with that meaning is not known to many. This has to be known in order to grasp the true significance of the word. In the word Varna, the root Vr means 'description' or 'elaboration', also the process of counting. The roots r, rn, which form such words as ramana mean 'the enjoyment, pleasure, etc.' Therefore, Varna signifies "accepting with pleasure after elaborate consideration."

As regards 'colour', the generally current meaning of the word, white, red and black are the basic ones. Other colours are but derivatives. The white symbolises the Satwic tendency, the red, the Rajasic and the black, the Tamasic. That is the mystery of creation. Individuals take birth according to the tendencies they appreciate, aspire for and adopt. So the Varnas into which they are born are determined by themselves and not by any external authority. Which particular tendency they choose to cultivate depends on their intellectual level. It is generally believed that desires shape the intelligence. Intelligence moulds the activities and activities decide the character and nature of life. This is the correct interpretation of the expression "Guna Karma Vibhagasah".

While the Shruti and the Smriti texts indicate so elaborately the causes that lead to the individual's birth, life and death in particular castes, religions, families and sections, persons who are unable to understand the same lay down theories according to their own limited intelligences and derive satisfaction there from. What else is this than sheer ignorance? Or it

may be egoist pride exhibiting that they know everything, for, is not egoism itself the progeny of ignorance? The conclusion is that caste, social status, family and even religion are determined by Guna and Karma. They are not amenable to human manipulation. The Vedas declare so; they posit that it has been so decided by Divine Will.

Bharat is designated as Karma-bhoomi, or Karma-Kshetra, the Holy Land of God-ward Activity. All men everywhere are pilgrims trekking towards a Holy Land of God-ward Activity. Karma is the *sine quo non* of Bharat; it holds forth the divinity of activity and turns all activity into spiritual Sadhana. This is the reason for the names by which Bharat is known.

The sacred scriptures of this land (Shruti) loudly proclaim that the individual is the architect of his own fate, high or low status in Society, luxury or poverty, liberty or bondage. "Sa yatha Krathurasmin loke purusho bhavati; thathe thah prathye bhavati": "Whatever form the person craves for now while alive in this world, that form he attains after death." The Sruti declares thus. Therefore it is clear that Karma decides Janma, and that the luxury or poverty, the character and attitude, the level of intelligence, the joys and griefs of this life are the earnings gathered during the previous life. The inference therefore is inevitable that the next life of the individual will be in consonance with the activities prompted by the level of intelligence which rules the person here and now. Some persons though of noble birth engage themselves in evil deeds. Others, though born in castes considered low, are engaged in good deeds. How does this happen? This is a problem that agitates us often. Persons born as Brahmins perform bad deeds; in other words, they descend into Rajasic and Tamasic levels. Persons born in inferior castes rise into the Satwic level and do good deeds. Brahmins of the type mentioned are only Janma Brahmins and not Karma Brahmins, Brahmins by birth and not Brahmins by virtue of their deeds. The others are low only by birth and not low at all by virtue of their deeds. The Vedas require co-ordination of birth and behaviour, in castes.

Persons of pure Satwic nature are rare in the world. Mostly, they have Rajas colouring the Satwic character. Such individuals having attained noble birth are involved in Rajasic activities. They declare by their deeds that they are of mixed caste. The Vedas have not ignored such examples of mixed nature and the consequent effects on caste. The Vedas are impartial; they are not prejudiced against one and favourable to another. They do not elevate one set of persons or discard another, they only proclaim the truth that exists.

Let us consider an example. Kausika was a Kshatriya, that is to say, a person of Rajasic nature. However, as the result of his deeds in previous lives, Satwic tendencies and attitudes entered his consciousness and he went about adhering strictly to truth. He transformed himself and sublimated his consciousness into a pure state. The mantra that he uttered, which emanated from that level of consciousness is the Gayatri! Kausika is the author of that mantra. He is known as Viswamitra the mitra of the entire Viswa, for he became the well-wisher of the entire world! Brahmins have accepted and acclaimed that mantra as a Divine Gift; they have revered and recited it and derived immense Bliss. Kausika was therefore a Janma Kshatriya but he became a Karma-Brahmin and he was accepted as such by the Vedas, which emanated from the Voice of God. Thus it is clear that the Vedas proclaim the path to all mankind without prejudice, partiality or sense of distinction. They pay attention only to the nature and acts of the individual.

About this, modern thinkers may have some doubt. This is quite natural. Let us see what that doubt is. When it is said that divine will has laid down the Varnas, should they not exist in all lands? Surely, they should not be confined to this country, Bharat, they say. But, there is no rule that whatever is created should necessarily be found to exist everywhere! It is not possible to realise that expectation.

It is but natural that restrictions and preferences concerning the process of living comprising the code have to be established with reference to each region, its atmosphere and climate, its peculiarities and specialties. There is no rule that trees that grow in Bharat should be found growing in other countries also. We cannot argue that stars which occupy the sky should exist also on the earth. There is no compulsion which insists that fishes that live in water should also live on hills.

God alone knows and decides what should happen to which, and where, and why. All else are powerless. Events like birth are determined by circumstances of space, time, causation and the like. They are not bound by our needs or reactions, favourable or unfavourable. For this reason, mere observation and study of what is patent will only lead to confusing doubts about Varnas. Such doubts are inevitable, for they are bred by the ego. The core of reality is separate and distinct from the fabrications of the ego. When people start acting according to the whims of fancy and speaking whatever comes to mind, we can only characterise them as examples of sheer ignorance.

(To be continued)

So Far, Yet So Near

—C. P. K. Nair

"It is far, It is verily near." (Isa Upanishad)

"He is far away and yet is He near." (Bhagavad-Gita)

We have unshakable faith in the existence of God. The question "Is there a God?" does not bother us at all, God is the Creator and the Sovereign Lord of the world-the unchanging Reality which pervades the Universe and sustains it. But in our helplessness to comprehend Him, are we not still concerned with the question, "Where is God?"

Few know the answer and those who know it can put it only in paradoxical language as above, since the language we know cannot describe God. Man may echo the mighty words of Prahlada that He is inside and outside of everything, here, there and everywhere. But looking at the column pointed out by his enraged father, it was only Prahlada who could unhesitatingly declare, "Why, I can see Him there also!" Despite God's immanence man still vends his weary steps to the temples at Tirupati, Varanasi and Puri to find Him! He still wanders among the holy places in Haridwar, Badrinath, and Rishikesh, and the hallowed locations in Mathura and Dwaraka, in search of peace! Others retire to their shrines in the corner of their homes and with folded hands and tearful eyes, unburden their distressed minds and call on Him for the strength to face the

battle of life. In short, man runs hither and thither, and everywhere in "search of God and all that God stands for!

The Avatar of the age, Bhagavan Baba, has been telling us in unmistakable terms: "The Lord is neither in Heaven, nor in Kailasa or Vaikuntha or Swarga. To believe that He is manifest only in one place or location and to journey thither is a superstition much to be deplored. He is everywhere, in everyone, at all times. He is Witness of all, in all." We are indeed thrilled as we hear these declarations from Bhagavan, the Lord of compassion. In fact our thoughts stand still when we listen to Him. We feel as if the Kingdom of Heaven, is at hand. But as Karma would have it, once we leave His immediate presence, doubts start assailing us and we are again on that lonely quest, "Where is God? Where is happiness? Where is the Promised Land?"

Lest I should be misunderstood, the temples and shrines, the holy places and hallowed precincts have their own importance in the spiritual evolution of man. Nothing that can turn him Godward, and nothing that can help him on his evolutionary path can be considered irrelevant or insignificant. But if the quest is for God enshrined elsewhere, or for Divinity that manifests only in some holy place, that quest is in vain, and we shall have to wind up without finding an answer to the question, "Where is God?"

The Supreme Self is stated to be far! The Upanishad says: "It outstrips all that run." Such Upanishadic declarations have their own profound significance and meaning: The human mind cannot define objects and events except in terms of space and time. But space and time have no reality in themselves. They are the creations of the mind catering to the mind. 'It is far!'—what else will you say about Reality which is an experience, a realisation which is not proximate to worldly life or sense, or subject to intellectual apprehension.

Is the Goal really far, and the path to be traversed long? Why should the seers and sages prescribe rigorous disciplines for the aspirants on the evolutionary path—disciplines that may have to be gone through not merely throughout this life, but carried into hundreds of lives that may follow? Why should the scriptures prescribe several alternative paths to suit the intellect, evolutionary status and inherent nature of the individuals? Jnana (Knowledge), Bhakti (Devotion), Karma (selfless and dedicated action) and their variants which delineate these paths would seem to confirm that the Goal is far. But all these beg the question—'For whom?' In the words of Acharya Sankara commenting on the first part of the Sutra (aphorism) quoted at the beginning, "It's Far" (tad-doore), "it is far because even over millions of years it cannot be reached by the unenlightened." And steeped as we are in our ignorance of our real nature, can we claim to be 'enlightened'?

How then can we acquire that enlightenment which at least can put us on the right path, and give us the direction, which irrespective of the distance, can take us ultimately to the Goal. We normally look to science which claims to find a solution for every known problem for this knowledge too. Our knowledge is saturated with worldliness; our thinking is in terms of worldly norms; our intellect cannot discover any other source from which we can have any such knowledge, leave alone the solution to life's riddle.

The world vainly thought that the progress of science and the advance of technology would solve all the problems of living and build for man a paradise on earth. It has on the other hand left his moral nature untouched and animal nature uncontrolled. It (science) has undoubtedly offered much to the material world. But materialism does not provide man with the wherewithal of genuine happiness. It can measure the distance to the planets in accurate terms, but it cannot know whether the Consciousness that lights the intellect of man is near or far, leave alone measure how near or far It is.

Let us then wholly give up our concepts of distance in material or scientific terms in visualising the proximity or otherwise of the Ultimate Reality, the time needed to reach It and the vehicle that will take us there. Human knowledge and intellect cannot unravel the mystery that is the very power behind his very existence. The stream cannot rise higher than its source.

We may in one sense be justified in considering the Goal to be higher—higher than all the heights that man can reach in the time-space continuum. We have to admit that man today occupies the highest place among sentient beings and in physical terms he is the acme of creation. He is no more subject to the biological laws as other sentient beings. He is not bound by the intransgressible laws which apply to others, in other words, the animal instincts. He has the choice either to obey the dictates of his flesh, which include his sense and mind, or else to evolve further on a moral or a spiritual plane or on both. The animal was lower in the evolutionary process and man is the higher. While the former had no choice, man has been endowed with an intellect with which he can, if he so chooses, raise himself to higher levels and achieve Divinity that is his true nature. The Kingdom of God is in him, and that is the spiritual state that Christianity promises to man. It is a state of enlightenment and not of enjoyment.

The concept of God in different religions differs in details, but in essence the Truth propounded is the same. The difference in details may have led to difference in approaches. According to western thought God is 'the one object of supreme adoration,' that which is most attractive to us, the worth of which draws us and evokes a willingness to give ourselves in complete devotion. He is man's hope and his refuge in the hour of peril. Indian philosophy, while leaving man to visualise God in whatever form he likes, emphasises His immanence and sees Him as the Unity behind all the diversity. The contribution of Vedanta (Upanishads, in particular) and the Bhagavad-Gita to the understanding of the Supreme Reality is indeed unique. Western philosophers have not hesitated to acknowledge their gratitude for this contribution of Indian philosophy to the spiritual evolution of mankind.

The Supreme Lord as the Atman or Reality behind the ego, gives us a God who is not outside of us. He is the innermost self of man, the Soul, the core of his personality. The Lord having created the Universe, pervades and sustains it. In fact the Cosmos is but a partial revelation of the Infinite which is even beyond it. "I support the entire Universe, pervading it with a single fraction of Myself." (Gita X-42). In relation to embodied souls the Lord declares: "The Lord abides in the heart of all beings, O Arjuna, causing them to turn round by His power, as if they were mounted on a machine." (Gita XVIII-61). "It is the inmost self of all," says Kenopanishad. "The person of the size of a thumb resides in the middle of the body ...He is the Lord of the past and the Future" (Kathopanishad). Let us not worry about the size referred to. Acharya Sankara dispels unnecessary doubts when he says that the 'size of the thumb refers to Atman as

conditioned by the mind manifesting through the space within the heart. It is so conceived for the purpose of meditation only. In fact Atman is Purusha—that by which the whole Universe is filled.'

The Supreme Being, the inmost Self of our existence, is thus nearest to us. But caught in the meshes of Maya and veiled by the ignorance which is its character, we are living wholly in the physical world, our senses running from one object of pleasure to another, virtually leading us farther and farther away from the core of our existence and binding us more and more in the coils of Samsara (worldly life) in that process. In one of the verses of Viveka Choodamani the Acharya describes: "He identifies himself with it (perishable body) and nourishes, bathes and preserves it with the help of sense-objects. Thereby, he becomes bound like the silk-worm in its cocoon woven by its own threads."

This identification has to stop and man should know himself as the Absolute Brahman. The mind should withdraw into itself. Once man sees himself as the embodiment of the Divine, he sees everyone and; everything as Brahman, and the whole world for him is but the manifestation of Brahman (Brahma-mayam). In the two famous verses of Gita, the Lord says. "He whose self is harmonised by Yoga seeth the self in all beings in the self; everywhere he sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self everywhere he sees the same. He who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, I am not lost to him, nor is he lost to Me." (V-29/30)

So, It is nearer than the nearest and the approach to It is through one's own mind. " When the objective world is shut out, the mind becomes quiet and in the quiet mind arises the vision of Paramatman." (Viveka Choodamani). There is no belittling the intensity of the spiritual discipline needed for it. But the Goal is clear, the path has been chosen, and man has the equipment for the journey. The scriptural statement of It being so far and yet so near, is no more a paradox. We shall not discuss here the paths for Self-realisation propounded by the seers and sages nor about their relative merits. There is a Sadhana for everyone, in every status of life, in any stage of spiritual evolution. From the direct apprehension of the Supreme Reality through Wisdom, pure and transcendent, the reflective ones attain realisation. The emotional approach to the same end is through adoration and love. To the active man of the world, engaged in his worldly obligations, subjection of his will to the Divine purpose in whatever he does, takes him to his destination. At the end Knowledge, Love and dedicated Action mingle together. The Gita, which has come to be recognised as a spiritual manual for the modern world, expounds the path of dedicated action (Karma Yoga) as the most practical. "Therefore, without attachment perform always the work that has to be done, for, man attains the Highest by doing acts without attachment," says the Lord and cites the examples of King Janaka and others who have attained perfection through dedicated action (III-19/20).

God is ours and we are of God. He is the Eternal Witness and if we have the Wisdom and Enlightenment to choose, the Constant Companion. To those who seek refuge in Him, as Arjuna did, He is the charioteer in the battle of life. He is with us in our service. Says Bhagavan Baba in the clearest terms: "God is not somewhere away from you, someone distant from you. He is in you, before you, behind you, beckoning, guiding, guarding, warning, prompting, the inner voice ever speaking with you. You need not seek Him, He is there ready always by your side." Let

these thoughts strengthen our Sadhana. May Bhagavan, in His infinite mercy, give us the vision to realise that Glory!

The Call from Brindavan

750 students from Colleges functioning in all the States of India and from a few Colleges from overseas are participating in the month-long Summer Course, on Indian Culture and Spirituality, held at Brindavan, for the Seventh year in succession under the auspices of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, in the Divine presence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The course began on 20 May 1979. The first week of the Course is dedicated to an intensive study of the Bhagavad-Gita and its relevance for youth today. An innovation made in the programme this year, as directed by Bhagavan, is a daily two-hour Rural Service in the mornings in selected villages around the campus. The students of the Sri Sathya Sai College, specially those who belong to these villages will be the companions and the Lecturers on the staff of the College will be the guides. The participants will also attend Yogasana classes and have Pranava recitals, Bhajans and Nagarsankirtans. On Sundays, they will go through Elocution tests, Quiz sessions etc.

More important than any of these schedules, however, is the daily discourse which Bhagavan gives and the unique opportunities He affords to the participants to gather the precious gift of His grace, during the 30 days of their stay in His presence.

The students started the Inauguration day, at the Hostel where they reside, with Pranava recital at 5 A.M. and Nagarsankirtan, until 6, when Bhagavan graciously vouchsafed His Darshan. At 8-30 A.M. the participants and the devotees who had gathered in vast numbers from all parts of India moved in procession from Brindavan to the Auditorium of the Sathya Sai College. Bhagavan was in the procession with the guests, Hon'ble Justice of the Supreme Court of India, Sri V. R. Krishna Iyer and Sri M. Santhappa, Vice Chancellor of the Venkateswara University, in His car. The entire route was gorgeously and tastefully decorated by devotees from Kerala. There were bhajan groups of men and women devotees, who moved in front. It was a unique event which heartened those who yearned for Sai Darshan.

The function began with the recital of Vedic hymns by the students of Sathya Sai College. Dr. S. Bhagavantam welcomed the gathering on behalf of the Central Trust. Dr. V. K. Gokak then spoke on the genesis of this annual event and how it has shaped itself from year to year as an integral part of the programme of the Sathya Sai Educational Renaissance. He said, "Education, today is not relevant to the problems that face mankind. Moral values are crumbling all around us. In India the enthusiasm for secularism has thrown spirituality overboard. Students leave Schools and Colleges as utter strangers to their precious heritage. The Summer Course is framed so that the men and women who participate, imbibe a sense of Universality in the place of their present allegiance to narrow ideals, a spirit of service based on Spirituality, an abiding interest in yoga and meditation, and above all the yearning for attaining self-reverence, self-knowledge and self-control. More than all these, the participants receive guidance and inspiration from

Bhagavan, the Embodiment of Love and Wisdom, Bhagavan to whom the entire world is turning today for Light and Love.

Hon'ble Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer then lighted the Lamp as a symbol of having inaugurated the Summer classes. In his Inauguration Address, he declared that Bhagavan is steadily and silently transforming us into instruments for His Task. He said, "Where He walks, it is holy ground; where He sits, it is a shrine." "He is all the prophets of the past come together in one Human form." "He teaches us the Law of Love and Compassion which can overcome passion." The Hon'ble Justice pointed out that Scientists are today sunk in orthodoxy and rationalists have succumbed to superstition. He warned the students against the pseudo-rational bigotry of Science and asked them to pay attention to the 'subjective technology' that is fast gaining ground among seekers of truth.

Sri Santhappa, the Vice-Chancellor of the Venkateswara University, who presided over the Function deplored the degradation of values that is polluting the character and behaviour of students in Universities, a pollution that has spread into academic areas and all over the world; he thanked Bhagavan for restoring the supremacy of the spirit through Colleges and other educational institutions and the Summer Course on Spirituality.

In His Divine message, Bhagavan spoke of the pernicious fascination which Western Culture has exercised on the minds of the youth in this country, as a result of which the precious heritage of Bharatiya Culture is being disowned and discarded by the students of Colleges. The ideal of Dharma has lost its hold on the people and, as a consequence, greed, violence and injustice are ravaging both peace and harmony and drying up the springs of Love.

Young men and women, who have to claim Indian Culture and Spirituality as their right, have a great responsibility for which they should equip themselves. They must wipe the tears of the Mother-land which is in agony at the neglect of the treasures she has stored for Her children. Remember that the great men and women, who liberated this land from slavery, also desired to uphold the lofty ideals which Indian Culture stood for. They, in their own College days, tried to cherish and nourish these ideals. But today, the rulers have no will to promote these ideals and the people who have elected them have no urge to direct them aright. Students today have to avoid, the tentacles of the ideal of "high living and low thinking" and implant in themselves the ideal of "high thinking and simple living." Moral excellence and spiritual Sadhana are the very foundations for a stable and happy society. Do not be led away into the bog of pomp and pettiness. Reduce your craving for sensation and sensual satisfactions. Try to learn more and more about the Bharatiya way of life as laid down by the seers and sages who had in view only the welfare and prosperity of all mankind."

On 21-5-79, Bhagavan inaugurated at the College Auditorium the Five-day Central Training Camp for over 190 District Conveners of Seva Dal, drawn from all over India. The programme for the camp includes lectures on the various aspects of Seva Dal work in the society around, and on the qualifications that one has to earn in order to be a worthy member of the Seva Dal. There are also talks on the ideal of the Seva Dal Organisation, the Administration of the Dal, Training camps for those anxious to join or continue in the, Seva Dal, the rural programme of Seva activities into which the Seva Dal is launching in a big way, and Social Service in urban areas.

Time is allotted for Discussions and Demonstrations. But, the most productive and beneficial item in the programme is the daily Discourse of Bhagavan, during which He has graciously promised to answer questions and solve the doubts placed before Him by the participants, as beyond their capacity for solution during the Discussion Sessions.

Dr. V. K. Gokak gave an illuminating talk on the Inner significance of Seva Dal. He stated that the Sathya Sai Seva Dal is unique, because it emphasises not only the reformation of society but also the transformation of the individual. Seva should achieve both these victories, Baba says. It is not Seva, by itself, that matters. The Sevak must have spiritual training which will weaken the ego and sublimate the emotions. "Seva must proceed from an inner urge, constantly fed by Dhyana and yoga." Dr. V. K. Gokak analysed the psychological urges that inspire Seva Dal members, and classified five general groups of social service workers. 1) Those who claim to be or are known as public 'servants' who in reality are 'masters' of the public with whom they deal. A moment of 'service' for this group of people is a moment of 'tyranny' or 'exploitation'.

2) There is a class of social workers who label themselves as such but who do not react to the distress around them. The good that they do is the silence that they maintain. They may do no service but they are harmless and lazy.

3) There are many who get the urge to do service—say, endow a ward in a hospital, only when they suffer the illness to which, the ward is to be set apart. They develop sympathy only when they themselves are affected by the calamity. So, there is a trace of ego in the service that they offer.

4) There are, however, many who glimpse a sense of fulfillment when they render service to the brother, sister, child, animal or plant. They derive a strange joy from the contemplation of the fortune that gave them the chance. Here, the element of ego is fast disappearing and the Sevak is liberating himself for its bondage.

5) The fifth and the happiest group consists of those who render service as an act of worship to God who has appeared in the form of the blind, the lame, the poor, the illiterate etc.

Bhagavan in His Inaugural Address called upon Seva Dal workers to practise Nishkama-karma; we must serve because we cannot but, because it is our nature to help others and to guide and lead others towards God. Really speaking, other people are loved and served because it gives joy to the person who loves and serves. Things are desired and sought for, not for the sake of the things, but for the sake of the person who strives for them and seeks them. Every act has as its goal the promotion of the happiness of the self. One has to be very careful about the urge behind any activity, for if the urge is laudable, the result will be good; if it is low, the consequence will be harmful. The urge to go to the rescue of another, to console and comfort him, and to serve him is laudable, provided the ego does not intervene and direct you towards earning effervescent fame, crazy publicity, and temporary authority. Serve, because Service is the very mission on which you have been awarded this human birth. The urge to serve must be active and alert in every nerve, muscle and cell of your body.

The expression, "Duty is God" is repeated so often that you have ceased to think over its implications and importance. Reflect upon that expression and try to find out: What is duty? Why duty? Duty to whom? etc. Man is born as a member of a Society, as a limb of one particular social organisation; so, his health and habits, the language he speaks, the attitudes of mind he regards as acceptable, the mould of his emotions and passions; the style of living, the direction and content of his thoughts, and the ways along which they operate are all fed and framed by the society with which he is inextricably involved. When man claims that freedom is his birth-right, society will put forward its fundamental right to be served by him, a right that can supersede his birth-right. In the exercise of his right to freedom he cannot harm or injure another member of the society who has the same right.

God too has limited His freedom so that He can act for the welfare of man. Two farmers, for example, who own adjacent fields, pray differently—one wants immediate rain for his crops and the other wants dry days since his daughter's wedding has been fixed on those days, and his guests and kinsmen will be inconvenienced. These prayers for mundane benefits will not reach God; they are disposed of by the authorities to whom they are allotted. God listens to and grants only prayers (1) which emanate from a purified heart, (2) emerge from boundless universal Love and (3) bear the stamp of desirelessness, the absence of craving for the enjoyment of the results that flow from the events prayed for.

If the Seva Dal Member does not have this selfless Love that knows no bargaining and no fear, he is not behaving as befits his status, and he brings dishonour to the Organisation to which he claims to belong.

Of the nine steps in the path of Devotion, the Seventh is Seva and the eighth, that can be won if the feet are steady and secure on the Seventh, is Sneha... the status of being like Arjuna, the Mitra, the Companion and Comrade of the Divine.

The ideal of the Brotherhood of Man is not as elevated as Sneha. Brothers quarrel among themselves and fight for their share in the inheritance. But, the attitude of the Sevak belonging to the Sathya Sai Seva Dal should be Ekatma Bhava; identity: the other whom you serve is no other than you who serve. For, in both, the Reality or Atma is the same Divine spark."

—Ed

Look about for chance to relieve, rescue or resuscitate. Train yourselves that you may render help quickly and well. Seva is most paying form of austerity, the most satisfying and the most pleasurable) It springs out of Love and it scatters Love in profusion. It plants a seed on stone and is delighted to see it sprout! Plant it with Love, and the seed will discover Love inside the stone and draw sustenance there from.

It is the inner joy, the Love that you radiate that is important. Mere sentiment and sympathy are no use; they must be regulated by intelligence. Shower cheer on the sad; soothe those that have lost the way; close your eye to the faults of others, but, keep them open to discover your own. All these are hard jobs. Practice alone can make you perfect—practice, not only in item of service, but, in meditation on the Divine. Japa and Dhyana will render you more and more efficient in the field of service.

—Baba

The Divine Presence

Baba's words of comfort and love, "I am always with you, in you, around you, beside you," were never more clearly felt than recently on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in California.

The Sai Baba Center of Santa Ana had held its membership meeting in my home, as customary. We had been privileged to have an Indian prince, a devout devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, as our guest speaker. It was a very special afternoon. The kindredship, the merging of two cultures together in their love of and hunger for God were deeply felt by us all.

After the meeting came to a close, the Center Board members remained to talk over affairs of the Center. There were eight of us, sitting together, sharing thoughts and reflecting on the enriching experience we had just shared.

Suddenly Baba's voice rang out like a bell from the next room singing Rama, Rama, Rama. All talk stopped, unfinished sentences hanging in the air. We looked in wonder at one another. The divine voice continued pouring out its message of love from the other room. The tape recorder on a little table had been turned on by an unseen hand and Baba had blessed our meeting. We sat in joyous, tear filled silence, knowing there is no separation from our beloved Baba, knowing He hears our every word, knows our every thought, witnesses our every action, that He is indeed with us always.

—*Frances Reeves*

The Surgeon's Ring

On the morning of Thursday, 22 March 1979, in Prasanthi Nilayam, when I was granted an interview by Bhagavan, He produced a most beautiful ring for me in which Swami's face was shown in a purple hue. (Later I felt that Swami should have given me a different picture of Himself as I did not feel that this picture did full justice to Him). However, the ring was a tight fit. That morning I was both happy and a little worried. As a surgeon I had to take the ring out often to wash my hands and operate etc. The ring would come out only with difficulty. Moreover, I felt that my wife, who did not accompany me to India on this occasion, would have liked something too from Bhagavan: but how was I going to ask for a small boon like this. Swami called me in again on the same evening and, no sooner had the interview started, He inquired of me if the ring was a little too tight for me. "Surgeons need to wash their hands a lot," said Swami. He asked me to give Him the ring. Holding it He blew on it once and placed the ring back on my left ring-finger. It was a neat fit and could be put on and taken off easily: I prostrated myself in thanks and did not examine the ring closely. Swami asked me to look at the picture. This too had changed and there was a most beautiful pose- a smiling face and the hand raised in blessing: "Why fear when I am here." Soon after He inquired after my wife and produced a

lovely locket with His bust on one side and "Om" in Sanskrit on the other. "This is for your wife," He said sweetly.

—Dr Y. K. Pillay, Singapore

Who are Untouchables?

—By Prof S. V. Pappu, Indian Institute of Science

Almost every day newspapers report about atrocities committed on Harijans and allied communities, who were overtly branded and treated as *untouchables* until a few decades ago in our country. Now the practice of untouchability is unlawful according to our constitution; but it remains a fact that covert practices of untouchability are at the root of the atrocities that are being committed on Harijans. Untouchability no doubt is an ignominious aspect of our society and every effort should be made by all concerned to eliminate this evil. However, the efforts that are being made by political leaders are only meant for making a political game out of this problem in order to achieve their selfish ends. Of course the so-called intellectuals have long ceased to be a force to reckon with in this country, mostly because of their lack of stamina to stand up and be counted. Fortunately for mankind Bhagavan Baba appeared on the scene at the right time and we can hope for a permanent solution to the vexatious problem of untouchability with His guidance. This is the firm conclusion I had arrived at after listening to His discourse on March 4, 1979 in the golden jubilee hall, Bangalore. I could arrive at such a firm conclusion because for the first time I have heard a person who has clearly analysed the problem and offered solution.

It is most unfortunate that the glorious land of Rama, Krishna and Bharat has become synonymous with the word *untouchable*. But, in my view, untouchability is a multifaceted social problem and our country is not the only one which is plagued with it. As examples let me cite: (a) Apartheid: Is it not a form of untouchability? (b) Religious bigotry: Is it not a manifestation of the attitude of untouchability? (c) Attitude of developed nations towards developing nations: Don't they reflect the presence of undercurrents of untouchability? I believe all sorts of discrimination, which basically arise out of "Superior than thou" attitude, ultimately lead to the manifestation of untouchability in one form or another.

Many questions have been accumulating with me over the years in regard to the problem of untouchability. I am sure this has been the case with all right thinking persons all over the world. While the details about the questions have been changing somewhat, the core, however, has remained the same over the thirty odd years of my adult life. The evolution of the questions has started when I was a young boy studying in school. I remember vivid the rigmarole of leaving my clothes in the backyard and then taking a bath before I could enter the house, all this because I had gone to the market to buy vegetables from so-called untouchable. My sister had to go through the same routine because she was attending a Christian missionary school. I should say that this attitude of untouchability has disturbed me profoundly and then I started asking myself the following basic questions: (i) who created untouchables? (ii) Why did he create them? Naturally at that young age I could only turn to my parents and teachers for answers to my

questions. Invariably the answers were that God in His wisdom had to create the untouchables because there were menial jobs to be performed by them for the benefit of the rest of the society. Though they were unsatisfying I had to accept the answers in the name of discipline, respect for the elders, etc. As a matter of fact such answers provoked me to formulate more questions. For example, I wondered why God the supreme father of all mankind would be so malicious to create untouchables? Actually I used to convince myself that God could not be the culprit for the following reasons. If the Good Lord has created untouchables then, (a) why did Rama partake of the fruits already tasted by the so-called untouchable woman Sabari? (b) Why did God allow Narada to reform the untouchable Kirata into Valmiki, the greatest poet of all times? Though through such rationalisations I used to derive some comfort, I still used to feel very uneasy because my core questions have never been answered to my satisfaction. At that time I became aware of the efforts of great leaders such as Gandhi, Lincoln, Ambedkar, who have tried to tackle the problems arising out of untouchability in the contemporary world. I have tried hard to assimilate their contributions with the fond hope that my questions will get answered. There is no doubt in my mind that they have contributed a lot towards the elimination of untouchability of various kinds; but I felt that their efforts have been only partially successful. In my view they couldn't have achieved more than what they had because they have tried to trace untouchability to sources which are external to Man. I believe this is the reason why I could not secure answers to my questions from the contributions of these giants. I was waiting patiently all these years until someone came along to answer my questions satisfactorily and that someone is Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

In His Divine discourse on March 4, 1979 Bhagavan declared that the *Real Untouchables* are those who misuse their Divine Strength by allowing it to be submerged with traits of Ashraddha (Inattentiveness); Avishvasa (Faithlessness); Ahamkara (Ego); and Asuya (Jealousy). He further asserted that the association of the letter A with words representing immortal qualities (e.g., Shraddha) in Man results in the destruction of those immortal qualities and renders him to become an untouchable. So in order to liberate from untouchability one should liberate himself, through Sadhana and attachment to God, from the clutches of the Four As. When I was listening to these declarations of Bhagavan that day, suddenly I realised I am getting satisfactory answers to my core questions. Immediately it became crystal clear to me that God is not but Man is the culprit so far as the creation of untouchability on the planet is concerned. Further from Baba's fascinating interpretation of untouchability it became apparent that untouchables can and do exist in all communities, in all religions and in all nations. Bhagavan asserted that untouchability could be eradicated only by the removal of the choking veil of Four As, thus allowing the Divine strength in each person to operate with full force. It became clear to me that since the Good Lord has given initially the same quantum of Divine Strength to each person, the removal of the veil of Four As should render the so-called untouchables equal to others. To bring home the point that selfish people, and not God, who created the tools of Caste and Religion in order to divide and rule, Baba always declares: "There is only one Caste and that is the Caste of humanity. There is only one religion and that is the religion of Love."

How fortunate we are that Bhagavan decided to move among us in order to reestablish Sanathana Dharma with all its splendour and glory! Let us all strive to be worthy of His Grace.

Why Spirituality?

A life of Spirituality or a Spiritual life means a life devoted to earnest effort for realising and uniting with the Divine. The term Spiritual life in itself may sound somewhat like emphasising the obvious. For, without the Divine spirit there can be no life. As has been said, not a single blade of grass can move without the Divine will. It is one Infinite Divine Consciousness commonly referred to as God, that permeates and activates the entire creation.

Modern science has proved that even apparently inert substances have activity in them—activity of the fundamental particles in different configurations characteristic of each substance. Hence all life has inevitably to be spiritual. And yet, it is not uncommon that a person interested in spirituality is ordinarily looked upon as rather odd, and as taking to the spiritual path perhaps out of some frustration in life, or for some material benefit.

Is it necessary that these should be causes for a person to take to the spiritual path? What could be more natural for a human being as the embodiment of the Divine spirit, than to try to identify himself and unite with that spirit? If he does not attempt this will he not be deceiving himself and labouring under a cloud of continuous delusion? As Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said, 'for the consummation of human evolution and realisation by man of his highest goal, religion and spiritual discipline are very essential'. He has said—'More than food for the stomach, man needs food for the spirit.'

The common man may question—since memory does not continue from birth to birth, why should man bother in this life about what happens to him after death. Instead, make the best of his life by trying to satisfy earthly desires by whatever means available. Studies in spiritual science have shown that while the Divine spark in each person is the same and part of the Infinite Consciousness that is Divine, it acquires in each human being an individuality of its own, and that this individuality continues its existence separately even after the disintegration of the body. This individuality is determined by the strength of the ego, the desires and thoughts, actions and reactions and a variety of other factors which go to make up the complex human personality. A vital part of the complexity of the human being is that he is surrounded not merely by the seen material world, but also by certain unseen spiritual worlds or planes in which his consciousness continues its existence after shedding the material body, depending on the 'strength and nature of thoughts, desires and actions in the material plane. According to the Devi Bhagavata and Vishnu Bhagavata, these planes are seven in number, namely, Bhuloka (material plane) Bhuva Loka (astral plane), Sva Loka (heavenly plane), Maha Loka, Jana Loka, Tapa Loka and Sathya Loka. The Mundakopanishad and the Chandogyanopanishad also refer to these different planes.

The thoughts and actions of man in the material plane leave a corresponding impression or effect on one or other of the spiritual planes, the noblest and the purest thoughts and actions leaving their impression on the Sathya Loka and the grossest or devilish thoughts leaving an impression on the astral plane at the other extreme. The intermediate thoughts and actions would leave their impressions on the other planes depending largely on the degree of purity and unselfishness in each case.

In the course of a man's life he builds up impressions all the time on these planes, the impression in each plane depending on the nature and strength of his thoughts and actions in the material plane. These impressions act as encrustations round the Divine spirit within him, imparting a separate identity or individuality to it, which can be said to be his soul or the Jivataman. On the disintegration of the body, i.e. death of the person the soul continues its existence and retains its consciousness in any or all of these planes, tormented by the desires corresponding to the impressions left in each plane, but without the capacity to fulfill them in the absence of the body which it no longer occupies.

The duration of existence in any plan would depend, again, on the strength of the impressions left in that plane in the course of the person's earthly existence. This kind of existence for the soul continues until such time it takes on another birth. For example, if, as a net result of the thoughts and actions in the material plane, the soul is left with the predominant desire to seek liberation, the next birth may be in a highly spiritual family thus facilitating the course of the soul towards liberation. If, at the other extreme, the soul is left only with evil desires, the birth may be in an atmosphere full of evil. This process would go on all the time, each new birth giving an opportunity to the individual soul to improve itself and march towards the final goal of liberation and merging with the Infinite Divine.

It follows from this process that if the individual does not utilise this opportunity given to it, it would have to go through an interminable cycle of births and deaths with the inevitable experience of acute sufferings and apparent joy whereas, with a determined effort on the part of the individual to lead a spiritual life, his life would be happier and he would thereby expedite the process of progressive evolution towards the ultimate goal of merging with the Infinite.

As Divinity, is the source of and the ultimate in perfection, harmony and peace in every respect, the life of a person who follows the spiritual path will inevitably be based on the elimination of all that is evil and the prosecution of all that contributes towards perfection, efficiency, beauty, harmony, peace and happiness.

As Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said, spiritual living is not merely, an intellectual exercise; it is right living, good conduct and moral behaviour. A society consisting of individuals following the spiritual path cannot but be an active instrument for bringing about peace, harmony and happiness in the world. As a corollary, a society made up of individuals not following the spiritual path would be a menace to the peace and happiness of mankind.

—D. Hejmadi

All that I long for

'Tis but words of illusion to describe our Baba
'tis but a futile attempt to explain the One
who wears the red stained robe
and yes it is just a little imagining
to fathom the One Supreme Lord
If a poet could write, and a singer sing in
lovely tunes of Thy glory,'
what words could be used
what sounds to be heard
to translate Thy wonder
in tangible digestible nectar
at least enough for 'buddhi' to decipher
and 'manas' to wander
What sounds other than the ever-vibrating Primeval Pranava
can be said that You are
what amount of love is there to utter
when Thy NAME is spoken
May be best as said with fewest words
that with death and bodies
return to dust that
Thy Lotus Feet be all that I long for

—*Hollander, U. S. A.*

How the Avatar Works

Confronted with the intractable problem of mass poverty in India, one often hears the question asked why Sathya Sai Baba does not direct His astounding powers to the miraculous eradication of poverty.

Questioners in this category desire a magical solution, by a wave of a wand or hand, to a long and continuing sore in the social fabric. It is believed that the instantaneous mass production of food grains, for instance, would banish hunger and poverty by the simple procedure of handing out free bags of rice, dal, and so on. Free distribution of bales of cloth, and rent-free housing are similarly implied.

One needs to distinguish between relief measures to alleviate acute distress and a permanent solution of the undesirable condition.

Handouts of food, clothing and money to the chronically poor and underprivileged members of society will only serve to degrade their humanity, relegate them to a state of permanent beggary.

It will ruin hopes of the growth of the sense of human dignity, self-respect, self-confidence, and acceptance of personal responsibility. Indiscriminate charity is a double-edged sword.

Any plan or scheme of upliftment which ignores the fundamental principle of assisting the poor to achieve self-confidence, self-reliance and responsibility as individuals and families is doomed to failure.

Social changes of the kind envisaged in the eradication of mass poverty call for massive programmes of education and training in many kinds of skills, family planning to regulate size of population to national resources, employment creation, investments on the land and in industry, improved management for the growth of the economy, and time.

It is not sufficient to raise a person or community out of the ranks of the poverty-stricken by providing food, clothing and shelter from Above, by a beneficent Avatar or government. One must also see to it that they do not slip back into old patterns of living through some habits of improvidence, weakness of character, incompetence, incorrect values and attitudes, or through the continuance of exploitative institutions and practices.

Not even an Avatar can raise a person from poverty who is unwilling to make the effort. God helps those who help themselves. On the other hand, willing individuals and families require the help and encouragement of government, and enlightened leadership.

Thus, a radical psychological revolution has to take place in human minds and hearts to eradicate mass poverty. That will form the seedbed from which appropriate policies, plans, programmes and institutions will sprout.

The Avatar's attitude to mass poverty is a cosmic attitude. God does not create poverty. He has endowed the earth with abundance. Man himself, through greed and incompetence, has created and perpetuates poverty. Man must learn to manage his affairs better to improve the quality of life. This attitude accords with our present human understanding. The Avatar can and will release waves of spiritual energy to provide support for cleansing the social system of impurity and obstruction, for strengthening weak minds and will. The Avatar contributes directly to the solution of human problems, to alleviate human suffering by pointing the direction of growth, by releasing human creativity.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the Avatar of our times, shows the way by living a life based on the eternal principles of Sates (truth, integrity), Dharma (righteousness Justice, duty), Prema (love, friendliness, co-operation, mutual helpfulness) and Santhi (peace, calmness, absence of greed, hate, fear).

—Dr. S. Cooppan, Durban (South Africa)

Jyotirgamaya

(From Inaugural Address, Hon'ble Justice **Sri V. R. Krishna Iyer**, Supreme Court of India)

This is a spiritual supplement to the curricular material that colleges impart too heavy an undertaking for me or anybody vocally and superficially to perform today, but Baba does it silently, smilingly and by sheer presence every day. We are but *alibis*, rather, instruments; no more. What comes from the depths of my mind now is what Nehru said of the Mahatma once, because it aptly applies to Baba:

"Where he walks is hallowed ground;
where he sits is shrine."

Sceptics and critics, scientists and rationalists, accepting their *bona fides*, seek fragments of Truth but are too bewildered to see the whole Truth beyond sensory grasp and materialist measure. But Truth will out and the science of materialisation and allied phenomena will cease to be mysteries once we realise the Higher Truth or Super-Science which is Divine Materialism. What they miss is the greater miracle of Baba's gospel of infinite love, profound compassion, world brotherhood, *Advaita* and their variations and refinements delivered as if the Prophets of the past had been resurrected into Human Advent, with all the six superlative attributes of Bhagavan recited in the Vishnupurana. The words of Einstein may well be applied to Baba:

"Generations to come will scarce believe that such
a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth."

So, with reverence and humility, I speak a few words from this sanctified auditorium on the sublime theme of Culture and Spirituality and, more particularly, *Prem Sans* which life is a span mis-spent and academic degrees mere measure of surface skills, if the deep ocean within, of which our externalia are wavy reflections, is left unexplored. Education is hollow, knowledge half-baked and scholarship a burden if we miss the meaning of the Law of Love or are alienated from those higher values which humanize the mind and divinize the man. What are men but sheep or goats if their life is not lifted by human ascent and graced by divine descent into loving feeling for every created being? It is platitudinous, yet profound, that:

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

Man as animal is violent, but as Spirit is non-violent. The moment he awakes to the Spirit within, he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards Ahimsa or rushes to his doom. That is why the prophets and *Avatars* have taught the lesson of Truth, Harmony, Brotherhood, Justice, etc.—all attributes of Ahimsa.

Even nationalists and revolutionaries sacrifice themselves out of love for their brethren. All great and good things are done out of love, not out of mercenary motive. The battle of life is won by the power of *prem* and the messages of prophets have exhorted people to have a *feel* of the Universal Self, of Karuna, brotherhood, love and sacrifice. That is why no true education can avoid the transformation of the psychic inside.

The Academia pack the student's mental portmanteau with knowledge of Matter and arts of the world while true culture nourishes the human inside with wisdom about Reality and science of the soul. In Baba's words, science, conventionally taught, is outside, wisdom, in its essence, is inside. The transcendental values are irrelevant at school; the teaching of information is irrelevant to Truth. John Locke rightly said:

"A child's brain is a fire to be ignited, not a pot to be filled."

Through parables and anecdotes, through teachings and experience Baba has transformed men by igniting their spirit, not feeding their credulity.

He has pierced the illusion of sensory existence but underscored the role of form in the story of the son who nursed the ailing mother and wept when she died. The mother's form had functional relevance. He made a distinction between spiritual information as a trade and spiritual experience as an awakening. Nor are austerities a certitude of realisation. Said Sai Baba:

A million people sit cross-legged in meditation. No one gains liberation from bondage. What is the point of it all? If even the guru gained liberation, there might be some value. But even that does not happen.

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man, said Swami Vivekananda. And perfection is the unfolding of personality, not the current polemics about plus two and allied politics of unlettered disputes about the calculus of school and college courses, vocational and book-centred patterns. The worth of the human person revolves round culture and character which, in turn, depend on the measure of one's compassion and control of passion. The super-relevance of this extra-curricular but ultra cultural Summer Spectrum of Courses consists in its elevating impact on the soul. Its absence elsewhere in our country makes college campuses ubiquitously restless, examinations violent and student careers dismal.

Holistic education draws forth the divine in the human and is more than informational and instructional and higher than acquisition of material skills and temporal arts. It is creative, cultural and character building. True education spiritually sensitizes the student to the Advaitic bond between Man, Creation and Creator. It enlightens the being into an awareness of the Cosmic and fills the student with a sense of service to suffering fellow creatures in the spirit of worship of the One Beyond everyone, yet present everywhere. Baba puts it puissantly:

Man has to worship God in the form of man. God appears before him as a blind beggar, an idiot, a leper, a child, a decrepit old man, a criminal, or a mad man. You must see even behind these veils, the Divine Embodiment of Love, Power and Wisdom, the Sai, and worship Him through *Seva* or service.

In sum, true education transforms consciousness into the Upanishadic teaching:

"All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion. By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy; lust not after any man's possession."

This integral part of education cultivates in the aspirant the constant feeling of union with the Eternal Presence while engaged in individual action: *Yogasthah kuru Karmani*. The inspirational Sai presence and the Supramural moral essence of these courses shift the focus of schooling from examination halls to vibrating hearts, from top marks to deep hearts, from packing the brain-bag to the point of brain fag, to charging the spirit with higher values to respond to the call of the divine. Culture is the promotion of this supra-mental process and is distinguished from the end-product of animal evolution. These Summer Courses, directed by Baba are geared to the goal of *Jyotirgamaya* and this perspective is the great contribution of the Sai System to heal the aches and agues of our educational system which is currently lost in many non-issues vociferously fought. One of the sayings of Baba is pertinent:

The end of wisdom is freedom, the end of culture is perfection, the end of knowledge is love, the end of education is character.

It is time that we wean our colleges from becoming houses of vice and violence, drugs and addictions, crass materialism and gross hedonism. The danger to the survival of modern man in the contemporary world comes from the symbiosis of the literacy of the head and illiteracy of the heart and more terribly, from the moral neutrality and pseudo-rational bigotry of science, deaf to the duty to society and its *Santhi* and blind to the burgeoning superscience and the break-through in psychic exploration. Science of the Spirit is master of the Science of Matter which obscurantist scientists do not realise. All those whose souls are hungry, whose hearts are empty and whose heads are heady should know that:

Education without character, science without humanity, commerce without morality are useless and dangerous (Baba).

At this point I wish to emphasise that my thesis is not negation or refutation of materialism but affirmation and integration of spiritualism. Baba, through these courses brings about a fundamental change in our world-view, a critical mutation in our consciousness. Edgar Mitchell, the astronaut scientist in his book "Psychic Exploration—A challenge for Science" observes about transformation of human consciousness:

It would restore health to our divided psyches, unity to our fractured society, and harmony to the unbalanced environment. Thus far, science has mostly produced fragmentation. But health is wholeness. To "cure" science, we must, as philosopher Dane Rudhyar says, "build greater wholes."

Now is the time to develop our non-rational abilities into a "subjective technology, which will begin the wedding of science and religion, reason and intuition, the physical and the spiritual.

This union of head and heart; insight and instinct, will ensure, that as science comes to comprehend the nonmaterial aspect of reality as well as it knows the material—that is, as science approaches omniscience—our knowledge will become wisdom, our love of power will become the power of love, and the universal man of cosmic consciousness can then emerge.

Out of the Workshop

The Universe is the best University for man; Nature is his best teacher. With an observant mind he can learn many lessons from rivers and hills, from birds and beasts, from stars and flowers and from trees. The trees offer cool shade to all who seek it; they do not deny it to anyone on the basis of caste, creed or colour. They offer their fruits to all, irrespective of their social or economic status. Of course, every state is now engaged in planning for prosperity. Prosperity is to be welcomed but that alone is not enough. Prosperity without the will to share it will only breed fear and anxiety.

Human nature is an amalgam of animal, human and divine characteristics. Love, compassion, humility, charity—these are all divine. One has to cultivate these, in order to be at peace, with oneself and others. These spiritual qualities are the real lifesavers for man. It is for this reason that Bharatiya culture placed much emphasis on them. They elevate humans into the status of the Divine.

These qualities are not the products of scholarship. Mastery of various fields of knowledge about the objective world leads only to the greed for wealth, for luxury, for fame and for the accumulation of authority over others. It urges man to lead a life of uncontrolled licence. Scholarship does not confer "real education." Virtue and character—these alone reveal the educated person, eager to engage himself in self-less service. Morality has to be practised and not simply be talked about. The Gurus of old taught only from experience; they loved their pupils and sought to correct their faults and failings, in order to make them happy and useful. When the pupils finally left his home the Guru exhorted them to follow two Sutras (Epigrams) which were as essential for life as the two Netras (Eyes)—Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara (Speak Truth; Walk on the path of Dharma or Righteousness). The Guru had the faith that the Shishya (pupil) would take the advice to heart, for, he himself was the living proof of their value and validity. The Guru usually takes great care to remove from the heart of the pupil the weeds of evil habits and tendencies, to implant therein the seeds of Love, to insist on Sadhana for purifying his mind and to render him strong enough to overcome temptations of all kinds.

Sathya (Truth) sustains the Cosmos. Dharma protects and promotes the peace of mankind. All activities have to be infused with the ideals of Sathya and Dharma. Dharma never suffers decline; only the practice of Dharma declines. So, Divine Incarnation takes place to restore faith in Dharma, to revitalise the practice of Dharma, and to demonstrate that the practice of Dharma confers peace, joy and prosperity. If Dharma is ignored, it amounts to sacrilege, for Dharma is God and God is Dharma. People see God in a picture, an icon, or a plaster of Paris figurine but God is most manifest in Dharma. Only those who believe in Dharma can be called 'the faithful'; those who do not are the genuine atheists, though they indulge in profuse use of the word 'God'.

They may spend enormous sums for pilgrimages and for rituals and ceremonies but that will not take them any nearer God. What profit can they earn in the spiritual field, if they adore God and at the same time, insult and injure their fellowmen?

One has to visualise God in every living being and worship Him through Love. Therein lies the supremacy of man. Ownership of enormous wealth is a dangerous burden; authority over many men is a dubious asset. Love is the most precious treasure to be sought after. Virtue is the wealth to be won. Ravana won the Grace of God but as boons from Him, he prayed for paltry, personal, fleeting pleasures, which ultimately led to his ruin and the destruction of the entire Rakshasa clan which followed his footsteps. The Kauravas shaped themselves into embodiment of aggressive greed and so were exterminated on the field of battle by their cousins—the Pandavas—who were the embodiments of justice and humility.

Faith in the ideal develops Love; Love develops Peace and Serenity; they lead to God; God confers unshakeable Ananda Bliss. Man seeks but his efforts reward him with pain, for they are directed towards the accumulation of riches, or of power or fame of any kind. Man must possess a source of detachment which will prevent him from getting entangled beyond escape in the coils of greed, envy and hatred.

Once you are reinforced by Love and Compassion and charged with this sense of detachment, from the consequences of duties well done, you can plunge into activity that can defeat the forces of injustice, cruelty and untruth. You must, each one, be a Karma Veer, a hero in action. Stand on your own feet; do not imitate others. Do not be a slave to the fickle mind, pursuing the senses. Follow the dictates of your intellect.

You have been in this workshop for one full month. Return to your homes now, full of reverence, humility and the eagerness to serve those who serve others but with no one to do them Loving Service.

You must have noticed three hands in the wall-clock. When the second hand which is the most active moves 60 paces, the minute hand performs a little jump and advances one bit. When the minute hand moves 60 paces, the hour hand has advanced a twelfth of the circumference. All the activity of the 2 other hands is to serve the hour hand which progresses silently and steadily. The second hand represents the body which has to be active and alert. Its round of activity is for the purpose of serving the minute hand, the heart. When the heart fulfils its duty of purification and clarification, the hour hand reveals the time. That is to say, the Atmic principle manifests itself.

Whatever you have imbibed here from the lectures of scholars and devotees, from contact with fellow-students of other States, and from these evening discourses, try to put them into practice. I direct you to practise at least one or two of the lessons instilled into you. (1) Do not keep in your memory the good you have done to others and the evil others have done unto you. (2) Revere your mother and father; do not cause them grief; pay them grateful homage. (3) Develop your contacts with the villagers and be engaged in improving their living conditions and in strengthening their faith in God. This is the reason why "Village Service" was a part of your daily programme in the Camp. (4) Join the Sathya Sai Seva Dal Organisation, nearest your home and try to learn from it the best way of channelising your skill and enthusiasm.

Always meditate on the *Oneness* that interpenetrates this apparent Diversity. "Brothers and Sisters" you repeat before every gathering. But, the brotherhood that existed between Rama and Lakshmana is absent now. That, was the Supreme Stage. Now, brothers named Rama and Lakshmana fight for property and spend it all in litigation leading up to the Supreme Court. The real ideal should be the higher one—the ideal of Oneness, the other being only you in another Form, with another Name.

—*Valedictory Discourse, Summer Camp. 21-6-97*

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7

The different countries of the world fall into two categories—Karma-bhoomi and Bhoga-bhoomi—countries where the people are devoted to activities with spiritual motivation and countries where the people pursue the pathways of the senses, with no higher purpose to guide them. The categories emphasise the ideals of the people, down the ages. Bharat or India is the Karma-bhoomi, where the people have discovered the proper goal of all activity, namely the glorification of God, resident both within and without.

Karma is inevitable; it is immanent in every thought. It is of two kinds: Material and Spiritual, Loukik (connected with this world) and Vaidik (drawn from the Vedas or scriptural injunctions). All Karma that merely sustains life is material. The Vaidik that elevates the human into the Divine is based on either the Vedas or the Shruti or on later texts like the Sastras or the Smriti. They can be any of the three mental, emotional or physical. They are also determined by the activities which the individual has adopted either in previous lives or in this. The consequences of acts done in past lives that are affecting this life are called Prarabdha; the Karma that one is engaged in now which is bound to affect the future is called Aagami; the stored Karma that is slowly being worked out by the individual in life after life is called Sanchita.

The Shruti and the Smriti texts of India have thus classified Karma, on the basis of the consequences it creates in the life of the individual. The word Karma is short and crisp; it is used freely by all and sundry. But, the idea and ideals it conveys are of great significance to mankind. Karma is not simply physical; it is mental, verbal and manual. Each one can read into it as much value and validity as his reason can unravel.

Karma subsumes every activity of man—worldly, scriptural, and spiritual. All the three strands are, in truth, intertwined; the worldly Karma entails merit or demerit; the scriptural Karma is saturated with the experience of generations of good seekers; the spiritual devotes itself to the cleansing of the heart so that the indwelling God may be reflected therein. Karma is an overflowing stream—This stream that flows ever faster and faster turns the wheel of life and keeps it incessantly active.

Karma means movement, or that which urges the movement. Air moves in space; the moving air results in fire. It is the friction caused by aerial motion that makes the latent fire manifest. Living beings are able to maintain the temperature of the body, so long as air is breathed in and breathed out. The quicker the breath, the warmer the body. Warmth is the characteristic of fire. Fire is the origin of water. The Sun, as one can see, raises clouds. The particles of water get mixed with other elements and then, hardens into 'earth' (ground, soil). The earth produces and fosters plants and trees, which feed and foster man and keep him hale and healthy. These plants give the grain, that man lives upon and the seminal fluid that produces progeny is the gift of the grain. Thus is the Karma of creation effected and continued. This is how the Smriti summarises the process.

In short, Karma is observable here as movement, as progress, as evolution and as hereditary.

It is only natural and reasonable to expect that this vast flow, this constant movement must have something fixed and unmoving as its base and support. This is exactly what is posited as Atma or Parabrahma. The very first vibratory movement on that base happened when Parabrahma became Parameshwara and expressed the three thirsts for Juana (Wisdom), Ichha (Wish) and Kriya (Will). That very movement was known as the primordial Karma, the Karma of Being transforming itself into Becoming, the Karma of Srishti.

It is the importance of Karma that necessitated the triple aspects of Divinity, Brahma (who causes creation), Vishnu (who supports and sustains) and Maheshwara (who dissolves and destroys). It is the Law of Karma that rules the motions of the stars, the planets, the galaxies and other heavenly bodies in space. The same law directs and controls all that happens in all the worlds. It is inscrutable, in its very essence. No one can penetrate into the time or space when Karma was not. What, why, when and how—events do happen is beyond the capacity of man to predict with accuracy. They are laid down from eternity to eternity.

Just as a work being done or an activity which is engaging one can be referred to as Karma, no work being done and no activity being engaged in are also Karma! On seeing a person silent and calm; sitting quiet and doing nothing, we infer that he is free from activity. How, then, can he be described as doing Karma? What is meant by saying, "He is not doing any work," "He is not engaged in any activity?" That statement only means that "He is engaged in keeping himself away from any work or activity." So, it can be affirmed that men sometimes are busy doing work and sometimes busy with keeping work away from their attention; that is to say, they are engaged in Karma as well as A-karma. If he is not engrossed or attached with the Karma he does and is engaged in it as his duty, as his way of worship, and if he is not attached to the fruit of his action, then he can practise A-karma even in Karma. This is the highest Sadhana.

The very first act with which the career of a living being starts is "breathing and vibration of vital airs." When one thinks of it, it is wonderful how it happens. It is an amazing mystery. No human being resolves, at the moment of life, to draw in and breathe out the air that exists around him. It proceeds without being willed or wished for. Not only man but every living organism is evidence of this great marvel. Doubts may be raised, "How can anything happen to man without his knowledge or without his resolution?" It is best to answer this doubt by confessing that man cannot unravel such secrets. Even if an attempt is made to reply that "Nature is the cause," the question still remains, "What exactly is Nature?" Breathing begins when life begins; it is

automatic, natural act—it is said. But, all this is only saying the same thing in other words. They do not explain anything. It can as well be said that we are ignorant how it all happens just when it is most essential. It is indeed surprising that the act of breathing is a mystery even to the person who breathes.

When we reflect on the fact that yogis exercise their will and stop their pulse—beats and their inhaling-exhaling process, we realise the power of Will in inducing Karma. Karma we can infer, is not something hanging loose in mid-air! Unless we become doers, deeds do not emanate. "Na jaathi icchathi jethathe" says an axiom in the Nyayasastra. "As one knows, so one wishes; as one wishes, so one acts." The Vedanta Sutras also proclaim the same truth. "Yad dhyaati, tad icchati" (That on which attention rests, that is the thing wished for). "Yad icchati, tad karoti" (That on which the wish rests, that is the thing for which deeds are done). "Yad Karoti, tad bhavati" (That for which deeds are done, that is what he becomes.)

The manifest nature of the individual is moulded by desire. He shapes himself in line with his hopes, aspirations, attempts and achievements. Even his own future life is designed by him through his decisions and deeds. The force that his 'reason' exerts on him and which directs his will in specific directions is known as Prakriti, or 'Nature'. When once it is discovered that one's own level of intelligence is the prime factor in determining one's inclinations and desires, then, it is easy to follow the means by which one can win release from the hold of "Prakriti".

(To be continued)

Security for Society

Today man can, thanks to the advancement in Science and technology, move about in space and underwater, land on the moon and listen to the stars, but the pity of it is, he has lost the secret of living on earth with peace in his heart and in harmony with his fellowmen. He can beat the bird in the sky and the fishes in the sea, but he is helpless as a man. The innate purpose for which he has earned this human birth is being neglected in frantic pursuit of the petty pleasures derivable from the outer world. Thus he is only laying waste the years given to him. There is a divinity, higher than humanity, that is behind and beneath all man's activities. But, man is not aware of it and he fails to benefit by that awareness. His first task is to cognise this source of joy and peace. That divinity is like the thread in which the flowers are strung; we see only the garland; we do not cognise that string that hue, the flowers together and makes a garland out of a heap of blossoms.

Mankind is strung together by this inherent divinity. I see in this campus people from all the States and all the linguistic area of our country. I look upon this gathering as a garden shining with multicoloured blossoms. But, in spite of these differences and as a result of the underlying unity, you have met here in this Academy with the same ideal, undergoing the same training and welcoming the same series of experiences.

I wish to emphasise three guide-lines or Sutras which have to be followed to ensure success in your endeavours. Your responsibilities and your duties require that you should pay attention to these three. They are Duty, Discipline and Devotion.

For the Police, especially, Discipline is essential. Your job involves many trying moments, many worries and much exertion. Really, you are the custodians of peace and guards of security. Therefore, a disciplined mind that ever remains in equanimity is very necessary for you to lead peaceful happy lives. Equanimity can arise only from the spring of devotion in the heart. These days, even those who are educated and those who benefit by training courses such as yours, are anxious about the future and full of fear lest the standard of life to which they are accustomed may fall. How and by what means can I increase comforts in my life—that is the concern of everybody. No one worries about the happiness that he can contribute, the joy he can give, the duty, he can discharge. Every one is calculating the happiness others can give him, the joy he can extract from society and the duty that society owes to him. The number of those who concentrate on their responsibilities rather than their wants is very small. How can I as an individual get the maximum benefit out of society? —that is the urge. But, people forget that it is their primary duty to safeguard, the security and prosperity of the society of which they are the limbs. It is only when the individual is prepared to sacrifice his selfish desires and toil for the Welfare of society—that the nation will prosper. Then only will the world have peace. That is why the Vedas proclaim that man can have peace only when he renounces selfish desires. The Vedas condemn persons who accumulate wealth and who are ever immersed in activities that can add to their physical comfort. The man, who gives, receives even while he gives, more than what he gives. Do not strive for your own happiness but strive for the happiness of all; then you can derive greater happiness, with additional joy of having added to the happiness to others.

When you joined this Department of Public Service, you dedicated yourself to the service of Society and you decided to welcome all the incidental troubles and worries. You renounced an easy-going life in favour of the higher ideal of ensuring peace, safety and security in society. Faith in an omnipresent God will sustain you when you are overwhelmed by the ups and downs of life. Cultivate devotion and dedication and you can be ever at peace with yourself and the world. For, then, you can fulfill your duties with joy and with all your strength.

Nowadays, every person in authority talks of discipline and exhorts others to be disciplined, but we do not find in such even a trace of what they want others to have! You have come here, many of you far from your own states, for the purpose of equipping yourselves better for the jobs you have entered into. Feel it as your duty to benefit to the utmost from the course of training given here. Otherwise, you will be doing great injury to your own careers, and, more serious than this, causing injury to your motherland. Children of Bharat must live, not for the salary they get but for the chance of service they have secured. I advise you to develop faith in God and promote that devotion through duty and discipline. Earn fame as sincere servants of society and vigilant guardians of its safety.

Without an ever-present Faith in an all knowing God, life is dry and drab, shadowed by, despair and doom. Love of God and fear of sin, are the two primary needs for a happy life. Without these two, man becomes a monster. Man must be ever ready to sacrifice his selfish needs for the sake of the larger community. There is nothing so glorious as renunciation. Be honest, be proficient in

detachment and with God installed in your hearts march forward to offer your talents and skills for the duties you have undertaken.

—*Discourse by Bhagavan, National Police Academy, Hyderabad, 29-3-1979*

Tears of Love and Sorrow

Unlike people living in many other parts of the world most of us in America work five days and have the Saturday and Sunday weekend off. The workdays for most exact a toll. Folks need to wind down to a slower pace in preparation for the next week's struggles.

We had arisen in the very early hours of a particular Saturday morning. We had gone to the Source and that wondrous feeling of being inwardly serene was upon us. The pre-dawn meditation had pacified the mind. When one forsakes meditating it is easy to generate ideas to consume the time away. When uncontrolled waves of thoughts pound on the beaches of the mind one runs in all directions trying to obey the demands of the mental command post.

There was very little chance for any flimsy thoughts to chase me out into a world of illusion that morning. It was with this feeling of inner joy that I gazed towards the blue Pacific Ocean through the open window. From the garden wafted the exotic jasmine blossom gift and from within the shrubs came the sweet chirps and trills of little birds welcoming in the new day.

In the midst of those precious moments My Beloved whispered deep within my Inner Ear, "Invest in yourself." How wonderful it was to hear Him and to again have the assurance. He is always watching and guiding His devotees. May I now share with you, my Sister and Brothers His Divine Teaching—

"Man in his ignorance always tries to fill in every moment he has. At the mind's slightest whim he launches himself into activities some of which may consume the balance of his life. Such is the strength of the thoughts of a person who has weakened and not awakened himself to his own Divinity.

"Use every moment to live within the realms of your own Self. Allow it to fill the living Temple with its sweet Presence. Deep devotion awakens the Spirit. An everlasting peace comes to you. It is this Peace that is one of the miracles of life. It is the beginning of Freedom that is within and so seldom achieved. Unrestrained minds drown the joy of Life.

"When savings are placed into a bank account interest is expected. Is it not? When time is invested in being devotional 'dividends' are always forthcoming. Inner time deposits are profitable. Unlike worldly gains that are only measured by percent ages, measurements and things, the Divine Trust Accounts pays a much sweeter amount of interest.

"When the life span is running out, then and sometimes only then, a person belatedly realizes he has selfishly and willfully squandered away his time. All of his earthly gains have to be left

behind. One may have a perfectly legal Grant Deed to property but with the departure he has to lose hold of the title. Even the paper it was written on becomes dust when its time runs out. Then there are those agreements and contracts prepared so carefully. They too vanish when the Lord calls. Ponder over such investments that consume life itself. Those blinded to their own true Inner treasures have little time to re-evaluate themselves.

"To them I say invest in your Self while the soul is still embodied in your temple of flesh. Discover your own Divine Inner wealth. Once `found' the joy will transcend anything else you have ever experienced. The more time you take to walk My Path the less you can spend on detours seeking false assets.

"Once you are truly aware that within yourself there is Pure Gold you will have Divine `assets' to draw upon throughout Eternity. You already have available to you such blessed accounts as those of Truth, Happiness, Love and Bliss and many more.

"With tears of love and sorrow I implore you again and again to approach Me. Turn from the traps and attractions that rob you of the little precious time left. Turn to Me and I will lead you into the Light that brightens the soul that has been wondrously entrusted to you to nurture during your visit to this Planet of Dust." His words ended.

As this Penn ceased writing a colorful humming bird came and hovered so close to the ear that Baba had been whispering into. It seemed that the right chords had been touched. In the garden patio where I had been writing and as the Winged Messenger vanished from sight I dived deeper into the Ocean of His Consciousness.

—Charles Penn, California, U. S. A.

Death is pictured by some as a terror-striking God who rides a monster-buffalo, and pounces on you with a noose. No, the noose is your own making. He does not pounce; he gives advance notice of his arrival to take you—notice in the form of intimations like grey hair, falling teeth, failing vision, deafness of hearing, folding of the skin etc. He does not ride any beast; he is only another name for Time. It is Time that creeps steadily towards you and shears the cord of life. So, utilise the capacity for Karma with which you are endowed to liberate yourself from the clutches of Time. The law of Karma holds out hope for you; as the Karma, so the consequence. Do not bind yourself further by seeking the fruit of Karma; offer the Karma at the Feet of God; let it glorify Him; let it further His splendour. Be unconcerned with the success or failure of the endeavour. Then, Death can have no noose to bind you with. Death will come as a liberator, not a jailor.

—Baba

The Closest Friend

The actual work with the children is a joy to the teachers (or gurus, as they are named by Bhagavan). But in addition to the happiness brought to both gurus and pupils, the Bal Vikas

program has a goal, an objective. The goal is clearly set forth by Bhagavan. He declares, "The End of Education is Character."

Bhagavan's concept of the educational process as character-building immediately tells us that the help of the children's parents is important to success in character building. The guru instructs and inspires the pupil, but the pupil's habitual behavior is shaped by home and society (school, playmates, T. V., etc). The society, the world, is not going to change itself to accommodate us, but we can certainly change the immediate world in respect to the circumstances of our program. Hopefully, we can expand our world to include the parents and homes of the Bal Vikas pupils. Parents love their children and in many instances they will be willing to help if they can see that the guru and the program are both without ulterior motive, and that the only interest is the present and future well-being of the child.

What is meant by "Character" in Bhagavan's educational program for children? What is meant is purity of mind and heart, and strength of mind and love. Character such as this becomes the natural state of the child when there is right education coupled with love for God and fear of sin.

The child can learn to fear sin when he or she understands that what happens to people in life is the reflection of their actions, and that great suffering comes as a result of sinful action-sinful action being action that expresses such negative feelings and tendencies as hate, greed, lust, anger, jealousy and pride (ego). By understanding that sin is the greatest of all dangers because of the suffering that will inevitably reflect on the sinner, the child will learn to hesitate and consider before acting when he or she is attacked by one of the above named tendencies, which are the deadly enemies of happiness.

Love for God comes when the child understands that He loves each child with a most tender and deep love. God is the closest of all friends to children (as well as to adults!). It is natural for us, both children and adults, to love that which belongs to us, and God becomes ours if we pray to Him that we want Him to be always in our hand to always protect, love and guide us. God is the only possession that we have that will never fall away and leave us. And he is the only friend who will always return our love with even greater love. Tell the child loving stories of God, of His beauty, His wisdom, and that He is ever present beside us, and that in prayer the child can talk to God as the dearest and closest of all friends and companions. The natural love for God that is in every heart will begin to unfold in the life of the child.

Right education for the Bal Vikas child is not the duplication of the curriculum of the school; the school also is doing its best to prepare children for life. Right education in the Bal Vikas program is the child's building of his or her character, and this is where the help of the parents is almost irreplaceable. For, those inner tendencies which are the enemies of the child's happiness now and of his life in the future must be observed and cut short whenever they arise in the character and behavior of the child. And the guru is simply not with the child long enough and moreover does not have the authority to reprimand and eradicate the harmful tendencies.

Every adult has had the opportunity to observe at one time or another that young children are loving, trusting, happy and want only to play and be loved. That is, the heart and mind are pure when new and fresh in the new human being. But deep beneath the child's loving nature are

unfavourable tendencies and cravings that have been cultivated and developed, we know not when or where, but they are there and as the child ages these tendencies come out of the seed form and start to grow. These tendencies are described as being of the nature of hatred, lust, anger, jealousy, greed and egotism (pride), and if they freely find their way into action, they multiply and take command of the person and ruin the life. The vital force of desire gives strong energy to these tendencies and it is too much for the average child to cope with by himself. He and she need help. The parent who is watchful and observant is in the best position to give the needed help to the child. Whenever a wrong tendency ("wrong " means unhappy and harmful) shows itself, the parent should cut it short and stop its growth. And whenever a good tendency shows itself it should be encouraged. These very important items can and should be explored and discussed between gurus themselves and with parents.

The relationship with parents will require diplomacy and tact. Some parents provide an ideal home of life for the child and serve as a good model for the child's learning process. Young children learn more by imitation than by precept. Just as young animals learn to survive by imitating the parents, it is so also with young children. Unfortunately, not all parents are ideal models, and the imitation process of the child may result in learning negative character traits. Then, again, many parents have the idea that the child should not be corrected but should grow in "freedom", and the children are not taught to curb wrong behavior and to cultivate good behavior. In a number of instances the parents are not going to be of much help in the development of excellent character in their children, and where this is the case the guru will be carrying responsibility.

Eventually, as the child grows more independent, only self-discipline will be of help, and teaching the child the way of self-discipline is a primary duty for the Bal Vikas guru. Bhagavan names three essentials of character building as Duty, Devotion and Discipline. In order to teach successfully, the guru in his or her own life must be an example of duty, devotion and discipline. Bhagavan gives emphasis to this truth for teachers by saying, "My Life is My Message."

Duty is Dharma, righteous behaviour. When asked to explain Dharma, Bhagavan said that the essence of the Dharmic way of life was expressed by Jesus when He said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Each task that faces the child, each duty will be guided correctly by resort to this golden rule as set forth by Jesus.

Devotion is love for God, adoring Him, thinking always of Him, making Him the most intimate and closest aspect of one's life. Of the three facets of character building—duty, devotion and discipline—to the extent that devotion is encouraged and gains in strength as a facet of the child's character, to that extent duty and discipline develop naturally and easily. Where devotion to God leads, the other two inevitably follow. .

To summarize: the Bal Vikas guru teaches character. This the guru does by the example of his or her own life, and by encouraging the child to love God, develop self-discipline and to act according to the Golden Rule of Jesus rather than according to self-indulgence. The means may be stories, plays, role-playing or whatever good method comes to attention from correspondence with other gurus of other Centers, and from the guru's own talent.

The guru should keep in mind that the only real solution for any problem is to dissolve the problem by laying it at the Lotus Feet of God. He is the Creator and Sustainer of life and the Destroyer of all that keep us separate from His Peace, Love and Strength—proving that we abandon ego ideas and acknowledge that He is the only Source and the only Refuge.

—*John Hislop*

The New Year Pledge

Today is the holy Yugadi day. We bid farewell to the year gone by and welcome the New Year. We hope that during this Siddharthi our time and activity will be meaningful. We pray that the new spring should confer on all beings longevity, health and goodness. Pleasant experiences and unpleasant memories of the previous year that linger in the mind contain many good lessons. When one reviews the past year within oneself, one can realise how much time was spent selfishly and how much in service or sever.

Man has achieved some progress physically and scientifically but morally he has fallen. He is sliding down due to his egoism. What is the cause of this fall? Selfishness, ignorance and Avidya are the only causes. It is selfishness that is now operating every thought, word and deed. Those who seek the joy of liberation surd burn this selfishness in the fire of Jnana. Otherwise there is no future.

Do not misuse time which is precious. Time fleets fast. The span of life is like a porous pot. Not to realise this is the basic ignorance. Make good use of time by recognising what is permanent and true in human life.

There are 564.000 small villages in our country. Their condition is sad and pitiable. People like you living in the towns must involve themselves in social services programmes and help these fellowmen. It is because of your selfishness that you become useless to others. When can you recognise the good in others? You entertain all kinds of hopes and finally get deceived. People preach a millions things but do not practice even one.

We say from platforms "Brothers and Sisters." We feel that we are all brothers. But, even real brothers wrangle over properties and go up to the Supreme Court in litigation. So, instead of thinking that we are brothers merely in words we should cultivate the higher spiritual feeling of 'Oneness'. The fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man become meaningful only then.

Today is the holy Yugadi Day. It is not enough if we wear new clothes and partake in feasts. Launch a new movement to mark the New Year. People in the villages have no medical and educational facilities. They have no drinking water, no sanitary arrangements. They have no food to eat. Provide these facilities for them and there by realise Divinity. The need of the hour is the man of action, not the one who only talks. Our Bharat bhoomi is Karma bhoomi. Karma is exertion, effort. Bharat bhoomi is also the land which is known for its love of God.

Today our lives are tainted by a desire for wealth. Wealth makes a man intoxicated and mad. Money is necessary but it must have a limit. Excessive money can be harmful to the mind. It is more difficult to spend money than to earn it. It is even more difficult to take care of money. This difficulty has an advantage—put the money to good use by spending it for the rural folk and people in distress. It is not 'Dhana-moolam idam Jagat' but 'Dharma-moolam idam jagat'. If money grows, unrest also grows. Money brings sorrow with it. A rich man is harassed from three sides—the Government, his relations and thieves. God alone knows the agony suffered by a rich man. Those who amass wealth for the sake of their sons, themselves suffer privations, and ruin the very sons. So, give away your money in charity and make it purposeful. Members of Sathya Sai Organisations must tour every village and improve the lot of the rural folk. This is a new challenge for the members of the organisation.

I shall visit every village along with you, serve them without any discrimination of caste, creed, race and, class. I wish that the Sathya Sai Organisations should, from this day onwards, undertake programmes of rural uplift, go to each village and provide educational and medical facilities. Meditation and penance are useful to one's own self only but the good of the world at large is achieved through sacrifice. The Upanishads refer to sacrifice as the only means of salvation—Thyagenaikena Amritathwamaanasuh. So, I wish that from today onwards members of Sathya Sai Organisations should develop the spirit of sacrifice and provide the basic necessities of life for the rural masses. It is in the villages that a certain amount of morality and honesty is still left. I hope that all rich people will strive to improve the condition of the villages.

Does a festival mean only wearing new clothes and eating sweets? Get rid of old ideas and plant new ones. The bitter-sweet mix served on the Yugadi day symbolizes that one should treat pleasure and pain equally.

Children and Students must be trained to serve in rural areas. There are 2,55,00,000 children in our country today. Forty percent among them go about begging. It is not good to keep quiet when there are such hardship in the society around. We should give up Japa and sadhana and uplift such people through service and sacrifice. We should feel that Jana Seva is Janardana Seva and Manava Seva is Madhava Seva.

All of you should take the pledge on this New Year Day that you will serve the rural people to the best of your ability. You must do this as a sacred duty which goes beyond differences of politics, caste and creed. Such a feeling is strengthened by self-confidence and equanimity in joy and sorrow. We say we are all children of Bharat but in what way are we sustaining the culture of Bharat? Our Culture cannot be sustained without proper faith on our part. Faith and Self-confidence are essential for spiritual progress.

With the hope that you will regard service to villages as service to God, I offer my blessings to you.

—*Divine Discourse at Sivam, Hyderabad, on 28th March 1979*

The Spirit of Service

—*V. H. Narasimhan, Editor, Deccan Herald*

"By their fruits shall ye know them," says a famous adage. By that test, what shall we say about our system of education? If the products of the system have learnt nothing about the real values of life, have no respect for their teachers or elders, have little knowledge and less regard for their great spiritual and cultural heritage, and even the little knowledge they have picked up during nearly fifteen years of schooling and college is pitifully scrappy and hardly of any use facing varied challenges of modern life, the whole system must be regarded as a colossal lure and a frightfully expensive irrelevance.

Nearly thirty years ago, the University Education Commission, presided over by Dr. Radhakrishnan, emphasised the importance of moral and religious instruction as an integral part of the educational process. "We must civilise the human heart" said the commission. "Education of the emotions and discipline of the will are essential parts of a sound system of education. Religion is a permeative influence, a quality of life, an elevation of purpose."

Despite this sublime declaration of the higher values implicit in true education what we have witnessed in the country is a steady deterioration in the character and discipline of our students, the results of which we are only too well aware. Mass copying in examinations, assaults on Vice-Chancellors, principals and teachers, violence during college elections, destruction of public property during student agitation, mostly unconnected with educational needs have created an alarming situation which ought to cause profound concern among those who are anxious about the future of the country, which will depend largely on the character, competence, integrity and dedication of the younger generation, especially the educated youth.

The problem is well known. The question is how to solve it. One thing is clear. No attempt merely at tinkering with syllabuses and curricula and juggling with the number of years of study at school or college will cure the deep-seated maladies of the system. A basic change is needed in the entire attitude to the aims and purposes of education at all levels from the primary to the highest university level. The acquisition of knowledge is a small part of the educational process. The more important thing is to develop what the ancients called "Prajnana" the culture of the soul.

It is extremely unfortunate that out of an irrational conception of secularism, most of our political leaders and even many of our educationalists have sought to taboo religious or spiritual studies from the educational system. To most people who flaunt their secularism, the term is synonymous with contempt for religion. But secularism, as envisaged by the makers of the Indian Constitution, means complete freedom of thought, belief and worship and, so far as the State is concerned, equal respect for all religions and beliefs. Above all, in a country in which religion is deeply ingrained by the traditions and culture of centuries any attempt to divorce religion from education is bound to prove disastrous in all spheres of national life.

Example

It is in this context that the educational institutions established by Sri Sathya Sai Baba in different parts of the country offer a ray of hope as well as an inspiring example for the rest of the country. The atmosphere in these institutions is suffused with a spiritual aroma which can be sensed by the most casual visitor. Based on his philosophy of the good life, which is founded on the four principles of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, and Prema, the Sathya Sai educational institutions have achieved a remarkable integration of cultivation of the spirit together with the pursuit of the normal studies in the humanities and the sciences.

The measure of success achieved by this most significant revolution in education may be seen in the annual summer course in spirituality and culture which Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been conducting for students from all over the country since 1972. Starting with barely 278 students in the first year the benefit of the course has been extended to an increasing number of students. This year over a thousand students, including nearly 400 girls, from practically every State in the country participated in the course.

Apart from lectures on religions and spiritual subjects by experts from various fields and the sublime discourses on the Bhagavad-Gita by Sri Baba, a vital constituent of the summer course has been the participation of the students in social service in the neighbouring villages around Whitefield.

Although such social services are undertaken by students from other educational institutions, I noticed a significant difference in the way the students devoted themselves to this work. I found the students taking up this work as a form of spiritual sadhana: The main item in the programme of social service consisted of cleaning the villages, especially the drains, which were so badly clogged that they had become large cesspools, serving as breeding grounds for mosquitoes and posing a permanent threat to the health of the villagers.

When I visited two of the villages where the summer course participants were carrying on their cleaning up campaign, I realised how serious is the problem of drainage in the rural areas. In fact, it seems to me that there is no other need which is so urgent and vital for improving the quality of life in the rural areas as the provision of a proper water supply and drainage system. This is the key to rural health and without health even education becomes useless.

What impressed me most in the work of the students was the elan with which they got down to the by no means pleasant job of entering the drains, digging up the stinking sludge, deepening the channels and enabling the water to flow more easily out of the residential area. A batch of students from Delhi, who apparently belonged to well-to-do families, showed no sign of disgust or distaste for the kind of work they had to do, working in knee-deep mass of filthy drain water, they plunged with gusto into the job of removing the sludge and the accumulated garbage that had been thrown into the gutters.

I was also happy to note that the villagers, who at the beginning were watching with amusement the activities of the students came forward to lend a helping hand when some difficult task had to be done, like removing a big slab. Such co-operation between the outsiders who wish to serve the

villagers and the rural population is essential if the students' social service work is to lead to a permanent improvement in the conditions of living in the villages.

More than land reforms or financial aid or the setting up of welfare institutions, what is required for ensuring improvement in the quality of life of the rural masses is a new dedicated leadership, inspired by high ideas and capable of mobilising all the energies and enthusiasm of the rural population for a great co-operative effort. Such a leadership can come not from the ranks of the politicians, but only from those who have derived their impulse for service from the spiritual values of the country.

The young men and women coming out from the Sathya Sai educational institutions may well be the crusaders of the spirit who will provide the leadership in different walks of life, which the country and Society need.

Transplantation of the Heart

A temple is a reminder to the people around of the goal of life; it is a guide to greater spiritual endeavour; it is a step towards the Almighty; it is a warning against the vain pursuit after sensual pleasures. They reveal the path by which man can fulfill his destiny, realise the purpose for which he has been endowed with the human body with all its unique treasures of discrimination, imagination, intuition and capacity to keep aloof from material attractions. So, you must be appreciated for your efforts to have a temple in your village and inaugurate it today.

Embodiments of Love! Man is a bundle of bones clothed in muscle and fitted with communication nerves. As a base of this gross body, he has a subtle body too. It has its own hunger and thirst and life cannot be happy unless these too are fulfilled-the hunger to return to the Source, a thirst for the nectar that confers immortality. In the search for something to allay this hunger and this thirst, man sheets with countless obstacles, for, he does not know the road and is easily misled by his own senses, which profess to show him the road. It is only when some disaster or distress overpowers him that he becomes aware of the true path. The true path is the path that reveals the Atma within.

Just as a branch is part of the tree and is able to exist as the part, so each one of you is a part of Brahman, the Paramatma or Universal Self. Each one is part of the one and shines because of the same Divine Current that flows in and through. Villagers are leading lives and spending their days without the awareness of this unity of one with all. So, there are factions and groups in every village, which prevent welfare and prosperity, peace and harmony. Villagers must recapture and develop mutual cooperation; they must preserve unity and cultivate love and joy. Spend some time each day together in Bhajan and Satsang in this temple. Then, the day will be brighter, the conversation will be sweeter and life will be more full of harmony and happiness. Trusting in God strengthens your faith in your fellow men. You will love them more, suffer their faults and failings with greater sympathy and you will share in activities that serve the poor and the disabled. You will come to know that God loves those who love His children and He will shower grace on those who serve the weak, the meek and the ignorant.

Not only is this building in which the image of God has been installed, but the body of living being is a Temple, for, God has installed Himself therein and is waiting for recognition and reverential worship. That recognition will confer on us unbounded Bliss—far more than any worldly possession can give, far purer than any victory can confer. To recognise it, your minds have to be cleansed through good words, good thoughts and good deeds. Where can a fish find the greatest happiness—in water, in a full flooded river or the sea? Place it in a gem-set golden plate; can it derive any joy from that good fortune? No. So too, man can be happy only when he is merged in thoughts of the God from whom he has come, by whom he lives and into whom he merges.

From dawn to dusk you toil for eking out a livelihood; I am asking you to devote at least ten minutes a day to join in Satsang, to meditate on the glory of God who watches over us and to decide, in consultation with our brothers, the best; way to promote prosperity and unity.

This day, you have achieved a task; you have completed the construction of a temple. But, why should this achievement be appreciated? For, just as a heart is essential for a living body, a temple is essential for a living village. The heart purifies the blood and pumps strength to all parts of the body. The temple calls all to the Feet of God, corrects their faults, and purifies the minds, of every one who worships the God installed therein. I advise you to gather here in the evening, after the day's toil, sing some Bhajan songs and enjoy yourselves in Namasmara. That is the best and easiest Sadhana in this age of anxiety and fear, this Kaliyuga of wickedness and vice.

Do not run to the officers of Government for every little petty problem. Try to be as self-reliant as possible; endeavour to stand on your own feet. Be industrious. Be efficient and enthusiastic in the work that has come to you as your share in life. God has provided two hands for every stomach. If those hands work assiduously and intelligently, they can, without doubt, fill that little stomach. The trouble is: we are loath to work. We welcome every chance to talk and teach. But, speech cannot fill the hungry stomach. Work, work, dedicated work, intelligent work—that is what is needed. Work unitedly. Our villages are broken into factions and parties. They are not aware of the vast possibilities of unity. If you meditate every day on God as the inner core, the real flame of love, power and wisdom, in each inhabitant the of village, man, woman and child, high and low, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, then you will not emphasise the differences and quarrel. Then, anger, envy and hatred cannot enter your broad heart. Love will be the only quality welcomed therein and emanating there from.

I advise you therefore to ignore and destroy any such divisive tendencies in your heart. The Name of God is the overhanging branch which a mankind falling down a precipice can hold on to, in order to be saved. So, in each part of the village, have these Satsangs and carry on Bhajan in this temple every day in the evening hours. This day should mark a new era in this village. Welcome all improvements and facilities that may accrue to your village but more than all, develop mutual trust, mutual cooperation and joint effort based on love and reverence to all. Be assured that the more you cultivate these qualities, the greater the shower of grace that the Omni present God will bless you with.

—*Bhagavan's Discourse, Nagar-Kurnool - 30-3-79*

Being a Rationalist

—*S. Suresh Rao, Power projects Engineering Division, Bombay*

Is there no meeting ground for the rationalist and the spiritualist? A very tricky question indeed. What have the spiritual leaders to say? Here we find that the thoughts culled out from great spiritual leaders and philosophers have also been based on rationalism of a very high order. These leaders have been far more earnest seekers, as can be seen from their biographies, their way of life and their sacrifice. I therefore wish to study the stand taken by such spiritual thinkers, (who would probably be called "non-rationalists" by our present day rationalists). If so, one is then tempted to ask—Is the rationalistic faith an atheistic faith? If so, what is meant by atheism and who is to be dubbed a true atheist?"

Here I will quote and explain a great spiritual leader of our times, Swami Vivekananda, who defines an atheist as follows:

"A true atheist is one who not only denies God, but also the world." This definition is truly rationalistic and should help remove a few barriers of doubts and misgivings between the modern day rationalist and the Vedic philosophers. For by this definition, it is imperative that denial of the world is denial of the perceiver, that is the self, and ego with all its concomitants. If the perceiver and the things perceived by his senses and mind are to be denied then what remains? Truth (or God) remains. What then should be the definition of this Truth?

Truth has been defined as that which is imperishable and ever-lasting. What is imperishable (everlasting) in this Universe? Nothing. Everything has a beginning and an end. Even the great sun and stars have to end one day. It is a question of time. Then what is the definition of this Truth or God? It has necessarily to be beyond time and beyond the world and universe. In other words, what is perishable is not the truth, the self being a part of the perishable.

To be true atheist therefore is to deny the world and the self which means being selfless to the extreme—a Buddha! (where self is replaced by Self i.e. Self or Truth or God). Buddha then would be termed as a true rationalist by our philosophers; and all other rationalists falling outside the purview of this definition could be only termed as pseudo-rationalists. A truly moral man shall then be a true rationalist.

"Seeing is believing is what our present day rationalist would assert. While the philosopher would say "Seeing is not believing." To see, it is implied that the individual is in the waking stage, using his various sense perceptions.

But as per the philosopher, dreaming, deep sleep and the waking stage are all three relative states of existence, which lose their meaning in the fourth state (which is transcendental or the super conscious state of awareness). Just as dreaming states lose their meaning in the waking state, the waking state and all its associated perceptions lose their meaning in the fourth state. A true rationalist in such a case would give little credence to such phenomena of the waking state as seeing, thinking, rationalising, observation etc. of the phenomena of miracles, and the miracle-man.

This brings us to the next point. What then is a miracle? By inference as shown above, we are all miracles. The whole creation and the universe is a miracle, something perceived by the senses—(which is also defined as false or an illusion). Miracles therefore can only be of the false, the perishable. But our present day rationalists want to assert the existence of the miracle man, while denying him the miracles which is absurd. Truth is the underlying reality, the substratum of all that is. For an individual, is it not possible, that the power arising out of his knowledge of Truth can create innumerable miracles? Does this make the miracle man false? No, because his miraculous creation is a part of the miraculous creation of this universe and the miracle-man is false only so far as the universe is false, but the truth behind both is the sole Reality or Truth or God. This brings us to the next question—Can such a God-man exist. Here again the philosopher says, "yes" because Truth is more weighty than untruth, and the world can never be without the presence of such blessed souls. Another doubt experienced—is such a, God-man hypnotising or is there no other way to explain away these miracles? According to our philosophers (Who as I said, claim to be true rationalists) we are already hypnotised beings, hypnotised into belief that in the waking state is the true state, and thus believing that we are perishable, (which is not Truth) that we are born, we die, we are males/females etc. and that the perishable world (which is false) is real. The God-man's miracles are, so to say, awakeners from this dream-state, which we call the waking state, and help us to dehypnotise ourselves and help push us more God-wards or towards Truth, and hence the necessity of miracles by God-men.

Flooded with Baba

(From Inaugural Address, **Hon'ble Justice Sri V. R. Krishna Iyer**, Supreme Court of India)

Knowledge is power, but guided missiles in misguided hands is a danger! So it is that this summer series of discourses, at once meaningful and magnetic, are for all, not for students only. After all, adult illiterates, intellectual, ignoramuses and heartless heads in power need these revolutionary courses of character-culturing if collective *Satwa* were to dissolve encircling *Tamas* and compassion were to conquer passion, The ennobling strategy of these annual spiritual cultural courses is thus purpose-oriented to the ethical elevation of the community at large. If the environmental pollution of arrogance of power, avarice, lust and the like, is to be neutralised, the noetic art of heart-transformation, through the Baba technology, is the answer.

We are gathered here today to hear the Sai voice and recognise the elementale of his teachings. The greatest miracle of Baba for promotion of *Vibhuti* in the whole world is this salvatory stress on character-building through *Prema* permeating every cell of our being, in the practical affairs and daily commerce between man and man. This is the true temple, the worthwhile pilgrimage and the great gospel. I have come here to listen, to learn and to live the art of loving, living creation.

I beseech you to remember the inspirational sayings of Baba, not to be fanatical about Form and Cult and Esoterics which cut down the universality of his appeal and the penetrating power of his message for this world and its welfare, including the uplift, material, cultural and spiritual, of the

lowliest and the lost. For Baba, none is lowly or lost, none is mighty or majesty. A human egalite woven round Cosmic Love is the discipline of devotion he teaches and that is why Baba says Work is Worship and Duty is God.

"Real education requires the cultivation of a sense of humility. Great learning brings great humility. Without humility, there is no education. That is wanting in the youth of today. Culture must be directed towards the reform of character."

If we do contemplate on these lucid and lucent truths we will gain a new insight into the nature of Baba's revolutionary role. In modern democratic diction, he is *of* the people and *for* the people. Materialism has reached a blind alley, and so, has to be salvaged by a new synthesis with spiritualism to lift the masses, not to dope them.

Says Baba: "No Avatar has done like this before, going to the masses, counselling them, guiding them along the path of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema." The goal of mankind is a human cosmos founded on the dignity and divinity of every member of humanity. This higher purpose has been declared by Baba as his mission in this incarnation. He is here "in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting as one family the whole of mankind through the bond of brother-hood, of arming and illumining the divine reality of each human in order to reveal the divinity which is the basis upon which the entire cosmos rests, and of instructing all people to recognise the common divine heritage that binds human to human, so that each one can rise into the divinity which is the supreme goal of human endeavour."

He reaffirms: "My task is the spiritual regeneration of humanity through truth and love. I have come to show you how to live usefully and die profitably! If you approach one step nearer to Me, I shall advance three steps towards you. As far as I am concerned, there is only one role that binds Me: Love. That love will quieten you, it will comfort you, it will inspire you to merge with Me.

Be you sceptic, atheistic, agnostic, materialist, hedonist or critic, you cannot deny the validity of Baba's commitment to the salvation of homo sapiens from the miasma of moral degradation. This is the message of the Gita,

Listen to the Sai Suktas: "Religions are different but the goal is the same; even as the cows may be different in colour but the milk is the same; ornaments may be different in shape but the gold is the same. The end of wisdom is freedom, the end of culture is perfection, the end of knowledge is love, the end of education is character."

Many of you have seen in railway compartments the notice "Less luggage makes travel more comfortable." In that sense, our life is a long journey. This long journey, because we are accumulating a lot of luggage in the form of many desires, becomes somewhat troublesome. When we can diminish this luggage consisting of desires, then our journey be less troublesome.

The emphasis thus is on making one's life a Yagna or sacrifice, a spiritual offering to heal fellow-beings' suffering. Many religious men do not dedicate themselves in this sense but become devotional on Sundays, Fridays or during pilgrimages. But Baba admonishes us:

"Devotion is not a uniform to be worn on certain days when you gather for worship and then be laid aside when the service is over. It must mean the promotion of an attitude that is ever present. It is the sustenance for the body." For, "It is work that is done in the spirit of the constant presence of the Lord that is honest. The Lord will reward by His grace his work that is done sincerely and gladly, not work that is done through fear of superior officers." Again, "Love lives by *giving* and forgetting. Self lives by *getting* and forgetting":

It is the *Yajna* or sacrifice rooted in spirituality and *yoga* or divine union by total surrender that make action without attachment possible and inner peace inevitable. When we speak of education, we must insist on the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of the Supreme who manifests divinity latent in every creature and as love vibrant in every atom, and switch from *bhoga* to *yoga*. This is culture directed towards reform of character. The Summer Courses are annual Cultural Banquets in the highest sense because, more than collegiate attainments it invests in the participants manliness and saintliness, without which society becomes an animal farm with a small difference. More than ever before, man is his own enemy today. He can travel millions of miles into Outer Space, but cannot enter even a few inches into Inner Space. To accomplish this psychic exploration you need spiritual technology.

Thus, a new harmony between matter and spirit, between *anna* and *ananda*, between life and love, is emerging as the Song Celestial of humanity in its higher state. Those who chase sensuous and sensual pleasures as the *summum bonum* of existence suffer from penury of the heart and must be flooded with Baba.

Four in One

The Vedas speak of the four Varnas, as directives for the exercise of the rights and responsibilities of individuals. They declare that the Brahmin group, the intellectuals and the spiritual seekers must serve as the face of society—the face that hears, sees, tastes and 'smells' the changing moods of the community. This group has the duty to warn the community of impending calamity, of oncoming distress and latent drawbacks. They have to guide, lead, counsel and comfort the rest of the people aright. They form the Brain Trust, on which the country relies for advice—timely, impartial and most conducive to the common good. They represent the Head of the Cosmic Person.

The Kshatriya group is the "arm" of the Cosmic Person. The group consists of the Rajasic individuals who equip themselves for guarding the country against internal and external danger. They dedicate their all for the safety and security of the country.

The Vaisya group is the "thigh" of the Cosmic Person—the support and sustenance of the arms and the head. They gather and preserve the where-withal on which the community lives and prospers. They adhere to the limitations imposed on profit and exploitation.

The Sudra group is "the feet" of the Cosmic Person, bearing the burden of feeding and fostering the community.

The four Varnas form one organic whole, one indivisible unity. No one can do without the other. On the harmonious cooperation of all the four depends the peace and prosperity of the community. The head is immediately aware of what happens to the feet; the slightest pain anywhere is cognised by the entire body. When a thorn pricks the sole, the eye reprimands itself for not noticing the thorn and warning the foot in time. It sheds tears of repentance. The eye has the responsibility of warning, leading, guiding, and saving the foot. Every caste has to ensure the prosperity and strength of all the rest.

When you invite a person into your home, you cannot request him to bring in only his head. The feet too have to be welcomed with equal solicitude. The feet are important. In fact, homage is offered at the feet of the Lord. The feet of the Lord are the objects of adoration and worship.

The limbs may be different, with distinct names, forms and functions. But, they function only because of the unceasing grace of one Heart which supplies each with a single stream of blood. The qualities of each limb and its special activity may be different but the same Divine Impulse activates each one. There can be no question of inferior or superior, when all are cooperating in one Common endeavour. They are all moved by the single urge of Love towards the individual they constitute.

—*Baba 30-5-79*

Happy! Happy!

Last summer, Pete, my husband, told me of a scientific meeting in New Delhi in February. He had submitted a paper! It was accepted! Now we faced the problem of funding. We knew we would have difficulty paying two fares. Pete applied for grants from several institutions here in the U.S. No money was available. We had almost given up hope. The meetings were a month away. I was sitting meditating, one Sunday, when Swami appeared to me. I was so overjoyed. He had not come to me for almost four years. Three days later we got a cable from India. Money was being sent for my husband's fare! We had only three weeks to prepare! Many obstacles appeared and disappeared through Swami's Grace.

At last we were off! Or so we thought. Our flight out of Los Angeles was fogged in and we missed our connecting flight from San Francisco to Hong Kong. Luckily, we got an almost empty flight (the other flight was full) to Tokyo. After a day there we were booked on a late night flight to Hong Kong. It was the beginning of Chinese New Year and many people were going to Hong Kong. We had to wait a long time in the crowded airport. My "jet-lag" was becoming extreme. I felt so tired and off balance. My stomach was in a knot. I felt worried about the children who were all ill when we left. In particular, I was worried about Jesse, our nine year old boy, who because of allergies, always gets severe croup when he gets ill. He had croup the day we left.

We continued on to Hong Kong and then on to New Delhi. As we were getting closer and closer to Delhi, I felt my heart soar. Mother India! I felt the tremendous blessings of the Rishis and Saints. Tears of joy ran down my cheeks. Soon I would see my Beloved.

When we arrived in Bangalore we telephoned our friend; who is the mother of my husband's former secretary in N.Y., who is a Baba devotee. Yes! They had received our letter and were expecting us. In fact, they said, we were very lucky as Swami had just arrived at Whitefield the day before.

Can you imagine my extreme joy to step on the sacred earth of Brindavan? I had kissed that earth in my dreams because I know His Feet had walked on it. I look the dust on my heart and head. It was all exactly as in my dreams; the trees, the pandal, the beautiful red earth, the crowd of people. We took our places in the Darshan line. After about five minutes, some one came out of Swami's house and mentioned for us to go in! I was so dumbfounded, my heart, I felt, would stop beating! My husband sat down in the foyer with the other men and I and my two lady companions sat opposite. We were looking toward the center door, expecting Swami to come through there. Instead, I felt a rush and turned, He had come through a side door right next to us!

He was like the sun. So radiant. Words cannot describe the sweetness of this precious moment, beholding Him for the first time. Smiling, He came straight to me and in His golden voice, softly, said, "Where is your husband?" I gave Him a garland of flowers and touched His precious feet and then pointed Pete out to Swami. Swami went over to Pete, and as he touched Swami's Feet, Swami gently patted him on the shoulder several times and said "So happy. So happy. Good man. Good man." Then He told Pete to "sit, sit," and that He would be back in a minute.

When He returned, He came to me and called Pete over to us. He then related very personal details about us, clearly showing He is with us every moment. He assured us about several personal matters. Then I showed Him a photo of our children. He said, "Yes. Yes. I know." I told him how Jesse was sick often with allergies. Swami then said, "Don't worry. I will take care." Then He said, "I give Prasad " And with a gesture I was to see many times in the next two weeks, He materialized Vibhuti into my hands, my husband's and the women we were with. "Eat! Eat!" He said, and we licked it off our fingers like small children lick cookie butter from their bands!

Then Swami brought out a red basket filled with Vibhuti packets and filled our hands to overflowing! Swami then signed a book for Pete and one for me. As He was signing my book, I knelt down and kissed the Precious Foot of my Lord. Six years had passed since the moment I knew He would stand before me. My heart's desire had been fulfilled. Swami said several times, "So happy, So happy," to us and "Good man! Good man!" to my husband. Then He said, "be happy," to both of us and turned and went out to give Darshan.

Pete had to see people in Bangalore the next day, who want him to work with them (Swami's Grace again) and so he missed Darshan that day. The following day he had to return to Delhi to begin his teaching. He was planning to go to morning Darshan before he left, but found out the airlines had listed his flight time incorrectly. His flight left before morning Darshan.

So, you see, Swami knew Pete only had that one chance to see Him. I stayed on for two weeks and came to Whitefield every day. Just the sight of Swami coming through the gate was enough. To have Him so near, to have Him walk right by us, to see His Precious Form; to see the Beloved Feet and Hand, to hear His sublime, sweet voice brought such joy. How grateful we are to have had this most precious experience. *I pray to see Swami in every being I meet and in every thing I see.* How blessed we are to have Swami's precious teaching of Divine Love before us.

—Mrs. Pete Engel (Murali) Pacific Palisades

I am Involved

Once again, my humble thanks to Baba for Life, for preservation, and for the miracle of close protection. A midnight return from visiting a friend brought me down mountain Drive, just up beyond the Mission in Santa Barbara, a very narrow road—a dark night and a light drizzle: An unyielding wall made of huge rocks rose sheer on my left, black limbo down the canyon on my right. The car was moving too fast; I geared down. Still too fast, approaching a spot known as "suicide curve". Not enough rain to wash off the slick, I noted. I touched the brakes, and the car skidded. Heavier braking, wheels seemed to lock, as if no brakes at all! I could not believe what was happening. Over the curb, and then time slowed as motion accelerated. Everything in me screamed, "No, no! no:—Baba!"

The car lurched, skidded, banged, leaped, but did not roll over. A huge limb loomed, and I thought "decapitation." But the car slipped under and I heard the heavy branch and leaves brush roughly over the top. Another lurch into black abyss and light showed a great tree coming head-on, but a slip to the left which smashed both doors on the driver's side veered the car slightly to the right to miss the tree and wedge me between the trunk and a large rock. I could hear glass crashing, but it blew out, not in. Just a few very small flying splinters struck my face, to make me aware of my good fortune, I guess, at no disfigurement. A sudden stop, motor still running, full tank of gas under the right side of hood—no explosion.

I turned off the motor—no lights. It was not quiet—all the noises of the night tuned loud and, below, the rush of Mission Creek, the boisterous frogs and the crickets. Gingerly, I moved arms, legs, body. I was shaking, but whole. The door on the driver's side swung out but I could not tell where I would drop if I stepped out, or whether I would dislodge the car, which now and then shuddered a little. In a quavering voice, I heard myself say aloud, "Oh, Baba, Baba, I can't handle this myself. What will you do with me?"

The dash clock said one or two minutes after midnight. I could not see any escape, in any direction; no mark where I come down the embankment, or how I could get out; no clue to where the road was which I had left so abruptly. The car was tipped uncomfortably to the left but slowly I reached for my personal things that had been thrown violently around the car, including my slippers which had apparently detached. I could not see or hear any signs of civilisation near me. There had been no other car on Mountain Drive when I went over the edge. I expected, then, to stay there until daylight.

The clock showed almost 12: 20, when suddenly a powerful light beamed down from about 45° above me. I moved carefully to the right door, rolled down the window and called for help. I could hear male voices behind that big searchlight and when they had determined that I was alive and uninjured, they identified as police officers—told me the Fire Rescue Team was on the way. I watched the first man come down on a security chain, then three others followed. It took half an hour with a winch and four firemen to bring me up on a safety litter and when they stood me on my feet on the road, no one, including myself, could believe I was intact.

"How did you find me, or even know where or how to look for me?" I asked the officer bringing me home. "I got the radio call from the station at 12: 11. Somebody must have called in." Because I was anxious to personally thank whoever reported the accident, the officer called his headquarters when we arrived at my home. Looking at me, he shook his head, with the telephone in hand, "An anonymous call," he said. "Man or woman?" I asked. "Couldn't tell," and he hung up. "Why, would anyone make an anonymous call in a situation like this?" I queried. The Officer shrugged "Many don't want to get involved, I guess" I walked behind the officer to the door, then distinctly heard the words in my head, "I am involved."

Baba, with all my heart I am grateful, and I thank you. I solemnly pray that for whatever reason you chose to save me, I will cooperate 100%.

Several times since, I have awakened re-living that terror—but the calm comes when, again, I hear the words, "I am involved."

—Muriel J Engle, Santa Barbara

Partial Education

Termites appear insignificant and innocent in the beginning; they are named 'white ants', as if they deserve admiration and attention, rather than extermination. For, they multiply fast and destroy in silence the entire structures of the houses of man.

Bad habits, imitative tendencies like drink and drugs, gambling and gangsterism—they secure entry into individual and social behaviour noiselessly in various disguises and then destroy the career of even the toughest and the most upright. The youth of India are succumbing to the siren calls of foreign cultural traits. They are discarding their own precious heritage of reverence towards elders, service of parents, compassion for all beings in distress, humility, simplicity, adherence to truth and attachment to self-respect. Science and technology have encouraged the material out-look, concentrated all effort towards comforts and exaggerated the ego. The same sad decline is happening, more or less, in every country today.

The prime cause for this tragedy is the neglect of the spiritual and moral aspects of the human personality. Man feels no obligation towards family, society, nation or mankind. He worships his ego, more than any thing else. He is proud of his technological advance—the travel in space, the

computers, the unravelling of the atom. But, look the confusion and the conflicts in the political, economic spheres of life! Man has not been able to overcome greed, pride and hatred in the national and religious aspects. His narrow loyalties towards his caste, colour and creed persist to the detriment of higher ideals. Confusion in the sphere of education has grown into enormous proportions. He has not yet been successful in sublimating his animal impulses into human attitudes. He is therefore behaving in a ridiculous manner, mostly animal and partly man.

Today, man is madly engaged in accumulating money for the sake of the comforts it can bring. He is wading in sorrow and joy from moment to moment, in the pursuit of sensual pleasure. Just as death follows life, anxiety follows wealth. The rich man is persecuted by troubles just as a crow with a piece of meat is pursued by dozens of hungry birds who follow the crow. Man's ambitions are increasing every day everywhere. Contemporary civilisation is piling fear upon fear on all parts of the world.

Instead of 'high thinking and low living' which was the ideal of ancient times, modern India is adopting the ideal of 'low thinking and high living'. The system of education is to blame largely for this downfall. Mahatma Gandhi realised the eternal values enshrined in Bharatiya culture. He attempted to promote these values through the primary schools he sponsored. When he was in prison, a British officer who visited him often asked him, "I find you sad and worried today. Tell me why?" and Gandhi replied, "I find that the educated person has a hardened heart, more hardened than the heart of an uneducated person. This is something that should not happen. The system is fraught with danger." This made Gandhi try his experiments in imparting Indian ideals to the tender minds in primary schools. The same officer approached Bal Gangadhar Tilak later and told him how Gandhi had accused Western education of hardening the heart. He asked Tilak, "But, I find you have not been spoiled at all by the Western system of education." Tilak replied, "I asserted that I am what I am, in spite of the system of education through which I had to pass."

Men repeat the word 'duty' day after day and during all hours of the day, without any clear conception of what that word means. Duty arises when there are two people, you and another. Education has lost its meaning when it does not instruct what an individual should render to society, how he has to control his ego for ensuring the common good. One individual has the right to exercise freedom, only so long as he does not obstruct the freedom which is equally the right of another. Honouring the right of the other man to freedom is your duty. The right and the duty are both fundamental. Nevertheless, we find everyone fostering and insisting on his own rights and paying no consideration to the rights of others. We find in society, around us, millions of brothers and sisters subjected to harm by this callousness.

There are 500,000 villages in India where people live in poverty, ignorance and disease. Rulers forming the Government have drawn up various plans to raise their standard of living, but it is wrong to leave it all to them. It cannot be done by the efforts of government alone. The hearty co-operation, help and good-will of the villagers themselves are essential. A single flower cannot make a garland; a single individual cannot set right the wrong of ages.

Crores of children live as beggars in the streets. It is the responsibility of the grownups to wean them away and enable them to become self reliant, self-respecting citizens. Older people are like

old trees; they cannot be bent in the direction which is good for them. But, these tender saplings can be trained to grow straight and strong. So, I wish to declare that the first duty of every adult, son and daughter of this country is to pay loving attention to the children.

I call upon you to resolve to establish a primary school and arrange for medical care for every village. Wealth is intended not for adding luxury to life, for revelling in sensual joy. Through good sanitation and good education you can improve the condition of the children. If it is your intention to raise India, once again, into an example and ideal for the rest of the world, it can be achieved only by hard physical work and by systematic reduction of desires.

In the sacred land of Bharat where Annapoorna, the Goddess designated as food, is worshipped, there need be no shortage of food for the people. Controlling population is not the right remedy. For, consider this: Every child is born not only with a stomach that has to be catered to, it is also endowed with two hands which can work and produce the food for the stomach. The hands have to be given the strength and skill; they have to learn the lesson of self-reliance. They should never be lazy or slothful. Then, there can be no deficiency in food and no problem of underfeeding.

We have to inspire and instruct the children to become Karma Virs (heroic enthusiastic workers), whose lives are dedicated to work as worship of the one God who resides in all. They must be trained to take part gladly and intelligently in "activity programmes" filled with the spirit of service.

In order to make the primary schools succeed in this endeavour, see that you run them with patience and love. Now after spending thousands of rupees and mortgaging or selling their lands and houses, the parents are happy that their sons and daughters have got a degree. But, they suffer great sorrow when the degree is discovered to be only a begging bowl with which their children go round from office to office. Instead of education for doing the work of society, we are having education for jobs which society has to create to give them work. The head is loaded with trivial information and the heart is hardened.

Degrees are conferred even if the candidate secures 30 marks out of 100. This means that a person is certified useful, even if he commits 70 mistakes in every hundred items of work assigned to him by the authorities. The parents and the teachers must be examples of lives led in the light of Atmic consciousness. Then we can have a balanced education. Then we can have a generation of students wedded to the service of society, for each student will see in every other person a replica of the Divine Itself.

—From Bhagavan's Discourse Bombay: University Convocation Hall 13.5.79

God has given you "the heart" to use in life; return it to Him as clean and as pure as when He gave it after using it for storing Prema, Santhi, Dharma and Sathya, and for distributing them to all who come in-contact with you.

—Baba

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8

The individual living being is shaped and controlled by natural forces and impulses; he is inextricably bound with Nature—these beliefs are held generally by students and scholars. Nevertheless, we shall postpone the discussion of these points and pursue consideration of the simpler aspects of karma or activity and the urges that mould and direct it.

Karma is generally known to mean 'work'. Transactions and actions of all kinds can be designated as 'work'. There are no levels of work like low or high. All work is holy, if it has to be done for the upkeep and uplift of life. This is the reason why karma is praised as highly sacrosanct and desirable, and as fraught with meritorious or deleterious consequences.

The Hindus ascribe good fortune and bad, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, to the inescapable fruit of karma and so, it has happened that some have labelled them as idlers who do not resist and overwhelm distress, disease and pain. This is a partial paralytic view, which ignores the guiding principles and underlying philosophy of karma and knows it only as reflected in worldly, material activities. This view is adopted and emphasised to help particular sections to progress, that is all.

Take some examples from within your own experience. The commuter working in an office, the farmer who lives on his own toil, the porter who depends on his physical strength to gather the meagre means of livelihood, the blacksmith, the potter, the carpenter, the washerman, the barber—these are conscious of the activities which they have to follow and the sense of duty with which they have to follow them. They know that their lives cannot flow smooth, when each one does not fill his assignment with dedication. Therefore, they engage themselves in their profession as best as their intelligence, skills and aspirations allow. But, where is the need to prompt such people into further activity, to warn them and encourage them? We have to undertake this task only when they are unable or unwilling to carry on their duties.

In the case of Arjuna, who was confused about his duty and who withdrew from battle since he was befogged by a feeling of renunciation, Sri Krishna said, "you have only to concentrate over the act and carry it out as you can." To act and only to act is the duty imposed on you. That was immortal nectarine advice of the Lord. This advice is quoted by many. But it must be pointed out that this advice was given with context of the restoration of the practice of Righteousness. It deals with activities approved by Holy Scriptures and Sastras and not with worldly, sensual and animal activities like seeking food, shelter and the mate.

Dharmaraja and others were immersed in worldly affairs and they were past-masters in dealing with worldly situations. They were engaged constantly in following and fostering the duties and responsibilities laid down for the four castes in society and the four stages of life. Well. Why then should they be prompted and persuaded, counseled and commanded to *engage in battle*? Krishna advised Arjuna to resume his bow and arrows, presenting before him many an argument.

"You are born in the Kshatriya caste; that caste is entrusted by social norms with the execution of one social duty; fighting against injustice is that duty; engaging in battle against wickedness is your responsibility. Do not desert that duty and discard that burden. Man is bound to the inclinations implanted in him by Nature. Again, consider this. Man has to be ever involved in some activity or other; he cannot live without it even for a moment. Therefore, it is best you act now, in accordance with the inclination and skill impressed on you by your ancestry and heredity." This is the lesson taught to him, not to give up his Kula-Dharma, the path of the caste or class to which he belonged.

Does 'work' connote only acts by which food etc., are procured. Aircraft, Ships factories, hospitals are all seats and products of work. They too can be said to involve only worldly material 'work'. This type of work is important for living, and happy living here is a preparation for spiritual advancement in the hereafter. The more faulty one's activities in his worldly pursuits, the less success will be for the individual, the society and the nation. There can be no two opinions on these points. Nevertheless, men do not exert as efficiently and as enthusiastically for spiritual advancement, as they do for worldly success and fame. This is indeed a pity.

The relation between worldly and spiritual karmas has also to be examined. We plough the field deep and make it fit for the seeds to grow. We select good seeds and sow them in the furrows. We foster the saplings with care. We remove the weeds that hamper and harm them. We water the plants when they need. We protect the crop by the erection of fine fences. We keep vigilant watch and save the plants from pests. Take it that each of these crucial steps are carried out by us diligently and without delay, as and when required. But, how can we be certain, in spite of all these, that the fruit of our labours will reach our homes and can be stored by us for our use? The irrigation canal might go dry any day. The sky might pour down too much rain or withhold it altogether. Pests might prove too powerful to be eliminated; they might destroy the crop just when harvest is in sight. But, man should not, even when such disaster faces him, collapse, as if he has lost everything.

If one does not get rain in time for his crop, he can venture to fly into the clouds and scatter chemicals in order to induce showers, by artificial means. But, what guarantee is there that the rain thus produced will fall on one's own land? Artificial means cannot affect the mood of gods. They help or hinder according to their will. When all paths are closed and when, at last, one decides to pray to God for rain; how is the prayer to be framed, in what form should it be uttered, these problems confront one. The disaster is evident; the only refuge is prayer—"O God! The growing crop in my field is fast drying up on account of unbearable thirst for rain. The canal has not even a drop of water to slake the thirst of men and cattle. Therefore, have pity on us. Give us rain, in plenty, soon."

Meanwhile, another problem has risen, let us say. One's neighbour has arranged for the celebration of some festival and since rain will ruin the festival he has planned and cause great inconvenience to the participants, he prays equally fervently "O God, keep off the rains until this celebration is over"

Both these applicants are intense devotees of God, the one who clamours for rain and the one who opposes the rain. What is God to do, under these conditions? Whose prayer is He to fulfill? Of course, answering prayers saturated with sincerity is the characteristic of the Divine; when the prayers of devotees clash, how is He to shape His Grace? God is free, His will is Law. But, He is bound in some sense by His own Love and Compassion.

The monarch of a realm cannot satisfy the desires of every one of his subjects; he cannot claim the power of fulfilling all their needs. Why? He is unable to fulfill for himself all that he desires. If he attempts to satisfy every wish that arises in him, the subjects are certain to rise up against him and pull him down from the seat of power. There is that danger always dangling over him. Because, however mighty the monarch, he has to obey certain rules and honour some limitations laid down to ensure a just rule. These might have been laid down by the very monarch; but, once promulgated, he too is bound by them and had to honour them. If he casts them aside or transcends them or oversteps them, chaos will be the consequence. For, the subjects too will exercise their freedom to cast them aside or override them. "As the King, so the Subjects."
"Yatha raja, tatha praja."

The person who is the author of the law must himself obey the law. He cannot stay away. The monarch must always hold as his ideal the welfare and happiness of his subjects. Their welfare and happiness are essential for his own welfare and happiness. They are so closely inter-related.

To satisfy the proper and praise-worthy desires of his subjects is the inescapable duty of the monarch. It is for this reason that the monarch, in order to carry out his duties effectively and smoothly, has assigned the task to many subordinate authorities, instead of himself attending to all matters concerning the kingdom and the subjects.

(To be continued)

With Devotees from Bombay

Bhagavan: Ask me questions pertaining to your Sadhana. I am most pleased when you bring to me such problems.

Devotee: I am very much upset. Please grant me peace of mind!

Bhagavan: Peace of mind is not something that can be *given* to you. It need not be *given* to you; it is your very nature. You have only to look within you to find it. Even Swami cannot give it to you.

Devotee: No, Swami! You can give it.

Bhagavan: Yes. I have given it to you already. I gave it as Birthday gift. But when you grow in age your greed, jealousy, pride and egoism also grow in you. So, the peace of mind I gave is now very much diminished.

Devotee: What is Sakshatkara, Swami?

Bhagavan: Knowing that you are not the body but the Atma, the Atma beyond space, time and mind.

Devotee: Swami! Are visions helps or hindrances in Sadhana?

Bhagavan: Visions are only reflections or reactions of Divine Vibrations from the mind aroused by Sadhana. They are milestones, sign-posts; they happen on the road to the goal. They do not, they cannot accompany you right to the end. You will have to travel alone and overcome obstacles.

Devotee: What exactly is the function of Grace in helping spiritual progress through Sadhana?

Bhagavan: Grace from your own self is the most important and the most essential help! I may grant you Grace without limit, but of what use can it be, if your heart is not clean, if your head is full of ego? Clean your heart with Prema, remove Ego with the help of Seva.

Devotee: How are we to control the mind?

Bhagavan: Tell me what exactly is the mind. This hand-kerchief has yarn as warp and woof; if the yarns are pulled out one by one, the hand-kerchief vanishes. So the mind can be made to vanish by pulling out one by one, the desires which urge you on. The mind has, as its warp and woof, the yarn of desire. Or, you can make the mind harmless by another method. Before catering to senses, the mind must take instructions from Buddhi (Intellect). Then, the mind will be a help and not a handicap.

Devotee: Give us all pure clear intellects, Swami!

Bhagavan: You have enough intelligence. You are Sat, Chit, Ananda. Chit means the intellect. But, you misuse it and pervert it. Give it mastery over the mind. The mind may prompt you to follow one path or to do one act. Consult the intelligence, for it has the duty and power to discriminate between right and wrong, permanent and temporary, beneficent and maleficent. So, never listen to the mind and plunge hastily into any activity.

Devotee: Swami: Can we all repeat the Gayatri mantra?

Bhagavan: Oh! Yes! You can, all of you. There is nothing sectarian in that mantra. It has three sections: The first nine words—Om Bhur Bhuva Suvah Tatt Savithur Varenyam Bhargo Devasya—describe the Divine. Dhee mahi, denotes Meditating on the glory of the Divine. And, dhiyo yo nah prachodayat, denotes the

prayer to the Divine whose splendour illumines the three worlds for sharpening the intelligence, so that it may regulate and control the waverings of the mind.

Devotee: What is the difference, Swami, between Atma and Paramatma? We find both words used indiscriminately.

Bhagavan: Both are the same-like cotton and cloth in this piece of cloth. One is with form (Rupa) and the other is without form. One is Saguna and the other is Nirguna. The self in you is Atma; it is also omnipresent. The omnipresent aspect is Paramatma. You are now in the conscious waking state; when you go to bed, you may dream that you are shopping in Bombay, though your body is at Puttaparthi. The dream state is the sub-conscious stage. The deep sleep where not even the mind can weave dreams is the unconscious level of your personality. There is even a fourth stage called Turiya, the Super-conscious. The Atma is present in all these states—So, it is Omnipresent.

Devotee: How are we to reconcile free will and destiny?

Bhagavan: Both are the same. You have no *free* will; it is the way in which you use your intelligence and your mind to control and direct your senses. You use them wisely for higher ends, your destiny will be good. If you use them wildly for sensual ends, your destiny will be bad.

Devotee: Swami! I long to come here and serve in whatever position You choose for me, in the College or Hostel.

Bhagavan: Bangaroo: The work you are doing at present in Bombay is My Work. You cut the cloth with a pair of scissors but it is not the scissors that cut. It is you. Similarly, I use you as my instrument to work in any field I like. Do your work with the intention to please Me. Do not get attached to it, as if it is work done for yourself.

Devotee: Please give me your autograph on this picture of Shirdi Baba.

Bhagavan: Give it.

Devotee: Is it Your own form, Swami?

Bhagavan: Why do you doubt? Even you are my Form. All of you are. Sweets may have different names, shapes, colours and ingredients but they are all sweet, on account of the sugar. All of you have Divinity as your Reality. But you forget the Truth once you step out of My Presence.

Devotee: Swami! We shall try to follow your advice.

Bhagavan: Don't simply try. "Try, try try; it will become dry." Do, start doing.
I shall bless you with success.

—*Ed.*

Work for Peace

Cities have become stormy seas, agitated with violent waves, and the residents move in tossing boats, surrounded by darkness. For these desperate people, the spiritual ideal shining bright is the only guide to safety. The countryside is fast being caught up by the culture of the cities and the distress is spreading everywhere. This is the spirit of the times. Entangled in this spirit man accumulates all types of desires in his mind, and when he cannot fulfill them, he becomes desperate and his life ends in unspeakable distress. Man forgets that his inmost desire which has to be cherished is the desire for God and for self-realisation. All others are mean and meaningless. Man has been endowed with the power of discrimination between the essentially good and the superficially pleasant but he does not cultivate that faculty and benefit from it.

The Pandava brothers were highly fortunate. The eldest Dharmaraja rose to be the Emperor. The second was the indomitable Bhima, armed with the terrible mace. The third was Arjuna, son of the Lord of the Gods, Indra. The lord poured His Grace on Arjuna and deigned to serve him in battle as his Charioteer! In spite of all these advantages, they were subjected to the severest tragedies in life. What is the lesson that their lives teach? No one can predict which calamity will overtake whom at what time. Everything lies in the will of Providence; it all happens according to the Divine Plan.

Where exactly does God reside? He is everywhere, in all beings. He is termed omniscient and omnipresent. Really speaking, He is Love, and Love pervades everywhere. That is all we need to know. There is no being without a trace of Love. Love leads to Ananda, pure and lasting. Many seek this Ananda through relations with individuals; others try to attain it by amassing fame, power, riches etc; a few attempt to gain it by renunciation of material possessions and the desire for worldly pleasures. Detachment alone can confer Ananda. The Upanishads proclaim that Tyaga alone can grant Amrutattwa: (Renunciation alone can bring about the Ananda of Immortality). One has to ignore all bonds of kinship and comradeship; one has to give up all attachment and affection. And, in the heart thus liberated, one has to install God in all His Glory. This is the only means to earn everlasting undiminished Ananda.

The Yadavas of Dwaraka were attached to Krishna by the bonds of kinship and they were happy and proud at that relationship. But, how did they fare in the end? They fought among themselves and were destroyed. The Gopis, however, installed Krishna in their hearts. They overcame their little selves and identified themselves with the Lord. So, they realised the goal. Surrender is the secret of spiritual triumph.

People praise the late Narayana Bhat (the Founder of the Loka Seva Vrinda complex of Educational Institutions, later taken over by the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust) but praise is no substitute for love. Love must prompt enthusiastic fulfillment of the work to which he dedicated

his life. That alone can justify that you are judged, not by the number of times you prostrate before the image of God or repeat His Name. Prostrate before your acts and make them holy. Make the acts conform to your thoughts and your words.

Bhakti is usually taken to mean the repetition of the Name, the recitation of psalms and hymns, rituals to propitiate God and win His Mercy. Even meditation on God and His Compassion cannot be termed genuine Bhakti. All these spiritual Sadhanas have a shade of selfishness darkening them. Vyasa has declared that service to man is the highest form of worship. Do not offend or harm any one, that is true adoration of God; for, in truth, the other is you yourself. Awareness of this Truth is Liberation, Moksha. Share your joy, your wealth, your knowledge, with others less fortunate; that is the surest means of winning Divine Grace.

Perform all acts with as much Love as you would offer God. In truth, you eat for the satisfaction of the I in you; you put on dress to please the self-same 'I'. The husband loves the wife for the sake of the 'I' and the wife adores the husband for pleasing her 'I'. And who is this 'I' that is persistently inherent in everyone? It is God Himself. "Iswarah Sarva Bhoothaanaam..." The Lord resides in the heart of every being, says the Gita. He is the Atma in every being, says the Gita. He is the Atma in every one, the Param-Atma. You, in your ignorance, have hidden it under the twin sheaths of mind and body, and you believe that the mind and body are the real 'you'. But there are three 'yous'—the one you think you are, the one others think you are, the one you really are. You think you are the body, others think you are the mind, while you are really the 'Spirit' or Atma.

Not only you, but, all are Atma, sparks of the One Paramatma. So, do not think evil to anyone for it reacts to your own disadvantage. You have heard the statement, Sarva deva namaskaarah Kesavam prathigacchathe: (Homage paid to any God reaches Kesava). I state now, Sarva jiva thiraskaarah Kesavam prathigacchathi (The insult you pay to any living being reaches Kesava) for Kesava is the inner reality of all. If you cannot serve them, leave them alone; do not deal dis-service. Now, the cry from the heart of every one is for Peace. From the Prime Minister down to the beggar, all ask for peace and aspire for peace. Peace cannot be purchased from the bazaar; it cannot be manufactured by industrial undertakings. It can be secured by acts, activities charged with love. Holding a cup of salt water in the hand, you cannot by mere slogans, make it potable and sweet.

This is a holy place, because you pay sincere attention to the proper development of the children under your care and devote your efforts to transmute them into sublime individuals, worthy sons and daughters of this sacred land. This is the only means by which we can ensure the welfare and prosperity of this country. Politics is powerless; it cannot save us. Machines and machinations cannot rescue us. Only by installing in our hearts the sacred ideals of Bharatiya culture and marching forward towards those goals can peace be attained.

Narayana Seva or Feeding the Hungry with reverence and humility is the Seva that is urgent today. The cry for food is being heard everywhere, though if each one works hard, the problem will not arise at all. We talk of stomachs to be filled but each stomach arrives in the world with two hands. Those hands if they are kept idle or unskilled cannot fulfill their assignment of finding the food for the stomach. Work hard that is the message. And share the gain with others.

The harder you work, the greater your gain, the more you can share. Work hard and, more important still, work together with others in loving kinship.

—Discourse at Alike South Kanara Dist, Karnataka 25. 1. 1979

Yoga—States of consciousness—Meditation

—(Summary of Talks) Dr. R.R. Diwakar D. Litt.

A human being is today partly an animal, with some traits and trends of a human being, *definitely* with an aspiration, an intense desire and *will to be a divine being*.

It is this universal aspiration to be a divine being—perfect in shape and form, pure and egoless in mind, full of love, master of all energies in himself, living a happy, peaceful, joyful harmonious life, which is called the evolutionary urge. This aspiration is the driving force and motivation for excellence and perfection in human beings. Evolution is always change for the better; for a higher and nobler and more harmonious arrangement of energies and forces in human beings.

Evolution is on. It is that evolutionary urge or will of God which has evolved life from a unicellular life of the single cells in the living body to a multicellular, bi-sexual human being. Socially speaking, the progress from tribal grouping to national and international living is evolutionary. Human being has developed self-consciousness and conscience. That is, he knows and understands what he is doing, what he ought to do and what he ought not to do for his own development and for evolution towards divinity. He has come of age, and therefore responsible for expediting his own evolution towards divinity.

Yoga—that science and art which helps human evolution towards divinity—is at the service of man. In essence, it is the scientific engineering of all one's energies and powers for attaining the highest summit in one's consciousness, which means attunement with God or Universal Consciousness. There is mention of many yogas—Hatha, Raja, Bhakti, Karma, Mantra, Kundalini and so on, but in essence, Yoga is only one—that which is capable of uniting the individual soul to the Supreme Power, call it God or by any other name. That is the highest level to which human consciousness can aspire and have access, giving him the supernal bliss of which the human consciousness is capable. All yogas using varied techniques have this unitive living with the Supreme Power as the final goal.

The Master Yoga or Basic Yoga is called Ashtanga Yoga by Patanjali. It developed in India as early as the seventh century B.C. New dimensions are being added on even in recent times by personalities like Paramahansa Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo and Gandhi.

The eight ingredients or Angas are as follows: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Though followers of various yogas may emphasise different angas or ingredients, yoga as a science and art is a package deal; the indispensable ingredients being, Yama and Niyama, Pranayama and Pratyahara, and Dhyana. No yoga, whatever its name, can deliver the goods, namely, the ecstatic union of the individual consciousness, with the universal consciousness without practising the main ingredients.

The Yamas are five which are disciplines;

- (a) Ahimsa - Non-injury by thought, word or deed.
- (b) Sathya - Truthfulness in thought, word, and deed.
- (c) Asteya - Non-stealing, non-covetousness regarding property belonging to, others.
- (d) Brahmacharya - Full continence and control over senses, especially sexual control over thought, word and deed. and
- (e) Aparigraha - Non-possessiveness, non-acquisitiveness, non-storing.

The Niyamas also are five observances:

- (a) Shoucha - Sanitation and hygiene and cleanliness.
- (b) Satvashuddhi - Selflessness gives, mastery over senses.
- (c) Santosh - Contentment-self satisfied condition.
- (d) Tapas - Austerity in living and
- (e) Swadhyaya - Study of scriptures, regularly.

Finally, by surrendering oneself to God, one attains Samadhi.

The observance of Yamas and Niyamas as a discipline is necessary; otherwise, there is a possibility of going in the wrong direction when one attains certain powers by practising Yoga. Yoga is the science and art of human evolution towards higher levels of conscious existence and living, which could be called 'divine'; a person taking to yoga must begin to look upon himself as a unit of consciousness—chit, which calls itself as 'I', and begin to treat the body, its organs, and its senses as tools to be mastered. 'Atmanam rathinam Viddhi', the Atman, the innermost being is the real, and ought to be the real master of all the tools. This could be done by any of the yogas, through Vairagya, not allowing the senses to dominate the consciousness, and by Abhyas, that is constant practice. I am not this body of flesh and blood, nor am I vital force—Prana, nor am I the mind but I am pure consciousness. This is possible only when a person begins to value the joy and the bliss and the Ananda which is the very nature of Atman, pure consciousness without any content and contamination of the innumerable impressions left on our consciousness by habit from the beginning of our birth and earlier in our gene.

In this effort, Asanas and Pranayama are helpful. Asanas by exercising the neurophysical centres and influencing the glandular system ensure health and an equilibrium in biological functioning giving peace of mind. Breath-control or Pranayama is a science by itself and control over breath gives control over cerebration and ideation and gives control over the Vrittis or modifications of the consciousness. That is the essence of yoga, the control and stoppage of the modifications in

the substance and content of our consciousness. When there is that control, consciousness becomes aware of itself as self-existent, enjoying bliss; that is what is called 'Swaroopa Avastha nan', or 'Atamanyevatmana Tushtah'. Dharana Dhyana—Samadhi are together called Samyama. Dhyana is concentration, and also contemplation when that concentration is on several aspects of the subject of concentration. But Dhyana is the union, communion of the individual consciousness with universal consciousness, of the soul with God or of self with Self. That is Samadhi which transforms the person's consciousness into an egoless transcendent entity, truth-conscious and bliss-centred.

A practical-minded person would ask, what is the use of this kind of attainment, this Samadhi. One simple and easily understandable result is the unmixed and uncaused joy that bubbles up and abides. The second thing is the transcendence of the normal dimensions of being, namely, the body, life and mind complex with all the pains and afflictions and sufferings with merely bits of happiness here and there. The third thing is the complete transformation of being and therefore of awareness and the total change in relationship, be it with things or living beings. The fourth thing is the feeling and continuous experience of freedom where no drives, no compulsions, no needs, no attractions are there to do or not to do things. There is almost cosmic spontaneity in the life of a Jivan-mukta—Free living. This is the kind of life everybody aspires after.

There is one more specially important aspect about yogic discipline, that it is not a discipline peculiar to any particular religion with a theology and a ritual. If, theistic Hindus follow it, it is equally followed by non-theistic Buddhists and Jains. Any one believing that human consciousness has certain potentialities for transcending it and transforming it is welcome to follow the discipline. In fact, the world over, millions of people of different faiths and ideologies are practising yoga of one type or other. There is no hierarchy about it and no restriction of caste, creed, colour, race or sex or even age.

One more thing has happened to Yoga. Though it is quite clear from the quotations and reference in the Vedas and Upanishads that yoga developed initially as a science and art of human evolution in the field of spiritual realisation and for communion of the individual soul with God or Reality, it is today being used partially or wholly for attainment of various objectives: for instance, for physical health and culture; it is used as therapy for cure of diseases; it is used and practised for acquiring occult powers; it is practised for intellectual sharpness and brilliance; it is practised for peace of mind and self-control, and so on.

It is difficult to define consciousness. The word used in Sanskrit is chit, though it has other meanings also. But since the highest reality is often described as Sat—(Being), chit—(consciousness), Ananda—(joy), chit may well be understood to mean that power or energy or Shakti which cognises, responds, knows, thinks, feels, experiences, wills and drives to action.

Traditionally consciousness has four aspects, waking awareness (Jagrata), dream-state (Swapna), sleepy condition (Sushupti) and the fourth state—Turiya or Samadhi. The fourth state is described as, peaceful—Shantam, auspicious—Shivam, one without a second—Advaitam, where all activities merge—prapanchopashaman, and finally, that which testifies to the one indivisible eternal existence—Ekatmapratyayasaram.

Just as you attend to the needs of the body, feeding it three times a day in order to keep it in running trim, so, too, spend some time regularly every day to keep your inner Consciousness also in good trim. Spend one hour in the morning, another at night and a third in the early hours of dawn, the Brahmamuhurta, as it is called, in Japam and Meditation on the Lord. You will find great peace descending on you and great new sources of strength welling up within you as you progress in this Sadhana. After some time, the mind will dwell on the Name wherever you are and whatever you are engage in; and then, Peace and Joy will be your inseparable companions.

—Baba

A Vision Lost

When will I see Thee again?
When will I behold—again—
that beauteous vision?
OH! Nectar of the universe!

What means will take me
to the End
That You are—
O' Truth Supreme
O' Love Abound!

The Beauty is veiled, now,
and the Power unmanifest;
yet sailing through
the harmony and delight;
You make this motley soul share—

as does a Mother to a baby
in the cradle at dawn
and at dusk alike;
the joy of love.

The Sun's halo too has gone
too far out of sight—
'so near, and yet so far'.
The fiery eyes,
the childlike face,
the playful hands,
the dancing fingers,
the angelic gait ...
the golden gaze in the
Infinite's space, and
the nameless touch
on my forehead's eye ...
haunt me painfully
as I step nearer
my earth-bound flight!

—*Purusottama, Melbourne*

His Clarion Call to Teachers

"The end of knowledge is Love. The end of education is Character. A student will understand the significance of possessing the attributes of LOVE and CHARACTER in a natural fashion, if he is exposed during his educational career to realise the importance of the three D's viz., DUTY, DISCIPLINE AND DEVOTION. The great task of transforming the present day student-by instilling in him the traits of Duty, Discipline and Devotion so that he possesses ultimately the attributes of Love and Character which are so vital for the sustenance of human race—into responsible citizen of tomorrow is in the hands of Teachers, Educationists and Scientists. This great task could be accomplished if these three come together and work in a cohesive manner. The best way to achieve this is to constitute a SATSANG of Teachers, Educationists and Scientists. I am very happy that you wish to constitute such a Satsang under the name of STUDY CIRCLE. I promise you that I will be with you and take an active part in guiding the activities of the Study Circle."

Thus said Bhagavan while formally blessing the formation of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Study Circle on Sunday, 12th August 1979, in the Prayer Hall of Prasanthi Nilayam, where a group of over hundred teachers, educationists and scientists had gathered. Bhagavan spent about two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening giving His Divine Discourse. Every one felt, when the time to depart had arrived, that the day had never come to an end. All of us were overwhelmed by the affection and grace showered on us by Swami and we all became full and resplendent with His Darshan as well as with the sweet nectar of His loving voice and words. How did all this happen?

A few of us Teachers, Educationists and Scientists have felt the need to seek the guidance of Bhagavan in order to devise ways and means to combat the rot that has set in into our country's educational system and educational and research organisations. Some months ago we mooted the idea of starting a Study Circle for this purpose and we got the blessings of Bhagavan. Then a preliminary meeting of the proposed Study Circle was held at Gandhi Bhavan, Bangalore, on Saturday the 21st July 1979. A few speakers spoke on that occasion essentially bringing out the gist of the teachings of Swami and also explaining the working of Sathya Sai Organisations. It was made clear to the audience on that day that the purpose and the action programmes of the Study Circle will be clearly spelled out only after receiving Bhagavan's instructions and guidance. After listening to what has transpired at this meeting, Bhagavan suggested that all those who are interested in the Study Circle should first visit Prasanthi Nilayam and see for themselves the various activities of Sathya Sai Organisations there. Swami suggested that we could go over to Prasanthi Nilayam on 11th and 12th, August, 1979.

So on 11th, August we left Bangalore at about 2 P.M. in three buses and reached Prasanthi Nilayam at about 5-30 p.m. Swami was giving Darshan. Bhagavan informed us that He will meet us the next day at 9 a.m. in the prayer hall. Everyone was eagerly awaiting the dawn and that precious 9 O'clock. Many of us got up very early in the morning to participate in the AUM-kara Recitation and Nagarasankeertan. We assembled in the prayer hall and Swami came in exactly at 9 A.M. He spent two full hours with us giving His Divine Discourse. We were overjoyed when Swami announced that He would meet us again in the afternoon at 4 P.M. Exactly at the appointed hour Swami walked into the prayer hall and He talked to us for some time clearing our

doubts. It was about 6 P.M. when He closed His discourse and blessed us to have a safe journey back to Bangalore.

Bhagavan said that it doesn't need much reflection for one to say that our education system is floundering. The reasons for this are obvious. When our country was under the British rule, they started an education system to suit their needs. They found it highly profitable to train local people in English and other subjects so that they can get the manpower to run their administration. But today, even after the British left the country, we are still groping in the dark, continuing the education system of colonial rule. Every Education Minister of independent India has been making pious pronouncements stating that he will revamp the education system so as to make it suitable to the needs of our country. What all we have had in the name of revamping is only the juggling of numbers to add up to fifteen. As a matter of fact education system has deteriorated over the thirty odd years because of frequent changes and unhealthy experimentation.

Now-a-days we are educating our children to make them use their paper degrees as begging bowls for securing jobs. In olden days the primary concern of education was to train people to serve society; today society has to provide jobs, preferably white collar jobs so that they may earn their livelihood without dirtying their hands and soiling their clothes. The education that we are imparting today is not true education; it is the supply of information to receive a paper degree.

Besides our education is not at all geared to allow the students to develop Discipline, Love and Character through the control of their senses. On the other hand it is allowing them to develop Indiscipline and Lust through pandering and free display of their five senses. The scientists claim that they have achieved complete control over the five elements; but they could not claim even a partial control of their senses. However much educated a person may be, if he or she does not develop control over the senses it will definitely lead to ruination of the individual as well as society. Though a mastered all then available worldly knowledge, Ravana could not get firm control of his senses; as a consequence he perished; he ruined his kith and kin and the beautiful city of Lanka. Ravana's lack of control led him to indulge in indisciplined behaviour and he paid for it very heavily in the end.

Reaction, Rebound and Resound are the basic facts of living. If one does good deeds one reaps good rewards. If one abuses another and if the other person ignores the abuse (like an unsigned registered letter will be returned to the sender) then it will rebound and thus will hurt him in the ultimate analysis. That is why Swami always says Do Good Be Good and See Good.

Discipline is the most important ingredient in all human activities and the need for its inculcation from childhood onwards cannot be overemphasized. Now-a-days the problems that various educational institutions and other organisations in our country face are solely due to lack of discipline. The sole cause for indiscipline is the lack of upright behaviour on the part of parents, teachers and leaders. There is a gulf of difference between what they preach and what they practise. How then could they create in the youngsters' minds Trustworthiness and Discipline? For example a father would give instructions to his son to be home by 8 PM, no matter what happened; but he himself will go to a club or a film and turn up at midnight. A teacher would exhort to his students not to smoke. But he himself would violate his preachings

and smoke cigarettes. How could you expect such a father or a teacher to inculcate discipline in the youngsters' minds?

Many boys were very undisciplined when they entered the Sathya Sai College in Brindavan. It is natural to have such students because these were the boys who were trained by the above mentioned type of irresponsible parents and teachers. But the same boys have not only become highly disciplined but also have secured high ranks in their college examinations. So it all depends upon the good examples that they are made to witness and experience and the loving care with which they are treated. As Bhagavan brought home with utmost emphasis the need for discipline in all walks of life, He categorically stated: "Practise what you preach and learn. Do not indulge in indiscriminate reading of books and unnecessary talk."

Bhagavan spent considerable time elaborating on the concept of DUTY. He said that proper education leads one to acquire discipline and this in turn leads to the discharge of one's duties rightly. He said that many people have the misconception that going to school or office punctually and regularly is Duty. But it is only a very minor aspect of Duty. It takes at least two individuals to discharge one's duty. A person is considered to be discharging his duty rightly only when he recognises and honours the freedom of others. If a person obstructs the freedom of any other person, he is not doing his duty right.

After analysing the concepts of Duty and Discipline Bhagavan turned His attention to DEVOTION. Devotion is not a uniform to be worn on certain days when you gather for worship and then be laid aside when the service is over. It must mean the promotion of an attitude that is ever present. It is the work that is done in the spirit of devotion realising the constant presence of God as the witness that will fetch us the grace of the Lord. Work done without devotion for fear of superior officers will always turn out to be dishonest work. Such work will never be appreciated by Swami.

Any education which inculcates Discipline, Duty and Devotion will allow the person to graduate from the stage of Self-confidence to Self-realisation through the intermediate steps of Self-satisfaction and Self-sacrifice. Is it not an irony that Man can reach the Moon, but he could not travel half an inch to reach his own heart through devotion? In order to promote the attitude of Devotion, the teacher must tell the student from his childhood onwards stories relating to God, Great Saints and Sages and Great Leaders of our Great Country. At present, a student knows more about the private life of a cinema star than anything at all about Rama or Krishna. "Most of you may feel it is difficult to change the present education system, because of political and other considerations, and bring into the regular curriculum the formal instruction about Devotion, Morality and Spirituality. But I disagree. A conscientious teacher can always take extra time to teach the youngsters the required lessons regarding the history and the culture of our great country. By this process I am sure you can implant the attributes of Devotion in a student. In the final analysis it is up to you to take the time and spend the effort to educate those entrusted to your care along right lines. In my considered opinion even under the present education system, there is tremendous scope—through conscientious effort and innovative teaching—for the teachers to inculcate the right concepts of Duty, Discipline and Devotion and make them blossom with LOVE and CHARACTER, and to become the torchbearers for the moral and the

spiritual upliftments of this great country. Make them tread the pathways of SATHYA, DHARMA, SANTHI AND PREMA,” said Bhagavan.

Before closing his discourse Bhagavan emphasized the need for all of us to work unitedly. He stressed that the seeking of name, fame or designation should not be our concern; but the spirit of service for the welfare of society should be our primary concern. To drive home the point about the importance of collective working for the benefit of the society, Bhagavan narrated the following story. Once upon a time the little finger of the human hand had a quarrel with all others and it proclaimed that it is the greatest because people keep it in front while making gestures. At this the ring finger got provoked and said that it should be the greatest since golden rings laid with gemstones are placed on it. The middle finger suddenly got angry with the behaviour of the little and the ring fingers and said: How could you claim superiority over me? I should be the greatest because I enjoy the disposition of a king with two bodyguards (viz., little and ring fingers on one side and the pointing finger and the thumb on the other side) on either side. At this juncture the pointing finger ridiculed the claims of the other three fingers and said: I should be the greatest because everyone uses me to point out at things Good or Bad. The thumb got very much annoyed at their arrogance and burst out: Look all of you! You cannot do anything without my help and cooperation. So why boast about your prowess. All of you are inferior to me. But the fact of the matter is, said Bhagavan in His sweet and loving voice, that in order to do any work perfectly all the fingers are required and hence the question of one feeling superior to the other should not arise. So like the fingers of a hand, all of you should work unitedly and harmoniously in order to carry on the activities of the proposed Study Circle. It is your responsibility to see that the ideal working environment of Sathya Sai Organisations is reflected in the working of the proposed Study Circle also. Money should be of no concern; do a good job of the work under taken, and maintain the high ideals of Sathya Sai.

We all went back to our homes in Bangalore with feeling of Bliss and Determination to tread the Path shown to us by the Good Lord Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Every one of us is convinced that one has only to experience to believe in the Infiniteness of Sri Sathya Sai's love and affection for His creation.

NOTE: The group that visited Prasanthi Nilayam on August 11th and 12th, 1979 consisted of Professors, Scientists and Teachers from various institutions such as: Indian Institute of Science; Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore University; University of Agricultural Sciences; National Aeronautics Laboratory; Hindustan Aeronautics Limited; Indian Space Research Organisation; Indian Veterinary Research Institute; Bangalore Medical College; Seshadripuram College; Renukacharya College; Poorna Prajna Education Centre and Kendriya Vidyalaya.

—Prof. S. V. Pappu, Indian Institute of Science

Man is just not a creature with hands and feet and eyes and ears and head and trunk; he is much more than a total of all these organs and parts: they are but the crude image that came out of the mould. Later, they have to be ground, scraped, polished, perfected, smoothened, softened, through the intellect and higher impulses and pure intentions and ideals. Then, man becomes the ideal candidate for Divinity, which is his real destiny. The impulses will be rendered pure and the intentions will be raised to the higher level, if man but decides to dedicate all his

deeds, words and thoughts to the Lord. For this, faith in One Supreme Intelligence which conceives, conserves and consumes this Universe.

—Baba

Morality of Spirituality?

Most of us take great pleasure in explaining the cause of things. We, perhaps, believe that the greatest good can accrue to mankind if they abide by moral principles which, again, can show us the way out of major problems. So, when something happens to somebody we comfort him, saying, 'Look, this happened to you *because* you did this or that; so you should not violate these principles again'. Those of us who want to explain away the mystery of things by a simple *because* or *should* or *should not* are like schoolboys who cannot understand a poem, without 'notes'.

The search for prescriptions, for dos and don'ts, has always initiated the decline of the great religions. They were born to reflect the greatness and glory of human life, to show the heights to which man can reach and inspire him to attain it. But gradually life was subordinated to doctrines and the doctrines started dictating to man. The God-men with whom the great religions were born spoke of men with understanding and knowledge; they had great love and compassion for man in spite of his many weaknesses and frailties, for, they knew, if man chooses to grow, he can grow out of all the bounds set by religions. They never damned a brother however irreligious he was; on the other hand, they said, the brother needed compassion more as he had strayed away. This is beautifully explained in the parable of the prodigal son. Religion is the inner life of man, who evolves in his own way within certain broad boundaries. It is the inner discipline which comes of its own, once the desire to grow is entertained; it aids one's understanding of oneself in an intuitive manner and it is that which opens out one's consciousness to higher levels of existence. It can not be reduced to a set of moral formulas.

But with time the inner spiritual content of religions got shrouded and dialecticians and moralists became self-appointed mentors of religious life. They began systematising, confining, codifying, formulating, and binding the great religions with moral principles and rituals. Rituals, not realisation became the 'central idea' of the religions and the decline became rapid. The more they insisted on moral laws, the greater became the degeneration, for morality has never been more than the outer boundary of any religion. And when you are thrown to the periphery, to quote W. B. Yeats, "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold."

So we must be clear about what we want, morality or spirituality. Are we going to build up a world governed by dos and don'ts or by a spiritual vision? The moralist is a mathematician who never understands anything more than, greater than, formulas. He must reduce every-thing to mathematical principles; but the spiritualist Sadhaka is a poet who sees a vision even in dark, who hears a music even in the tumult of war, who sees a profound order even in apparent disorder; for he sees with the inner eye.

Life is not governed by moral laws alone. On the other hand, life needs and is ruled by spiritual vision. For instance, in the moral world, we speak of Sathya or truth. "What is Truth?" said the jesting Pilate, "So long you live, live with all pleasure, if need be, borrow money and drink ghee," was the greatest truth for Charvak, and Keats sang, "Truth is beauty and beauty is Truth." The dialecticians are engaged in endless war on what exactly is truth, for what is truth for a man at a given period of time, with a given level of his mental standard may suddenly appear untrue once these are changed. We certainly cannot afford to dissipate the small span of our life in these vagaries. The spiritualist shall not say 'Sathya' and enter into the assembly of moralists or dialecticians; he will rather say SAT and keep quiet in meditation. Truth varies in space-time-causation dimensions, but SAT is the common denominator of all truths through space-time-causation. So unless we attain spiritual excellence, spiritual vision, the moral vision remains incomplete.

A moralist talks of Papa and Punya, Heaven and Hell, Reward and Punishment. This is born out of a fear psychology. 'Be fearless, is the injunction of the Upanishads for, fear is a bondage. While the aim of religion is to free man from all bondage, one cannot accept fear to be a part of it. It may be a guiding force for every small time, in a very small measure to a limited set of people who are on a particular level of mental maturity, but it cannot be, should not be, the driving force. A moralist will say 'Ye men, God is great, and when the Great God chooses to punish, He can be very hard. So question not, be afraid of Him and obey Him'. But a spiritualist shall say 'Brothers, God is all Love. He loves all his children immensely and is greatly pained when somebody strays away from Him. So love Him and run from all that tempts you away.' Which will be more effective? Certainly, not the first. Therefore Baba always insists we must not say 'papoham', I am a sinner; we must remember 'Sivoham', I am Siva.

Since a spiritualist has only love for God, and has no fear for Him, he can be equal minded, for he shall inherit God and the 'perfect Balance' that He is. He won't say 'God is good', he will say, God is God, or simply 'GOD IS'. For a spiritualist these human concepts like justice, honesty, goodness, morality or injustice, dishonesty, evil, immorality do not hold any attraction, for he sees a higher meaning in all. For him there is no anti-God, as God subsumes everything and Man's sadhana is to rise up to that level where there are no contradictions. The ultimate freedom, of man or society does not lie with a moralist, It lies with a spiritualist.

A moralist works within the framework of ego, so he is an egoist—though it may be a finer ego. A moralist sees good and sees bad and then tells us how to avoid the bad.

But the spiritual aspirant sees only good. In this context Baba always says, "do good, see good and be good; this is the way to God." Being good is more important than seeing or doing good, for when you are good, not only you see or do what you are, you can inspire others as well to take up the way to God.

There are moments in our epics and Itihasas as well as in the myths of other nations which cannot be explained by moral principle. For instance, a moralist may raise the question "why should Lord Rama kill Vali from Behind a tree?" or why should lord Krishna violate the sacred principles of war by instructing Arjuna to kill Karna just when he had no weapons, or indicate to

Bhima to strike above the knees of Duryodhana? etc. and then may enter into endless arguments trying to 'justify the ways of God to man', or trying to point out short-comings from which God also suffers! He also has to go through His own Karmaphala! With a pair of wise and penetrating eyes, placing his scholarly glasses on the tip of the nose, he utters the last word, 'look, even God cannot escape his doings!' Thus in our Puranas we sometimes come across descriptions of a seduced God, an egoist God, a self-conceited God, a warring God and so on. These are all later creations, and creations of moralists who cannot see the world as anything more than a play-ground of reward-and-punishment. So Baba warns us not to take things in their face value. He uncovers the spiritual content of such stories and rejects all that do not conform to the pattern.

The moralist sees the, obvious, if a man commits a murder, he must be punished, he says. But a spiritual seeker who can see the secret laws of life, may come out, call him his brother, hug him to his heart, refuse to brand him a sinner and pray to God to redeem him. He alone knows the secrets of the suffering and the deeds of man. He knows moral principles are only one of the many windows that open on the man and you cannot judge him rightly by looking at him through a half-shut window. The secret laws which form, perhaps nine-tenths of all the laws, laws of love and understanding, laws of Being. The moral laws are only a fraction of the laws of Becoming. A moralist shall ask a man to sleep with his feet away from the temple, and the spiritualist shall insist 'show me where God is not, and, if you can, turn away'. We know that happens to such moralists. The temple turns with the feet of the saint. This is true religion, true aid to growth, true realisation. When the culture of ancient India became largely a moral culture, the great fall began.

From the above discussion the readers should not conclude that this is a denunciation of moralists. This is only to point out their limitations and say that a moralist may not be a spiritualist but a spiritualist is a moralist of higher order. We should be guided by spiritual vision, and not depend upon moral principles alone.

Only a spiritualist can surrender, not a moralist, for a spiritualist can accept every thing quietly as grace of God. But a moralist must question, explain and then accept. He accepts only when you tell him something in the language of principles. He is not after understanding, he must be satisfied that a certain thing conforms to moral guidelines.

"When religions decline and men stray away, I come to resuscitate it to its pristine purity," God has said. We may read it thus, "When people forget the spiritual content and the message of the religions and meander among the moral dialectics I come to elevate the consciousness of man w that he can visualise spiritual truths." When the spiritual vision is forgotten and people are confused by outer forms, they kill and die in the name of religion. Therefore Baba so often declares that there must be only one religion, the religion of Love or the message and vision of all religions, is going to foster the future man.

Baba is inscrutable, unpredictable and many can not describe Him as just, for, He is all-inclusive, all-pervasive and all-transcending. He is beyond all formulas, all thought-patterns, all explanations. Those of us who attempt to explain His ways are either egoist or moralists. Those of us who can enjoy his certainty and uncertainty as well, are real spiritualists. Morality has its obverse companion immorality, justice injustice, good bad and when we are surrounded

by these pests spirituality is the only pesticide, and the Avatar comes to redeem us by spraying this pesticide on our mind and heart. He also comes to accelerate the evolution of man by removing the obstructions on its way to the Genuine Man, the manava who shall become Madhava.

—*B. H. Mishra, Cuttack*

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9

The rulers of worldly states have perforce to lay down hard and fast limitations and conditions, disciplines and duties in order to ensure welfare, prosperity and progress. Imagine then how many more such have to be imposed by the Lord who holds Himself responsible for the entire Cosmos! For the smooth and safe working of the various facets of Nature, He has to prescribe flawless rules. Just contemplate how numerous and universal they have to be! These affect every activity and inactivity in nature. Each unit must have (and has) its own peculiar restrictions and regulations. It is more or less, itself, within the larger framework. It has a separate Head with limbs of government, coordinating duties and responsibilities and co-operating with others.

The prayers of the afflicted for timely help or useful guidance are attended to by, the appropriate units only. Therefore, if through ignorance or want of care, the pleading is addressed to the wrong Head, what can he do? He can only cast it aside, remarking that it does not concern Him since it has been wrongly addressed to Him. So, prayers for specific benefits and bounties have to be directed to the departments with which they are related. The divinity concerned with rain is Varuna. So, prayers for rain or about rain have to be directed to Him, for, He alone is authorised to deal with such. Similarly, Surya is the Head of the Realms of Health and Splendour. Ganapathi is the Head of the department that deals with prevention of difficulties that hamper good works. Bhudevi is the goddess in charge of vegetation. Cultivated Crops and medicinal plants are fostered by Chandra. Thus, each group of Divine manifestations and expressions has a lesser divine authority empowered to supervise and manage it. They are referred to as Deities. There are Deities supervising, guarding and, guiding each one of the senses of man.

It may be asked, "God is One. Why then can He not listen to and fulfill our prayers Himself?" This question is based on mistake; it is a sign of weakened faith. Of course, there is only one God. But, in the governance of the Cosmos, there must needs be different fields of activity to rule and regulate. These have subordinate deities. If you write a letter to me and address it to another, it will reach only the addressee! It cannot be *presented* before the person whom you desire to approach. So too, you have to address the Deity in charge, concerned with the fulfillment or denial of the desire you have entertained. Then, that Deity would interest himself in your problem and initiate whatever steps he can to solve it.

It is essential to inquire into the credentials one has before one formulates the prayer. That inquiry will reveal whether one's thoughts and resolutions, hopes and desires arise from firm

Faith or not. How to test and discover the truth? People take a piece of gold and draw with it a line on a slice of stone; then they examine the streak and assess the quality. The test which will reveal the quality of your Faith is whether you are practising sincerely the injunctions laid down by God. Your beliefs and actions must be expressions of Faith. They must have holiness as their core. They must be so full of Love and Compassion that they attract on you the Grace of God.

Activity emanating from such sacred belief and faith is the goal of Karma segment of Vedic scriptures. It is the tap-root of human progress; it is the very breath of happy human existence; it is the food that can alone allay the hunger of man; it is the life-sustaining water that can cure his thirst. Activity or Karma is as essentially bound with man as his need to discover and realise his own Reality. Therefore the first and continuing duty of man is to engage himself in activities that are taught in the Vedas, or approved therein.

Three types of activity reach God and earn His Grace. (1) Activity not prompted by personal desire, (2) activity emanating from unselfish Love and (3) prayer arising from pure hearts. These are the items to which the Lord pays heed; they reach God direct. The rest are the concern of deities who preside over their disposal. Therefore, prayers have to be unselfish, saturated with Love, and free from the taint of "attachment to the gift that the prayer would bring."

The word Sastra that is frequently used to indicate scriptures means "that which commands, orders, directs with authority." "Before eating food, cook it well; before sowing seeds, prepare the soil through ploughing"—the Sastras need not contain such orders. Who commands and where is that command laid down that the new-born calf shall seek food at the udder of the mother cow where it is already stored to appease its hunger pangs? Birth takes place along with sustenance for the being born.

As a matter of fact, the sustenance is ready first and the birth of the individual to be sustained takes place later. The individual's food and standard of living are dependent on the merit or demerit accumulated in previous lives while struggling for these two. He uses his intelligence to overcome the obstacles and cultivate the skills needed to succeed in this struggle. But, the really valuable guidelines for human progress are beyond the understanding of man and even the capacities of his intelligence. Nevertheless, the characteristics of his conduct and behaviour, his attitudes and aptitudes are delineated in the Vedas, and demarcated in the Sastras. Activity is as essential on Vedic and Sastric lines as they are for humans in the worldly level. The learned should realise that activities recommended in the scriptures promote the best interests of man here and lead to peace and harmony in the hereafter.

In the art of beneficial activity, the goal of 'Service to mankind' occupies the foremost place. Of course, the individual pursuing the goal is also a beneficiary, since he is part of the living community which he serves. He is the co-sharer in the magnificent adventure. Knowing this and being aware of this truth when engaged in the service are themselves the highest urges for service.

Today, we hear everywhere, slogans like, "Manava Seva is Madhava Seva," "Loka Seva is Lokesa Seva," "Jana Seva is Janardhana Seva," "Jiva Seva is Deva Seva"—each one highlighting the idea that the service rendered to man is worship offered to God. This idea is very true, and

very valid. But, the method of service is not being well thought out by many. The call for service to mankind is heard and welcomed; but, how and where that service is to be practised is not reasoned out and decided. Each one follows his own inclination and impulse. The most powerful impulse is self-aggrandizement, which is camouflaged as 'service.' In the name of 'service', neither worldly prosperity nor spiritual advance is furthered. More destruction than construction is achieved. Helping one, co-operating with another, sympathising with others when they suffer defeat, disease or distress-all these must cater, not merely for the individual, but also for the harmony and happiness of the world.

The organisation of the urge to serve and the directions into which it was channelled have prevailed since ages as laid down by the sages who were the forefathers. The forefathers believed that the very observance of Dharma (Righteousness and Justice) by the individual contributed to the welfare of the world and could be evaluated as 'service'. The broad circular heavy footprint of the elephant can include and even obliterate the footprints of many an animal. So too, the imprint of Dharma includes service to society and to mankind. This was the faith of the Sages.

High ideals are inspired by Dharma. The forefathers imbibed them along with the breast-milk of their mothers. Therefore, their practice of Dharma was pure, praiseworthy and productive of the highest good. It was believed in those ancient days that the festive feeding of the hungry, the provision of houses for those without shelter, the construction of temples, the digging of tanks and wells, were all conducive to the happiness of man. Good men who propagated such ideals were discovered and gathered, fostered and fended; entire villages were ear-marked for them and cultivable land allotted for their upkeep. The cool comforting moonlight of the fame of these leaders and guides has lasted even unto this day, providing unshakeable examples of love, compassion and wisdom in the service of humanity.

(To be continued)

The Baba Balm

(From Inaugural Address, Hon'ble Justice **Sri V. R. Krishna Iyer**, Supreme Court of India)

The switch from darkness to light is what takes place as we sit through these Lectures day after day in this hallowed hall. For in Ruskin's finer phrases: "He is only advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, his blood warmer, his brain quicker, and his spirit entering into living peace."

Here we attain to a finer synthesis of the triple paths. The first step is Karmayoga, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the Gita's insistence is on action. The second is Jnanayoga, the self-realisation and knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world, and here the insistence is on knowledge; but the sacrifice of works continues and the path of works becomes one with but does not disappear into the path of knowledge. The last step is Bhaktiyoga, adoration and seeking of the Supreme Self as the Divine Being, and here the insistence is on devotion; but the knowledge is not subordinated, only raised, vitalised and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of works

continues; the double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, the one fruit still placed before the seeker, is attained, union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine Nature.

There is no contradiction but coalescence in *this* orchestrated Project. This is the core of the teaching by Baba of *Prem* and the *Supreme* in my humble understanding Sage Aurobindo says, "When the divine consciousness and Power, taking upon itself the human form and the human mode of action, possesses it not only by powers and magnitudes, by degrees and outward faces of itself but out of its eternal self-knowledge, when the Unborn knows itself and acts in the frame of the mental being and the appearance of birth, that is the full and conscious descent of the Godhead, it is the Avatar. Those who deny that possibility are guilty of bigotry disguised as rationality.

The contemporary Indian drama is a saga of sorrow and self-centeredness, a traumatic tale of arrogance and corruption, a moral-political collapse and bankruptcy both of divinity and humanity, never mind the manifestoes, commissions, legislations and official assertions. We are prisoners of power and pelf, sex and self, violence and vice.

A massive spiritual change of scale produced by a plenary charismatic Divinity is the necessary condition for a wider, purer, welfare-oriented social order even on the material plane. A Marx-based society will develop cracks absent in a Mahatma-type moral sensitivity and both may crumble *sans* the Sai *Prem* Power. The integral yoga of body, mind and spirit is the engineering know-how for mankind's flight to heaven *here*. His core teaching is the answer to the key question: Who am I? He once gave me the answer: I am *I*. Reflect over this profound reply and Realise that the Universal 'I' subsumes every individual 'I' Aham Brahmasmi.

The physical—psychical explorers have reached these sublime frontiers and offer challenges to materialism as the be-all and end-all of Existence. "The result of all sincerely followed paths, however, is a change of consciousness in the one who walks the path. Sometimes gradually, sometimes suddenly, the traveller perceives a previously unseen order and meaning in the universe, a recognition that gives significance to life by merging the boundaries of the self with the cosmos. He recognizes that, paradoxically, the deepest aspect of himself is one with all creation. That radical expansion of the meaning of *I* has best been termed *cosmic consciousness*. It is a state in which there is constant awareness of unity with the universe pervading all aspects of one's life. Every activity, every relationship, every thought is guided by the knowledge of oneness between the self and the world. Inner and outer space are unified, and the inhumanities that people perpetrate on one another and the stupidities that people mount against nature become impossible to commit. This internal self-regulation is the surest safeguard against the destruction of our world." Science and Religion have an underlying unity. Baba, by his Presence and lessons, brings home the basic idiom of the Oneness of Consciousness!

The human planet is in a spiritual, moral and material crisis. Hubris and hypocrisy, hunger and heartache, upheaval and annihilation, in many *asuric* shapes shock humanity and drown *santhi*. Where is the therapeutic recipe for this sick society where life is long fever for the haves and the have-nots. A transformation through a higher *manava-dharma* is the ancient prescription. If divinity is everywhere and in everyone how can you hate or harm another or enjoy by yourself when your brother is in agony? Atom bombs will not explode if every atom in the human heart is

charged with love and peace. Our sages of old, why our later saints, *Acharyas*, founding fathers, *Paramahamsas*, inspired exponents and *Maharshis* have served humanity by offering the Indian yet cosmic solution of raising the collective consciousness by the integral yoga of Matter and Spirit of this world and Beyond.

There is one touch of Nature which makes the whole world kin—the Baba balm of *Prem* which must permeate *karma*, kindle *jnana* and sublimate into *dharma*.

The One and Only Choice

‘The one Ruler, the Self within all beings, who makes his own form manifold—the wise who perceive Him within themselves, to them belongs eternal Happiness, not to others.’
(Kathopanishad).

The basic desire of man is to be happy. The tragic riddle of life however is that while his instinctive nature drives him towards happiness, his inner life is beset with conflict and doubt. His environment at times gives him what he may call happiness; but it is no more than his experience of occasional pleasures, and these pleasures are mostly tinged with sorrow and pain, or are at best, the intervals between such sorrows and pains.

Bhagavan Baba says: ‘Our philosophers have accepted the position that every human being in this world is continually struggling in order to obtain happiness, or to increase the amount of happiness which he has obtained or to obviate and reduce unhappiness’. However in trying to find happiness (Ananda) in the physical world, he experiences just the opposite of it. Bhagavan points out: ‘He (man) hoards wealth, authority, fame and learning in order to acquire happiness. But he finds that they are fraught with fear, anxiety and pain Happiness of material origin is short lived and has misery as its obverse.’

Man's basic nature is happiness—the Bliss characteristic of the Divine that he is. But in the world of objects, he is working under a delusion mistaking pleasures for happiness and the satisfaction of his sense cravings as the purpose of his life. It is an endless urge, the urge for material joy unchecked by ethical and spiritual values and disciplines. One desire satisfied, ten push forward to take its place. Wealth, power, position—all become means for him to achieve that satisfaction. With desire chasing satisfaction and satisfaction engendering greater desires, life becomes an endless struggle. While the achievement of happiness should leave nothing else to be desired, pleasures only stimulate the urge for more and more of them. Desires thus lead to the very negation of happiness since disappointments and frustrations which inevitably dog his footsteps, give rise to sorrow, anger and other darker passions leading to complete loss of equanimity. Arjuna asks the Lord in Bhagavad-Gita: ‘But by what is man impelled to commit sin, as if by force, even against his own will, O, Varshneya (Krishna)’ and the Lord clarifies this succinctly: ‘This is craving, this is wrath, born of the mode of passion all-devouring and most sinful. Know this to be the enemy here.’ (Gita III-36/37)

Is man helpless against this craving for sense-life with pain and agony predominating over the brief periods of pleasure, or is it that he considers that sense-life is adequate and satisfying? No one, in any stage of evolution, willingly accepts bondage. Even beasts and birds resist bondage. Man, it is stated has been made in the image of God, which means that freedom is his essential nature. Why then should he accept the domination of his senses and be a prisoner of his thoughts and desires? Why should he not rise above these and soar into the freedom which is his right and see the end of that bondage?

Human life stands very high in the scale of evolution. Man has been given the intelligence, the discrimination (if he chooses) to work towards his own perfection. He is not bound by the chains of destiny as other sentient beings are. Destiny he has; but that destiny is his own making. He reaps the fruits of his own actions; in fact he reaps what he sows. While the law of Karma is a divine and unerring law, God does not sit in judgment of his actions and impose on him punishments for his sins. The sins are what he brings on himself by his actions, impelled by his desires and passions. In fact the end of all creation—not of man alone—is union with God, but only in man has that end become conscious. Only man can love God consciously. Other creatures are drawn towards Him blindly and have no will in the matter. The conscious love of God is possible only for a free soul. The freedom of the soul is however limited or denied by the Ego acting in conjunction with the mind and the senses. Man is deluded by Maya, and the Primordial ignorance (Avidya) draws him down continually towards the world of objects. All his activities and relationships, all his desires, are influenced by Maya. He is a prisoner within the network of time and space, cause and effect, and relativity. Under the influence of his Vasanas (inherited tendencies) he acts in furtherance of his Karma until the wisdom born out of discrimination and the Grace of God turns his steps inwards towards the Reality within himself.

Bliss or abiding Happiness is the nature of the Infinite. Pleasure and pain are relative and refer to our finite state. Individuals may differ in the mixture of pleasure and pain that they experience in any span of life—some having more of the former and less of the latter in this life and vice versa in the next or a subsequent life. But so long as the soul suffers the finitude that is imposed on it, this cycle should continue. The end of this comes only when it can rise to the Infinite, when the soul, unimpeded by the ego realises its unity with Brahman, the nature of which is Sat-chit-Ananda abiding, enlightened Bliss. That alone is the goal worth seeking.

The question is whether man would consciously take to the path of discrimination (Viveka), realising the futility of sense-life and turn God-ward or whether the yearning for abiding peace has to be forced on him by a catastrophe or calamity. Irrespective of whether the world is the creation of God who is omnipotent, or His emanation, Infinite as He is, the Supreme abides in everything and sustains the universe and everything in it. Man is the embodiment of that Divine. The happiness that he seeks is in fact the Bliss of the union of the embodied soul with the Eternal Soul, this union according to the Eternal Philosophy being known as Yoga. Following the path of sensual life man slips down to animality. Obviously that cannot be the choice of the wise and discriminating. It has to be the path of Wisdom, the path to perfection, the path of evolution of the physical to the spiritual, of man (manava) to God (Madhava). This then is the only choice for man, irrespective of whether he develops the discrimination for it, or is forced into it. With His characteristic compassion for mankind Bhagavan says: 'Peace comes from within. Contentment is a mental condition. Do not feed the roots of attachment to worldly comforts more than is

absolutely necessary. They lead to anxiety and fear; they can never satisfy the innermost craving of man. Lead them into the path of devotion and dedication; that will be for them the path of contentment and joy.'

The realisation that this is his only choice marks the dawn of man's spiritual life. From then on he is on the God-ward path. Based on their experiences and realisations the seers and sages have laid down the disciplines (Sadhana) needed for the aspirants. The Scriptures prescribe them with the authority of authenticity. Suited to the stage of his wisdom, temperament or status in life there is a path for him, and all paths lead to the same goal. Some may be fortunate in having the guidance of a Guru (teacher); but the Guru himself has to be a realised soul. Since such Gurus are rare Bhagavan asks us to adopt God himself as our Guru; He is the Guru of all Gurus. Once on the spiritual path, it is immaterial how long it takes one to achieve the Realisation. But as Gita declares, no effort, however insignificant or incomplete goes waste. The immediate achievement is the peace that arises from the surrender of the ego at the altar of the Infinite. The ego may have to pass through numerous births from which it has gradually, progressively, but inevitably to learn the art of true living. Its experience should release the virtues and wisdom that lie latent in the personality of the individual and prepare him for the life in the spirit that is his goal. The time needed for this, the lives to be lived are all immaterial. Time is of the finite world; birth and death are also of the finite world; these are not relevant in the context of the Self, the Infinite.

True, man is under the influence of Maya. But Maya is again the nature of the Lord, who pervades it. Brought up in Maya and caught up in Maya, it is only through Maya that one can work towards the Reality which is the substratum of the self-same Maya. 'Know nature to be Maya, and the Great God to be the Lord of Maya. This whole Universe is pervaded by Him, through beings which form His parts.' (Svetasvatara Upanishad). Maya cannot be condemned or discarded as alien to our spiritual pursuit. Endowed with mind and intellect which are finite, it is only by subduing the former and developing the latter that one can get behind and beyond Maya and be truly free. Having been born in Maya and reared in Maya the experience of life should strengthen his resolve to realise freedom and help him in his Sadhana.

The realisation of the Ultimate Reality being the only choice for abiding peace and happiness, it behoves on man to use his world life, his body, mind and intellect towards that end. In Viveka Choodamani, Acharya Sankara says: 'The body is essentially an instrument for realising Paramatman. He who does not constantly use it for liberating himself from the bondage born of beginningless ignorance, but struggles to nourish it, is destroying himself.' (Verse 83) Life as man (nara-janma) is a rare gift and the Acharya is very critical of those who do not grasp the opportunity for liberation from the bondage of Samsara: 'O, fool, give up the thirst for possession of wealth, create in your mind, devoid of passions, thoughts of Reality. With whatever you get (as a reward of the past), entertain your mind (be content). Seek Govinda, Seek Govinda' (Bhaja Govindam).

Fears are often expressed about the arduousness of the spiritual discipline. The misgivings arise on account of the mistaken conception of the nature of the goal. It is not the achievement of a distant objective, but the realisation of a unity that already exists everywhere and at all times. The Lord who created the Universe or from whom the Universe emanated, is not standing apart or away from it enjoying His play or dispensing justice according to one's merit. He is in

everything and everything is in Him. `Subtler than the subtle, Greater than the great, the Self is hidden in the heart of the creature. By the Grace of the Lord one sees Him who is actionless, sees His majesty and becomes free from sorrow' (Svetaswatara Upanishad).

The path is arduous if we allow our mind and intellect to run away and seek material and sensual satisfactions. But once we surrender ourselves, and all our thoughts and actions to the Lord, the path becomes smooth. The extent to which one can control one's senses and subdue the mind depends on the faith he has in the Lord and the discrimination that he has developed. Non-attachment to the world of objects and the fruits of one's actions, nay, to everything that is material and transient is the key to Salvation. `Once man is free from undue attachment to the body and its appurtenances, he is liberated also from the pulls of joy-grief, good-bad, pleasure-pain etc. He is finally established in equanimity, fortitude, undisturbed balance. Then "man discovers that world is one kin in God; that all is Joy, Love, Bliss," says Bhagavan Baba.

The Unity that one realises between the Self and the Supreme and of everyone and everything in the world is the highest Happiness that one should seek. And that Unity is the YOGA that the Lord of Bhagavad-Gita refers to in these beautiful verses (VI-21/23):

`That in which he finds his supreme delight, perceived by the intelligence, and beyond the reach of the senses, wherein established he no longer falls away from the truth;

`That on gaining which he thinks that there is no greater gain beyond it; wherein established he is not shaken with the heaviest sorrow;

`Let that be known as .the name of Yoga, the disconnection from union with pain. This Yoga should be practised with determination, with heart: undismayed.'

—C. P. H. Nair

The Sadguru Speaks

The macrocosms and the microcosms—the Brahmanda and the Pindanda—the Universal and the Individual—all arise from the One Truth. Though they are manifestations and emergents from that Truth, it is not affected by either. It is known as Brahman. When this unmodifiable transcendent and immanent Brahman, instead of being just `Being', decides on `Becoming' it is best designated as "God", "Easwara" or "Almighty". The divine ground of everything that is, is the spiritual Absolute, called Paramatma, or Overself. It is also the Ground, the Base, the Core, the Reality of man.

But, in spite of "Becoming" which is only an illusion imposing multiplicity on the One Being, It remains One. So long as inquiry is postponed, only the multiplicity is cognised. The multiplicity is neither Real nor Un-real. It is relatively-real, temporarily-real, pragmatically real, Mithya, not Sathya but an amalgam of Sathya and Asathya—apparently real but fundamentally unreal, real for most practical purposes (Vyavahara) but unreal when the basic nature is

unravelling. Mithya is the mixture of Sat and Asat, the 'knowledge' of the serpent which is negated when the knowledge of the rope is won.

The clouds appear to be stuck to the sky; so too, Maya (or the tendency to conclude that what the senses tell us is true or to project our preferences and prejudices on to the world around us) gives us an untrue picture of Brahman. It makes us believe that the World is real. Its impact warps our reasoning process, our sensory impressions and our views on God, on Creation and on Man. It spreads before us a diversity which tantalises and deceives.

The Basic Truth upon which Maya projects its kaleidoscope, is described by seers as Sat-Chit-Ananda. This does not allow us to infer that Brahman has three attributes and three only—It *exists* beyond Time and Space; It knows and can be known; It is the source and acme of Bliss. They are not three distinct characteristics; they indicate the one of which the three can be posited by experience, not by words for words can only recoil before that Godhead, We cannot assert that Brahman belongs to a class or *genes*; It cannot be defined by qualities like the three, for It is without qualities; it cannot be described as performing specific activity, for It has no activity. Activity can come only through desire. Nor can It be explained in terms of relationship with other entities, for It is the One, without a second.

Maya is only the Divine Will that inaugurated the manifestation of the Cosmos (Ekoham, Bahushyam—I am One; I will be many). Maya inheres in every being and every activity of that being; it has three aspects of achievement through the three modes and moods of that Will—the Satwic, the Rajasic and the Tamasic, the calm, contented, equanimous mood, the potent passionate mood and the inert, slothful, sluggish mood. When Maya prompts us into the Satwic mood of that Will, we become progressive seekers of Jnana or the Higher Wisdom that reveals the Unity. When we are overwhelmed by the Rajasic quality of that Will, we are deluded into the pursuit of worldly victories and ephemeral wealth and renown. The Tamasic Will seeks the quickest and easiest ways of happy living. These are the reflections in our minds of the basic modes of the Will that Brahman assumes when it is moved by the Primal Urge to express Itself. The facets of that Will are called Jnana Shakti, Ichha Shakti and Kriya Shakti.

The three modes affect beings and things in various proportions and permutations and so, we have all the variety and diversity of the objective world. Atma, individualised or universalised, is One and One only. The Jivatma and the Paramatma are One and indivisible.

The philosophers of all lands and all times have sought to discover the truth of God, the objective world and man, as well as their mutual relationship. Maya is the Will that causes all three. It is a clear flawless mirror; when the Satwic nature is reflected in that Will or Mirror, God (or Easwara, the Creator or Providence) results. When the Rajasic nature is reflected, the Jiva or Individualised self, results. It is ever anxious to grow, to grab, to survive and to be secure. When Tamasic nature is reflected in that Will, matter is the result, that is to say, the objective world. All three are Paramatma; only they derive their reality as Its reflections. When undergoing reflection, they attain different forms and combinations of characteristics. The One becomes Many; every one of the many is real only because of the One in it. Maya too is the component of the One; by the emphasis on that component, the one transformed Itself into the Many.

We now know that Maya is like a mirror. The mirror reflects within itself all that is before it. The convexity or concavity of the mirror, or the covering of dust it might have collected will certainly mis-shape the image but they cannot mis-shape or affect the objects reflected. Easwara, Prakriti and Jiva are all three images of Paramatma in the mirror of Maya, warped by the Guna that tarnishes the surface of the mirror. It is the mirror that pictures the One as Many; the One is ever One.

The One is comprehensive of all this. So, it has no wants, no desires, and no activity to realise any thing. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, "Na me Partha asthi Kartavyam, thrishu lokeshu Kinchana: Partha! there is nothing I have to do in any of the three worlds." He has willed the world as His sport. He has laid down that every deed must have its consequence. He is the dispenser of the consequences, but, He is not involved in the deeds.

Therefore, it becomes plain that neither the Personalised God, nor the individualised selves, nor the objective world can ever succeed in discovering the beginning of the Maya which brought them into existence and started the chain of "acts-consequence-acts." Nevertheless, one can succeed in knowing when Maya will end! When will it end? When the objective world is ignored or set aside or denied or discovered to be immanent with the Divine, the Jiva is no more; when the Jiva is no more, the Easwara is superfluous and disappears. And when the Easwara is faded out, the Brahman alone is. Where there is no child, how can a person known as *Mother exist*? It is a word with no significance. When a Personalised God, a Personality separate from the rest called Jiva and the mental creation of that Jiva called Prakriti or the Objective World are non-existent in the developed consciousness of man, Maya, the progenitor of all three, cannot persist.

The One Sky is found enclosed in a pot or in a house; then, it appears limited and small. But once released from the container or Upadhi, it merges in the infinite sky outside the bounds. The sky is not reduced or lessened or transformed in shape or quality by being held in the Upadhi. So too, the One Atma that is pervading the bodies and lives of billions of beings does not get affected by the Upadhis to which it adheres for some time.

Many are affected by the problem that haunts them, namely, what caused the Cosmos? How did it come into being? They advance various theories and lay down many opposing hypotheses. But, there is no need for seekers to beat about the bush so much. What is the cause of dream, how does it come into being? The right answer is: Sleep is the cause. So too, the Cosmos is caused, by Maya. The Cosmos is an ephemeral and as vagarious as a Dream. It is difficult to discover laws that explain or govern its infinite mysteries. More profitable than inquiring into the mysteries is the inquiry into possible ways of benefiting by them and learning from them. It is mostly waste of time to probe into the origins of the Cosmos or to determine how it will end. You are part of Creation. So, try to understand yourself, and the goal you have to keep in view.

The Jiva or individual has 'the emotional, passionate or active qualities' in his composition. The quality that is inferior is the Tamasic and that which is superior is Satwic. Easwara is the Satwic reflection of Brahman. Therefore, man must strive to rise higher into the Satwic realm. He must be ever vigilant not to slide down into the lower realm—the Tamasic realm of Matter and Material pursuits. The Guru has to hold this ideal before the pupil and guide him towards it.

He must encourage him to become aware of the God within Man. The word 'Adhyatmic' or 'Spiritual' is used often by aspirants and preceptors. What exactly is implied by 'Adhyatmic?' Is Bhajan or congregational prayer Adhyatmic? Or, does it involve Japa or Dhyana? Or, does it denote religious rituals and ceremonies? Or does it extend to pilgrimages to holy places? No, no. These are only beneficial acts. 'Adhyatmic' in its real sense, relates to two progressive achievements or at least to sincere attempts towards those two achievements: elimination of the animal traits still clinging to man and unification with the Divine.

Consider how far man has succeeded in overcoming the animal inheritance of lust, greed and hate, when he spends time, money and energy for these so-called Adhyatmic exercises! What progress does he make by listening to exponents of texts? Has man become any less bestial? This is the inquiry, this is the assessment for man to be engaged in, but this is the very task, ignored by him at present. The Sadhanas now adopted promote only pride and pompous display, envy and egoism. They do not uproot them in the least. People proceed to the House of God as pilgrims but pray to Him for more money, fame and power! For, their thoughts, words and deeds centre around only these transitory trivial tokens of worldly success. The world and all its trappings bespeak the Tamasic Guna. They can never raise man to the higher level of the Satwic.

The Guru must exhort the individual self to realise the Universal Self. On this Gurupurnima, we must revere with grateful hearts such Gurus who have consummated liberation for many. They are the highest Gurus. There are in the world many other types also. There is the Guru who gives you a mantra, tells you its potentialities, and directs you to repeat it sincerely and steadily. He is the Deeksha Guru; the Initiation into the Mantra is called Deeksha, in ritualist parlance. He assumes that his duty ends with the gift of the Mantra and the command to use it with conviction and care. He does not worry about directing the pupil to master his senses and guiding him to march forward to attain that victory. For the pupil, the mantra is a formula to be repeated, as a gramophone or a tape-recorder does. He might even know that it is a precious gift. But, without the Sadhana of Self-improvement, the gift is not precious at all.

A second type of Gurus recommends the worship of one or other of the forms of God. Another set of Gurus teach lessons destined to change your consciousness. These are the Teacher-Gurus. But, all these types ignore the One and divert attention, adoration and devotion to the many which is only relatively real. They do not lay down methods by which purity and clarity can be won. They are afraid to antagonise the animal urges in their pupils. Their teachings fill the head but do not thrill the heart. They assert that God, Nature and Man are distinct, whereas they are all based on the play of Maya on Brahman. They deal with the subsidiary, not with the primary, the diversity not the unity, the trivial, not the True. The primary is Brahman, which when reflected in Maya, seems to be broken into God, Nature and Man. These three are only the unreal images of the One. And the Maya too is an aspect of Brahman. "Mama Maya: My Maya" says Krishna in the Gita. So, when we merge in Brahman or win the Grace of the Lord, His Maya cannot exist for us.

Or, one can be rid of Maya if one can discard the three Gunas from his make-up. The Satwa guna too has to be transcended. Why? The Gita directs that even the eagerness to be liberated is a bond. One is fundamentally free; bondage is an illusion. So, the desire to unloosen the bond is the result of ignorance. Krishna says, "Arjuna! Become free from the three Gunas." In truth, the

word 'Guns' means 'a rope' and all three do bind the Jivi with desire. Liberation means liberation from delusive attachment or Moha. "Moha Kshaya"—decline in the desire caused by attachment to sensory pleasure. The Yadavas were attached to Krishna through a sense of belonging to Him. They were His kinsmen, they felt. And, this feeling did not save them from total destruction. The Gopis felt they were His, not that He was theirs. So they were recipients of His Grace. When the ideas of 'I' and 'mine' disappear, man's only thought is "Thee" and "Thine". He then finds only "Thee" everywhere; he achieves the Vision of Unity.

This day, thousands of you have gathered here, because it is Gurupoornima, the "Full Moon of the Guru." The fully worthwhile Guru must facilitate that vision of Unity without the discords and divisions that 'mine' and 'thine' engender in the mind of man. Such a Guru was the sage Vyasa. This day is called Vyasa Poornima in order that mankind can offer him the gratitude he desires. "Vyaso Narayano Harih: Vyasa is the Lord, Narayana, Hari." Narayana or the Lord Himself came as Man, as Vyasa to collate the Vedas, and teach him the path towards God, away from the animal from which he has risen. He has made the path plain and easy to climb.

But, the tragedy is, man has misinterpreted or missed the path. He has stuck to his out-moded beliefs in the efficacy of worldly, material and transitory rituals and rites, which weaken his mind through fear or through pride. The true Guru should keep away from such weakening tactics; he should impart the strengthening awareness of the Atma. Then only should he be revered as a Guru. When there is the clear call from the higher regions of the Satwic why should the Guru remain deaf to that call and grovel in the regions of Tamas and Rajas? Why must he be content to keep his pupils in those lower levels?

However, the trend among the guides and seekers in the spiritual field is to avoid the heights and wander in the valleys. Consider for a moment how long the worldly triumphs will last. They are but the play of scintillating name and form, on the Divine which is the core of every being and thing. Earn the vision that sees the Divine that inheres in all. We are not troubled when something is good but we are disturbed when it is bad. This is because goodness is natural and evil is the aberration. We are worried and alarmed when some one slides into wrong or is in pain or is sunk in sorrow. This is because nature plans us to be right, to be happy and ever-in joy. It is a pity man has lost the understanding of this Truth.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Really speaking, man is encased Atma. He is the repository of the infinite, ever-full, One Indivisible Atma. Man, at best, remains as Man, satisfied with the Rajoguna dominant in him. Many are content with their dealings with the objective, Tamasic, world. Their ideal is only to amass materials and respect material needs. Examine yourselves and discover in which level you are by analysing your desires and activities, and after arriving at the conclusion, you can yourselves sublimate your thoughts and urges.

These revised urges must have a beneficial impact on your 'activities', for it is through activities that Gunas are given up or gained. Activities cause birth and death; they fill up the years of life. They underlie good and evil, joy and grief.

However, man is willfully unaware of the activities that will lighten the burden of lives and wipe off the series of lives, and also illumine the Atma. It is the Atma that illumines all but man

is in the dark about its existence. Just as everything sweet is sweet, on account of the sugar it contains, all things and objects are cognised, because the Atma is behind the cognition. It is the universal witness; it is not affected in the least. It is the Sun that activates all but never gets activated itself. You too must establish yourself in the position of the witness.

The sages have laid down methods by which man can attain the status of witness. Dhyana is the most important of these. It is the penultimate of eight steps, the last one being Samadhi which grants the wisdom to be completely unaffected. The sixth stage is Dharana. Dharana is the stage when Japa, Puja and other practices are engaged in, in order to prepare the mind for Dhyana.

Dhyana is not mere sitting erect and silent. Nor is it the absence of any movement. It is the merging of all your thoughts and feelings in God. Without the mind becoming dissolved in God, Dhyana cannot succeed. The Gita describes genuine Dhyana as "Ananyaschinthayantho maam ye janaah paryupaasathi" "Those persons who adore Me, without any other thought and feeling." And Krishna has assured such persons that He would Himself carry their burden and be by their side, guiding and guarding. Persons adept in this Dhyana are very rare; most people go through the external exercises only. So they are unable to win Grace. Dhyana is interrupted in most cases by worry and anxiety regarding one's kith and kin, and one's earnings of riches. But since all are manifestations of the Maya which is natural to Brahman or Paramatma, the Paramatma or Lord in which you take refuge, will certainly free you from fear. Why? You are each one the Atma and nothing else. This is the reason why I began this discourse, addressing you as "Divyatmaswarupas!" Your bodies too are expressions of the Atma. Your personality, individuality, mind intellect—all are manifestations of the Atma which is the prime mover of your life.

This teaching is being propagated since ages by the sages of this land. The seers who saw the validity of this vision encouraged inquiry and experiment into the process of Dhyana and Sadhana.

Vyasa svaminathised with mankind caught in the coils of dos and don'ts, of success and failure and desire and despair. He demarcated many a path which lead man along, to fulfillment. The fulfillment consists in uprooting the animality that lurks in man and reaching out to the Divinity that is his essence.

We find individuals and groups trudging to Badrinath, Kedarnath and Haridwar in search of peace and prosperity. They go to Tirupati and Kashi. Have they jettisoned a few at least of their animal propensities? That is the test; that is the justification for the money they have spent, the troubles they have undergone and the time they have spent.

When the animal is conquered and Godhead is felt within reach, man can assert that all these pilgrim-spots are within him. He has no need to travel from temple to temple. Without achieving this victory, you have no right to claim that you are a devotee of Rama or of Krishna or of any other incarnation of the Lord.

This is real Adhyatmic or spiritual progress. I bless you that you may all earn it.

—*Gurupoornima 9. 7. 79. Bhagavan's Discourse, Prasanthi Nilayam*

His Golden Thread

Our beloved Baba weaves with His Golden Thread of Love the divine gowns of countless devotees and future devotees. A seeker need not know Him to be encompassed by His Grace. He serves all. He does not wait for a seeker to find Him. His omnipresence cloaks all.

He wants us to know that we are all of the same Divine Spirit which manifests all that there is and all that there ever will be. "Yes, I am God, and you too are God," He informed a devotee. In an interview He said to Faith and me, "You are just the same as I. Only the body is different."

Yet through ignorance, in various circumstances, we all experience inner tyranny such as fear, anguish, and resentment; perhaps even harm others. Is not our ignorance then the great obstacle which must be removed so that the awakening of our true identity can be revealed—the very Spirit of God in human form. Are we all not the Lord enjoying Himself upon this orb as suspended Divine Energy?

Let us join in the Mission of our Beloved to overcome these forces of ignorance which trample down the flowers of Paradise miraculously created by Him. Baba exhorts us to cast out fear and other human frailties with the power of Divine Love and Wisdom, by engaging in bhajans, prayer, repetition, of the Lord's Name, selfless service, and meditation.

During this phase of being, let us remember that we are never alone. Baba responds to a small cry, a whisper. Most of all we must believe in His Plan in spite of what our bodies are undergoing. If we place ourselves entirely in His Hands, turn to Him for solace, for inner joy, for guidance, then we can flow with His Love as naturally as a drop of moisture released from the atmosphere and drawn to earth.

Sincere efforts bear fruit. Baba's Golden Thread of Love will form an impregnable fortress, of inner strength to help us meet the vicissitudes of life, and by His Grace we can live in a blessed state of tranquility within the body temple.

In meditation He becomes ever so close. Recently, to a devotee with a restless mind, He appeared and pressed His divine thumb tightly to his forehead. To another He gave His precious Vibhuti. To others He poured forth a wondrous flow of Love. These are a few of the sweet threads of Love which bind together those who seek the Presence of the Lord.

One day we will wear the finished gown which He is so beautifully weaving with His Golden Thread of Divine Love.

—Charles Penn

Krishna as love

Repeat the name, Krishna, in your mind, every moment of your life. You will find It sweeter than sugar or honey: indeed, It will taste more delicious than ambrosia.

Men whose intellect is narrow and unable to reach out to the vastness beyond, men who do not dive deep into the mysteries of existence, cannot achieve success in the task of promoting world peace and prosperity. These depend on establishment of peace and prosperity in society and since society consists of individuals, the individual has to attain peace and prosperity in order that the world may shine in their glory. And, for the individual to discharge this obligation, he has to derive the faith and fervour from the Divine that is his Reality.

Unless man marches on in the spiritual path, he cannot be at peace with himself and his fellowmen. That march will confer peace, and with peace, welfare. Today, wherever we turn, people talk of Peace but their actions belie their profession. They only increase the feelings of anxiety and fear. Each individual desires to outstrip the other in this game. As a consequence, the spirit is neglected and the mind is polluted. There is no genuine understanding and sincere goodwill among men. Life is a meaningless passage of time. Ten highly intellectual pupils of a sage named Paramanada waded across a flooded river and reached the other bank safe. They wanted to be assured that all the ten had survived the feat. So, they stood in a line, to be counted. Since the one who counted did not include himself as the tenth, every one of them who did the counting by turns, found one man missing. They started bewailing the tenth man "who was carried away by the raging waters!"

Similarly, men who are proud of their attainments and achievements on earth and in space, bewail their lot because Peace has escaped their grasp. Man can now count the stars and walk on the Moon. But, he has no knowledge of his own self. How then can he experience the delight of kinship with others? When can he claim to have reached the goal of fulfillment? The bliss of fulfillment is not available in the objective world. It must be won through turning the vision inwards. Man is now in bondage, though he is unaware of it. But he is so deeply sunk in this ignorance that he makes no effort to liberate himself.

Wife and children, kith and kin, house and land, properties and possessions are declared by some people as bonds. One can discard these and free oneself from them. It is a comparatively easy process, for these are not the things that bind you most. The tightest bondage is the 'ignorance of one's own reality.' Not to know who one is-this is the biggest handicap. Until this is overcome, grief is inevitable. For, man is involved by this ignorance with Tamas, with the Unreal and with Death.

Without self-knowledge, man is led into the belief that the objective world is true and lasting, and into the neglect of the really true and the really eternal. What is the self? Here too, man mistakenly entertains false beliefs. He holds on to the belief that the self is the Body and revels in describing its components and characteristics. He ignores the Atma, sublime, serene and ever-fresh, Divine Principle that he is. It is the ever-present urge to expand and to illumine. The urge to contract and limit is the feature of the animal. Denying the Atma, disregarding its Mandate, ignoring its existence-these are the roots of grief.

Now, about Death. The Atma has no birth, and so, no death. It is ever-existing never disappearing. It has no Beginning and no Finis. It does not die; nor does it kill, nor can it be pronounced inert. It is the Witness in each and all. The moment one becomes aware of the Atma,

one is freed from the bondage to grief. Forget that the objective world is valid; it is at best a mental image that serves as a test. This is the reason why the prayer of the sages was: Asato maa Sat gamayaa (Lead me from unreal to the Real) Tamaso maa jyotir gamayaa (Lead me from Darkness to Light) Mrtyor Maa Amrtam gamayaa (Lead me from Death to Immortality).

The true goal of human life is to visualise Brahman and merge in It. The ancients declared that there are three stages in the path towards the goal: Karma Jijnasa, Dharma Jijnasa and Brahma Jijnasa. These three steps have been demarcated, described, and analysed by scholars for centuries. Through Karma (Activity) one becomes a moral individual (Dharma) and one starts seeking the basis of morality (Brahman). One discovers that virtue and morality add to one's Ananda and that all Ananda everywhere flows from Brahman Itself. One realises that Activity devoid of this awareness is barren and binding.

The Upanishadic declaration, "Kaarunyam paramam thapah" is based on this awareness. It means "Compassion towards all beings is real spiritual discipline." Man is the crown of Creation; he is the highest among living beings. Therefore, he bears great responsibility. He has to love other living beings, serve them and save them, for they are his kith and kin and they too have the Divine Principle as their core. But, man is proving himself worse than animals through the cultivation and practice of self-centredness, conceit, envy and anger. Though man is endowed with pity, charity, sympathy, fortitude and joy, he has given up these virtues and become in-human in conduct and behaviour. Imagine a tiger gaining entry into the cattle shed! Vicious tendencies are like tigers; they destroy the Satwic virtues. Once you recognise the extent of this calamity, you have to resolve to destroy these wild intruders.

Now, man can be saved only through Devotion and Dedication (Bhakti and Prapti). Devotion or Bhakti does not end with Japa, Bhajan and Dhyana. It consists of devotion to the ideal, the ideal of getting rid of the beast and rising up to the Divine; give up the Pashu (animal) and gain Pashupati (God)—that is the call. Only those who give ear to that Call deserve to be labelled Men. In order to hold forth before Man this Supreme Destiny, this Divine Destination, God Himself (though free from birth) takes on the human form, for He is Gopala. 'Go' denotes not only the cow, it denotes the Jivi (humans and other living beings). This day, Krishnaashtami, is the Day on which the Avataric career of Krishna began. Krishna gave man the call to rise from the beast to Brahman. By devotion and dedication to Him, man must earn the awareness that he is unrelated to all things that 'bind' him—body, riches, kith and kin, attributes and feelings.

For Krishna, the Avatarhood was a Leela. His life was His Message. He was the embodiment of the noblest and the most fruitful Karmayoga. His actions had no trace of selfishness or pride or envy.

He took upon Himself the assignment of driving the war chariot of Arjuna. After the day's battle, He washed the horses; He fed and tended them, applying balm on the wounds. However insignificant the task, He executed it with as much care and enthusiasm as must be given to the most important task.

Man has been equipped with Iccha Shakti (Will Power) for this very purpose—to will the good, the ennobling and the elevating. The two other Shaktis gifted to him are Jnana Shakti (the Power

to know) and Kriya Shakti (the Power to Act). To make the interdependence of these three Shaktis, here is an example: "Your wish to drink a Cup of Coffee is so insistent that you will to have it fulfilled. But, mere Iccha cannot produce coffee. Next, you use your Jnana and provide yourselves with a stove, a quantity of water, sugar, milk and coffee powder. But still, your original Iccha is unrealised. Next, you use Kriya and prepare the coffee you wanted and knew how to make."

Well. The Icchashakti wills to attain God, let us say. Mere wish is too weak to gain the goal. Jnanashakti advises you not to despair. There are ways by which you can win. It lays before you various Sadhanas. Kriyashakti takes these up and inspires you to act, to persevere in practice, until you attain the objective. Unfortunately, 99 men out of 100 use only the Icchashakti; they stop with the wish; they do not pursue and attain the Bliss that waits. Their faith falters; they do not march on boldly. The Iccha prompts you to earn a First Class in the examination but the Jnana is ignored and the Kriya is left undone. If a thousandth of that eagerness is shown in Kriya, in the test, the First Class can be secured easily.

Krishna has elaborated, in the Bhagavad-Gita, the methods in which these three powers can be cultivated and utilised by man. Above all, the evil desire to harm, injure and insult others must be uprooted from the mind. The saplings of devotion and dedication can grow only on minds that are soaked in Karuna or Compassion. How can even the best of seeds sprout on salty soil? Compassion means reflecting in our minds the joys and sorrows of others, and responding with exhilaration and sympathy. For this to happen, the mind has to be cleansed and transformed into a fine mirror.

God will respond to your prayers for relief only when you respond sympathetically to the needs of others. Life should not be wasted in selfish activities, blind to others' distress and deaf to others' groans. Suffer equally, rejoice equally—this according to Krishna is Equality, Samatwam. Practise this equality and succeed in it—this according to Him is the way to win His Grace. You may not be rewarded materially by compassionate acts but the highest reward is the joy that you derive and the joy that you confer. The body with all the precious and unique qualities which are its equipment has been given to you in order that you may 'will' so, 'know' how and 'act' thus. A block of 'time' has been allotted to you so that you may benefit by using it profitably for these holy sanctifying purposes.

But, every one is overcome by egoism. He wants others to respect him but he is not willing to respect others. He strives to be happy but he is unwilling to make others happy. Most people are content if they are happy; many are content when they as well as others around them are happy; a few do happily undergo misery themselves, so long as they render others happy. The first group can be compared to the bulb that sheds light only on the little room where it is lit; the second is like the moon, whose light, though widespread, is not bright enough to give clear knowledge of things; the third is the Sun, shining on all things and revealing their nature and characteristics.

Among devotional disciplines, installing a picture or idol of the Lord in the home and adoring it, is the least valuable. The celebration of Krishna Janmashtami should not be confined to special Puja and extra dishes for lunch. This narrow schedule arises from the desire to attract the Grace of Krishna. But that Grace can be won only by the observance of the teachings of Krishna. They

will not be conferred on pride and pompous display. Adoring Krishna and avoiding His Teaching is a sacrilege. You can give up the adoration; nevertheless, you can earn Grace if you sincerely attempt to proceed on the path He has marked out.

Krishna was the embodiment of Love. Hence, Love is the virtue He appreciates most. Love has to turn into concrete acts of compassion. Cultivate compassion and develop sympathetic understanding, until you reach the goal, of merging in the embodiment of Love, Krishna.

There are many among you who are engaged in Sadhana. What is the basic purpose of Sadhana? Each exercise of the Sadhaka is a stream that moves on to the sea of Grace. Believe that the Love that prompts you to serve and sympathise is a spark of the Love of God.

—From Discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam, Krishna Janmashtami, 14-8-79

Sai Family News

The Bhagavan Sri Sathya-Sai Vidyapith, as Sri Sailam, Quilandy Taluk, Calicut District, Kerala, is a Residential School run on the principles of Sai Education by the Sri Sathya Sai Trust, Kerala, with English as the medium of instruction and Hindi and Malayalam as additional languages. The school has now classes up to the Seventh Standard. Instruction will be given up to the Tenth Standard. The school is affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education.

“‘WILLING’ is superfluous for me, for my grace is ever available to devotees who have steady love and faith.

Since I move among them, talking, singing, even intellectuals are unable to grasp my truth, my power, my glory or my real task as AVATAR.

I can solve any problem, however knotty.

I am beyond the reach of the most intensive inquiry and the most meticulous measurement.

Only those who have recognised my love and experienced that love can assert that they have glimpsed my reality. For the path of love is the royal road that leads mankind to me.”

—Baba

Sai Viraat

“The vision of the Viraat, the Cosmic Form, is given for those who surrender their ego and take refuge in the Lord (as Arjuna did) and who imbibe with care the Gita sung by the Lord in the

silence. God is omnipresent; He is the Inner Motivator of every particle in the Universe.”
Sathya Sai Speaks IX 100.

Every heartbeat of mine
makes a new note,
unique and unprecedented;
Nay, between two beats
a million-million images
show up before my mind's eye.

And every image is a part
of the world of itself,
Infinity is no hollow concept
of intellect, it is living experience
in the company of those images' Creator,

a leisurely activity for Him
and precious pristine
vision for me, which goes
beyond this universe,

it encompasses millions,
nay, trillions of universes living
within me. They are realities
never dying, permanently imprinted
in the image of their Creator...!

I dare take one more step
look around for that Creator.
Who is hidden by clouds
of this Maya of infinite universes,
His own creation.

It is His eye when it opens,
its light penetrates through
these clouds—He shines
more than a million suns together,
and I realize

‘I am in Him.’ The clouds
disperse, no mist
in eyes, the time-span between
two heartbeats expands limitlessly
and fills infinity.
My Lord, you are so powerful!

—C. H. SHAH, Cambridge, U.S.A.

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10

The very first step to ensure peace and harmony to mankind is each one observing the Dharma or code of conduct laid down in his own religion. If every one holds his own faith and its essential principles mandatory, all can serve himself best and also serve others well. Dharma in this context means action in accordance with the traditions of the culture of the land. In every facet of the culture of this country, the ideal of world-peace and world-prosperity is immanent.

"Atthatho Karma Jijnaasa" "Now, for the inquiry into Activity"—thus begins the intellectual probe into the mystery of Karma, which in our Scriptures extends over vast fields. For example, to give away in charity, and as gift is a very proper type of Karma; but, one must be aware that egoism can pollute it and make it improper. It is laid down that plentiful charity now will ensure happiness in a future life and so, consideration of this advantage for oneself might well lead men to good karma. Even if many doers have no eye on the future, it can be asserted that most charity flows from egoistic motives. This is an all-too-evident fact.

People feel proud that they have helped others. They are eager to be praised as beneficent and munificent. This attitude reveals their ignorance, Ajnana; it springs from non-awareness of actuality, Maya. In the Vedas and Sastras, the Rishis while elaborating on do's and don'ts, non-violence, compassion, Service to the world, Charity etc stress these as virtues to be acquired. Saint Vidyananda named these as the very essence of Indian Wisdom.

Wisdom is the precious ambrosia gathered from all sources of knowledge and all the arts of earning it. It is the sweet, sustaining butter churned and collected from all the Sastras. Wisdom is not to be defined as the capacity to discriminate and declare, "This is flat" or "this is round" or "this is a hill, this is a house, or this is a thorn." That is the common belief. This is only knowledge. Next, we have, what may be called good knowledge (Sujnana), when man is able to distinguish between right and wrong or good and bad, when he can discover, "This activity is for my betterment and the betterment of others." Both Jnana and Sujnana are confined to the intellect of man. There is a higher stage called Vijnana, when the heart is transformed by loyalty to Truth, Non-Violence and Compassion. Such a person can understand himself, his kinship with the Cosmos, and with the Creator of the Cosmos. He lives in accordance with that understanding, without doubt or disharmony. Ajnana or Ignorance breeds sorrow; Vijnana confers joy. If one hesitates to call any experience Vijnana, let him examine it whether material or spiritual on the touch-stone, "Does it give me unalloyed joy?" and then classify it as such. The yardstick for Vijnana is Dharma. The more Dharma is put into practice, the more one gets rooted in Vijnana.

The expression in action of Vijnana is evidenced by the peace and prosperity of the nation. The decline of Dharma reveals the disappearance of Vijnana. The eras are differentiated on the basis of adherence or aversion to Dharma. When Dharma, Justice and Straightforwardness prevail

fully and fearlessly, it is said to walk securely over the land on four legs. The times when it is so observed are also referred to as Krita Yuga, the Krita Era. When Justice and Harmony prevail less and less, people feel that Dharma has to limp its way on three legs! The times suffering from this handicap are referred to as the Treta Era, the Treta Yuga. When Justice and Harmony prevail only a quarter of the Krita Yuga, Dharma has to struggle on two legs. That is the Dwapara Yuga. When they have no respect paid to them and when they are largely non-existent, Dharma suffers with only one leg, as it were. This is the Kali Yuga, we are told by the scriptures.

The wisdom of the Bharatiyas is nourished by Dharma. Though Indian thought asserts that "the objective world" is basically untrue and though it teaches us that our involvement with life and its problems is an illusive adventure that does not affect our Reality; the Sastras which are the roots of that thought do not advise us to discard Dharma. For, to grasp the Highest and the Ultimate Truth, Dharma is indispensable. The four traditional goals of human endeavour (the Purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha) are laid down to cater to those who live in the belief that the objective world is 'True.'

It can be seen that even among the four goals, Dharma has been placed first and foremost. The State to be earned by the first three achievements is Moksha, which is mentioned last. The person who seeks riches and the fulfillment of his desires along the path laid down by Dharma can alone win victory; that way lies liberation which gives man the highest Bliss.

Nevertheless, since the Jivi or the individualised, limited self is caught in the net of Desire or Kama, the goals of Dharma and Moksha do not enter the vision or arouse any interest. He takes delight in sinking and floating on the waves of material pleasures (Artha and Kama). This is nothing strange for persons of that nature.

The search for food, the avoidance of fear and the enjoyment of sloth and sleeping—these, man and animal are equally eager and equally involved. The search for Moksha and the observance of Dharma—these promote man to a higher level of existence from the animal level. If that yearning is absent, then man cannot claim to be human.

India has been acclaimed by her own people as well as by people of other countries for holding forth the ideal of Vijnana, the Highest Wisdom. Here, there is faith that God exists in all lands. Here, there is constant effort to discriminate between Dharma and what is not Dharma. Value is attached to Justice and Virtue. Compassion towards living beings and non-violence are also held high as guides to conduct. Efforts are made to distinguish Truth and Untruth. Temples still flourish and are still replete with spiritual vibrations. We have in other countries many Houses of God constructed by man such as churches and mosques but they are not so ancient and charged so long and so deep with Divinity.

All religions are One, declares this land of Bharat. There may be difference in the number and nature of the limbs; the message each conveys is the same as all the rest. This is the discovery of India, and her Announcement to mankind.

For directing their prayers to God, one person has, as his Symbol, a stone; another has a piece of metal; a third uses wood but, all attach great importance to prayer and believe in its beneficent

effects. One person turns to the East, while praying; another regards the West as really sacred. The prayer of both concerns the same wants and inadequacies. This is the conclusion arrived at by Bharatiya sages and thinkers. Each faith has its own Scriptures and doctrines. But, one must pay attention to the special features too. For example, God is so intimately felt as one's own, that prayers often address God in singular: "Can you not do this?" or "are you incapable of protecting me?" or "Have you become weak of hearing?" This is a peculiar trait among Bharatiyas.

However a person feels or thinks, he transforms himself into the embodiment of those feelings and thoughts. If he is immersed in the truth that he is God, he can become Divine. However, if he is immersed in the falsehood that he is the King of the Land, he will be deemed mad or traitorous. He might even be beheaded for treason. God will not treat you as insane or insubordinate. Every being is Divine; this is the final judgement of the wisdom of Bharat.

Logic and intellectual investigation can give only partial accounts of the Truth. Every thing in creation has many phases and many angles. Reason can observe only from one angle; it can see only one phase. The intellect that has been purified and clarified through the activities (Karma) laid down in the Vedas can succeed in observing both phases. Without undergoing that process of purification and clarification, Reason can work only within the bounds of the materialist world. So, the conclusions that it presents before us can only be partially true. But, the intellect subjected to the processes of cleansing and sharpening in the Vedic way can serve us by presenting a picture of the full Truth, of the objective world. Most of the other Faiths rely on principles reached by Reason, not subjected to these disciplines taught by the Vedas. Bharatiyas have the Sastras which illumine far beyond the bounds and limits of the temporary and the temporal.

(To be continued)

The Kerala Onam

The Message Of Onam

It is the bounden duty of Bhaktas to preserve and protect- the rich culture and heritage of this great country because it is a land: (i) where great men, who have earned name and fame spreading over continents, have been born; (ii) which has been the spiritual arena for achieving national independence and (iii) which was resplendent with the glory of prowess in music, arts and science.

Alas! Such a glorious land known as Bharat is now bedeviled with problems, which are mostly due to the presence of men in large numbers who are full of ego, jealousy, hatred and selfishness. Only by removing such traits in men can one hope to purify their hearts, so that the hoary past of this great land could once again be brought back to life.

The story of the festival, Onam is the story of Bali Chakravarti who was an embodiment of Tyaga (sacrifice), but who suffered from traces of Ahamkara (Ego). Due to the predominance of other virtues, he was even able to overcome the ill-effects of Ahamkara and bury it deep, in

Patala, through the grace of Lord Vishnu, who appeared before Bali in the form of a Vatu (Brahmin Brahmachari) named Vamana

Bali was dedicated to rule his subjects by the observance of and strict adherence to the Principles of Dharma. He was the son of Virochi. Virochi was the son of Prahlada and thus Bali was the grandson of Prahlada. So it is no surprise to find Bali possessing rich traditional qualities of Bhakti. Once Bali wanted to perform, after obtaining the permission of his guru Sukracharya, a great yaga called Viswajit. Viswam means the totality of Pancha Bhutas (i.e., five elements); Pancha Indriyas (i.e., five senses) and Pancha Kosas (i.e., five regions of the human body). It is the victory over such Viswam which the word Viswajit represents. Indra has got that name because he is the ruler of Indriyas and the ruler of Indriyas in man is the Manas (mind). The nature of the interplay of Indriyas is such that it is possible to derive gain as well as loss through the result of such an interplay. Indra wanted the rulership of Heaven, but Bali wanted nothing of that sort. Indra used to propitiate and beg Vishnu for achieving what he desired; but Vishnu Himself descended in the form of Vamana to beg from Bali. Thus Bali has proved himself to be far superior to Indra.

Vamana belonged to the famous Siddhashram, which was founded by Kashyapa (representing Purusha) and Aditi (representing Prakriti). It is through the union of this Purusha and Prakriti that the progeny known as Siddhi in the form of Vatu, the embodiment of Vishnutattwa, was born. The Siddhashram was located on the banks of a sacred river called Pavitra and this flowing river also represents life. And Siddhi will always be located on the bank of flowing life whenever the Bhava Shuddhi (purity of mind) and Chitta Shuddhi (purity of heart) predominates in a Man. It is due to the fact that all Sankalpas could be realised at this sacred ashram that it has come to be known as Siddhashram. Viswamitra, after the successful completion of his yaga with the help of Rama and Lakshmana, brought them to reside at this ashram for some time. It was at this ashram only that Bali attained Moksha.

The spreading of Vishnutattwam is known as Trivikramatattwam. The aspect of Trivikramatattwam is represented by the Gayatri Mantram "Bhur Bhuvashuva". The Bhoolokam, Bhuvarelokam and Suvarlokam constitute the Trivikramatattwam. It is wrong to conceive of these three lokas as one existing on top of the other and hence could be reached by climbing a ladder as it were. In fact the three lokas are intertwined with each other and one exists within the other. The real meaning of this kind of geometrical configuration for the three lokas is the following. The Pancha Indriya, Pancha Bhoota, Pancha Kosa, aspects of Man's Deem (body) is Bhoolokam. The aspect of Pranasakti (or Manastattwam) is Bhuvareloka and microscopic state of Anandam (Bliss) represents Suvarloka. So it can be said that the three worlds Bhooloka, Bhuvareloka and Suvarloka are nothing but the Dehatattwa, Manstatwa and Anandatattwa respectively and the totality of these three represent Trivikramatattwa. Again these three aspects of Trivikramatattwam could be understood in terms of the three states of an individual viz. (i) the one you think you are; (ii) the one others think you are and (iii) the one you really are. Hence only by proper sadhana that one can transcend from Bhooloka through Bhuvareloka to Suvarloka. The attainment of Suvarloka is known as Moksham and it represents the stage of complete merger with the Lord. Since it represents a state where the aspect of Moha (attachment) is made to disintegrate it is known as Moksham (Moha Kshyam, Moksham).

Bali is an embodiment of Tyaga and he personified the aspects of Datrutvam (Giving) and Dharmatatvam (Righteousness). Since ONAM is a festival day to be celebrated in memory of the reappearance of Bali in his Sukshmaroopa (microscopic form), it is imperative for everyone to remember and practise the ideals for which he stood when he was alive. It should be remembered that Bali, as portrayed above, should be visiting us every day and not once a year. But we forget this because we give in our daily life ample room for the cultivation of undesirable traits such as Greediness, Selfishness, Ego, which in the present day man are reaching gigantic proportions. It is precisely due to this kind of a situation that periodically the world gets plunged into wars. Bali's life-message is that the abovementioned traits in man should be eliminated at all costs, thus rendering his heart pure so that the Lord can reside in it.

Another important aspect of Bali's life is the demonstration of the fact that the quality of Tyaga (sacrifice) should be an integral part of one's actions (Karmas). All Jivas do perform actions; but only Man can, if he so desires, act making sacrifice an integral component of his actions. Again the existence of these traits in Man is possible because of his abilities to think and reflect. Unfortunately many a man use these God given faculties to enunciate theories and preach, but never to put into practice what they preach. For example thousands of Onams have come and gone and people have been preaching for years as to what Onam signifies. Yet the hearts of Men remain impure. Bali practiced what he preached, whereas his revered Guru Sukracharya did not, as evident when he intervened to stop Bali from giving away everything that he possessed to Vamana. Preaching and Practising are like the two eyes. Since Sukracharya only preached but not practised, his one eye was made ineffective symbolically. A man with dual mind is half blind. In our life we must be Balis and not Sukracharyas. One should realise that in order to get one thing, something else should be sacrificed. Bali demonstrated through his Tyagaswabhava that if you sacrifice everything you have you will attain Moksha. The real sacrifice involves two things. The first is to realise the cause of our bondage in this life and the second is to sever this bondage. People mistakenly think that property, family etc., are his bondages and by severing connections with them he is able to sacrifice everything and thus become eligible to attain Moksha. But these are not the real bondages for man. The real bondage is the ignorance of man to identify himself with his body and he who cuts this bondage, as Bali did, will attain Moksha. For cutting off this bondage purification of the heart is very necessary. Purification of the body with soap and water and applying perfume to it does not at all result in the purification of the mind. In this Kaliyuga Namasmarana of the Lord is the easiest way to purify one's mind and surrendering to God with pure mind is the surest way to attain Moksha. Bali offered two of his three aspects namely Adibhoutika (i.e., his body) and Adidaivikam (i.e., his jeevam) to the two feet of space out of the three demanded by Vamana. As for the third feet of space required by Vamana, Bali offered his Adhyatmikam aspects (i.e., his atmatattvam) by surrendering completely to the Lord. That is why the Lord has placed His third foot measure on the heart of Bali and pushed him to Patalaloka; thus pushing completely the trace of Bali's Ahamkara into the bottom-most layers of this universe. Thus Bali was delivered from the bondage of birth and death.

The Word Bali has another meaning and that is charge for service rendered or tax. We pay money to the departments which supply water and electricity knowing fully well that they are not responsible for the creation of either water or electricity. But what charge are we paying to the Creator of Water, Air and everything of this universe. Nothing. But we do wish to get His Grace.

How is it possible to get His Grace without giving Bali or Shulkam? That tax which the Lord expects is Devotion and purity of heart. And this is the essence of the message of Onam and hence Onam is not to be treated as a festival which comes once a year, but it should be treated as an event, the message of which should become way of life for everyone throughout one's life. The three steps which Onam symbolises are: (i) The incarnation of Lord Vishnu as the Vatu (ii) The attainment of Moksha by Bali and (iii) The Antardhanam or the merger of Bali with the Lord.

*From the Divine Discourse by Bhagavan delivered at Brindavan on 4th. September, 1979
—By Prof. S. V. Pappu, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore*

The Power of Love

—Dr. M.V.N. Murthy

Anybody who has been to Prasanthi Nilayam during festivals such as the Navaratri or 23rd November, or any other festival, would wonder at the thousands who gather there and the newcomer would wonder more so asking himself, what it is that brings all these people in spite of the travails of the journey or the difficulties of living there. I have seen devotees coming from Dibrugarh, Sadiya, Ziro, Agartala and nooks and corners of North east India and elsewhere. Once a New Zealander was so much attracted by Baba that he came all the way only to find that Baba was not at Prasanthi Nilayam and he had to return home immediately. On his way back he saw Baba's crown of hair and he wrote saying that he was fortunate to have had Baba's Darshan! Just the view of the halo of hair! I have witnessed people coming during Navaratri when it rains in Prasanthi Nilayam, people standing under a tree throughout the night, and getting fully drenched and going about in the morning as fresh as ever, as if nothing had happened! There was the occasion of the first Shivaratri after Baba had announced that there will be no more celebrations, when thousands had gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam and at Brindavan. Baba had 'disappeared' into the Mudumalai forests, with College boys. What is it that makes people come to him in spite of such disappointments? There have been many who have not had interviews for years. I know of a classmate of mine who became a devotee, who lost his young daughter on a Thursday, and soon after came Prasanthi Nilayam. Baba did not call him and his wife for interview to wipe their tears! He was also under fire because he belongs to the Srivaishnava sect and he and his wife were under fire for having taken to worshipping the "Shaivaite God", who according to them had brought about this disaster! But their faith in Baba continued unabated for years and continues to be so! Are they all attracted to Baba to see Him 'performing miracles'? Or, are they drawn to him because of his "discourses" in which He expounds the highest of Vedanta? Can you show me any other place where brilliant discourses are given on Vedanta where you can see such crowds, and such assorted people? How is it that rich men, people who would care two hoots for spirituality and Vedanta come to Him, even suffer being neglected and continue to come? How can you explain that they sit quietly and read books and some of them sit in the back rows even though they have donated lakhs of rupees to the Sri Sathya Sai Trust?

"Well! It all happened one fine morning when I was desperate. Somebody came at my house and gave me a book about Baba and also a packet of Vibhuti. The clouds cleared, the difficulties disappeared and I am thankful to Baba." "For fifteen years I suffered from Asthma; the best doctors could not do a thing and my family and I were grief stricken. A packet of Vibhuti from Baba cured me permanently!" "I was a drunkard; I had a special bar in my house! One day I was to have a peg of whiskey before going to a party. My parents had hopefully kept on my table a book on Baba, which I never liked but which I also did not throw away. On that day, I opened the book and started reading. There was a whole page addressed to me (!) on my habits and the need for changing my character if I had to avoid perdition. There was also the assurance that He will help me! That day was a turning point in my life." "But for Baba I would not be alive." If you ask the person sitting next to you, he will begin his narration of how Baba had transformed him! Each person who comes to Prasanthi Nilayam has a little story to tell you. If there is one book "Sathyam Sivam Sundaram" narrating Baba's life and Message, there are hundreds of unwritten books which individuals carry in their heart. Those who come to Nilayam come there because each has a personal link with Baba, or to put it more correctly; Baba has a personal link with each one of them who come there. "Nobody can come here unless I call you," says Baba. How true it is. People who come there, come because He has called them. He calls them for interview or speaks to them even in a group. A single word, or single glance is enough for most people to get their batteries charged and they go back satisfied. "I give you what you want until you begin to want what I have come to give you" He declares. That is the key to His Life and Message. He has often declared that His greatest power is the Power of His Love.

"Start the day with Love; fill the day with Love; spend the day with Love; end the day with Love" He exhorts. "Worship the Sai in all; I am the dweller in every heart" He assures. "If you hurt somebody you are hurting Me," He reminds us. This Message of Love which is the Power that Sai has which transforms us should be the power that we should use to carry out His Message in our lives. All the Seva activities which the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations undertake should be motivated by this single power of love. Unless this is done, it will not have any value to us or those whom we are supposed to serve. Bertrand Russell in his book "Conquest of Happiness" says "a sense of duty is useful in work but offensive in personal relations. People wish to be liked, not to be endured with patient resignation. To like many people spontaneously and without effort is perhaps the greatest source of happiness." Duty is God, says Baba. The Duty that Baba equates with God is a not a mechanical performance of what has to be done. The word Love should be replaced for the word like in Russell's statement to convey the full meaning.

Sai devotees must ponder over this basic question. Seva as a sadhana will have the transforming effect if it is motivated by Love. We can love a group in an abstract way. Society consists of individuals. Just as our relationship with Baba is personal and based on Love, our Seva must also be based on personal relationships and based on Love. Whether we go to a hospital or an orphanage or a destitute home onto a village, we must go there and learn to become involved with individuals. It is important to spend time with each trying to find out his name, his background, his problems. Baba says, "Even if you cannot oblige, speak obligingly." Even listening to somebody will help him or her to unburden the load of grief. A pat on the back will give the individual encouragement at the right time. Do we do this even to ourselves? Even in

Samiti meetings how often we find negative feelings and mutual recrimination! How can we do Seva if we cannot have love, sympathy, and compassion?

We are also unable to attract young people because we have not given them the example of Baba by the display of Love which we receive from Him. How can we display, anger, jealousy, envy, hatred and at the same time claim to be devotees of Baba? Because of our past Samskaras we are what we are. Once we come to Baba and accept Him as our guide, we must start the difficult art of changing ourselves. Some people say, "We are still children in the spiritual field" and unashamedly continue their bad habits (which Baba does not like, e.g. smoking and continue to be members of Samitis!) We must set an example if we should expect others to follow the Message. Our thought word and deed must be in unison. The hundreds of critics of Baba will judge Baba by what we are and how we conduct ourselves! Let us remember this! We have a great responsibility.

I would like to narrate here the transformation which has been brought about in an Orphanage near Udaipur in Rajasthan, in a small village called Sukher. The Government of India has provided funds for the construction of the building and some funds for running the Anathalaya. After last year's Summer course a Sai Family at Udaipur decided that they must do something positive and decided to start Seva activity here. They contacted the gentlemen in charge who had no objection. In the meantime two other Sai families joined the venture. So every Sunday since Gurupoornima of last year, the three families have been going regularly to this orphanage, which has about 70-100 children in the age range of 3 to 16, mostly boys, and a few girls. They started with bhajans, and Bat Vikas classes. They found that the Orphanage does not have drinking water nearby; they had to walk about two kilometers for water supply. The devotees contacted the groundwater Department, bored a well and finally fixed a pump which is now supplying fresh sweet water to the children. I have been to this place periodically and have seen how the children have been transformed. They are disciplined, they are clean. Their dresses are washed and clean. They sing bhajans with a gusto which is difficult to imagine. Bhajan leaders from the children have taken over. They know about Baba's life and Message and they can give details of his life which probably many may not know. One of the boys plays on the drum; being a tribal he has a natural sense of rhythm. Since it is also a residential school, there are men and women teachers, some very qualified. They have become immersed in Sai love. During a recent visit the gentleman in charge made a short speech on the effect of the Bhajans and the Seva activities; I had heard him a few months ago when his attitude was one of tolerance. Now the tone was different. He described how the children do all the work themselves. They have been divided by the devotees into groups each of which as a leader from among themselves. They make all the purchases for the hostel. They help in cutting vegetables; they help in the kitchen; they water the fruit trees which have been planted and which have taken root. They pray before eating; they pray before going to bed! He also confessed that he has made many mistakes and he is correcting himself and finally added that "I do not know anything about Sai Baba. I have not had His Darshan. As far as I am concerned these three families are Sai Baba to me."

I explained that the description that he gave reminded me of Brindavan where boys of Swami's College do all that he described and the love of Sai had brought about this transformation among Bhil children in a place far away from where Baba lives physically! One of the boys who attended the Summer Course writes to me about Brindavan saying: "The thing that struck me

most was how the members of lovely Kingdom of Love spread their love. That I feel is a very difficult task, 'spreading love to all equally'." In fact that is what the three families have done. They have spread love. They have taken the children as their own. If any of them is ill, they take him to the hospital, they give all the treatment besides Baba's Vibhuti which cures them anyway, directly or indirectly. They know them by name as individual human beings. There are two brothers, the younger one being very small, about two years old; the father is in jail because he murdered their mother. The devotees visit him, take the children and he is happy that the children are looked after! This involvement has changed the three families. They have something to look forward to every week. They are looking forward to Sunday as anxiously as if not more anxiously than the children! Love transforms the person who gives and the one who receives.

The Power of Love can be transmitted from person to person, as Baba does. Those of us who have had the good fortune of being recipients of His love must share this. The method to be followed is the one that Baba Himself has outlined. The path is clear! Are we ready to take the path? That is the crucial question.

The Real vs. Non-Real

We often hear the Vedantic statement, "This world we are experiencing is not real ... it is only illusion." Then there is the affirmation that the true reality which is "Satchitananda" (truth, consciousness, bliss), cannot be described.

How are we to understand these statements. They should likely to be true, but how do they fit in with my experience of the pen in my hand and your presently holding this paper before you allowing the words to flow into and affect your mind.

This is a difficult point to realise. Much of the problems revolves around the word "real" or "reality". In Sanskrit the word "Sat" refers to the "eternal Reality" or the "Eternal Truth".

The key is the duration of the object, experience or state. When something is of a transitory nature, that is, if it changes or passes into something else with time, then it cannot be considered real. What is real must survive the effect of time; otherwise it is illusion.

Some examples are given to us by the sages, those who know. You have a dream that you are being chased by beings intending to harm you. You awaken and realise the temporary nature of the reality or its "non-reality". Or, you dream that you have found a treasure chest and have become very rich and powerful. When you wake up, there is no money or power. It was non real-not lasting.

It is the same with the dream of our life. When it ends all the states and accumulations disappear. This is what the sages mean when they say all this drama we concentrate on is not real. It is not lasting; it will pass.

Before we are born, the drama did not exist. During our life in the physical body we are put into a "dream-like state" through the power of *Maya* or illusion.

We experience the drama of this our human incarnation in all its physical, mental, social, financial, and experiential variations. We are a particular sex, with a certain type of body, of a certain social class and from a specific ethnic origin. We have a role to play. We become lost in the role. We identify totally with it, forgetting that it is only one part out of many that we have played and will play. Even within this one "Life-script" we play many transitory and different parts, such as, parent, child, relative, mate, employee, employer, teacher, student, etc.

Behind all these changeable roles there is one continuous feeling of "I". The "I" will change its identification according to the situation or role it finds itself in. But it is always "I", an individual, separate and in opposition to the world stage around it.

Then one day the curtain will fall; the dream will end. The "I" will find that it has been sitting in the audience witnessing the drama all this time. It will realise that although he got caught up in the drama and felt everything as real, it was not real; that it was only a drama and that he had simply forgotten to remember that he was watching it and not actually acting in it.

In the same way, the dreamer will awaken from the dream and realise that it was not real; that what he thought was his reality was only a passing experience.

Each incarnation is an entering into a dream or starting a new drama. The sole purpose of this whole "dream-drama" is to remember that one's true reality is that of the witness or the dreamer and not that of thoughts, words, actions or experiences taking place in that non-reality.

When the reality of the witness is remembered, then one experiences the nature of the REAL—"Sat", or the truth of one's eternal, non-changing nature; "Chit", or pure unmodified consciousness; and "Ananda", or eternal bliss based on no external or changing phenomena. These three qualities are totally unaffected and undisturbed by the changing flow of events and experiences occurring in the dream-drama of one's incarnation.

This is perhaps what the ancient and contemporary sages meant by the real and the non-real.

Jnana Yoga is the method of reunion with the soul through discriminative wisdom. Here one constantly seeks to discriminate in each experience between the drama and the witness; between the unreal and the real. One seeks to identify with the witness and objectively observe the drama in an unattached way.

Although this is certainly a very difficult path, established for a minute portion of the spiritual seekers, almost every individual can gain great benefit and certainly more objectivity, clarity and peace of mind by objectively watching the drama of his or her life.

In this way, situations and experiences gradually lose their power to totally over-cloud one's consciousness, creating negative states such as anger, fear or depression. One begins to see

events in perspective, noticing a pattern of repetitive experiences which seem to be trying to teach one some lesson about life.

One becomes more relaxed, learns more, and becomes fascinated with how perfect a teacher life is. One learns to pay attention to and benefit from the messages life is giving, rather than complaining about and suffering from every little obstacle.

One develops a certain steadiness from his or her identification with the witness, and can tolerate more easily changes taking place in the drama. It is easier to accept problems and obstacles affecting *others* on television or in the drama around us. In the same way, when we can observe "our drama" as objectively as "someone else's drama," then we suffer much less and the meaning and message of experiences become much more clear.

Let us try, then, to remember in as many situations as possible, that we are experiencing is a transitory drama, all of which will change and pass. The more quickly we realise this, the more quickly it will pass.

More and more of life will be spent near the Real rather than the non-real.

—*B. Najemy Athens*

Why This College?

Sathyam (Truth) is to be adored and adhered to. It is the highest goal to be won by Sadhana. So too is Saantham (equanimity). Truth, the Principle of Truth is immanent in every being; knowing this, the seeker or the student has to be loving and friendly with every living being. This is the message of the scriptures of all lands.

When we examine the life and behaviour of animals labelled as 'lower', we can learn many lessons for our own betterment. The elephant, the cow and the deer do not harm or wound or eat other animals. They live on leaves or grass or grain. They lead Satwic lives. Therefore, they receive reverence and worshipful homage of man. On the other hand, the tiger, the leopard and the wolf have cruel natures; they hurt other animals; they eat up the animals they kill. As a consequence, man is ever trying to keep these Rajasic animals at a distance.

Man prides himself as the crown of creation. It is a rare piece of good fortune to be born as a human animal. We all agree with this statement. His is really a holy, sublime, and beneficent role; how then can cruelty, hatred and violence pollute his heart which is the centre of compassion, love, justice and equanimity? How has he fallen from the Satwic heights of Divinity to the depths of Rajasic qualities like ungratefulness, vengefulness and vandalism?

Imagine the terror caused among the cattle when a tiger or leopard or wolf enters their shed! They struggle in panic and undergo fearsome panic, until they are felled and eaten. So too, Rajasic traits of character relish destroying the Satwic virtues in man.

Students! You are embodiments of unpolluted Love. The heart of man has to be saturated with pure feelings; clean impulses, and self-less urges towards service of living beings. Do not, at this stage of your lives, soak it in hate, cruelty and other evil qualities. At present, boys and girls of your age live without awareness of the suffering of others. You are, it can be said, blind and deaf. When a man in agony stands before a blind man and beats his breast, he remains unmoved, since he cannot grasp the tragedy. When some one in distress recites his story and appeals for help, the deaf man is not affected at all. When you see the sufferings of others or listen to their wailings and yet remain unsympathetic and unresponsive, you can be justifiably called blind and deaf.

Often, you yourselves cause injury or mental agony to others. You exult in the humiliation or exploitation you cause. You revel in mean tactics to insult others. Since your hearts are full of low desires, they do not react when the hearts of others call out for comradeship. To set right this sorry state of affairs, you have to cleanse and polish the heart into a clear mirror. A mirror reflects all that is before it—the misery, the poverty, the helplessness. But if the mirror is overlaid thick with the dust of ego, it cannot reflect the sadness yearning for relief. When the heart is clean and clear, it will receive correct impressions of the struggles of your parents, the problems of society and anxieties that pester the country.

But, consider what students are contributing today. Instead of resolving problems they are multiplying them. Far from alleviating suffering, they are worsening it. They have themselves become sources of anxiety. They are becoming blind to the sacrifice their parents make to educate them and to the hopes they arouse in them as well as in Society and in the hearts of those who plan for the country's progress and prosperity. Many who have come to this College are blind to the purpose for which this College has been established, viz., to shape generations of students with holy ideals and pure hearts, filled with Love.

In the name of education, you spend your time reading trivialities, writing trash and accepting experiences second hand. You do not seek to have elevating first hand experiences yourselves. The physics, chemistry or mathematics that you learn at College have no practical validity, so far as your daily activities are concerned. In the laboratory you learn that oxygen and hydrogen constitute water. But, when you are thirsty during lunch at home, you cannot put the two together and drink the result. You have to drink water, as prepared by Natural forces. For living out your years in peace and harmony, you have to develop common sense and master general knowledge. Poring over books or cramming formulae will not help.

It is foolish to believe that you have to be 'educated', since it leads to jobs. At present education is oriented to jobs, to secure a living, not to lead a life. Education must teach a person what life is, and what its goal. It must purify the heart and clarify the vision. It must prevent pollution of the hand, heart and head by habits injurious to the individual, society and the nation. It must promote virtues and raise the moral and spiritual standards of the educated.

In times gone by, universities were referred to as "homes of humility" since humility was the characteristic of an educated person. Pride is the root of aggressiveness; it is the nature of wild animals. But the mark of man is humility in the presence of elders, teachers and parents. There is an ancient axiom which says, "Education imparts humility; humility ensures credibility;

credibility brings wealth; wealth induces charity; charity confers peace and joy, here and hereafter." Nowadays, all educational institutions emphasise the need for riches. "Become wealthy through the easiest and quickest methods" that is the slogan. No effort is spent to inculcate humility and reverence, for they are won through discipline alone. Without discipline and self-control man reduces himself to the level of the beast. The stomach is not the central core of man.

Youth today longs for a type of work which involves no labour. They want jobs which they can do, sitting comfortably in an air-conditioned room signing files at the places indicated. They revel in sensual pleasures and selfish display, in starched shirts and soft assignments. They shy away from jobs that require physical exertion. Only idlers will prefer such jobs; others will relish and derive delight from hard jobs that try their physical, mental and intellectual powers. The Gurukulas of old gave such educational opportunities in plenty to the pupils.

Man does not live for food alone. To concentrate on eating and drinking is foolish. Consider how many millions are struggling on a standard of living much more pathetic than yours. Accept them and involve yourselves in their uplift. Acquaint yourselves with the scriptures of the major faiths, so that you can transmit the lessons of peace, harmony and joy they contain to others who need them more urgently.

Students today have neglected the purpose of education. They feel that the passing of examinations is the be all and end all of the four or five years of College life. How to gain marks by foul means, if fair is beyond reach—that is the primary concern—Copying from books or slips or entering the examination hall with mnemonic writings on the palms—these malpractices have become rampant. Even at this tender age, they follow crooked ways and pride themselves on their degradation.

You must recognise the Distinctiveness of this College which distinguishes it from many others. We had no desire to add one more to the list of Colleges that are degrading youth. Here, the curricula laid down by the University are taught and you are trained to appear for and pass the examinations conducted by the University, entitling you to the Degrees they confer. But, that is not considered the primary purpose of the College. The real aim is to equip you for the role of future leaders of India, as embodiments of Truth, Justice, Peace and Love; you ought to blossom as true representatives of Indian culture, spreading tolerance, charity and brotherhood throughout the World. Since you are encouraged and enabled to acquire the degrees, your parents send you here; but, we try to instill into you qualities that most other Colleges ignore, namely, reverence for elders and parents, humility; we discourage the desire to display and hurt others, to humiliate others and to cater to low sensual pleasures.

You must have read in the Bhagavata that Yasoda was approached by the Gopis with complaints involving Krishna; she planned to punish him; she offered Him butter with one hand, to persuade Him to go near her but she had also a rod held in the other hand hiding behind her back. Krishna goes near attracted by the butter but gets corrected by the threat of the rod. You have come attracted by the chance to earn a degree but you are exposed to disciplined life in the hostel. You are taught the scriptures of all faiths; you are persuaded to follow certain uplifting spiritual ideals. When the patient is reluctant to take the medicine, the physician cannot leave

him alone. The patient might even avoid the physician but since he is the well-wisher, the doctor has to be welcomed and the medicine taken. It is not merely for the good of the person who is ill; if he is cured, his *parents* and kith and kin will benefit; society will benefit; the *nation* will secure a disciplined, dutiful, devoted, dedicated subject. When other Colleges deem their existence fulfilled when the curriculum is taught, this College considers the development of self-reliance, self-confidence, self-sacrifice and self-knowledge as the basic curriculum. There is much controversy going on about first language, second language and the third language and the medium language. In this College the medium is discipline. The first, second and third languages are Love, Service and Sadhana. There is also much talk of progress—helping progress, measuring progress, achieving progress, etc. Do we really progress in securing peace of mind, in harmoniously living together, and in removing ignorance of higher values? No. We are only progressively declining from the human to the bestial level. We value many-storeyed buildings as a sign of progress. Persons who spend their time in air-conditioned rooms breathe their own breath over and over and are polluted thereby. Their feet never touch the ground. Sunlight seldom warms their skin. Boots for the feet, pants for the legs, coat for the chest and back, hat for the head and a tight tie round the neck! This is the pitiable plight.

The British rulers needed clerks and managers who can be trained to be docile and devoted. They devised a system of education which could produce people to do such jobs for them. Even today that job oriented system holds sway, and therefore, we have in India 'educated' persons in thousands desperately in need of "jobs".

Students of our College must not seek cushy job; they must not parade their degrees which are really "begging bowls" before office after office and pray for jobs. They should stand on their own feet, exert independently, produce through their own effort enough and to spare for themselves and their parents and be useful to the poor, the illiterate, the diseased and the distressed. Only those who practise this ideal sincerely and to the best of their abilities can claim to honour the maxims: "Duty is God" or "Work is Worship". On the other hand, if, like highwaymen, you live on the earnings of others or on salaries for which you do not offer adequate work in return, your education is a waste and your life itself is a sorry burden.

As soon as you finish your course here and pass the final examination, I would exhort you to go back home and offer grateful homage to your parents. Resolve to fulfill their hopes about you; give them joy. Revere them and pay due honour. Then, learn about the problems that trouble the village or the society and plan out the lines of your service. Engage yourselves in realising those plans. "The people around you must be glad enough to say 'Ah! How good, how useful, how intelligent, this young man has become after being in the Sathya Sai College.' How exemplary is his speech, manners and conduct!" That is the return I expect from you all that we do for you in this College; nothing else. Do not wander about like ownerless street dogs, enjoying endless wrangles and quarrels. If you fall into that company, you commit the sin of sacrilege. I am confident you will all avoid that fatal path. You must equip yourself to be the guides, teachers and leaders of India and even of the world. During your years in this College, I desire two or three modes of behaviour which will help you to mould yourselves into these. Do not waste time in idle talk and empty scandal. Continuous conversation saps one's energy. Talk only on problems concerning subjects of study or projects of service. Youth starts conversation on subjects and end up with talk on 'objects'; they start talking sense and end up with 'senses'. I like

silence and I would advise you to talk only when you must "and only to the person with whom you have to talk. Communicate with the minimum words and make them as sweet and pleasant as you can. Second, when you move from the hostel to the College or from one place to another, go in line. Don't form groups; be always open to constructive friendship. Let yours not be an exclusive association. Only cats roam from house to house; only dogs run through highroads and bye lanes. Do not reduce yourselves to those levels. Be human, try to raise yourselves up to Divinity. That is my message to you. I bless you that you succeed in this noble endeavour.

—Discourse by Bhagavan, Sathya Sai College, Brindavan 19.7.79

Bulwark Against The Threat

The Malaysian constitution provides for Freedom of Religion and one of the Pillars of the Rukun Negara is 'Belief in God'.

I understand that devotees of Sai Baba hold fast to the tenets of 'Belief in God', to 'follow the Religion of one's choice' and 'to perform selfless service to the sick, the poor and the needy, regardless of race or religion.' These are certainly very laudable sentiments. If all Malaysians hold fast to 'Belief in God' and perform selfless service to the more unfortunate, either as individuals, as informal groups seeking no self-recognition or praise, or through the medium of registered societies and clubs, they will in their own way be helping the government in uplifting the total welfare of the nation. Malaysia will then surely become a better place for all of us.

Today the threat of ideologies opposed to 'Belief in God', the drug menace that threatens to destroy the vitality of youth and the lowering moral standards are unfortunate consequences of rapid modernisation and the inflow of western ideas of morality and standards of conduct. These trends are threatening to tear asunder the very fabric of family life and the soul of nations, all round the world.

Only one factor can stand as a bulwark against this threat to our traditional Eastern heritage of love for God, respect for elders and morality in everyday life; and that is a firm and unshakable belief in God.

I hope that the Spiritual Retreat (Sadhana camp) that you are holding will reinforce that belief and bring about greater understanding within your group and also between the different groups in our country.

—*Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister, Malaysia 4th Julai 1979*

Fight The Ego

It took me a very long time to know my enemy number one. The enemy happens to be very strong, cannot be killed by guns, cannot be fought by modern weapon-systems and cannot be stunned by nuclear might. The enemy cannot be captured by physical power, cannot be imprisoned and cannot be prosecuted.

When I am ignored by a group I feel insulted. When I am heard, but not praised, I feel injured. When my help is not acknowledged I feel disgusted. Every minute I compare myself with someone above me and get frustrated.

Why should I be insulted, injured and pained? What is the root-cause for all my sorrow, pain, misery and frustrations? My ego.

Individual rivalries, inter-group fights, inter-national wars almost all *man-made* calamities are the result of somebody's EGO.

Who can fight my ego? Can the doctors help? Can the psychiatrists help? Most of them may not. So where do I go? The answer is simple: I have to fight my ego. I have to cleanse my mind. I have to make every attempt to overcome insult and frustration. I have to learn not to be jealous of someone. I have to find peace within myself.

First of all, I have to learn how I behave in a state of egolessness. Once I know this I can "try" to remember that behaviour and try and try and try to adopt that behaviour as my regular behaviour in the routine life.

When did I ever experience the state of egolessness. In a conference? No. In an office? No. In the super market? Not at all. Then, where? Yes, I remember now in the presence of Swami. Now at last I know the formula. I must programme my mind to feel that I am in his presence most of the time. Perhaps my ego will learn to sleep and keep quiet.

The formula is rather simple to *write*. See the Lord in everyone and everything around. The ego will learn to get lost. Unfortunately applying the simple formula in daily life is not easy: ego will not allow me to see Swami in everyone, so, the very ego which I want to get rid of prevents me from using the formula.

For the present I am happy that I know the formula. I am happy that I can use it once in a way. I am happy that I have the hope that gradually I can use the formula for longer and longer duration. I also feel very happy when Swami says the world will change for the better, for, this implies that in course of time many people will learn to be rid of the ego.

The crusade against ego is the sure path for the golden age, the one world and for the fulfillment of all the dreams of ours.

—*Bhanoji Rao, University of Singapore*

Four Feet Away

There You are
standing there before me.
I'm blinded, I'm paralyzed
I'm deaf, I'm dumb
I can't move pen to paper
no thoughtforms enter my mind.

There You are
standing there before me
all of Your divinity
turned up full blast
short circuits my mind
my reason, my rhyme

Your electricity
surging through my system
soul gone in oblivion,
mind unable to think,
body incapable of action
thought, word and deed
all divine, not `me'

Four feet away
for some reason You stand.
I've done something right today
I don't wonder or understand
I gaze from Your eyes to Your hair
along Your robe to Your feet

Hands in front of You, then in back
swaying gently as I feel Your breeze
You please me, the crowd—
You, standing there in this form
there is no doubt You are
what You are; the Creator

Your face
changes from God in majesty
to human in compassion.
In an instant as You stand
a slight wave of Your hand
to a far off soul
in a far off land
as You start to move away

The intensity of Your presence
the full expression of Your essence
is almost too much to stand.
Please, take my hand
as You walk away
to remind You to do this
Again, someday

—*Douglas james mahr*

THE DAMARU DRUM

Those fingers five, they shape the elements five.
They serve His Cosmic Will and mould

the manner of men and things.
They spread, they quiver and thrill
when they tingle to His thought.
They clasp and close around the gifts He loves to shape,
Like curative ash or protective gem;
they long for the gracious chance
to give and give and give, for ever anon.
Those fingers are tender petals
fragrant with strange compassion.
They speak the language of Avatar glory,
when placed by Him on humble heads
(or even haughty ones) or feeble hearts,
pallid cheeks or weakening pulse.
They transmit from the Source, transforming you.
O! You must watch the fingers play
all by themselves in frolics sweet and gay!
They scoop, they stir, they doodle, draw.
They knock at doors unseen,
that creak their negative don'ts.
They stiffen for no reason,
they soften, we don't know why,
They admonish—"Awake! Arise!"
They radiate the Bliss He showers in Love.
The *Index*! It guides so gently, it indicates,
It is subject, object and predicate too!
It circulates, and dominates,
it propagates His Message to faraway lands.
If you have eyes to read, you can learn
the Alphabet Divine and become
a spiritual literate. The fingers five
are but one palm—a lesson for clashing faiths.
Open your heart to their Song of Unity!
Let them arouse from your history the Sai Melody,
beating soft on deep-laid Damaru Drum.

—N. Kasturi

"Mastic, Master God"

On April 15, 1976, Holy Thursday, I went to St. John the Divine Church on 103rd Street and Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan. I had been told that Hilda Charlton, who had spent many years in India and the Far East, a considerable amount of that time with gurus and holy men, had something that I had heard spoken of several times. Hilda had 'holy ash' that was materialized by Sai Baba, a holy man in India. Several people had spoken to me of this ash within the last month.

I felt that any holy or sacred substance that is available without cost could be beneficial and I would do well to make an effort to get some. Hilda gave me the ash saying, "Keep it on you as a talisman; it will help you." I thanked her and left.

Later that evening I opened the paper containing the `Vibhuti' and placed some on each palm, then swallowed a tiny bit, and waited. I felt a definite reaction of warmth on my left palm and nothing on my right palm. As time passed and the days became weeks, one unusual thing continued—the heat on my left palm kept returning periodically when I would least expect it; upon entering a church or holy place, when I was discussing holy or religious subjects, and when I saw images of Christ. For three weeks, the heat continued to return several times each day, usually without warning and even when my mind was on something mundane, such as eating dinner or watching television. This constant reminder that the ash produced by some holy man 10,000 miles away `had touched me' and began to make me wonder, who is this man?

I resolved that I must go to a bookstore and read about this person who could affect me from such a distance. I purchased "The Holy Man and the Psychiatrist" by Dr. Samuel Sandweiss, M.D.. As I read the book my entire being was shaken to its very roots. Here was a man, alive and walking the earth, speaking with authority reminiscent of Christ, preaching a doctrine of love of God and service to mankind, and not accepting payment from anyone. He was backing up His grandiose statements that He was an Avatar come to earth by an incredible variety of miracles. He was multiplying food, healing the sick, and raising the dead.

I was thoroughly agitated and bewildered and yet I had found a spiritual uplift and inspiration that was a tonic to a thirsty soul. I had to read more, find out more about this man. It seemed to me that if all that I had read about Sai Baba so far was true, then He was the greatest man to walk this earth since Jesus Christ. Next, I was given a gift, a book entitled "Man of Miracle" by Howard Murphet, a journalist who spent several years with Sai Baba. Contained in it were more incredible miracles and confirmation of His works. Yet, very few Americans know about this man. Why? Now I was really hooked. I could read nothing else. Things began happening to me—one after another. Often I had the feeling that I was being led. At this time a friend suggested that I was becoming overly wrapped up in Sai Baba, and that I might do well to return to college for my graduate degree. Now I enrolled at Hofstra University to study more of my profession, Tai Chi and related philosophy. Then I awoke one morning from a vivid dream. In this dream the title of a book was clearly shown to me with the cover lay-out. It was entitled "Sai Baba: Contemporary Mystic, Master and God." Then it dawned upon me ...why not? That's all I've been reading about and that's all I really have a desire to read about. Why not write my thesis on contemporary mysticism and use Sai Baba as my subject. I cleared it with the University.

Then another problem arose. How could I start such a project based solely on second hand experience? So I decided that I could not write about Him unless I first saw Him and confirmed these miracles for myself. I also realized that I might also go to Him and find out that He was a fake. If so, I had reasoned that I could still write a thesis as an expose of a colossal fraud. That would also do. But, how do I get to India? My bank account was nil. I turned to Sai Baba and addressed Him saying, "If You want me to write this, then You must provide the money for me to get to India because I am broke! "

Within 48 hours I received a check in the mail for 1,000 dollars from New York for some money owed to me from several years previous which I had been trying to collect for some time. Whether or not Sai Baba caused the money to arrive was not really the issue, but rather the coincidence of my asking and receiving the exact amount needed to get to India that was so startling. Again, more evidence that I was being led called me to Him from afar. I would go there as objectively as possible and report as honestly as I was capable. I decided to go during my Christmas break when I had no class to teach and could remain for two months.

It is well to keep two things in mind at this point: 1) I was a confessed Christian and as such I was not looking for a teacher, guru, wise man, or organization to follow. I was convinced from all of my studies and life experiences that Jesus Christ was the highest teacher available to mankind and was Goodness personified; 2) This teacher had actually found me through my various experiences and was calling me to Himself. I was more than curious, and in fact, the thesis was only the rational excuse that I needed to justify spending so much money. The real reason for my going was much deeper than the consideration of any writing that I could possibly produce. I wanted to know if such a Being really existed, and I realized that if He did, He would be the greatest possibility for my personal evolution and advancement along the road of Knowledge and Wisdom.

Before leaving for India I wrote a letter to Sai Baba in which I asked Him several questions. One question was actually a test straight from the Bible. "Test every spirit" it says, "Ask who Jesus Christ is. If the spirit says that Jesus Christ is the son of God, it is a good spirit." (I John 4, 1-3) So I asked, "Who do You say Jesus Christ is?"

I first set eyes on Sai Baba on December 18, 1976. From December 19, 1976 on, Baba invited me along with some other Westerners and Indians, each night into His living quarters after evening Darshan. On December 24, 1976, Christmas Eve, I was asked by Baba to speak on Jesus Christ. This I did, and from that night on my mind was filled with visions of the life of Christ. These visions continued for approximately one month, then they subsided. I realized many things from this experience. 1. Sai Baba answered my letter's question by letting me, in my own words, tell all who Christ was: Lord and God. 2. There was a causal relationship between Baba's asking me to speak and the visions that I was graced with. Baba says, "Take one step towards Me and I will take ten steps towards you." He asked me to present Christ to Him and His followers, and He returned Christ to me more than ten times worth! 3. Visions of Jesus Christ are one of the highest blessings in Christianity. 4. I received confirmation from Sai Baba that Jesus truly was my God and that Sai Baba was my Divine Teacher who would take me to Him. 5. Christ said, "If you acknowledge Me before men, then I will acknowledge you before my Father in Heaven." (Mat 10:32 Luke 12:8). Baba was setting up a situation in which I had the honor of telling the life and meaning of Christ's Divine life and mission to a large gathering of spiritual aspirants.

I realized that I was unworthy of receiving such a precious gift from Baba. Simultaneously, I understood that this is precisely what Grace is; receiving a gift or blessing from God when you are not worthy. In this way you learn that you too can transcend by doing good to others even when they seem unworthy. When you do so, you are acting in a Divine manner. Baba says, "Love is giving and forgiving."

The next day was Christmas. I have never experienced a more holy and sacred one. Baba asked us to meet before dawn and sing Christmas carols and Indian bhajans while walking through the neighboring town. We then all converged on His quarters just after sunrise in glorious sacred choruses. I will never forget the unbelievable sight of Baba standing on the terrace swaying to the singing of "Silent Night." He seemed to be absorbing all our singing and the love it represented.

Later that day Baba gave a Christmas discourse. Some twenty thousand people gathered to hear this speech. When Sai Baba came out, He was a definite shade of blue, like Krishna. He quickly walked by without even looking at me, and as He did, the incredibly powerful fragrance of Vibhuti overwhelmed me. I turned to a friend nearby and commented on how unusually strong that smell was. In total disbelief he told me that he could not smell anything, nor could anyone else around me. My friend then said, "It must be a gift for you." Another realization struck me. A passage from the Bible suddenly opened up to me. It says, "All the books in all the world could not contain all the miracles of Jesus Christ." (John 21.25) Now I understood why. Because when the God-man confers Grace, it is just as I had been shown; an undeniably experienced 'personal fact', yet objectively non-confirmable. It was enough to convince me, but not enough to convince an 'objective' onlooker standing nearby. I came to hear of many of these subjective miracles, given to people on a one-to-one basis by Baba. These miracles confer Grace and Faith to specific people. These are not for all to share. These cannot be counted. These are often not recorded or even mentioned. These are between the God-man and you.

In His Christmas speech Sai Baba said, "It is correct that we should celebrate the birth of Christ, as it was a Divine Incarnation ...Jesus was the messenger of God, the Son of God, and one with God." He told us that the correct way to celebrate Christ's birth was not by partying, feasting, gambling and drinking, but rather by resolving from this moment on, to incorporate at least one of Christ's sacred teachings into our own lives. In this speech Sai Baba answered once and for all, without any doubt, the question in my letter. According to the Bible, therefore, Sai Baba must be called a "good spirit".

Jesus Himself told us how to discern whether a spirit is good or bad. "Ye shall know them by their fruitsevery good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit... wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." (Mat -7/16-20)

I looked long and hard at the fruits of Sai Baba. Firstly I saw the effect that He had upon me. Without question, Baba has brought me closer to God. He made God a more important part of my daily existence and He showed me Transcendent Love. He directs us to "see good, do good, and be good." When I observe the effects He has upon others, I see healings, educational centers, social service volunteer organization and above all the fire of Faith and Love ignited in the hearts of those who come to Him. This tree bears good fruits! I, therefore, accept Him as God's Messenger and my Good Teacher.

Upon hearing about Sai Baba's miracles, some people fear that He maybe the anti-Christ that was foretold by Jesus; and the thought certainly occurred to me. But in Him I saw only goodness, kindness, and Love. From Sai Baba's mouth I always heard three basic messages

1. Love God.
2. Show that Love through selfless service to your fellow men.
3. Realise that God is the Indwelling Spirit that is the Breath and Life of each and every being.

I remained with Sai Baba for two months. Daily I observed Him attending to the multitudes that came to Him; materializing objects and giving them away as gifts to devotees, and healing the sick. And every day Sai Baba taught me something new. Everything that Baba taught me was good and all of His endeavours were beneficial; He gave me permission to write about Him and that I am doing now. Sai Baba does not work in secret. His activities are an open book for all to witness and draw their own conclusions from. Baba often says; "My life is my message." I pray that I may receive more and more of His Message.

—Lawrence Galante, New York

My Joy, My Sustenance

That which is the central subject of the Vedas, that which confers Bliss (Ananda) on all life, that which is the object of unceasing search in the Jagat in various ways and along various disciplines—that is Brahman. It is everywhere; it is the basis of Creation. It is indivisible, indestructible, changeless, and absolute. The Bhoota-Akasa or the Cosmos which includes the stars, the sun and the earth is but a flake of froth on the surface of the Atma. The Chitta-Akasa or Consciousness that cognises is only a wave on that sea. The sea itself is the Chid-Akasa or Atma-consciousness. The Atma alone is real; the rest is all appearance; the play of name and Form, both of which are temporary and transient.

Since the Atma, the Reality, is befogged by the Name and Form of the Bodies, we are led to believe that man suffers from the three types of sorrow—the Adibhoutika, the Adidaivika and the Adhyatmika. Adibhoutika is the result of attachment to kith and kin, treated as separate but still one's own. It is the egoist bonds that pain men most. This demon of ego leads us into evil ways; its companion anger lays hold of us like a ghost and persuades us to join the devil dance with its gang, of which envy and greed are the chiefs. Adidaivika is the sorrow caused by what are called as acts of god: natural calamities and the like. By earning a balanced mind, unaffected by the whims of fortune, this sorrow can be conquered. This state is called Samadhi or equal mindedness, equanimity, a sense of equipoise. This adventure and attainment belong to the realm of chittakasa. Adhyatmika sorrow is caused by physical and mental illness or diseases. Yoga power can overcome this sorrow easily. Yoga controls and sublimates the agitations of the mind and thereby ensures calmness and peace.

To be rid of shone must direct all activity towards good thoughts, good words and good deeds. So too, to earn the Atma or Chidakasa one must realise how the Bhootha-akasa is cognised by

the Chitta and how both are expressions of the Chitta. When one knows the Atma, the Eternal Witness, he attains the Nirvikalpa stage free from dos and don'ts, ups and downs, joys and sorrows. Conquer Tamas by Rajas and Rajas through Satwa and finally free yourself even from the Satwa guna. Then only can you reach Nirvikalpa. Guna means a rope and Satwa-guna too binds. Nirvikalpa is the stage when man is fully free, fully awake and fully wise.

Ramakrishna once brought a house-holder devotee and Vivekananda, the ascetic devotee, together. He asked Vivekananda, "Son! What exactly is your goal of securing Wisdom or Jnana?" and, in reply, Vivekananda elaborated on Kapila's Sankhya System of Philosophy. He said that everything, big and small, every cell and star, undergoes change, every instant. Food consumed becomes fertiliser to feed plants which provide further food!

The air which one man exhales is inhaled by another and the minute particles of his system enter the system of the other person. Sea Water becomes the moisture in the air and gathered together as rain-clouds it fills the fields and gardens and is transformed into edible sweetness. Matter is but the perpetual commingling and separation of particles. The human body has all its component cells replaced by 'new' ones during every seven-year period of time. Therefore, how can we pronounce anything as stable, as permanent, or as true? This is the reason man does not get contentment, or peace. This is the reason man does not get contentment and joy, however wealthy he becomes, and whatever fame he earns. So long as he revels in the trivial and the temporary, he cannot be happy. It is only when he has discovered the Atma and is always deep in the ecstasy of that discovery that he can be in unblemished happiness. For, in that stage he is aware that he is eternal and all-knowing, absolute and omniscient....

Whatever Swami does or gets done, whatever He says or directs others to say, remember, it is to emphasise or make clear or exemplify this Message of the Atmic Reality of Man. I am prompting these students to speak or recite, sing, or act, so that this Message may be installed in their hearts. They are the media through whom I am reviving the ancient culture of this land. I am encouraging them to be examples of the strength and equanimity that can be gained during the practice of that Message. In a few moments, the students will be enacting a play on Ramakrishna Paramahansa, in which the secret of his supreme spiritual achievement is laid bare and he himself is held forth as 'the ideal for man in spiritual sadhana and in fearless enquiry into spiritual problems. Again, you will see a boy, named Mehta, a student of our Bangalore Sathya Sai College, dance as a Gopi and in other female roles. The whole cosmos, the gyrations it performs to the music of the spheres is a huge dance-drama. This is the symbolic representation of that Truth.

There is no Vidya which our students are not proficient in. They develop all the virtues and they saturate every act of theirs including their skills and studies with those high and pure qualities. To demonstrate that this process will yield joy, peace and prosperity, I have these students as instruments. They mould themselves as ideals; they are the source of my delight; they sustain my hopes. (They are my Aasaya, my Ananda and my Aahaara). These students and those of the same stamp are the pioneers in my task of mending the present world and ushering in a new world. I am determined to transform the students of all colleges into such instruments for the rebuilding of the world on the foundation of Dharma. Before long, all students in this land Bharat

will follow the ancient ideals laid down by our culture and earn happiness for themselves and others. This is my hope. I bless them, so that they may strive towards this goal and succeed.

—*Divine Discourse, Dasara 29. 9. 79*

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11

The Universe is the Macrocosmos; the Individual Being is the Microcosmos. The first is the Brahmanda, the second is the Pindanda. But, the basic Truth of both is One, the same. That One is independent and unrelated to any other fact or thing. When that alone is realised in this manner, it can be called Brahman. When it enters the awareness as related to the Universe, it is referred to as Parabrahman. The basic truth of the Universe is Atma. The basic Truth of the Individual is also Atma. All that appear different from Atma are of the region of 'delusion' or Mithya. Mithya or delusion implies a condition which until inquiry appears real but on inquiry is known to be unreal. It is only an appearance, this universe and its supposed basis—an appearance caused by Ignorance or Maya. The power that deludes us into believing that the created cosmos is true and real is only an emanation from the Atma. When this power operated and the Atma is clothed with it, it is referred to as Paramatma.

The Form of Atma is Satchitananda or Sat-Chit-Ananda, treated as one inseparable composite. Maya too is a composite of the three Gunas or natural modes or qualities—Tamasic, Rajasic and Satwic. They express themselves as Iccha Shakti (Desire), Kriya Shakti (Deed) and Jnana Shakti (Wisdom). The quality called Tamas creates the appearance of diversity, hiding the basic ONE and only. The quality named Rajas explores the Truth and the treasures of wisdom. The quality named Satwa is unblemished as a mirror and it gives clear and correct picture of things and events that happen before it. It reflects Parabrahman and reveals Easwara or God. God thus manifested becomes the Universe or Jagat created by His Will. The reflected Easwara does not have the capacity of Maya or Delusion. As the clear water of a lake has froth and bubbles on the surface, the Atma's essential nature seems to be tarnished by the deluding appearance of Maya and its product—the Jagat or Universe, with varied Names and Forms. When the three modes of Maya are in balance and in a state of unruffled equipoise, the Universe is termed as manifest, A-Vyakta. This is termed the "seed-state" since all subsequent variations are subsumed and latent in it. When Tamas and Rajas have their impact, Creation is caused and the Cosmos comes about. They agitate living beings into activity. The deluding force is conditioned by the three modes, as and when each expresses itself and asserts its influence over the rest. When Satwa predominates, it is named as Atma-Maya; when Rajas is ascendant, it becomes A-Vidya or Non-knowledge and when Tamas holds sway, it becomes Tamasi or Dullness. When the Atma is reflected in the Satwic mode, the image becomes Easwara; when reflected in Rajas, it becomes Jiva or individual being; and when reflected in Tamas, it becomes Matter. It is the mould, the Upadhi, that causes the distinction between Easwara (God) Jiva (the living being) and Dravya (matter); when there is no Upadhi or mould or case, all these are Atma. Since the whole Universe is God, Jiva and Matter, it can be truly described as the composite of the three modes. The Universe has

manifested in order to serve the highest interests of living beings and of man, the most intelligent of them all. While affirming that the Atma is reflected in the Satwic, Rajasic and Tamasic modes, producing impressions of Easwara, the Individual and Matter, one point has to be emphasised. The mirror that conditions the image has only limited capacity. It can reflect only objects that are opposite to it. But, when the mirror is either convex or concave in surface or when its plain surface is soiled with dirt, the image will suffer contortion or fail in clarity. This, however, does not affect the object; only the image is distorted or defaced. Usually the object itself is condemned on the basis of its reflection or image.

Brahmam too appears distorted on account of Maya and Ajnana (Ignorance) and this distortion which is a Super-imposed characteristic is supposed wrongly to adhere to Brahmam itself! The image of Parameshwara (the Supreme Godhead) is also a reflection in the Maya mirror. As milk turns into curds, Brahmam has turned into Jagat or Universe. This transformation is the handiwork of Maya, not of the reflection. Brahmam is the Master of Maya and not its subordinate. It releases the Maya Power and directs it. So, the personalised Brahmam or Parameshwara is known as Omnipotent and Omniscient. The Jiva, the Easwara and the Bhoota (Elements or Matter)—these three contribute to the progress of the individual, each in its own way.

The Easwara or Lord is the fulfillment of all Desires; all objects of enjoyment in the Universe emanate from His will and so, He has no desires at all. He has manifested the Universe not for the realisation of any desire of His or filling any vacuity, He suffered from, but for the benefit entirely of living beings. "Na me Partha asthi Karthavyam, Thrishu Lokeshu Kinchana—There is no duty binding on me, Partha, in the three worlds" says Krishna. Creation, manifestation, or emanation is His very nature. Hence, the description (Leela Vinodi) "Revelling in play", is often ascribed to Him. It is His will-power that is filling all living beings with consciousness and helping them to be alert and active. He grants to each the consequence of thought, word and deed and is therefore described as the Giver-of-the-fruit-of-Activity—Karma-phala-pradata. Without the intercession of the Lord, Activity cannot result in consequence; nor can certainty arise that a particular act will result in an identifiable manner. Besides, the sages declare that Karma (Activity) is momentary. The thought arises and the act is done. The act is followed by the fruit. It is not possible to predict when the fruit will be available or what its nature will be. Hence, we have to admit that it all depends on the Lord's Command. What cannot be interpreted by our limited intellect has to be ascribed to His Command.

However long the interval, however many lives elapse, one cannot escape the obligation of suffering from the consequences of one's actions. There is no place for inquiry into the origins of the act or when it happened, for, one has to trace from the beginning of Time itself. One cannot discover the beginnings of the Lord, the Universe, the Living Being, Activity and Ignorance; they are all beyond the beginning. In the Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna declares, "Gahanaa Karmano Gathih" (the way of action is elusively subtle and difficult to discover). The consequence might confront the person, even after the passage of many lives. The Lord is the eternal Witness, the Power that presides over every act. Looked at from this point of view, one has to realise and declare that the Lord and the Individual are bound inextricably together. In the absence of living beings, there can be no Lord. When there are no children, how can the word 'father' be meaningful? So, the Lord, it can be said, manifested the Universe, in order to provide living

beings with fields of activity and in order to grant them the consequences of those actions. The five elements serve the same purpose; they also help constitute the physical vehicles of life, in accordance with the quality and quantity of those consequences. There are also regions called Lokas where beings which have accumulated great merit or gathered terrible sins have to be in the hereafter. These have no relation to the regions or bodies that are visible to us.

(To be continued)

The Inner Yajna

Hinduism has been the faith of millions since the days of the Vedas. But, it has had to encounter and overcome many different obstacles, various periods of ups and downs, and a few inroads of distinct cultures. It has survived all these and is still unharmed and unwavering. Those who are experts in this field acclaim the excellence of the Hindu religion, because it encourages the co-existence of many cultural traits and moulds them into one distinct way of life. Buddhism was the first movement to be overcome by the full-flowing waters of Hinduism. It tried to diminish the popular faith in the efficacy of Yajnas and Yagas and strove its best to wean people away from Vedic Upasana. Kumarila Bhatta tried to restore them. Sankaracharya raised Vedanta or Uttara-mimamsa to the status of a universal religion, with great glory. It was the springtime of Hinduism.

Very soon, Hinduism itself broke into sects like Shaivism and Vaishnavism, dualists and monists. People could not welcome the Truth "Siva is Vishnu, Vishnu is Siva," taught in Vedic texts. It was at this critical moment that Islam which condemns idol worship and other beliefs of Hinduism entered India. But, Hinduism was not overcome; it continued powerful and pervasive. Later, Christianity, with the additional advantage of political power, tried methods to weaken the hold of Hinduism on the hearts of the people.

The name Hindu has been interpreted by scholars in various ways but the real meaning is, Hin (Himsa or violence) du (dur, far from), a people who keep away from violence. The Hindus have been praying since ages for the peace and prosperity of `all the worlds, (Samantha Lokas Sukhino Bhavantu). For, their conception of the Immanence of God is strong and unshakable. (Isavaasyamidam sarvam). The rituals, ceremonies, vows and rites prescribed in Hinduism are all directed to the promotion of the well-being of `all the worlds'. This is the reason why Hinduism is still live and active.

Since centuries and millennia, Yajnas, like the Vedapurusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna which is being inaugurated now here, are observed in India for the welfare of the world. These Yajnas are not performed to benefit an individual, a family, a sect or a caste or those who follow a particular faith. The aim is universal; the beneficiaries are all living beings, for they calm the elements, they propitiate the deities presiding over the earth, the waters, the fire, the wind, and the sky. The sages of old chose some place away from the habitations of man, either on the bank of a river or in the recesses of a forest, for the celebration of Yajnas. No one or no body of men can claim any special attention being given to them. The Yajna is everybody's privilege; it becomes a success

through everyone's effort. No one person can pride himself that he is indispensable. Handfuls of grain brought by those who had sincere desire to participate were heaped together; handfuls of ritual fuel-sticks brought by the priests and pundits were stacked together; this was done as a symbol of the union of minds and hearts and as an assurance that each one can share in the blessings of the Gods who are invoked by the mantras. When the ego of a few is given free play and fame is offered to one or many, as often happens in Yajnas today, they are rendered unholy and infructuous. This is the reason why Yajnas have become occasions for ridicule and adverse criticism.

Among Yajnas, there are two types—the outer and inner. The outer is the reflection of the inner. The inner Yajna is the bird in the hand; the outer is the bird in the bush. But, since the sanctified vision and urge are absent today, what is happening is the release of the bird in the hand with the attempt to catch the bird in the bush. The value and significance of the inner Yajna have to be understood first. It involves the awareness of the Divinity that is dormant but decisive in the very centre of our Reality. Worship It. Propitiate It, please It; become It.

The Mind is the Altar; place the Animal that is to be offered as oblation (the evil qualities in your character, behaviour, attitude etc.) and sacrifice it to the Deity invoked. Man is born as Man, burdened by animal instincts and impulses that have attached themselves to him during previous lives as animal. He has passed through many an animal existence and each has left its mark on his mental make-up, just as the scar on the skin when a wound is healed. For example, man is afflicted with the disease of aggressive conceit, what is called *mada* in Sanskrit. This is no natural trait for man. It is a relic of a former elephantine life. He is sometimes pitifully foolish, a *Moorkha* as described in Sanskrit. This is a relic of his existence once upon a time as a sheep. Some have an inborn tendency to steal. This too may well be reminiscent of his years in the dim past as a cat, which is a sly poacher creeping into homes in search of milk, cheese and other tasty articles. Again, some men are endowed with a full equipment of unsteadiness and waywardness. This is an inheritance from the monkey he was, previous to his appearance in the world as man. Man is known in Sanskrit as *Nara* and the monkey as *Va-nara*. When *Va* or *valam* (tail) is subtracted, *Vanara* is reduced to *Nara*; the monkey becomes man. Man has lost the tail but he has still all the waywardness and unsteadiness of that animal. The totality of such animal traces must be sacrificed on the altar of the mind, as part of the inner Yajna. The outer visible Yajna is a means to convey this inner purpose and message. When children are taught letters, the objects which they can see and identify are chosen and the spelling of the words by which they are known is selected. Under the picture of a chair, the word chair is printed and the child is persuaded to discover that C, h, a, i, r read "chair". Later, the picture is discarded as superfluous. So too, until the lesson is learnt, the external ritual of fuel sticks being offered to the sacrificial fire has to continue. The ritual is the casket, the destruction of the animal impulses the gem that it is designed to keep safe.

Here we see *Ritwiks* who are specialists in the different stages of Vedic sacrifices; we hear the recitation of Vedic hymns; we have pundits reading the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavata* and the *Devi-Bhagavata* from the original texts; we have the ceremonial worship of *Devi* on the lines of *sastric* injunctions; a pundit is engaged in the *Puja* of *Thousand Lingas*; there is another priest who propitiates the *Sun-God* by means of ritual prostration to the accompaniment of mantras praising His glory. Godhead in all its manifestations of elements and forces is thus being adored for seven

days as part of Vedapurusha Yajna. The five senses and their impacts, the five sheaths that enclose the Atma are all symbolised in these activities.

The outermost sheath or Kosa is the Annamaya Kosa, composed of the material body made out of the Anna or the food one lives on. Anna, the body built by Anna, and the man are all the products of the self-same substance, the Soil or Earth or Bhoomi. So that the material body be filled with felicity or Ananda, the Vital, Mental and Intellectual sheaths to be sublimated. All the Kosas have to be finally merged in the illumination of Jnana, Beatific Wisdom. The Homa or the oblation in the sanctified flame is the symbol of this consummation. The fire you see is fed by fuel-sticks and ghee; they are the flames of wisdom that burn out the last traces of ego, ignorance and desire. And, what exactly is ghee, which feeds the flames? It is clarified butter; butter is churned from curds; curd is curdled milk; milk is drawn from the cow; the cow moving on four feet symbolises the four Vedas. So, symbolically the Vedas themselves help the light of Wisdom to shine. The Vedas are embodiments of Truth, the Truth that can liberate and save. Recitation of the Vedas purifies the environment and strengthens the will to be true. Truth is the basis of Dharma. The Vedas expound the Truth. These lessons are symbolically conveyed by the various ceremonial items happening in this sacrifice or Yajna.

Many who are unaware of this significance find fault with those who partake in such Yajnas; they criticise the loss of grain and ghee. They bemoan the waste of precious materials, caused by the irrational behaviour of the priests. But the seers who declared the mantras and the Vedas which prescribe the ritual and those who faithfully celebrate the Yajna are not foolish at all. Ignorant people lament the loss when the farmer scatters bags of grain on the ploughed field, for they do not know that when harvest time comes around, the farmer can collect from the field ten times the quantity of grain that was scattered by him. A single tin of ghee offered with appropriate mantras in the holy fire will result in a million tins of ghee for mankind. The vibrations of the mantras and the effect of the oblations will ensure prosperity and welfare all over the world. The sages and the seers of old prescribed these Yajnas, prompted by universal compassion, in order that they may result in the welfare of mankind. Thus, men of all climes and creeds are being benefited by the Hindus persisting in the observance of the directions of the Rishis.

The Mahabharata Epic declares that "what is not in Bharat does not deserve reverential consideration." And in Bharat the Message has always been, "Tolerance, respect for all faiths, practice of the essential teachings of Love and Service and the giving up of hatred, envy and pride. This Yajna will help you to understand that Message and live in accordance with it."

—Divine Discourse Prasanthi Nilayam 25-9-79

The Merry-Go-Round

Life is a merry-go-round that goes round and round, going faster and faster, madder and madder—going nowhere. Just stop and ask yourself the question: Where are we all going? Where are we all rushing to? What is it that is so important that you must do? Is it really so

important after all? Sometimes one will be tempted to ask: When will it stop? Is death the only way to stop the merry-go-round?

Round and round we go—all in the name of Progress. Progressing steadily in the material world but not in the spiritual. Our companions are jealousy, greed, lust, hatred, and desire for power. Everyday you can find instances of them in the newspapers.

Many strive after sensual pleasures, even though they well know that these are impermanent, transient and insatiable. It is amazing the extent to which people would go to satisfy their senses and desires. What kind of a malady is this?

Once more the wheel turns. The horses bob up and down at the speed the person operating the machine decides and dictates. Do you want to be the operator? Some do. They like to crack the whip to make the horses dance. They like to play God. Little do they realise and remember that they too are transient in nature, that they too are subject to the laws of karma.

The experience of being in a hospital ward full of heart patients, looking at death full in the face would perhaps make one hesitate a little before abandoning oneself to the worldly evils of Kama, Krodha, Mada and Matsarya.

Yes, for some the merry-go-round is slowing down. Age and Sickness are now their constant companions. Money, Fame, Fortune, Power and Sense-pleasures taste bitter and no longer interest them. Soon the music will stop—what is, was or has been will soon become memories. As Shakespeare put it: "We are all actors on a stage full of sound and fury signifying nothing."

All of us who are striving to get off the maddening and futile merry-go-round of life would benefit from the pearls of wisdom that Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has given us. He says: "God dwells in you as Joy. That is why you seek Joy always in every object around you. To become as full as Radha or Ramakrishna or Vivekananda, you have to sacrifice your ego, and saturate yourself with the Lord, with the consciousness that the Lord is your being.

So long as you have a trace of ego in you, you cannot see the Lord clearly. Egoism will be destroyed if you constantly tell yourself: 'It is He not I. He is the force, I am but the instrument.' Keep His name always on your tongue; contemplate His glory whenever you see or hear anything beautiful or grand; see in everyone the Lord Himself, moving in that form. Do not talk evil of others, see only good in them. Welcome every chance to help others, to console them, to encourage them along the spiritual path. Be humble do not become proud of your wealth or status or authority or learning or class. Dedicate all your physical possessions and mental skills and intellectual attainments to the service of the Lord. Then your ego will be wiped out."

Sriram

Dasara Delight

The Dasara Festival 1979 drew more than twenty thousand devotees to the Presence of Bhagavan at Prasanthi Nilayam. Every one of them had the fortune of watching the Vedic ritual of Yajna, of listening daily to the Divine Discourse of Baba and of being thrilled at the display of Devotion, Discipline and Duty by the boys from Bhagavan's Colleges at Brindavan, Bangalore and Puttaparthi and girl students from the Anantapur College for Women.

The Festival was inaugurated on the morning of 22nd September with a feature, the installation for worship of the Holy Kalasam at the Poornachandra Auditorium, instead of the Hoisting by Bhagavan of the Prasanthi Flag over the Mandir. The Annual Day of Sri Sathya Sai Hospital was celebrated on the same day, with Dr. Fanibunda from Bombay as the Chief Guest. Bhagavan gave Discourse on the Fundamental Prerequisites for Physical and Mental Health. On the 23rd September, over ten thousand destitutes from far and near gathered in the Presence of Baba and were fed sumptuously. Many among them were given saris or dhotis. The Vedapurusha Sapthaha Juana Yajna started on 25th September when Baba came in procession to the Auditorium. In His Inaugural Discourse, Bhagavan declared that the sacrificial altar and fire, the grain and the ghee were symbols of the inner Yajna that was the real rite. The Annual Day of the All India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha was observed that same evening, with discourses by Pundits, chiefly Brahmasri Kuppa Bairagi Sastry and Brahmasri Sishtla Chandramouli Sastry. Lectures on other evenings were delivered by Prof. Anil Kumar, Prof. Jayamma Gopinath and by the Old Boys of the Sathya Sai College, Sri Nityananda Menon, M. Com., M. Phil. and Sri C. Srinivas, M.Com., M. Phil.

The students of the Sathya Sai College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Prasanthi Nilayam, presented a Play on Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa which feelingly depicted the travail of his sadhana, his yearning for gathering around him a band of young men to propagate His Message, his childlike faith in the Divine whom he addressed as Mother and his unique relationship with Naren, Rakhal and other disciples. This College provided also a very impressive speaker, scarcely sixteen, S. Ramesh, from Delhi who gave everyone of the thousands of listeners a heartening surprise, by his clear diction, confident delivery and sincere faith in Sai ideals. The Bal Vikas children from Madras enacted a Musical play on Saint Thyagaraja which highlighted many touching incidents in his life.

The students of the Sathya Sai College, Brindavan held the vast gathering spellbound when six of them, wearing the appropriate costumes, spoke on the religions which they professed in actual life. Sandeep Sastri (III B.A.) from Kabul, Afghanistan, spoke on Sanathana Dharma, Sonam Gyamtso Bhutia (II PUC) from Sikkim gave a succinct account of the Buddha and His teaching; Urvix D. Pithawala III B.Sc, from Bombay explained the main doctrines of Zoroastrianism; Terry Lee Scott (I B.Com.) from Hawaii, USA, spoke on Christianity; Nissar Ahmed Delvi (I PUC) from Libya, North Africa, described the life of Muhammad and the tenets of Islam, Amit Singh (III B. Sc.) from New Delhi spoke on Nanak and the Gurus and on the Religion of the Sikhs. The entire programme was an eye opener which emphasised the perennial spring of Sai that underlies all faiths.

Mehta, a student of the PUC class, Sathya Sai College. Brindavan, hailing from Tirupur (Tamil Nadu) was acclaimed by the devotees when he (as a lady) performed a few excellent Dance items in the Bharat Natya style, depicting devotion to Sri Krishna, Lakshmi and other Divinities

Another day, a young student, still in his early teens, K. B. Jayakumar (Kerala) astounded even veteran musicians by his correct but sweet rendering of classical songs in captivating Karnataka style. The College orchestra of the Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan, Bangalore, has "now as accompanists more than twenty instrumentalists, providing musical background for the vocalists who render a bouquet of Hindustani and Karnataka style Bhajans. It is noteworthy that no one of the students had an iota of formal training in music. Their performance won the appreciation and admiration of the thousands who listened with rapt attention.

In fact the students of the Sai Colleges are enthusiastically taking over! from the older Seva Dal volunteers the hard task of service at the Canteen and the special Kitchens and Stores of the Catering Section for North Indians, Foreigner devotees, and others. Boys and girl students were found in separate busy booths counting and packing books and pictures, weighing and measuring at the Provision Stores, handing out Vibhuti packets and Notebooks.

On the first day of October, when Bhagavan graciously responded to the prayers of the devotees and gave Darshan on the Jhoola, the renowned Music Directors Sri Rajeswara Rao and Sri Dakshinamurthy from Madras offered, as their homage, a programme of Vocal Music. The talented members of the Sanathana Bhagavata Bhakta Samajam, a body of Vedic scholars, Bhagavatars. Pundits, Poets, vocalists and instrumentalists contributed Harikathas and Music Recitals every afternoon during the Yajna Week and intensified the spiritual ardour of the gathering.

Though the many thousands were disappointed on the first day of Dasara when Bhagavan dropped the discourse, He blesses them with, every year, after hoisting the Prasanthi Flag over the Mandir and though He denied them the delight of witnessing the Vibhuti Abhishekam on Vijayadasami Day, they returned to their homes in a mood of ecstasy, for they could receive His Darshan and His grace many times a day; their vision was widened and deepened by His Discourses on the Atma Consciousness; they were also able to imbibe the lesson that the young students communicated by their example—the lesson of Duty, Devotion and Discipline.

—Ed.

With sincere repentance all sin can be washed away. God's grace responds. If it is His wish to forgive, nothing can stand in the way. All karma is cancelled out. At the root of all spiritual action—which is without reaction—is the seed of love. If that seed be nourished, it will grow as the tree grows, and all things of value automatically come from that tree of love. Regardless of the sins of the past, if there is deep repentance and love of God, the sins are washed out and the nature purified. To fear otherwise is weakness. God has infinite compassion. Seek His love, and forgiveness follows.

"You complain that God is hard-hearted; that he does not respond to prayer, or give signs from His portraits or speak from now ere to assuage or assure; but let Me tell you, God is Love, Love is God. When there is no response you have to infer that the cry from your heart is insincere, it is mere playacting. It is set to a pattern, addressed to someone alien to you, someone accepted by you as a far away tyrant or taskmaster. Know that God is your nearest and dearest kin."

—Baba

The Three Aakasas

Is the universe real? Is it relatively unreal? This problem has been agitating man since ages in all lands. The realists and the idealists have argued on their explanations for centuries. The scientists or realists long believed that the Universe is the conglomeration of atoms in many patterns which has assumed manifold forms and names. As salt has emerged from the sea, or ice has manifested from water or sugar crystals from cane-juice, the atoms have combined, they say, to form the things and beings in Nature. But, this is only partially true. The Vijnana-Vadins point out to the Bhoutik-Vadins, the spiritually oriented remind the materially oriented, that a firm base is essential for all these transformations to happen. Without an expanse of water, waves cannot arise. Without clay, pots cannot be shaped. The Universe must have such a basic force or energy or phenomenon. That fundamental principle is, according to them, the Atma.

However, the attempt in which men are engaged today is to deny the clay and build faith on the pot! This process is doomed to fail. How can waves be divorced from water? The cognisable Universe, which is dismissed as untrue, must have Truth as its base, as the rope on which the snake is superimposed. That basic Truth is the Atma.

Of course, the Universe in which we exist is cognised by our senses; we take it as true and real; we experience it in our consciousness. But, it cannot be accepted as Truth, for anything that changes does not deserve to be called so. We do not experience the Universe as without change at all times, do we? The Nature we are aware of during the waking hours slips away from awareness while we pass through the dream-state and the deep-sleep state. Again, it appears differently to different living beings and levels of consciousness. Animals, birds insects are aware of It in different ways and forms. It is shaped and moulded according to the desires, feelings and thoughts of each. How are these created? The Atma enters the Body as the inner motivator and awakens the thoughts and feelings. In the absence of the Atma, the Body is inert, in the absence of the. Body, thoughts do not arise and in the absence of thought, the Universe is not apparent; it is non-existent to the individual. The three are inextricably interdependent—the Body with all the powers of consciousness which is enclosed in it, the Universe and the Atma, either individualised or universally immanent,

Both materialism and spiritualism seek the fundamental universal base—one discovers it in matter and the other in spirit. The spirit or Atma puts on the Form of Body to experience and cognise the Jagat or Universe. Cotton puts on the Form of Yarn to be cognised and experienced as cloth. The Cloth is both yarn and Cotton. Cotton is the fundamental base, the (Atma). It assumes Name and Form and becomes Yarn, (the Body) and is finally known as the Cloth, (the Jagat,) the product of the thoughts emanating from the Body.

There is another way of understanding and interpreting this process. In the Upanishads and the Vedanta, five characteristics of the Universe are mentioned—Asti (Sat) Bhaati (Chit) Priyam (Ananda) Nama (Name) and Rupa (Form). Of these, the last two are temporary and therefore, trivial. The first three are the three facets of the everlasting Truth, the Atma. The categories of

Sat-Chit-Ananda are also correlated in Vedanta with Bhoota-Aakasa, Chitta-Aakasa and Chitta-Aakasa in that order. Aakasa is the name for a sphere of consciousness. Bhoota-Aakasa is Cosmic Consciousness, Chitta-Aakasa is the consciousness of the Chitta or the Centre of Discrimination in living beings and Chitta-Aakasa is the pure unalloyed Consciousness that flows from the Atma. The Bhoota-Aakasa is the vast limitless space in which the Sun and its Planets are but tiny knots of energy. It is so extensive that the light from the stars has not yet reached the earth, though when they sent the light out, the earth was just being formed. They are millions of light years away. Light travels they say at 1,86,000 miles per second (in fact the speed is 1,88,000 miles). So you can imagine the enormous size of the Bhoota-Aakasa which includes all these stars and much more besides.

The Chitta-Aakasa subsumes such an immeasurable Bhoota-Aakasa, for the Consciousness illumines, and becomes aware of all that exists. And the Chitta-Aakasa is prompted into activity by the Chidakasa the Chit of Sat-Chit-Ananda (different from the inner instrument of discrimination named Chitta). An infinitesimal fraction of the Atma is enough to activate the Chitta so that it can draw into itself the Cosmos, the entire objective Universe.

Therefore, every one must be firm in the belief that he is the Atma and not the Body with its senses of perception and action, its inner equipment of mind, intellect, Chitta and the ego. He must know that he undergoes no change, that he cannot die or be destroyed. When one is immersed in Bhoota-Aakasa, he feels it wrong to understand himself as the perishable body and its appurtenances. He often brings up to his memory this truth. That is to say, he is aware of the Sat, his existence that is eternal; while the Chitthakasa is contemplated, he is aware that he is the vehicle of consciousness, the chit. While he is saturated with the awareness of the Chidakasa—the effulgence of the Atma—he is the embodiment of Ananda, the third facet of the Atma. When the consciousness is turned inward, the ultimate state of Atma-Ananda is attained.

The human body is composed of cells which draw strength and life from food; food draws its value from the soil. Soil, food, man—that is the cycle and it is completed when man returns to the soil. The soil is Bhoota-Aakasa, the Food grown out of the soil becomes consciousness, the Chitta-Aakasa and the Chitta merge into the Atma consciousness or Chit-aakasa. A seed germinates within the soil and rises above ground as sapling; it puts forth leaves and branches, it blossoms; the flowers give place to fruits which ripen and contain seeds which can, repeat the process of germination and growth. The soil is the basis of these transformations and developments for, when you keep the seeds on your palm and water them, they do not grow. Soil and seed bring about the third entity, the plant. The cells in both have an affinity that is strange. The cells in the soil are its Atma; the cells in the seeds are its Atma. Soil is the substance of the food out of which man is born, through which man is sustained and nourished. But, the body is a temple of the Atma. No one should soil the body with any evil thought word or deed.

The splendour of the Atma reveals all things, illumines all things. The Atma, however, is self-revealing, self-illuminating. Atma shines everywhere, in all things. In spite of any number of changes, the individual persists. Within the child, the old man is dormant; for it unfolds into the boy, the youth, the middle-aged man and finally as the old man with the bended back. So too, it is the chidakasa which unfolds into the Chitta-Aakasa and finally into Bhoota-Aakasa, the objective Universe.

For example, when some one photographs me, I appear as a very small Sai Baba in the negative. But we can enlarge it to the size we desire to have. The Sai Baba in the big photo and the Sai Baba in the very small picture are the same. Can you assert that this five-feet three inches body alone is Sai Baba and that the figure in that tiny picture is not Sai Baba? The Anu and Ghana are both true. They are the same, looked at from different angles.

Therefore, O Embodiments of Prema, turn your Vision from the outer Universe into the inner glory, the Atmic splendour, which you really are.

—*Divine Discourse, Prasanthi Nilayam 28-9-79*

A Visit to Puttaparthi

—William Hwehu Ansah, (Accra, Ghana)

A year after knowing Bhagavan I made the trip to Puttaparthi under mysterious circumstances which I have so far refrained from revealing publicly for several reasons. Amongst these reasons are (1) I felt there were more mysterious occurrences than mine and (2) I did not have the urge to do so and (3) I was afraid of giving vent to some deep-seated feelings of pride and egoism under the pretext of singing the glories of Bhagavan.

I have now decided to write about my experiences for two reasons—(1) The most important reason is that I now have a definite "feeling" that I *should* write about it and (2) I notice from the Sanathana Sarathi that not many experiences are recorded from these parts of the world although many devotees here, for example, have several wonderful experiences. I felt there was a need to start, in the hope that others will follow.

Towards November of 1977, our centre invited names of devotees who would like to make the trip to Puttaparthi. It never occurred to me to immediately give my name since I considered it would be presumptuous for a penniless public servant to think of making such an expensive trip.

Soon after this, I started seeing Swami in my dreams. The first night I woke up with a rather vague feeling that I should think of going to Puttaparthi. I discarded the thought immediately. The next dream was more detailed and lengthier. I was in a little village living in rooms with a lot of people some of whom were from my centre and with whom I ate together. Next I saw myself in front of a tall building which had protruding platforms on the first floor. Bhagavan was on the ground floor and I was doing Namaskara. At this time I didn't know that to dream of Bhagavan was a privilege and not an ordinary occurrence and I again dismissed the dream as my silly imaginings. My third dream was a most peculiar experience. I saw only the face of Bhagavan for an instance or two; whereupon I was forced awake in the middle of the night in a sweat with a clear command that I should go to Puttaparthi!

After giving so much trouble to Swami in my inexperience and innocence, I finally gave my name to the Planning Committee without an inkling of where the money for the trip was coming from. I need not have worried! Within the next few days I made THREE TIMES MY ANNUAL SALARY simply because a friend of mine, for no compelling reason, decided to sell a huge consignment of imported goods through me and give me a percentage of the profits.

So the stage was set and need I say that all other arrangements and requirements went through without a hitch? Need I also say that those from the centre I travelled with were some of the faces I saw in my dream? So we got to the village late on the 21st of November. The last thing on my mind was my dreams but a friend decided to take me round and as we made the turn to the back of the bhajan hall, I stopped dead in my tracks. My friend asked what the matter was and I muttered something incomprehensible to him but what had stopped me was the fact that my dream was staring me right in the face in all its details—the two protruding platforms and rather surprisingly, the architecture and colours of the structure which I remembered very well

My surprise was not too great then when my private interviews were granted in a room on the ground floor and I did my Namaskara exactly where I had dreamt it! (I went to one of the interviews with my fingers shorn of all rings having made the wish that Bhagavan would give me a ring. As the interview progressed, my wish crossed my mind and at that instant Bhagavan interrupted his discourse, turned to me and said "Tomorrow I will give you a talisman!")

But all these surprises were nothing compared to what I experienced when I was bidding farewell to Bhagavan.

"When are you coming again?" he asked. I was not expecting the question as the thought of being lucky to come again was far from my mind. I was therefore flustered and in my delighted confusion I blustered out that I didn't know and that this time I came because I had had a dream and...

Bhagavan interrupted in a tone which seemed as if he was irritated. I was recounting something he already knew about.

"I know, I know," he said shortly and patted my back.

I cracked up emotionally and stumbled out. I had to sit on the short wall to recollect myself. Poor human beings that we are, after all that I had seen and heard, I guess my mind had still entertained a little doubt about the omniscience of Bhagavan or whether indeed he sent those dreams to me. The last evidence shattered me out of that scepticism once and for all!

Baba! Interview, Please

—*Bob Najemy, Athens, Greece*

Here in Prasanthi Nilayam and at Whitefield or wherever Baba gives Darshan, the main preoccupation of each devotee and even non-devotees is how to get that cherished *INTERVIEW*.

There are always thousands of people and each one secretly or overtly is besieging Baba with prayers to be called into the 'Interview Room'. This overwhelming desire, in most cases, causes much anxiety and in some cases "adharmic" behaviour.

Each is trying to figure out where to sit, how to sit, with whom to sit, what to say, whether to stand when saying it, whether to give Him a note, or ask Him directly, whether to beg or to be detached. There is cutting into the line ahead of those legitimately waiting and even pushing, shoving and running, on, occasions when the gatherings are large. Each is scrupulously watching who He calls; who He calls again and again; and who He ignores! This serves as food for gossip later in the day.

Who can blame us who go through all these? Personal contact with the Lord is the most valuable experience any Jiva can have and should surely be sought after. Undoubtedly, no other earthly experience could transform a Jiva who is ready, more than a meeting with Bhagavan.

But just for an interesting alternative point of view, this Jiva would like to share with you some of the Grace he has received from Baba, by not having as yet, an interview while attending Darshan for some 9 weeks.

First came the realisation that there is too much focus on Baba, as that heavenly orange-robed figure who walks so gracefully among us at Darshan. We forget that HE is the omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent Lord who is ever present with us at all times and in all places. Some people talk rather rajasically and generally creating an unsatwic environment while waiting for Baba's form to emerge during Darshan. When His form appears, silence prevails and palms come together. All this as if Baba was not working on us all, the time. We would do much better to quiet our minds and tune into His frequency and receive His Grace before, during and after Darshan. When we concentrate on Him, only when we can see His physical Form, then, we deny Him as the, Paramatman or the essential nature of every Jiva. We have to develop the ability to have his name constantly in our minds and see Him in all beings.

In addition, many personal lessons were learned while waiting in Darshan. The mind has had a problem with jealousy and envy. Whenever Baba would pick out others, especially those known to or very close to this Jiva, he felt the negative feelings of envy, and jealousy. He even found his mind hoping others would not get picked. Baba's presence allowed these feelings to be observed, separated and in time overcome.

One excellent way of transforming such negative feelings, as suggested by Patanjali, is to imagine the opposite feeling. We can cultivate Love for the others, mentally seeing them happy and successful and ourselves being happy at their good fortune. This works.

Another negative trait which came to the surface was *judging others*. As the eyes passed over various individuals, their dress, their behavior and character, the mind began to make judgements and feel superior or inferior. For a period of time, Baba played the lovely Leela of picking exactly those who the mind had just previously judged. Now I can catch the mind when it is doing this and mentally accept these beings as the many forms of God.

Other internal changes of purification and preparation took place. Inevitably whatever questions, I prepared to ask Swami, were answered, either as messages from within or through books, conversations and especially through '*thought for the day*' written on the chalkboard outside the Reception Office. Soon came the realization, that Baba is LIFE itself, and that all of Life's experiences are designed to teach and guide us.

From early childhood—insecurity comes the need to be acknowledged and approved of by those to whom we give authority (i.e. our parental replacements). In this way, we verify that we are "Okay." The mind was always hoping for some acknowledgement from Baba: a look, a smile or a word. He has the amazing ability to make you believe he doesn't know you exist, by passing right by you, eyes staring through you.

Remembering Baba's repeated message that we are all embodiments of the Divine Atma, and not this insecure body and mind, helped me to overcome this dependency to a degree and reaffirm my own "Atmic Okayness."

The hours of meditation were destroyed with repeated enactments, of how I will ask Swami for an interview and all the various ways he would respond or not respond. Meditation became impossible; the only consolation being that at least the mind was dwelling on his Form in one-way or another.

The question arose as whether to be aggressive and ask Swami over and over, or to have faith that in His Divine Wisdom, he would give the interview at exactly the right moment for the best spiritual progress of each Jiva. Some say you have to ask; He wants you to ask. Others affirm the latter.

Some lessons came out of this conflict. One was that one of the reasons the mind was in so much anxiety about getting an interview, was for pride and prestige. We felt inferior in a sense, when in the presence of other devotees who had had that Grace in the physical form. This was not the proper motivation for an interview.

The second lesson was that given by Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita; "Nishkama-Karma". It did not really matter which approach I took, but I had to be detached from the result. That is, if I did ask and He did not respond, I would have to accept that result and not lose faith that He loves all equally and is the very basis of my Life.

Because the mind was chattering so much in meditation, I was forced to learn to separate myself from it and realize that the conflict belonged to the mind and not to me. This ability of discrimination carried over into non-meditative experiences and more detachment developed. Patience increased.

These are some of the cleansing changes which have occurred through Baba's Grace. I am deeply grateful.

Does that mean I would not want an interview now? I can think of nothing more blissful than to be so close to Him and have His advice. He knows best the perfect time, place and form.

One last thought. Consider the inevitable as expressed by Baba himself as recorded in Dr. Hislop's book. He will soon become unavailable. During and after the upcoming catastrophic cleansing of humanity and the Earth, Baba will become so widely accepted as the Avatar, that interview and perhaps even Darshan may not be possible.

In light of this, each of us would greatly benefit by concentrating more on Baba's spiritual omnipresent nature as our own inner being. Through Japa, meditation and surrender of each act to Him, we can have a moment-to-moment interview throughout life.

Birthday Message

When the Dharma of the Yuga is laid aside,
To establish it anew, through loving means;
When the world is polluted by conflict and confusion
To restore the path of virtue and peace;
When good men caught in cruel coils wail
To save them from pain and shame;
When sacred texts are not grasped aright
To proclaim the message they teach mankind—
To relieve the Earth of the burden of Vice
To fulfill the promise made in Treta age
Achyuta has incarnated on this Earth,
Vaasudeva, Srihari, has come into the World.

—Baba

In every human heart there resides a gnawing desire-to achieve unwavering and lasting Ananda. Day and night, throughout life, man is endeavouring without a moment's rest, to attain this stage. Nevertheless, he finds it beyond reach.

What is the reason? The root cause of the failure lies in his identification of himself with his body and the senses and his belief that the physical and sensual pleasure he can earn will give him the Ananda which will appease his hunger. Man is not aware that he is the Ananda he seeks. The Upanishads clear all doubts on this point. They assert, "flour is rendered sweet by jaggery." Flour, be it of rice or wheat or gram, is not inherently sweet, when jaggery or sugar is mixed in it, the sweetness permeates all of it. The lesson the Upanishads convey is: The created Cosmos is the flour and the Divine Principle is the sugar. As a consequence, Nature charms us and is attractive. Wherever we hear melody, or see harmony, or experience the sublime, it is Divinity that impinges on us and not Nature.

God is described as 'A-prameya'. It means God cannot be measured like any limited phenomenon. Only the Vedas can give a satisfying glimpse of the glory. To indicate this, God is designated as 'Vedavid', 'Known through the Vedas'. There are three authentic means of acquiring knowledge mentioned in the sacred texts. They are (1) Pratyaksha or Direct Perception (2) Anumana or Inference and (3) Shabda or Authoritative Voice. When milk becomes curds after being treated with yeast, one can see it happening. The phenomenon is therefore accepted as true, as proved by Pratyaksha. When clouds of smoke arise from a mountain range, one infers that the forest is on fire. When some one who has been at Prasanthi Nilayam describes it to a person who has not, the latter too is able to picture to himself the Nilayam and its environs. This is an example of 'the Authoritative Voice' being a means of knowledge. Shabda becomes authoritative and acceptable, when it emanates from experience, and from honest communication of that experience.

Among the many thousands sitting in this Auditorium there is one, who has come from America, a member of Sathya Sai Council for America; Dick Bock is, his name. No one, let us say, has

seen him so far. Even if he is described as tall or short, old or young, or as having specific physical characteristics, people will find it difficult to identify him and spot him. But when I pronounce the sound, "Dick Bock," he will stand up for all to see. God too does not easily respond with His Presence when you describe Him and glorify Him. You had no name, before you were named but since then, you have been responding whenever you are called by that name. Similarly, God is nameless but He responds when His Name, any one of the many, is taken by the seeker. The Shabda as a means of proof has two aspects: the Thatastha and the Swaroopa to the permanent unchanging features.

To identify a house which a visitor is searching for, we tell him, "That one on which the crow is sitting" and he understands. This is a temporary feature of the house. God, the Eternal Absolute is pictured, praised and adored as temporarily apparent and as adored in limited regions in Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, Easwara, etc. These are not basic, fundamental expressions, the Swaroopa,, These are only Forms assumed for certain vital purposes like conferring peace on the world, re-establishing the norms of justice and strengthening the ideals of faith in the Supreme. The fixed and fundamental features are Sathyam Jnanam, Anantham: This is the Swaroopa of Brahman. These attributes do not change with time, space and the nature of the observer. All the rest do. They penetrate time, space and matter and we become aware of them as having five qualities—Asti, Bhaati and Priyam, as well as Nama and Roopam. Of these, Asti (Existence), Bhaati (Consciousness and Priyam (Bliss) are basic while Nama (Name) and Roopam (Form) are transitional and superficial. It is indisputable that all these features need a Creator who is immanent and is the author and contributor.

The Sun and the stars, the moon and the ocean, the earth—all these point to the Maker whom we have to accept. There are two causes which together produce any thing—the shaper and the substance. This silver cup must have had a smith who shaped it and silver which he shaped. When you go deep into this process of creation, you will realise that both causes merge into One, the Embodiment of Is-ness, Consciousness and Bliss. Since that One is all this, recognising it in all this confers full Bliss.

Every man yearns only for two boons: escape from sorrow and attainment of joy. When both are achieved, man is truly liberated; he has gained Mukti or Freedom. Not knowing the genuine implications of the stage of Mukti, persons who pride themselves as atheists or rationalists declare that they are not interested in it. Mukti is the fulfillment of these two universal cravings of man. Texts and arguments have led men astray and blinded them to reality. Can we reach Mukti along the path of activity or of inquiry or of worship? The disputations only fog the issue. These paths can only cleanse the mind or clarify the intellect or purify the emotions. If the Atmic core of all things and beings is recognised, Ananda will be ever-present and full. The Divine Principle is the Reality, the Base, the Essence, the Ocean on which the waves rise, roar and fall. Discard the Name and Form which rise and fall and contemplate on the Asti-Bhaati-Priya content in each cell and particle. Then, you can immerse yourselves in Eternal Bliss (Nityananda). Ananda is omnipresent; one has only to know how to discover it and derive it from the Source which is everywhere.

Embodiments of Prema! Things that move must needs have a stationary base. Nature moves but the Divine does not. Buses and cars speed along the road, because the road lies still without

movement. Pictures flit and fly along the screen in a cinema because the screen does not flit or fly; it remains steady and stable. The body grows or declines, the senses run around, the mind moves fast from target to target and topic to topic, the intelligence hops and hies—all because, the Atma is immovable and unmoved.

Now, by what trait can we recognise the Atma? By Ananda, which is its very Swaroopa. This is the reason why It is described as Nityanandam, Paramasukhadam (Bestower of Highest Bliss) Kevalam Jnanamoorthim (Pure Wisdom) Dwandwathitham (Beyond all Dualities) Gaganasadsam (vast as Space) Thathwamasyadilakshyam (Denoted by Vedic Axioms) Ekam (the, One) Nityam (the Eternal) Vimalam (Blemish-less) Achalam (Unaffected) Sarvadhee (All-Conscious) Saakshi-bhootham (the Witness) Bhaavaatheetham (Unreachable even by the Imagination) Thrigunarahitham (Attributeless), etc.

Generally speaking, the materials in the world will be sought by some, neglected by others and even hated by many. The reason lies in the mind, not in the matter. One's own likes and dislikes are moulded by one's own activities, thoughts and feelings. Whether I am intrinsically good or bad can be known only to me. For, if your reaction is good, you will pronounce me 'good'. If your feelings are bad, I may appear bad. The transformation from one attitude to the other happens in you, not in me. I am ever the same. Since a form has been assumed, wavering reactions are inevitable. They are human; they do not affect the Divine. Changes in the nature of the reactions and the lines of approach are brought about by the whims of the moment, the turns and twists of desire, and the pressure exercised by the environment, the region and the times. Last night, you witnessed the play on Jesus which was enacted by the students and appreciated the production in all its varied aspects. You were elated and uplifted by the performance. The disciple who was loved as the dearest of the group, Judas by name, decided to work against the Master, yielding to the low temptation of a few pieces of silver. Greed for money is a demon that gets hold of the weak. When one is overcome by it, one loses all traces of discrimination and accepts with ease wrongful ways of satisfying it. About twenty hundred years ago, there was only one Judas. Today, many are preparing themselves for that role.

Since the uniquely powerful impact of Sathya Sai has become world-wide, many persons afflicted with envy and monetary greed are attempting to manufacture various stories in order to belittle and defame the culture of Bharat. The envious mind will be ever engaged in wrong. This has been so in every age when the Divine has come among mankind. But such tactics can only result in momentary excitement among a few. The Task will not falter; the Triumph cannot be delayed.

You have to pay special attention to this truth, more than all else: The person who can point out any kind of blemish in Sathya Sai has not born on earth in the past or at present nor will he born in future. Individuals who can probe into the significance of the principle of Love (Prema) of which Sathya Sai is the embodiment are, of course, very few. This principle is fully self-less, fully pure and fully holy. This principle, with Sathya Sai as its embodiment and exponent, is spreading from continent to continent. Evil-minded persons watch with envious eyes the march of this transforming Love and try to obstruct it with falsehood. They are joined by others of the same mental make-up. For how can the wicked relish virtue? Or, the virtuous understand the ways of the vicious? As the proverbs proclaim, "pigs roll in sludge; do they wade in rose water?"

Since the attention of seekers and aspirants is now being increasingly devoted to the heritage and culture of Bharat, attempts are made by many narrow and crooked minds to cast aspersions on them. The success of the Task on which I have come will very soon reverberate throughout the World. The Truth that all faiths are facets of the One and all roads lead to the same goal is provoking some persons. You witnessed in the play on Jesus how his emphasis on the basic truths of good and godly life was misinterpreted by even leaders of religion who sought to hide their own failings by slander and falsehood. They even plotted to inflict torture on Jesus. All the acts of Jesus were pure, holy, and filled with selfless Love. One can have adoration for one's religion but it should not be defiled by hatred towards the religions which others adore. This hatred prompts people even to pay propagandists proficient in slander and scandal.

Do not pay attention to these, or allow yourselves to be agitated. Be engaged, on the other hand, in tasting the sanctifying, sustaining stream of Divine Love. That will confer lasting Ananda. To tell you the Truth, this Kali Era is the most beneficent of the four. For, you have now amidst you, the Eternal Embodiment of Ananda in a Form which you can approach, adore and learn from. You are singing with Me, conversing with Me and filling your eyes, ears and hearts with My utterances and activities. This is not a mere physical body composed of the five elements. You call this My Birthday. This Body might have had a birthday but I have no birth. You say I am fifty-four years old but I have no age which can be counted. The Eternal, with neither Entrance nor Exit, The One who neither Was nor Is nor Will-be The unkillable Person free from Birth and Death The Ever-effulgent Atma is Sai for ever.

Adoration is rising on one side of Me like the Himalayas; denigration is accumulating on the other side as another Himalayan range. I am however unaffected by both. As Gokak said a few minutes ago, upon both these peaks, I place my hands, showering equally my Blessings on the opposite responses. For, darkness heightens the brightness of light. The one and only Sun is the cause of both day and night. Be equanimous, yourselves. Endeavour to benefit most from the good fortune accessible to you.

Engage yourselves in spiritual Sadhana, of which Seva is the most productive of good. Of all the methods of Seva, Service to the long-neglected rural population is best. Dedicate your skills, your energies, to the betterment of the brothers and sisters dwelling in the villages. Service is God. Why has God endowed man with a body, a mind and an intellect? Feel with the, mind, plan with the intelligence and use the body to serve those who are in need of Service. Offer that act of Service to God; worship Him with that Flower. Put into daily practice the ideals that Sathya Sai has been propagating; make them known all over the world by standing forth as living examples of their greatness.

—*Birthday Message, 23-11-1979*

Milk and Water

Our ancient seers allude to the extraordinary ability of the Hamsa (Swan) which, it seems, has the extraordinary ability to separate milk and water and can take the pure milk without the water! To the modern 'rational mind' this sounds absolutely absurd since we know that this is

impossible. We know that milk is an emulsion of fatty substances in an extremely fine state in water. An emulsion is defined as "a liquid preparation of the colour and consistency of milk. A liquid preparation consisting of two completely immiscible liquids, one of which, as minute globules is dispersed throughout the other." Is it possible that our ancient seers who are credited with great wisdom did not even know this elementary fact about milk, even if they could not use these terms, that it is an impossible task to separate so called milk from water? Should we accept that there was a mythological bird about which they spoke, something like the two-headed Gandabherunda, the family insignia of the Maharajas of Mysore?

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to come to Baba and listen to Him have been awakened, even partially, into introspection; He has been reminding us that we should try to understand our ancient texts and statements in the context of their philosophical or spiritual meanings since most of the statements are symbolic. He explains with the inimitable lucidity arising out of His Wisdom, the various intricate and apparently irrational meanings of the symbolism so that we can understand them. We have to understand the so-called absurdities by an understanding of the spiritual symbolism. I am sure the two-headed bird must be symbolic of the two birds of the Upanishads, one of which is worldly and the other serene, one representing the Jivatma, and the other Paramatma. In the mythological Gandabherunda, the two birds became one; both are of one body. There is no Atman apart from the body!

The extraordinary ability of the Hamsa to separate milk from water must be examined in this light. It is obvious to anybody, and more so to the Ancient seers, that you cannot separate milk from water. Water is the substrate in which we have the fatty substance dispersed so finely that it cannot be separated. To the untrained ordinary mind water is a liquid; to the initiated mind, even in the modern sense of a scientist, milk consists of two substances, the fatty substance and the watery liquid!

Then what do the ancients mean when they speak of a Hamsa which can separate the milk from water and drink only the milk? The Upanishads speak of gold 'and the jewellery made of gold. You have gold, the substance and the jewellery which is what the goldsmith fashions out of it. Baba has said, "Jewels are many, but gold is one." Most of us look at the beautiful jewels but when we are looking at the jewels and admiring the beauty, we do not see the substance out of which they are made i.e., gold. It is only the person who has been awakened to the reality of the essence of things that will recognise that the two are not separate; they are one. The distinction is in our mind, because we are conscious of the form, but miss the essence! The wise man is aware that milk has within it dispersed the essence of what makes water milk.

Baba also gives the analogy of sugar, water and cup. If we add sugar to water and stir it then sugar pervades water entirely; the Upanishadic seer asked his student to bring salt and add it to water. The salt disappeared but its taste was felt in every drop of water. That is the nature of the all-pervading consciousness which permeates into the very fabric of whatever exists. In fact Baba says that you cannot see God other than in the World. The entire visible Universe is His manifestation like the gold and the jewellery! The Wise man is not deluded by the forms which are apparently separate, distinct and unique, but recognises the all pervading Brahman or Supreme Consciousness.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the greatest of realised souls are called Paramahamsas. Sri Ramakrishna who was living almost always in Divine Consciousness is known as a Paramahamsa. The concept is the same; a Paramahamsa is a realised person who is aware of the all-pervading Brahman, behind the apparent diversity. In other words he is conscious of the Reality behind the illusion of separateness. This makes the meaning of the ability of the Hamsa to separate milk from water clear. The Hamsa is thus not a bird which can separate the impossible task of physically separating milk from water and taking only the milk, but is conscious of what constitutes milk. Water by itself is not as valuable as milk. What adds to the value is the substance that makes water milk.

In fact the milk analogy in our mystic spiritual literature goes another step. The fatty substance which forms- an emulsion in water can be separated, by fermenting milk when it curdles and also churning it when the fatty substance becomes globules and finally into butter! Lord Krishna was fond of butter! Interestingly the method of separating the fat into butter has also a spiritual symbolism. So long as we are involved in worldly happiness we drink milk as if it is one, forgetting that it is water and the essence that makes it milk. In fact we are not conscious of the existence of the, essence, although we drink milk for that very essence! But spiritual awakening comes to most people through 'ferment', like the first step in the process of separating butter from milk, the process known as fermentation! When the world which we have taken for granted suddenly collapses, through some unexpected disaster personal tragedy, when the very earth on which we stand firm gives way, then and in most cases only then, do we start asking basic questions. Spiritual awakening to most of us comes through such disasters. We undergo torment and turmoil. We lose our peace of mind. The whole world on which we had pinned our faith seems to crumble into dust. The fermentation induced by a disaster leads to churning, an essential pre-requisite to acquiring the wisdom that can save us from further disasters, which gives us a new realisation which makes us wise enough to realise that the disaster is only in our mind, and that what has happened is the inexorable laws of nature sweeping by! Instead of getting swept off our feet we get on to the shore and watch the turbulent waters flow past us and become witnesses!

That is what happens to most of us who have had the good fortune of coming into contact with the Avatar of the Age. We go to Him with our disasters, incurable diseases, when human effort has reached its dead end, expecting the miracle. He performs the miracle! Not only does He cure the physical illnesses (either immediately or in due course depending on how long it takes for us to understand the real source of the disease which is in ourselves) and the Miracle of Transformation happens. He initiates us into a process of introspection, gives us props and moorings, and leads us step by step into ourselves. He churns our heart, gives us recipes for peace, periodically tests us, and then makes us strong enough to face the World with Courage and Confidence. He makes us aware that sitting in a Puja room and making a farce of worship is not spirituality; there is nothing secular distinct from spiritual; all work is worship. That is the purpose of, the Avatar, for which He takes the human form. The Avatar is the Great Awakener, who can give us the power to realise the essence of what makes milk and help us to perform the impossible task of separating milk from water and enjoy the bliss of feasting on the nectarine milk of love without being drowned in the turbulent waters of the World.

—*M. V. N. Murthy*

Mine and Thine

Man has demarcated two distinct goals before himself-material and spiritual. But, such distinction is wrong and ruinous. It may be congenial and convenient on the surface but if it is acted upon, great harm will be caused to the blossoming of the soul. For, they are both the same, one continuous pilgrimage towards the Divinisation of man. "The physical frame is composed of the five Bhootas or elements; its components finally merge with those five. Casting away this frame, the soul puts on another frame composed of the same five and undergoing some more terms of schooling, slides out of that vesture also. The soul is ever in search of new experiences; it is a highly peripatetic entity." This assertion too is not quite correct.

Because, the body is the instrument needed to realise the Atma. The Atma resides in the body and has to be discovered in and through it. Here is a silver cup; can we separate the silver from the cup or the cup from the silver. The silver is the basic truth; the cup is the form which has been given to it. We can make, out of the silver of this cup, a plate, an urn or a box. This same silver was perhaps, a plate in the past; it is the cup in the present and maybe, it may become an icon in the future. Through all these transformations, the silver persists as silver. Similarly, the Divinity, the Atma, persists, though the five elements form themselves into body after body.

Is the Atma with Form or without? Is it attributeful or attributeless? Is it unfeeling or feeling-bound? These doubts are certain to trouble the thinker. The Forms are merely artificial and temporary; they are not inherent. The Formless Atma is immanent in the Body-form. How then can Man separate them and deal differently with them? It can only lead to disaster. You are performing a Yajna here for seven days; it does not consist of the altar erected, the sacrificial pit prepared or any other material means. These are but external symbols of the inner paraphernalia. The Sastras do not lay emphasis on these ulterior signs. The ego-free mind is the altar; offer your activities (with traces of desire removed) in the fire of renunciation. To celebrate this genuine Yajna, one need not collect money, gather provisions, and assemble priests.

Acts done between dawn and dusk are offerings into the sacred fire of Wisdom. Among these, those that are prompted by instinct and impulse are 'material'; they do not arise from a mind moulded by the intellect. When the mind is crossed and the outer shore is reached, acts become pure and holy. When deep sleep overpowers the senses, the mind, the intellect and even the sense of ego, consciousness of the surroundings and the body disappear. The entire cosmos disappears from awareness. That is the time when the Atma is alone with Itself, and bondage is naught. The Atma keeps warning each individual of its existence with its 'I' 'I' 'I'. The 'I', the same 'I' insists on being recognised, in our babyhood, child-hood, boy-hood, youth, middle age and old age. Through all the changes that the Panch-bhoota constituted Body, the 'I' remains as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss as the unaffected Witness. Ignoring this reminder of the Unity of all life man flounders in hatred and greed. When there is only the ONE ATMA in all, how can hatred arise? Who is to hide from Whom? Ekam Sat. All that exists is ONE.

Man, in his ignorance, finds contentment in separating himself from the rest, for the search of his own happiness forgetting that he cannot be happy unless all are happy. He pollutes himself through the cultivation of pride. He uses time for degrading himself to the bestial level. Time is an invaluable gift which has to be reverentially treated. People usually measure time as from sunrise to sunset and sunset to sunrise. But, that is only similar to the illusion which makes us infer, the moon is moving when only clouds move. The moon does not move; the Atma too does not get affected by exterior happenings.

God or the Overself or the Paramatma is praised by man when his desires are fulfilled. When they are not realised, God is blamed. But It has no prejudice or partiality. If It has Prema, It must also have anger, or Krodha. Any manifestation of these feelings is only a show on the surface; they do not rise from the core. God is a witness of the Karma-Consequence chain. You can avoid the consequence by dedicating the Karma and abstaining from attachment. Only, you have to be sincere in your surrender and in your detachment. For this, you have to cleanse your heart and feelings through Japa, Smaranam and Dhyana. Without a pure heart and virtuous life, you may recite the Vedas during the Yajna but you will benefit from that Karma, only as little as a gramophone record does. The Rishis were sincerely self-less and earnest and so the Yajnas purified the atmosphere, pleased the elements and propitiated God. One's karma, therefore, decides one's destiny. There is no meaning in blaming others for our misfortunes and misery. Nor is it right to blame God as partial or cruelly unconcerned. When you plant a poison seed, how can the fruit be sweet? Why turn away from God when you do not get the fruit you can relish? It has become the fashion to claim all the good as one's own achievement and to ascribe all the despair and disappointment to the irresponsible attitude of Divinity.

Some Professors of Banaras University once ridiculed another of the same seat of learning for wasting 10 minutes in the morning and ten in the evening in 'Meditating' on a 'non-existent God'. He replied, "Brothers! If God is, as you say, non-existent, I agree I am wasting 20 minutes every day. But if God exists, as many believe, I am sorry you are wasting your entire lives! No one knows for certain whether He exists or not."

As a matter of fact, God alone IS; the changing world is what we have superimposed on the Divine Entity. Turn your vision away from the superimposition to the base upon which it has happened through your ignorance. 'Pashu' is the Sanskrit word for Beast, because the word has Pashyati as its root. It means that which sees the outer world, not the inner. When man too is content to use his senses to enjoy, to what little extent he can, the outer-world, he is not living up to his real destiny. Even spiritual Sadhanas have been reduced to external rituals by man in all lands. Morning and evening and on days set aside as holy, they do Puja with special pomp, heaps of flowers, of rows of lamps and strings of loud stotras. The impact of these rites is mostly thin and superficial. There are many who spend all their time in preparation for these acts or in their actual practice. But, what have they gained? Many are still afflicted by envy, pride and greed; they have no loyalty to truth. They have succeeded only in polluting their years and casting away the ideals laid down in the Veda's. Most people who proclaim themselves as Sadhakas do not dare to turn their attention inwards—the Atmic reality.

Of course, rituals and Puja are necessary in the earliest stages. They are the kindergarten of spiritual education. One has to march on, from this childhood into the adult journey towards the

Atma. This Yajna, these rules and regulations regarding rites, have to be transcended and sublimated into acts, words and thoughts which promote universal reverence, egolessness and equanimity.

I am telling you in every discourse that Divinity resides in every being. But, you must have noticed that I am inflicting rather hard punishment on those who have done some wrong or strayed into wrong paths. The Divinity has to shine in every activity and we should see that it is not befogged by 'human failing' or 'animalities'. For this purpose, such correctives, and remedial measures are imperative. . Copper as an alloy will lessen the value of gold. So, the stuff has to be melted in crucible to remove the copper. So too when the pure, holy and progressive human being is associated with certain impure, unholy and downward-dragging trends, Swami has to intervene to stop them and restore the value of the original 'Gold'. Or else, why should I indulge in correction and punishment? Understanding my actions in their true light is the surest means of earning my Grace.

The world today is suffering as a result of the reign of 'I'-ness and 'My-ness' over human hearts. Fear, anxiety, sorrow, pride, greed—each of these is fed into dangerous proportions by 'I' and 'Mine' feelings. When calamity affects some one within the circle of 'mine', undue grief overwhelms you; when it happens to some one outside the Circle, you are untouched; you dismiss it with gross indifference. So long as these antics of the ego are considered valid and proper, man cannot grasp the universal Atma that is in him as the core of his personality. In order to recognise the Atma and earn strength there from, man must practise the Sadhana of Unity. He must give up the distinction of those within the circle and without.

There is no difference between 'mine' and 'thine'. When others are punished for their wrongs, you rejoice; when you are punished for the same fault, you protest and bewail your lot. Through Sadhana, Sama-chitta has to be attained; that is to say, ego-less, equal-mindedness, which ensures a pure mind.

The criterion of purity is Love. The tree may fill your heart today with joy by its grandeur, and beauty. It may have a lovely crown of green, and attractive gifts of sweetness, fragrance and colour. But, the very next day, it might shed everything, become dry and die! What is the reason? The roots are damaged by pests which were working underground. They ruin the tree and cause it to fall. You observe the pitiful fate of many devoted and dedicated men nowadays—these are besieged by various types of calamities. For what reason? People ask cynically why such 'goodmen' should suffer so much. The reason is that the 'goodmen' have not attained purity of heart; they have not realised the Oneness of Atma; they are still possessed by 'I' and 'Mine'. The Sadhaka must take the calamity as a warning and tell himself, "I am beaten by this incident; It grieves me and deprives me of balance, because I have still some defects in me." When saambar is cooked in a copper vessel, however fresh and fine the ingredients are, the result is a highly poisonous stuff. When Sadhana is done with the most meticulous attention and care, if the intentions and attitudes are impure, no progress can be achieved. I wish to emphasise that purity of the heart, the mind and the consciousness is more important for progress than even meditation, japa or bhajan. Purity alone can convince you that there is the Divine within you, that there is a Kshetrajna immanent in this Kshetra—not only within you but equally within all. Love all, adore all, serve all. That is the Sadhana of worship to win Purity and earn Grace.

Personality—Divinity

There is duality in most things. In man duality brings conflict. There is the good self and the bad self. The good is trying to reach the highest levels of Divinity but the bad is contradicting, mocking, laughing, cynically analysing words, deeds, and thoughts of others and oneself and suppresses the goodness from reaching the zenith. It can use rationality, logic or anything that the person is familiar with that sounds like a reasonable explanation to squash the goodness in man. Goodness in man is constantly struggling to free itself from this vicious conflict. The moral concepts of society helps him to lead a steady life but not a life of peace, equanimity or attempt to enter the world of spirituality because the counter-force pulls him back.

This dual personality cannot find release and reach the highest level of intellect unless the duality merges into oneness. Oneness is goodness, and in goodness there is oneness. Oneness is the zenith in nature. In the world only the outer shell appears different. These differences deceive man. Man discriminates this outer shell and dwells on the differences. As a result he lives in conflict. He cannot be redeemed and enter the, world of spirituality. The most he could do is find salvation in man made laws, that is, the moral laws that also vary from culture to culture. But yet he is not in peace because the man made laws high lights the uniqueness of situations.

To enter the higher sphere, the spiritual world of peace and equanimity conflict should be completely removed. Oneness is supreme. One has to be good, only see good and do good. Look for faults in oneself, not in others. Commit every word, thought, and deed to Divinity (which some will understand as God and others highest plane of spirituality) and not to the glorification of one's ego. Ego is full of desire and craving. It is this ego that is the center of the counter-force in conflict with the good self. Everybody copes with this split personality. That is why men and women are disgruntled. One hears from them complaints, dissatisfaction and cynicism. Unhappiness is their venue. They are still good citizens because they are good moralists accepted by the codes of their culture. But as they live in conflict they cannot surrender, "Only a spiritualist can surrender.... for a spiritualist can accept everything quietly as a grace of God." ("Sanathana Sarathi" September, 1979).

To eject one's ego and the craving that goes with it is a hard up-hill struggle for man. The totality of one's personality has to be over-hauled by reflection and severe adjustments. One's thoughts, deeds and words have to be adjusted to a new concept of the world. At the beginning this new awareness should pervade every thought, word and deed. With acute awareness practised through meditation every thought, word and deed has a new meaning. Contact with the outside world is guided by universal concepts that are beyond comprehension to many. One's decisions based on love and compassion will bring inner happiness and a new strength and purpose to live. Because the new self is not understood by many, one need not try to justify it but be a quiet spectator and guide only those who are willing to be guided. It becomes important to the spiritualist to maintain peace and equanimity and avoid conflict.

The new self searches all the time equanimity in response to all situations. "The object in which the mind is in communion is the Divine Self. Buddhi-yoga is the method by which we get beyond Vedic ritualism and do our duty without any attachment for the results of our action. We must act but with equanimity which is more important than any action. The question is not what shall we do, but how shall we do? In what spirit shall we act?" (Bhagavatha Vahini.)

Refinement of the body and mind is not easy. Baba says, "...they have to be ground, scraped, polished, perfected, smoothened, softened, through intellect and higher impulses and pure intentions and ideals. Then man becomes the ideal candidate for Divinity, which is the real destiny. The impulses will be rendered pure and the intentions will be raised to the higher level, if man but decides to dedicate all his deeds, words and thoughts to the Lord: For this, faith in one Supreme Intelligence which conceives, conserves and consumes this Universe is essential." "Sanathana Sarathi", September 1979.

The new self may be a Hindu but "Though they have their roots in the Hindu religious organization, they grow above it and by their freedom of mind and universality of outlook are a challenge to corrupting power and cynical compromise of the authoritarians." (Bhagavatha Vahini).

The new self will enjoy settled and stable intelligence, purity of spirit and, through this pureness of spirit eternal peace.

As long as the dual personality exists one personality can be a yogi trying to reach the higher levels of spirituality and the other personality, merely a child looking for attention and lapping up praise or even promote the desire to provoke shock and surprise. The goal of spirituality is not attained in this dual conflict, the push and the counter-pull. The realization of this position can only come through insight. That is self-analysis and reflection of all one's thoughts, words and deeds. Objective self-analysis can bring out personality insights that can surprise one. Awareness of one's limitations is one way of conquering one's weaknesses and purifying the self. If the conflicts are strong and deeply embedded meditation on "Oneness is goodness and in goodness there is oneness" should strengthen the good self in one.

This can be strengthened functionally by reflection on goodness in the daily actions, that is on "thoughts, words and deeds." Once the bad self is submerged and good allowed to pervade all the time, interpersonal contact and communication gives pleasure and strengthens the meditative qualities of goodness. One's motivation is to forget one's needs and serve others with a pure heart full of uncorrupted compassion. The more one serves, the more the quality of goodness is strengthened. In service too one achieves the ideals of meditation. If one serves with a pure heart (without expecting anything in return) the total response is the same. It is another methodology to achieve the same goals. It is easy to combine meditation and service and get quick and best results. However, a few may succeed through devotion and wholesome sacrifice through service. Still others whose duality and personality conflicts are strong may need extra effort and innovative methodology to reach the higher plane of spirituality and merge with Divinity.

Like philosophy; spirituality too is a way of life. Reading on spirituality and intellectualising will not make one spiritual. Experiencing the ideals of spiritualism alone, every moment through practice will qualify one to enter that world and to reach Divinity.

—*Erika Dias, Bangkok*

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

12

Life-principle and Individual-principle do both mean the same. Both indicate that they have emerged from absence of the awareness of the Truth, or Avidya. This again is due to bondage to the Gunas or tendencies. The Individual is marked by the presence of Rajoguna or the active work-prone passionate mode, though it has the seeds of the other two modes also in its make-up. The Jagat or Creation itself has its origin when the Truth veiled itself in Avidya or Delusion. The modes manifested at that same moment and individuals differentiated according to the pre-dominance of one or other of the three chief modes, caused by the total effect of the Karmas gone through in life after life. When he is endowed more with the Satwic mode, he becomes a Bhagavata, inspired by devotion to God and engaged mostly in adoring and praising Divine Glory. Preponderance of Rajasic traits render him a strong intelligent man, content to be a man with no higher aspirations towards Divinity. If he is ruled by the Tamasic Guna, he becomes as bound to the body and its needs as birds and beasts.

The Jivi (living being) on account of an intellect caught in the coils of delusion imagines that it is an 'effect' and so, bound to some 'cause'. This non-awareness of Truth has to be conquered by Atma-vidya which urges towards this adventure and ensures success. It will destroy the distinction, now believed in, between Jiva and Jagat (the subject and the object, man and the Cosmos). To help man in this heroic duel, and to make him aware of the Truth, the Vedas prescribe Karmas or desirable Activities, in what is referred to as Karma Kanda. So long as one is caught in A-vidya, man and cosmos, the upper and lower worlds, dharma and a-dharma, Karma Bhakti and Jnana—these concepts have to be respected and one's life shaped accordingly. So long as one is established in the validity of the "diversity" apparent in the Universe, man acts according to the limits imposed by the personalised God, the Easwara. The Universe is for each Jivi its own mental picture and nothing else, fundamentally. So, unless one unravels the mind and its processes, the Brahma principle is difficult to understand. Those who have not understood the real nature of the sky will mistake it as dome of smoke and dust; so too, the Atma is mistaken, through non-awareness of reality, to be enclosed in and embodied as intellect or Buddhi, to be involved in activity and enjoyment of the results of activity, to be caught up in the twin bonds of joy and sorrow, and to be embroiled in happiness and misery and also in bondage and liberation. From the angle of change (Vyavahara), the higher Truth will naturally appear as different, though they are inextricably inter-related. Space is one. But, as a result of the diversity of vessels, it seems to be enclosed in the home, the pot, the building and the canvas. There is no truth in this sectionalised existence; it is the One pace that exists in all these "containers"—Houses, lakes, hills etc.—are shapes and forms, with distinct names attached to them and

different modes of behaviour and use. So too, individual beings (Jivas) have different names and forms, peculiarities and specialities of use and behaviour; but, like the string that holds the beads, passing in and through each and holding them together, the Super-Consciousness in all individuals is ONE. That is the Atma, 'which is in you mistaken as I, through ignorance. As long as this truth is not won, man cannot release himself from the hold of multiplicity and change. The scriptures communicate to us this Reality and exhort us to realise it. What is it that, if known, everything can be known? When the Atma is known, declare the scriptures (Shruti), everything can be known. The Jagat (the Cosmos) is only relatively real; it is partly false. Knowing it is unprofitable and unnecessary. It is not a legitimate purpose of Life. Life is best spent and human effort best directed when awareness of the Atma principle is sought to be attained. The Shruti warns man against other vain pursuits. The Shruti texts and allied sacred literature like Smritis, Ithihasas and Puranas do not teach us anywhere how the Cosmos was created or advise us to study and understand the origins and the process. They do not declare the absence of that knowledge as calamitous; they even assert that the task is impossible.

"Why worry how the Cosmos was born or when it will die? Worry rather about yourself." That is the lesson emphasised by the scriptures. "Know Thyself." Once you know yourself, everything else will be automatically clear. You are a Pindanda in the Brahmanda, a microcosm in the macrocosm. Just as the knowledge of one single clay-pot is enough to know all about all clay-pots when you know your self, all else can be known.

In order to persuade a child to stop weeping and regain joy, the Ayah relates a fairy tale which pleases it. The Ayah's sole purpose is to calm the child; the fairy tale is only a means modelled on its intellectual level. In the same manner, the Jivi, fascinated by the beginningless attraction of Maya and bound by tendencies cultivated during many lives in the past, cannot avoid inquiring into the origins of the Universe which he encounters. The Shruti answers such inquiry in words that give temporary relief. For, the question, how was the Universe created, is on a par with the question, how is a dream created? The dream originates from sleep or Nidra; the Universe originates through illusion or Maya. Just as the dream has no order or law, the Universe too is too full of mystery and Maya. There is only ONE, not two as often happens in dream. This is the doctrine of Advaita. Very much like the question of the origin of creation, another problem that generally worries man is, how did this ignorance happen? The solution has been provided by the sage preceptor, Vasishta, to Sri Ramchandra. "Rama!" he said, "Rather than entangling yourselves in the inquiry regarding how Ignorance entered Man, I would exhort you to be engaged in efforts to get rid of it." This lesson is directed not only to Rama but to all mankind. It helps all who do not possess the realisation of the Truth behind the objective world. Ajnana or Ignorance is the name given to ignoring what is one's own inner experience-that the universe is an ever-changing phenomenon.

Why then are we troubled by this question? Be convinced that you have this ignorance, give up the struggle to get rid of attachment to this changing world with its concomitant birth-death cycle. It is only another evidence of this ignorance to argue whether this A-jnana adheres to Brahman or emanates from the Jivi. Surely it is much more essential to concentrate on the methods by which the Ignorance can be discarded. For it will certainly yield to wisdom or Jnana. Jnana is Light; Ignorance is darkness. Darkness can persist only until Light shines.

(To be continued)

The Birthday Week

The Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, with its rows of three-floor flats, spacious sheds and dormitories, and the Vidyagiri Campus outside the Nilayam with the Easwaramma High School building and the almost-complete College Buildings and about a dozen tents were buzzing with activity and packed with devotees, delegates, participants and pilgrims even as early as 17th November. On 18th November, the Annual Rathotsav of the renovated temples of the Puttaparthi village was inaugurated at Prasanthi Mandiram by Bhagavan, amidst Vedic chants and ecstatic cheers from the pilgrims and villagers. About 2000 gurus from all states of India and a sizeable number from Malaysia and Sri Lanka arrived on 19th November and registered themselves as delegates for the Fourth All India Conference of Bal Vikas Teachers, programmed on 20th, 21st November.

Since the Bal Vikas Educational Movement is the responsibility of the Women's Branch of the Organisation, there were 1600 Lady Teachers and 400 Men Teachers in the Procession that proceeded on the morning of 20th November into the Poornachandra Auditorium. Addressing the delegates, Bhagavan stressed on the importance of inquiry into the mystery of man's yearning for an understanding of the purpose of life and the need of a loving, serene and virtuous life to unravel this mystery. He wanted the Gurus to be shining examples of love, humility and service, so that they may instill these qualities in the tender minds that seek their guidance. He advised the teachers to probe into their attitudes, words and deeds in order to discover faults and failings and also to assess the value and extent of their beneficial impact on the children and, through them, on their parents. The delegates were grouped into Committees which deliberated on various aspects of Bal Vikas—syllabuses, training courses, classes for rural and urban children, etc. On 21st November, during the morning sessions, the resumes of these discussions were presented to the Conference. Bhagavan listened to the reports and encouraged some delegates too to present their viewpoints on the suggestions contained in the reports. In His Valedictory Address during the evening, Bhagavan gave a philosophical analysis of the concepts of the Senses, the mind and the intellect of man. The body has to be kept sound and active; the years of life have to be spent in Tapas; the intellect has to be used to win wisdom and the tongue must be taught to adhere to Truth. He exhorted the Gurus to practise Dhyana and escape from slavery to the Senses. He wanted them to cultivate tolerance, and the spirit of loving service.

On the 20th and 21st, the delegates and other devotees were able to witness items of dance and drama by the Bal Vikas pupils, from Vidya Vihar, Ooty, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, U.P., M.P., Assam: Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu. The children acted, danced and sang in varied costumes and styles, the emotions delineated being devotion, dedication and the joy derivable from Kirtan and folk-tunes.

The colourful Bal Vikas rally on the 22nd of more than 2000 children of the age group 10•14 was a thrilling experience for the thousands who witnessed their disciplined march past, Bhagavan graciously blessing them with the Abhayahastha. Bhagavan described to them the

tearful countenance of Mother Bharat and asserted that the Bal Vikas was intended to make them conscious of their duties and fit to bear the responsibility of restoring prosperity and joy, harmony and happiness.

That evening, the "Kingdom of Sathya Sai" (the Old Students' Association of the Sathya Sai Colleges) celebrated its First Annual Day in the Divine Presence. A book named "Golden Age" containing Bhagavan's Message and a seven-page article from His Pen besides 54 articles on Bhagavan and His Universal Mission as the Avatar of this Age was released. While articles are contributed by the members of the "Kingdom", the writers include judges and jurists, principals and professors, administrators and scientists, philosophers and psychologists, from East and West.

Later, the "Kingdom" presented a Play in English on "Jesus", which held the vast gathering of 25,000 devotees, spell bound for over 90 minutes; the dialogues and soliloquies were delivered with convincing clarity; the roles were enacted with realistic tone, gesture and movement; the costumes were authentic and appropriate; the background music and lighting reinforced the emotional impact of the texture of the text. In sum, the play was a great success; it revealed the high level of talent and the potentiality of togetherness which the members could furnish in any adventure they set their hearts upon.

23rd November 1979—The 54th Birthday of Bhagavan.

Devotees had prayed that the Birth Place of Bhagavan in the village of Puttaparthi should be demarcated and dedicated and by gracious permission, a charming little Siva temple had risen on that site. Bhagavan proceeded to the village and installed therein-marble idols of Siva and Nandi. He also visited the "Samadhi" of the parents and placed wreaths on the tombs. Afterwards, Bhagavan proceeded in procession from the Mandir to the Poornachandra Auditorium, to give Darshan to the thousands gathered there from all the continents of the World. The members of the Sathya Sai Central Trust offered floral garlands to Bhagavan. The Convenor of the Trust announced donations from Vijayawada and Rajahmundry of lands and buildings for the purpose of establishing schools and medical centres. He announced donations from Italy for constructing an Elementary School at Vidyagiri Complex, Prasanthi Nilayam and from Singapore for the Hospital at Prasanthi Nilayam. The Donors were also presented to the gathering. Bhagavan blessed the gathering with a Divine Discourse, reverentially accepted by them as the Birthday Message. "Love of one's religion should never be allowed to lead to hatred of other religions. No religion can ever be promoted by running down other religions and cultures. Judas betrayed his master, tempted by the money he received as a reward. There are hundreds of Judases who malign and indulge in mud-slinging lured by the attraction of money. The great culture of Bharat is slandered by those people" He said. "Cultivate equanimity, tolerance and the ideal of service," Bhagavan directed.

Books on Baba's Teachings in the Indonesian and Japanese languages were offered to Bhagavan by the writers and released by Him for publication. A book by Dr. V. K. Gokak named "In Defence of Jesus and other Avatars" was also released on the occasion. Sri Indulal H. Shah, Convenor of the World Council of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations announced the formation of the Sri Sathya Sai Cooperative Urban Bank to help Sai Rural Development

Projects, and the holding of the III World Conference at Prasanthi Nilayam in the Birthday week, 1980.

In the evening, the celebrated duet of Vocal Music Artistes—Radha-Jayalakshmi rendered in their unique delicious style a selection of songs. Bhagavan later gave Darshan on the Jhoola while Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi offered a delightful bouquet of Karnatic Music. A short but scintillating spell of fireworks ended the Birthday week on a note of perfect joy and thankfulness.

"The elders must set the example of Viveka and Vairagya. If they run after sensory pleasure with feverish excitement, how can the younger generation be blamed for selfishness, greed, and indiscipline? The elders must practise the ideals they praise and preach and demonstrate in their lives that they have earned poise, contentment and real happiness. The elders have spoiled the ancient road by neglect and wanton destruction but they advise youth to march through it. They are discovering the hoax and are insisting that you walk along it and give them the lead. The responsibility of any person who holds forth an ideal is great, for he will be watched, tested and judged by all. An Indian has to feel this responsibility even more, for he is the heir of a precious culture which the world has admired for centuries."

—Baba

The Brain-wave

This year, I had a brain-wave, thanks to Bhagavan's Grace. I was worried about the celebration of the anniversary of my mother's death, in the City, faraway from my village. I was confused. Where am I to search for a priest and how am I to satisfy his orthodoxy and ritualistic requirements?

The brain-wave intercepted my thoughts. It said, "Feed the children in the Home for the Handicapped. That will please your mother most." My wife agreed gladly. We talked over the matter with the Superintendent and we were happy our plan of treating the inmates with a feast could go through without a hitch.

When we are about to leave the Home, while I was still on the verandah, I felt a tug at my left arm (which was paralysed and dangling by my side). A little boy with a lame foot spoke to me in Marathi asking me imploringly whether I could teach him English, just enough to enable him to speak in that language. Bhagavan's gift, I knew—this avenue for service—I readily agreed.

The very next day, when I met the Secretary of the Society for permission, he persuaded me into acceptance of a regular daily assignment to teach English and Hindi to the pupils of various classes.

I am deriving immense joy at this opportunity. Baba! You are really so loving, so gracious. Your ways are diverse and mysterious. Grant me the will-power and the strength to continue this great Seva-Sadhana.

—*A. P. Viswanath*