

A Question on Sadhana

You say that you have been reading the various Sai books, but do not understand what Sadhana is, or what to do in Sadhana.

Swami informs us that Sadhana is the process of getting what we want, and it has three aspects. First, there is "vritti", which means attraction to that which we want. Without this longing for what we want, Sadhana cannot get under way. But this "vritti" is not enough. The second factor of Sadhana is confidence in oneself. We need self-confidence, that we have the ability to get what we want. However, longing for that which we want and confidence that we have the strength and talent to get it is still not enough. The third factor is action. Without action nothing happens. We have to actually gain what we want and make it ours.

Baba tells us that this triple Sadhana is as effective for worldly ends as for spiritual life. In other words, that which is the object of your longing and your action, you will get if you are brave and have strong confidence in yourself.

The awesome power implicit in this triple Sadhana is a secret, unknown to the general public but revealed to devotees who study Lord Sathya Sai Baba. Triple Sadhana is a Divine guarantee, so to speak, that by the intense application of Sadhana to your life, you will get what you want. This being so, it is of the greatest importance to discriminate between your many desires before you engage in the Sadhana that will get what you want.

What is worth wanting? What is worthy of Sadhana? Surely it is only that which will truly and fully satisfy your desire.

What is desire? Desire is God, expressed as a vital force of your life. Who are you? You are the highest; in your inner most being your potential is Divine. Will the low satisfy the highest? No! No value that is lesser than the Divine will truly and fully satisfy, desire. Only God is worth wanting. Only the Highest is worthy to be the object of Sadhana. No beauty short of Him, no treasure short of Him, no power short of His; nothing that is lesser than He, will totally and finally satisfy and bring to an end the torment of unrequited desire. Lord Sathya Sai is the eternal Beloved in each person's heart, and desire will not be fulfilled so long as there is separation between the Beloved and oneself.

You are a Sai devotee, and thus you already have in your daily life the first two aspects of Sadhana. That is, you have sacred love for Him and are mightily attracted to Him. And your spiritual search is evidence that you have the strength and confidence to do Sadhana. What you are puzzled about is the action aspect of Sadhana.

Why are you puzzled even while studying the Sai books? If I may venture to guess, there are too many impressions coming all at once about what to do: Mentioned in the books are a number of different activities and each one is called "Sadhana". In this context Swami has given us a very important principle which merits your best attention.

Swami points out that a box may contain a hundred or more matches, each one of which is potential fire. But He asks us to consider that only one small feeble match is needed to start a huge forest fire that consumes everything in its path; even green and wet wood is burnt to ashes. There is no need to strike a hundred matches to start a big fire. A skilful and careful striking of one match will start a fire.

By this example Swami is telling us to do one Sadhana action and do it with the whole heart and mind. And, that is enough; the rest will inevitably follow.

For your Sadhana action, why not take the action of which Swami speaks most often. In this context He declares that sacred love is the Royal Highway to God. You already love and long for Sathya Sai; what is the action that corresponds to that sacred love? Well, by virtue of His Divine Grace, Swami even tells us this.

He whom we love, we wish to behold and be with, all the time. So all the time have Lord Sathya Sai, the Beloved, as your Guide, Protector, Constant Companion ever loving and affectionate, despite your human faults, call upon Him to bestow His Grace and be with you always. He assures us that He hears and ever responds if you repeat His Name with sacred love and visualize His Form in your mind.

This is the action to complete Sai Sadhana, the repetition of the Sai Name with love and reverence, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram," and the visualization of the Sai Form—this Sadhana action from the working hour to the sleeping hour. When duty calls during the day and you must concentrate on your work, then in your mind address the Lord and tell Him that you are dedicating every moment of the work to His glory—then go ahead with full confidence and do your work. Swami says that dedication of your work and the result of your work to Him is tantamount to the repetition of His Name, and in this way the Name continues in mind and heart from the working hour to the sleeping hour.

If I may suggest, when you are reading the Sai books, search out and give full attention to the paragraphs about Name and Form, and then all worry and uncertainty about Sadhana will fall away from you.

—John Hislop

Baba and Miracles: A Muslim View

—(Mrs.) Zeba Bashiruddin

Every day the sunlight in Prasanthi Nilayam silently illumines lines of men and women and children, sitting quietly for hours. They wait patiently, forgetting that they are rich or sick, ragged or aged, that the ground is hard, the sun hot, their postures uncomfortable. They have left their social, political, intellectual commitments outside the gates. Hours tick restlessly in their hearts, yet they squat hoping and yearning. And then, a hush ripples over them. They are all eyes now. Time ceases. Movement stops. Some even forget to breathe: DIVINITY HAS ARRIVED.

Some call it hypnotism, others have labelled it as magic. But an astute student of Islamic history will only interpret it as a miracle—"a Divine act". We can find similar examples in the life of Prophet Mohammad and in the courtyards of *Khankhas* (the ashrams) of Sufi Saints where emperors have stood in reverential humility.

The Quran does not mention the word "miracle" but the inexplicable episodes in the life of a divine being are repeatedly termed as "signs" and "proofs" of Reality.

Prophet Mohammad once commented that every Saint and Messenger of Truth had special gifts and observing them people believed in the validity of their mission. Following this tradition Muslim Saints have cured incurable diseases, mysteriously helped their devotees in distress, enriched the poor with sudden wealth, fulfilled numerous, impossible desires, created objects from nowhere and brought back to life men pronounced as dead.

To me, as a Muslim, Baba's miracles exhibit the same Divinity that has been manifested by the Prophet Mohammad, and later Muslim mystics. One example is enough to establish the parallel. In many devout houses Baba's pictures exude *Vibhuti or amrita or kumkum*. As a young girl I have seen a similar sign of divine grace. My father's richest treasure is a hair of the Prophet of Islam. Within a span of a few years I have observed a single Hair multiply into several new ones and grow into a tiny, glossy black lock. There can be no rational explanation given for the appearance of Vibhuti or a new Hair. To reject them or to doubt them is to reject or doubt Truth.

Miracles Or Magic

However, uncouth minds have always accused these happenings as magic. In his own city Mecca, Mohammad was shunned and feared as a magician. Even today, Baba is not spared. Sometimes even his own devotees wonder about Swami's *Leelas* and try to explain "how?" or "wherefrom?" They only have to turn the pages of famous biographies to feel ashamed of their weak faith. "All Muslim philosophers have come to one conclusion in relation to difference between magic and miracle," wrote Shibbi in his biography of the Prophet. "The man of miracles uses his power to do good to the world, the magician uses it for entertainment or selfish ends." (Vol. III, P-66).

Muslims accept the miracle as a direct act of God, whereas magic is the result of manipulation of physical and psychic conditions. The aim of a miracle is to strengthen faith and to promote Truth among mankind. The goal of magic is limited satisfaction of the human ego. To mistake a miracle for magic is also an act of ego. To doubt it is even worse. In Islamic terminology it is called "hypocrisy". Quran views the subject more severely: "when Truth came to unbelievers they said this was magic." (XLVI: 7)

The lives of Christ, Mohammad, and Sai Baba confirm the validity of the miracles which they perform. They live a life of Truth and Dedication. They strive to purify the human heart. Their preternatural actions change the attitudes and life of their devotees. Their lives and their message manifest the Truth, in speech and action.

Miracles As Grace

The Muslim World has accepted miracles as the first step towards Faith in the all-powerful, uncreated Reality: Allah. The dictum "God has power over everything" is repeated as many as eight times in Quran. Baba has elaborated it further by elucidating how sound, time, physical strength and the human heart are under the full control of the Lord (Sai Avatar II: 130). Under these guidelines miracles, when beneficial, are forms of grace—"Visiting Cards" from the Lord as Baba has aptly described them.

On a human level, historians have grouped these invitations from Divinity into two types, according to their influence on the faith of common man. The first type includes those happenings which are not of practical value but are given out as "signs" of Divinity. After preaching Islam for nine years and to show an extraordinary "proof" of Truth, the Prophet divided the full moon into two pieces with a single movement of his forefinger. The miracle is alluded to in the Quran. For years Baba has produced *lingam* on Maha-Sivaratri night. In His own words it is a "sign" for men to understand

"It is not possible for you to understand the Divine and gauge its potentials or know the significance of Its manifestation. In order to bear witness to the fact that Divinity is amongst you, it becomes necessary for me to express this attribute of Mine."

The inset picture of the Jyoti Lingam in Dr. Fanibunda's book *Vision of the Divine* has a clear star and crescent image on a dark green background. Only a hardened heart can reject this symbol of Divinity. On a mini-scale there are the episodes of weeping saris and crying pillar. The rejected saris wept and moisture was seen on them because Baba has not chosen them for distribution. The pillar in the mosque cried like a baby and people heard its moaning when Mohammad no longer sat resting His back on it.

These events are more than supernatural happenings. They are a "proof" as well as an indication of the constant love and grace of God, for men who have done little to deserve them.

The second type of miracles, almost uncountable, are the instances of helping devotees. Their range in terms of situation and variety cannot be comprehended. There was, for example, curing of Ali's diseased eyes and weak limbs by the Prophet. The young man became so strong that he won the battle of Khaibar (7th Hijra) and pulled out, single-handed, the iron gate of the castle that even seven men could not lift without difficulty. In the twentieth century, there is the case of a young boy in Hyderabad, who was a victim of polio, until a Muslim *fakir* asked his parents to visit Puttaparthi taking the boy to Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba. Needless to say that the boy has not only been cured but is the city's leading lawyer today.

The dead do not return to this world; but sometimes they do. The story of William Cowan is too well-known among Sai devotees. Similarly, the Muslims are well aware of a drowned couple who were brought back to life by the ninth century mystic, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani. These are a few examples where the law of Nature is overlooked but the Quran asserts that "the Lord can do anything."

The Lord's hands are a source of wonder as each moment is miraculous in healing and curing not only external illness but the diseased heart. The mere touch produces an incessant stream of *Vibhuti* on Vijayadashami day. *Amritam* has flowed from delicate fingertips on birthdays nourishing hundreds of devotees. Similarly historians relate how the Prophet has healed instantly wounds and burnt parts of body by passing his hands over them. Shibbi, the most authentic biographer of Mohammad, has described how, on several occasions water streamed from His fingers quenching the thirst of hundreds of his followers (Vol. III. PP 454-58.)

To the same group of miracles belong episodes which occur to amuse or strengthen the faith of devotees. Mr. Murphet describes how Baba has produced out-of-season fig for an American visitor. An almost identical story is told about Al-Hallaj, ninth century mystic, whose devotees have yearned for figs in the midst of a journey. He stood up and asked them to shake him like a tree. Figs showered down his feet to the amazement of people around him. However the real seat of a miracle is not the physical world but the human heart where the Divine is enshrined. There are instances where Baba has often changed a man by a look, a word, a thought. "Heart to heart" communication is emphasised most. There are cases where mere recitation of Quran softened the hearts of enemies of the Prophet and those who came to kill stayed to serve.

Time and distance are no obstacle for Divine help. Ram Gopal in his book on Baba Farid Shakar Ganji of Punjab narrates how the family of a brahmin devotee of the Saint has been saved from dishonour. By the orders of the Saint this family for years received part of vegetarian *Prasad* offered at his tomb. The greedy caretakers planned to stop it and one day filled the basket with pieces of meat instead of sweets. The innocent devotee was stopped and accused by intriguers; after a hot exchange of words the basket was uncovered. There was no meat, *The basket was full of "laddus"*. Is it a wonder that a Syrian princess finds her way in 1979 to Puttaparthi guided by Sai Baba? For years she has been helped and graced by Him before she came to India. Who can offer comment? The only answer is found in a Quranic statement "God has promised to help believers" (XXX: 47). Baba has made it clear: "I shall guard you as the lids guard the eye. I shall be beside you, behind you, before you, inside and outside, now and forever."

The Greatest Miracle

An avatar or a Prophet's greatest miracle is his own personality. The weak perception of man is unable to rise above the human aspect. Pointing to this blemish Baba has remarked:

"Since I move with you, eat like you and talk to you, you are deluded into the belief that this is but a human phenomenon—But any moment My Divinity may be revealed to you; you have to be ready, prepared for that moment."

(Satyam, Sivam Sundaram III, PP 11-12)

A Quranic verse points to the same human failing. "A whole life-time before this I (Mohammad) tarried amongst you. Will you not then understand? (X: 16).

There are people, just a handful, who recognise Divinity without any external help. For them everything about an avatar is a miracle. They see it in the unfathomable beauty of His eyes; hear it in the pristine softness of His voice; sense it in His loving message of Truth. Khadija, the first person to believe the Prophet saw it in the purity of His character; Ali, Abubaker and Osman,

His foremost companions found it in His daily behaviour. Najjashi, the Abyssinian king realised it in Quranic verses. The love offered to young Sathyanarayana Raju by Subbamma, the accountant's wife, and Mahboob Khan, the schoolteacher at Puttaparthi, the respect and faith of *bhajan mandali* children for their seven-year old Guru were not the result of an obvious, visible, material miracle.

They were instances before He announced to the world at fourteen: "I am Sai Baba." Their devotion was the magnetic pull of Divinity. "A prophet's face and voice," said the Sage of Persia, Rumi, "is a miracle for the heart that knows the taste of Truth."

On the contrary there are people who fail to see, refuse to believe. The main reason for their rejection is ego. The Quran has defined such people as proud men; "Those who behave arrogantly on the earth in defiance of right—then will I turn them away from My Signs: Even if they see all Signs, they will not believe in them." (VII: 146). They are further described as men who are cruel and ignorant, "who follow their own lusts" (XXVIII: 50), and finally "God does seal up the hearts of those who understand not" (XXX: 59).

For such Homo sapiens, unfortunate as they are, there is one more phase to be witnessed: In Quranic language it is called "God's Way" and "The way of the ancients, (prophets)." Ordinary language defines it as a prophecy, and the world history is eloquent on how these have been fulfilled.

Mystique Of Miracles

Yet only an ignorant mind will disregard the most powerful force behind a "Sign". It is LOVE. All miracles point out this one aspect of Divinity which is elaborated in Quran: "I was a hidden treasure, I wanted to be known and so I created the world." The Sufi calls it unity behind diversity, and love for everything. For a mystic believes in "Hama oost (All is Him)." This Love is the source of all creation and evolution. When viewed from this angle each miracle is an outcome of Divine Love. Sri N. Kasturi rightly says, "Baba uses the very Love with which He wins our loyalty, as a weapon of chastisement in order to chasten us."

The limited human mind can neither comprehend this Love nor enlist all miracles. At best it can accept the mystic Truth that Baba is the Lover, Love and Beloved and as such a devotee can only follow the one "Straight path" of the Quran, which Baba has shown us: "There is only one rule that binds Me: Love. That will quieten you; it will comfort you; it will inspire you to merge with Me."—**Baba**

Discrimination—Detachment

To identify and become aware of the Atma, the eternal Reality, detachment rooted in discrimination is indispensable. It is the very first step for success in this venture. A fixed mind free from agitation can alone practise detachment and win equanimity. Without equanimity the years of life are wasted. A person might be an emperor and have all that one could wish for, yet, if he has no equanimity, he would be the victim of anxiety.

Detachment does not mean renouncing hearth and home, family and friends, kith and kin, as it is popularly interpreted. Without the conviction that objects are transient and trivial, renunciation cannot be full and final. That conviction leads to true detachment.

Detachment from the objective world that springs from the realisation of the Divine that is, one's core can alone be the unshakable victory. Imagine the senses running after joy derivable from the outer world and the person giving up a few gains. This cannot be recognised as Vairagya or Detachment. The longing for the experience of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell for which we senses strive has to, be turned inwards. Along with this, the innate fault inherent in every object has to be recognised and remembered.

But, man today accepts, adores, and relies on the world as if it was real and true; so, he loses the goal of liberation. If man is unable or unwilling to discover the basic ephemerality of objects, he is degrading himself to the level of the beast by pursuing the pleasant and the attractive. Consider this: We are with a party of friends ready to drink our favourite Payasam (a sweet drink made of thick milk) and the cook walks in to announce that it has been poisoned by a lizard dropping into the vessel when it was simmering on the stove. However delighted we were at the prospect of enjoying the Payasam, we give up the stuff without a second thought. What was the reason for this act of renunciation? When you discover the hollowness and temporariness, you are certain to give up the fascination the world casts on you. You will certainly enjoy good music but when you are exposed to it, for too long, your joy will turn into disinterestedness and even disgust. It may be the celestial music of Narada or Tumburu, but they too may, before long, become bores. Sweets may be welcome at any time but not in any quantity. They will soon cloy. Many people imagine that they are happy when they share in a feast or banquet. But, can swallowing a physician's mixture be a source of joy? Food is only a medicine for the illness that hunger is. The avidity of the tongue is another illness, which you try to alleviate by elaborate and costly cookery. While trying to get rid of one disease, you invite many more into your system! What a colossal foolishness is this!

Born as humans, bred among humans and by humans, they grow as wild beasts. Talking of peace among men and nations, they prepare for war and revel in battles. Though human in outer form, they relish demoniac hatred in their hearts. Such hypocrites do, not deserve your trust. Their speech is sweet, but their hearts are bitter. They declare something as their goal, but they persist in proceeding in the opposite direction.

God has endowed man with intelligence and the faculty of discrimination, so that he can save himself from this falsehood, and visualise the Divine. But instead of Deva (God) being the target of activity, Delia (the Body) has monopolised the attention of man. Instead of understanding oneself through the proper use of this endowment, each one is engrossed in misunderstanding others through the perverted use of intelligence and discriminative skills. The mirror gifted to you with the injunction, 'Son! Use this to see thyself' is being held only before others. Buddhi is best used as an instrument for self-realisation. It is, nearest to the Atma in man, but when it is ever busy seeking faults in others, it gets polluted in the process and loses the power of reflecting the majesty, the splendour and the glory of the Atman which can illumine it. Now, the advantage of the adjacence is lost and Buddhi strays far into the world in search of objective pleasure, and

sensory satisfactions. If the summum bonum of living is the satisfaction of the senses, the birds and beasts with far less intelligence and much poorer discrimination are equally successful as man, if not more. No! Human intelligence has a nobler and higher purpose—the realisation of the Eternal Truth, behind all these apparent formations and transformations. The saintly guides of mankind have stressed the special excellence of man's Buddhi. They have said that along with humans, all other living beings have the need for food, the yearning for sleep, the protective impulse of fear and the instinctive urge of sex. But, they point out to the unique gift that man treasures: Jnana or synthesised knowledge. They declare that the person who does not seek Jnana and live as it directs, is, in truth, a veritable beast.

When man is entangled until the moment of death in stilling the clamour of the senses and catering to the needs of this illusory world, how can he thrill with the ecstasy of the awareness of his own Atmic core? From the monarch in the palace to the beggar in the streets, all are caught up in the game of extracting pleasure from the outer world. The illiterate man and the scholar are equally busy in the pursuit of this mirage. So, what are we to say of the superior capacities of scholarship? Earning money, guarding the earned money, increasing it by the surest and the safest methods—thus the struggle goes on—plus plus plus! The bondage to worldly things tightens faster and faster. No one pauses to enquire how deep and how real is the joy that these earnings can give. And what of the 'fashions' that he enslaves himself to? They justify these aberrations as social obligation' and 'duty'.

But, have people no duty towards the Atma? Have they no obligation to recognise the Atma? Should they not bind themselves fast to the Atma which is the Reality? It is sheer cowardice to avoid this duty, to ignore this obligation, and to escape from this bondage. Of course, you have to live on the earth and understand it. You have to study the universe and derive joy therefrom. But, to believe that it is the be-all and end-all of life is a sign of insanity. You have been attending such discourses since years and undergoing these journeys to Swami's Presence often and often. And you have listened to the lessons I am giving. Let me ask you—what is the gain you have garnered? How near are you to the goal? Which obstacle have you overcome? If you have not reached the higher stage, what have you profited from the Sadhana? How can you justify the label, 'devotee' which you have adopted for yourselves?

No. You must progress towards the goal step by step; you have to uproot evil thoughts, evil habits and evil designs from within you. Repeating 'God!' 'God' 'God', you are now only straying away into ungodly realms.

Analyse every object and discover the cheapness and hollowness of each. Then, genuine Vairagya will be planted in your heart. So, utilise the priceless weapon, the perfect mirror, that God has given you—the Buddhi, for the journey to God. An old adage announces that Buddhi is shaped by one's actions—Buddhih Karma Anusaarinee. But this is not quite correct. The mind prompts the senses for action. It has the Buddhi on one side and the senses on the other and is drawn by both into action. When the manas or mind leans towards the senses, and activates them, bondage results; if it leans towards the intelligence (which is illumined by the Atma), liberation results. Sometimes, the Buddhi is enticed by the fake delight that the mind revels in, through the senses. Sadhana has to be used at this moment to turn it away from serfdom to the mind. It must be restored to its status of regulator and controller of the vagaries of the mind.

This flower is beautiful; it gives exciting, enchanting fragrance, declare the eye and the nose. The wise man will not be content with the sense-impression. He resorts to Buddhi and wants it to discover—how long? How much? The answer is—until nightfall, till the new day dawns. Therefore he concludes true beauty, true fragrance can be derived only from God, not from created things and components, not from the moving and changing, the emerging and merging, the appearing, attracting and disappearing entities of the world.

What, then, is Truth—The witness of all these processes and changes, the see-er of all that is seen, the ONE that has no second, unaffected by Time and Space. Man is now riding two horses—the world and God, the Universal and the Particular, the Absolute and the Relative, the Eternal and the Time-bound, the Reality and the Appearance. He is therefore riding for a fall.

Sadhana alone can help man to choose the right path and pursue it relentlessly. Every religion in every era and clime emphasises the ONE and marks out the path to reach it. They warn us against too much attachment to the world, which is basically poisonous. You may drink it with delight but that will not mitigate its evil effects. You may drink the Atmic Ambrosia weeping and wailing but it will confer immortality nevertheless! So keep away from worldly enticements and turn your eye inwards to visualise the Atma.

Sadhakas! Embodiments of Love! Yearn always to be as close to your Divine Core as possible. You need not desert your family and run away into loneliness. You have only to keep in mind the comparative triviality of the world. Death stalks every living being; disintegration waits on all created things. From a world so transient, so uncertain and unstable, one has to win the goal of eternal peace and eternal bliss. The eternal Atma is associated with the ephemeral body! Discrimination alone can make this plain. Detachment alone can make the road clear.

—Dasara Discourse, 26-9-79

Flowering Hand and Gleaming Hair

Sri Aurobindo wrote that "24 November 1926 was the descent of Krishna into the physical ...A Power infallible shall lead the thought. In earthly hearts kindle the Immortal's Fire. Even the Multitude shall hear the voice!" and his wonderment shows that even he was not prepared for such a thing. What shall we say of the ordinary person? The divine surprise leaves us blissfully thunderstruck.

"O, be prepared, my soul,
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The million forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show to them a Man."
(Alice Meynell)

Over the eras the various ways of being religious have called out their forebodings and hopes in visionary language—a spiritual utterance from man to God. Sri Sathya Sai is the last Word which the Divine reveals in living language. An answer from God to man.

What man is so small minded that if the truth of his highest vision walked before him, he would not bow, regardless of all other circumstances? What strayer would miss this chance to know the answer to his deepest prayer?

The only language which can really satisfy the soul is the language of silence. Until divine silence dawns may we fill our time with praise.

"You had eyes dimmed distant dreams

And cared no more for the sacred inheritance...

Now lift up your heads. For salvation has come unto you.

In your burdened and arctic year

A springtime of new miracles has now burst forth.

With flowering hand and gleaming hair
A god has appeared and has entered
your home...

Now mourn no more—for you too have been chosen...
Praise your days in which a god has lived."

—William Jackson

Why drag on your existence as a mere consumer of food, a moving burden encumbering the Earth and obstructing others? Eat—but, transform that precious matter into good thoughts, sweet words and beneficent service. Move—but do not cause pain to others. Move, in order to lessen misery and promote joy. Do not demean yourself as weak, sinful, conceited, wicked. When you demean yourself and condemn yourself, remember you are demeaning and condemning Me who is your Inner Self.

—Baba

Golden Age

is the name which the, "Kingdom of Sathya Sai" (the Association of the Old Boys of the Sri Sathya Sai College for Men at Brindavan, Bangalore-67) has given to a valuable collection of 54 essays on Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, published by them on Swami's 54th Birthday, 1979. Fortunately the Book is available for the general reader too, at Rs. 18/-per copy, (plus Reg.: Rs. 5-55) from the "Kingdom" office at the College Hostel. "Service is God" is the motto which is prompting these young men to undertake a series of useful activities in the villages around Brindavan. This book too is an act of service for which we should all be thankful. It gives us

exhilarating glimpses into the Love, Power, Wisdom and Felicity of Swami experienced and expressed by scholars, seekers and aspirants from East and West, belonging to various professions and engaged in various disciplines. It is doubly precious, for it contains a Message from Swami and, another rare gift, a seven page article from the Divine Pen on Education.

—Ed.

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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"All this will disappear and lose its individuality with the emergence of Jnana, the Highest Wisdom," said the Sage Vasishtha to Rama. "Rama!" he advised, "You have to understand how this non-knowledge grew and by what means it can be destroyed."

There is one mystery hidden in this advice. Centuries of enquiry have failed to unravel the secret-wherefrom did the Cosmos originate? How did It emerge? For, if It had a Personal Cause, the enquiry could have succeeded. The Cosmos or Jagat is not any such object. The questions "How did It emerge?" "Wherefrom-did It originate?" are exactly on a par with the question, "How did the 'serpent' appear on the 'rope' and cause the 'terror'?" Only the rope exists there; the serpent originated thereon, during dusk, on account of the defective intellect of the onlooker. That is to say, on account of the illusion created by Reason. In other words, ignorance is the basis of the misapprehension.

Brahmam is the 'rope'; Jagat is the 'serpent' superimposed on it by Reason afflicted by illusion. We cognise Brahmam as Jagat; we take one thing as another, so long as this affliction holds sway. Therefore, it is best to conclude that the Jagat is an object which originated in our own Buddhi (Intellect) and emerged out of the same faulty, faculty. Such an object born of a delusion and confirmed by only an infirm intellect can never be true. When the delusion goes, when the infirmity disappears, the Jagat caused also disappears and dies.

"Aham Ajnah" "I am ignorant." Everyone has to acknowledge to himself, this fact about himself. He cannot escape making this declaration about himself. The conclusion set forth in all sacred texts and scriptures is that all this is Brahmam. Setting this aside, if the individual still claims that he is "I", he is asserting that he is but an Ajnani, an Ignoramus.

A doubt may arise in man, whether it is at all possible to forget oneself and believe that one is some thing else. We have already seen that the Vision of Mithya (Truth polluted with Untruth) is the sign of the ignorant person. In the dusk, falsehood is superimposed on Truth; the serpent form is visualised on the rope lying on the road. The delusion affects the consciousness and warps the Buddhi, so that they forget their genuine nature which is Ananda or ecstatic delight. They impose on themselves the limitations of individuality and consider themselves as Jivas. They welcome the belief that happiness is outside them in the objective world and they entangle themselves in Samsara, the moving, changing, and restless world. They suffer the twin blows of

fate and fortune. Such persons are taught by the Shruti, by the Vedas and sacred texts, to transform their lives through consistent endeavour for knowing and realising the Atma.

The protagonists of Advaita are not engaged in the task of proving that there is some thing named Ignorance or Ajnana. "I am not happy; I have no joy. I want this. I must earn this," such longings constitute the Individual or the Jivi. This attitude is the core of the Ignorance. So, if you seek to destroy the ignorance that separates and stultifies, this attitude must be transformed and the conviction that "I" am the embodiment of happiness, I am the One who has realised Desire has to be cultivated. The person who has the former attitude has got the Jivatwa Buddhi, the individualised knowledge and he who has the latter knowledge has Jnana or Universalised Wisdom. Bearing the burden of nonexistent problems, kicking up and down in confusion, tied helplessly to the wheel of birth and death, man curses himself in despair. The Advaitic Shruti arose in order to warn man against this Ajnana and to arouse in him the Jnana that can save him from misery and wrong. Truly speaking, we are in Ajnana, so long as we feel we are in bondage. In fact, we have not been created by any; we are not limited or abridged or bound by any. The faith that has taken root in us, namely, there is a Jagat which contains me along with other similar seekers of happiness, in that search, I meet joy and grief, and encounter birth and death—this faith is the fundamental Ajnana.

"We become what our thoughts are." These thoughts on the validity of the objective world and the value of the joys derivable therefrom, though they emanate from Ajnana, do shape us from within. The reason why we are caught in this mould lies in the absence of four acquisitions: (1) attention towards Adhyatmic gain (spiritual progress) (2) steady faith (3) devotion and (4) the grace of God. Even if one of these four is absent, man cannot experience the highest Bliss of the Absolute.

Our enquiry should not be directed only to the obvious and the superficial. This line of inquiry will only mislead us into believing what is not the Cosmos as the Cosmos itself. It makes us forget that it is our mind that has generated this panorama of Cosmic proportions, and presented it to us as Truth.

It is indeed strange that this huge Cosmos depends ultimately on whether 'I' cognise it as such or not! "If you feel it is there, it is there; if you feel, it is not there, it is not there!" This means that we have to go deep into this process of the mind of man. Is there any occasion when our assertion leads to the existence of a thing and our negation results in its disappearance? Or, is this conclusion a figment of the imagination?

Inquiry on these lines would undoubtedly reveal the Truth. When the rope is seen in darkness, by mistake, by ignorance, the serpent arises and appears in its place, displacing the truth of the rope. For some reason, when the truth is known, and the onlooker feels, "This is no serpent; it is a rope," the serpent disappears, for it was a mere 'falsehood'. So, feeling or thinking is able to create the serpent and also to destroy it. Assertion creates; negation destroys. Both are mental processes which can be classified as 'thoughts' also.

Though there are diverse levels and grades, all these are but thoughts. Where do these thoughts emerge from? Are they free to emerge spontaneously? To this question, the answer is "Buddhih

Karma Anusarinee" "Our intellect follows the lead of our activities." Thoughts arise in conformity with the attachment one develops and the results one anticipates from one's actions." The very first motive for action is, "I must attain happiness and harmony." This motive arises from the ignorant assumption that the World is real.

(To be continued)

Serve the Child

Men are proficient in various skills; they manufacture and operate diverse machines; they master many fields of knowledge. However, they have not acquired the peace that is their due. They are carried along by the torrential flood of worldly life. Though endowed with human capabilities exercisable through a human body, men do not choose the straight path of Truth; they wander about in false and fleeting pleasures; they fritter their years, forgetting their innate Divine Reality. This is far from the fulfillment they should aspire for. Mere skill, mere designing and manipulation of machines, hollow pomp and boast, assertions about one being a Jnani, these do not reveal the secret of human nature. Has man solved this mystery which includes all mysteries? Has he found the answer which is the key to all problems? Has he earned the knowledge which can make him know all that he has to know? The solution, the answer, the knowledge is one and only one. Why pluck the leaves and break the branches and hew the trunk in order to destroy the tree? Cut the root; it is done! The Vedic seers and the sages who followed, concentrated on the discovery of this key knowledge, the Atma Vidya, the Science of the Atma. Seekers from overseas also became aware of this Vidya and the modes of Sadhana it laid down and they acclaimed it enthusiastically over the entire world.

But, though this Vidya permeated its native home and illumined it for ages, Indians were huddled within the dark circle of the lamp's shadow. This has been their miserable fate. Our great-grand fathers, grand-fathers and even fathers pored over the pages of books depicting the sacred culture of our land; they assimilated their message, they practised the Sadhanas, they taught and remembered their teachings with gratitude. And, as a result, they enjoyed unruffled peace. They studied the great classics—the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Bhagavata, the Bhagavad-Gita—and their hearts had the moral maxims, propounded therein, imprinted indelibly on them. They were guided throughout their lives by these sacred texts and so, they placed them in their shrines and offered reverential adoration, Their, hearts were purified and sanctified by these acts of worship and work and they were promoted to render service to society as a consequence.

By some stroke of evil fortune, times changed. The `modern age' dawned; our people bowed slavishly before it. These `holy books' were neglected or even cast aside as containing `primitive' ideals and `legendary' tales. Western scholars and seekers, on the other hand, retrieved them, studied, them scrupulously, analysed for example, the medical secrets and the descriptions of weaponry which the Atharva Veda contains and the astronomic and mathematical discoveries and speak of them to the very people who had pioneered in those fields! We welcome them with glee, as a man prefers stale food from another house to fresh dishes in his own home.

In blind admiration of Western ways of life, students in India belittle virtue and extol dry scholarship. They forget they are human beings engaged in the pilgrimage to God; they are engrossed in attempts to squeeze joy out of the material world. Therefore, the first task of teachers; is the cultivation of virtue in the hearts of the pupils. This is much more vital than the promotion of learning. The education system, today does not recognise or encourage moral, or spiritual values. Therefore, the student community has degenerated into a socially dangerous element; the students do not pay the least attention to the promotion of the welfare of society; they deny their duty to others.

They have no understanding of their social obligations. Unless the desire to do service is earnest and the skill to do service is cultivated students will remain a burden on the community, behaving as parasites and exploiters. Expansion of the heart helps expansion of peace and joy. A little knowledge contracts the heart and limits his concern for others. It enlarges the ego and feeds selfishness. It makes men forget the delight derivable from virtue. Such students are unable to develop the prosperity of the nation or the progress of society. The thick veil of egoism hides their sight and renders them blind to their own dignity and destiny. Students should try their best to realise their heritage. The mind free from either extreme attachment or extreme detachment, the speech uncontaminated by falsehood, the body unpolluted by sins—theses the student must strive to possess Teachers, must, be vigilant to help and to encourage them, to avoid any trace of dishonesty in their actions and falsehood in their statements. Selfishness, envy and egoistic pride are the three tendencies and attitudes that should not take root in the tender hearts. Prompt them to engage themselves in acts of service to others. Look at the trees! They serve us, with no thought of self. They comfort those who appreciate their shade and even those who do not; both can take shelter under them. Rivers too render service to all without asking for recompense. Tell the children about the services the cow offers to man.

Deprived of the help given by these three—the tree, the river and the cow—man's life becomes precarious. What a shame it is for man to behave selfishly, while his life itself depends on the unselfish behaviour of the rest of creation! Whatever information, instruction or inspiration man has gained, or whatever wealth, riches or material possessions he has won, he should share with others in an unselfish manner; this is his primary duty. Teachers must be on the watch for chances to instill these ideals in the hearts of the pupils.

India has no shortage of rich persons, nor is there a shortage of big scholars. It has once regions ruled by Maharajas. In spite of this, the land has no peace, the people are afflicted by anxiety and fear. What is the reason? The chief reason is the greed for self-aggrandisement, the absence of the virtues of Service and Renunciation. The rich, the great, the learned and even the monastic heads of religious sects are caught in the coils of selfishness, and are unable to manifest the divine virtues latent in them. So, the hearts of the young pupils have to be filled with noble yearnings by you, so that they may be shaped into strong and sturdy instruments for raising the India of the future to the height which is her right.

Gurus have to be examples which can inspire the pupils. They must practise what they teach. As the teacher, so the pupil. When the tap is turned, water flows only if the overhead 'tank' is full;

the quality of tap-water is the same as that of the water in the tank. When the heart of the Guru is full of goodness, selflessness, and love, the pupils will express these virtues in every act of theirs.

There are, it is said, more than 5000 Bal Vikas Gurus in the land. If each one corrects and improves a hundred children, the nation would indeed; be transformed. You must examine what exactly has been attained, during the four years that have elapsed since Bal Vikas has come into being. This analytical study has to be taken up constantly. When the Guru cultivates a Satwic nature, students too will grow into embodiments of Satwic nature. The Guru should be alert that the weeds of hatred, envy and similar vice do not take root in her own heart. These weeds are rampant in the political field and they creep into other fields too. Teachers should not form rival groups—some proud of their achievements, some envious of the praise others earn—which engage themselves in recrimination. Move with others as with your own brothers and sisters. All are one when viewed as Atma.

Somehow, somewhere, now and then, at rare intervals, you may be confronted by wrong traits. But remember, you have entered the circle of Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Gurus. It may not be serious if these traits enslave teachers in other circles but your mission is much more fundamental and the hope that you arouse is much more heartening. These traits will hamper and pollute your efforts.

Be conscious of the sacred significance of the name; Guru, by which you are known. "Gu" means "Darkness"; "ru" means "its removal". That is to say, the Guru has to illumine the intelligence of the child and remove the ignorance that is obstructing its full development. Diving deeper, we find that Guru has another meaning also. "Gu" means "not limited by attributes" and "ru" means "not affected by appearances." That is to say, the Guru must be free from preferences and prejudices; she must treat all the pupils with equal love.

Pour out all your love on the children around you, and, instruct them gladly and sincerely. This attitude alone can justify association with Sathya Sai Bal Vikas. Of course, Sai is not unaware that the Bal Vikas Gurus are now heartily engaged in their sacred task and are contributing their best to the progress of the movement. Still, just as a battery has to be charged occasionally I am now pointing out certain defects and dangers that might tarnish. It is imperative that you should discover the right path and pursue it steadily with faith. Take, for example, the, petromax lamp. It requires pumping now and then; we have got to use a pin to clear obstructions; it must have some quantity of kerosene too. The kerosene is the faith; the pin is the Love which urges you to do your duty; the faith that sustains you in your task is pumping. Besides these, the lamp needs wicks. The Name of the God which is your constant inspiration is the wick. Endeavour, in the light of the Atmic Unity of all, to remove the primeval Ignorance from yourselves and from the pupils.

Discuss and discover during this Conference how far you have succeeded in this holy mission. And, as a result of that discovery, lay down before yourselves the ways and means by which greater success can be achieved. Communicate your experience to others and also your ideas on improving the curriculum, the method of teaching and the means of assessing the progress made. I would advise you to pay special attention to the methods by which you can contribute, through the Bal Vikas, to the blossoming of the talents latent in the children, the expansion of the

prosperity of the nation and the security and welfare of society. Think also of the activities that should be promoted through Bal Vikas which can ensure happiness and harmony for the children in later life. Children are lamps which can illumine the path of the Nation. A bad pupil causes harm only to himself; a bad teacher ruins the career of hundreds. Be steady and stable in your efforts. A guidepost which changes direction with every gust of wind adds only confusion to the confounded way-farer. You have also to cultivate Prema and expand your sympathies.

More than all, fill your mind with God and transmit God to the children. Look forward to no remuneration or reward, except the joy on the faces of the children. Nowadays, teachers are more attached to their salaries than to their duty. They are centred more on their own lives than on their sacred task. Give up the mad rush in pursuit of degrees; pursue rather chances to serve others and to promote the prosperity of the nation. Bharatiya culture has declined so far and so much, because teachers who are its guardians and promoters are content to feed themselves and their families and to cultivate their own fame and fortune. The Vedas tell us, "Na Karmanaa" (not by acts), "Na prajayaa" (not by progeny) "dhanena" (nor by riches) "thyagena ekena" (only by the one thing, viz., renunciation), "Amrthathwam aanasuh" (can Immortal Bliss be achieved). So, renounce, renounce! Serve, Love! Give your knowledge, your delight, your love, gladly to the children. And thus serve Society and the People.

The Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Gurus are doing this service whole heartedly. I believe they will continue their efforts even more sincerely and gladly. The Resolutions you will arrive at in this Conference should not be inscribed on paper only but must be followed and practised in actual day-to-day teaching in the classes. I am sure each one of you is determined to do your best in the service of the children, the society and the precious heritage of Indian Culture.

Address at the Fourth All India Conference of Bal Vikas Gurus-Prasanthi Nilayam 20-11-79

The Holiest Task

Whether one is a renowned scholar with expert knowledge of the deeper levels of religious lore, or a monarch revelling in the brilliance of palatial luxury, or a hero of many battles, or a miserable victim of poverty, if he has no devotion to the Lord, he does not deserve homage, honour or attention.

The physical body, the senses, the mind, the intellect—these are all to be considered as the clothes we wear. We are advised to control our senses but this can be done only when their true nature is analysed and known. When that is not known, various obstacles present themselves.

The body is known as Deha, which means 'that which is consumed by fire'. It is burnt on the pyre when life departs; it is also consumed when life persists by the flames of desire; it burns on the pyre of anxiety and fear, even when alive! There is another word which also means 'body'—Sarira, meaning 'that which wastes away', both during life and after death. While living, it is afflicted by wants and wishes which rob it of peace. When dead, it becomes dust. Starting its career, as a ball of flesh, it soon appears as a tender charming baby and an active boy; it

transforms itself into a straight, strong, attractive youth; it is reduced later into the pathetic shape of old age. Hence it is named Sarira and man who lives in it is known as Sariri.

The body is a house taken on rent by man. We know how the owner of the house persecutes the tenant in order, to compel him to vacate it, when the rent is not paid or the payment is delayed or when, the tenant does not maintain the house with care, and when he damages it, through negligence or sheer wantonness. Therefore, it is our duty to keep the body in good trim and avoid the wrath of the owner. The owner will certainly appreciate a considerate courteous, cooperating tenant. The tenant can win the owner's love and respect by means of his own goodness.

The human body has been secured as a reward for many lives of meritorious activities. It is valued as a boat which can help us to cross the ocean of change—Samsara. So it has to be tended with grateful reverence. The Bhagavad-Gita calls the body—Kshetra! That word means 'a field'. One can sow holiness and gather the harvest or sow sin and suffer. Choose the crop you need and fill the granary. Kshetra means also 'the entire earth'. Another significant meaning of the word is 'a holy place'. We say "Kasi-kshetra", "Prayag-Kshetra" etc., to indicate that, those places are sacred. The body is a Kshetra, since it is a temple, wherein God is installed and is worshipped through thoughts, words and deeds. The temple has to be cleansed and preserved healthy and pure. Purity is to be preserved and promoted not by multiple baths or by avoiding contacts with others condemned as untouchables. You cannot be pure by the observance of the superficial taboo, "Don't touch". The body can be clean, if washed in water; speech can be cleansed if it is saturated in Truth; life can be purified if it is sanctified by Tapas; the intellect can be cleared of blemish, through Jnana. Above all, the conviction has to grow in you that you are not the body; you are the Resident in the Body. If you identify yourselves with the body you carry about with you, you are inviting sorrow and suffering to overwhelm you, instead of the joy, and peace, which are awaiting to bless you.

Now about the 'senses', the Indriyas. They are known as Matras; that word means 'measures', for each sense has the capacity only to cognise a certain 'measure' of experience. A dish of dal must have a dash of salt, to make it tasty. The tongue tastes it and pronounces judgment, whether the quantity of salt is more or less or just right. "This face is pretty but the nose is a little awry," pronounces the eye. "This song is sweet," "This song is atrocious," declares the ear, after measuring its effects. Matra means also 'limit'. Every sense organ has to be used, with the consciousness of the limit inherent in it. Beyond the limit, it becomes 'misuse', 'sacrilege of a God-given instrument'. For example, the nose is to be used legitimately to help in breathing-and for the selective enjoyment of fragrance but many stuff it with snuff and degrade its real purpose. The tongue is polluted by using it to eat Rajasic and Tamasic food and to swallow intoxicants which demean man. All sense organs are thus spoiled by man through improper, unauthorised or illegitimate use. The consequences for man are mental distress and physical disease.

The body is an inert composite of matter. But it grows, it gets weak, it declines, all on account of a Consciousness that operates from within it. Otherwise, an inert heap of matter can undergo changes only by addition or subtraction through external agencies.

Next, the mind. "Mananaam Manah"—"The Manas or Mind is that which remembers; recollects and ruminates." This mental activity results in the formulation of resolutions or in their

dissolution, Sankalpa and Vikalpa. The mind has, as warp and woof, assertion and negation, do's and don'ts, Sankalpa and Vikalpa. It has no existence apart from these. It is ever engaged in them, until sleep stops its activity. Sometimes, when the Sankalpa or the determination behind the Resolution becomes too strong, the Mind overleaps its limits and man is rendered insane.

In order to calm the mind and keep it on an even keel, Dhyana is prescribed as a Sadhana. Dhyana is the process by which the positive and negative aspects of the mind are regulated out of existence. Man enjoys unlimited bliss when that stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi is reached. A taste of this is offered to man, during his deep dreamless sleep, when no wish or want, no desire or denial can disturb him. How much more satisfying should be the Ananda, when we attain the Nirvikalpa stage through Dhyana! The Ananda, that fills us then is characterised as Bhavatheetham, Thrigunarahitham—beyond the range of imagination, without any trace of the three types of attributes. You who have dedicated yourselves as Gurus to lead the children into Light must practise the discipline of Dhyana, at least one session a day, in order to earn this Ananda and this Equanimity. Those who have earned the gift of Ananda can alone confer Ananda on others. How can a mendicant support another mendicant? No beggar can make another beggar rich. A person rich in Ananda can share Ananda with those around him. Therefore your duty as Gurus is firstly 'to earn' and secondly 'to offer' Ananda. A life of Sadhana is a must, to every Guru.

There are three groups of Sadhanas which you have to take up—personal, social and universal (Vyakti, Samaja and Viswa). A single flower cannot constitute a garland, nor can a single tree be a forest or a single individual, a society. The individual's, spiritual success, his beneficent nature, his virtues when pooled with those of many others become the Wealth of Society, the common property of, all. Each one has to revere and serve all. The Divine in each is pooled into the concept of the Infinite Divine.

The Guru should not give room in the heart for conceit. As the indispensable teacher of innocent illiterate half-blind children, the Guru should not occupy a chair of authority. Egoism is the throne which is proudly appropriated by Authority. Be humble before the children and renounce the tone of power. This is the Sadhana for you. Revere the role of a Guru as a Blessing from God. This attitude alone can ensure the success of the journey, for the individual, the society and for the world.

Be aware of the transitoriness and the inter-relation of the body, the senses and the mind. What of the Buddhi or intellect? It is the source of the decision-making capacity. It is known in Vedantic vocabulary as Antahkarana. It reduces confusion, and calms conflict and determines doubt. When we say 'my inner voice has resolved thus', it is Buddhi that is meant. Buddhi is also referred to as the 'inner self', the Antaratma. It is nearest to the Atma, receiving the impact most. The lowest is the body, the physical sheath. On a higher plane is the 'senses-complex—the five of perception and the five of action'; the mind is on a still higher plane the Buddhi is even higher and so it is nearest to the core, the Atma.

When a chauffeur is sought for, the owner of the car will select only a person who is an expert in the art, a man of character and a person, who will be obedient to his employer. In all respects he must be a good and useful employee. When such care is taken to choose a driver for the

material vehicle, how much more should Buddhi, the chauffeur of the vehicle whose master is the Atma, be virtuous and skilled! Buddhi has no right to give a ride to anyone without the knowledge and permission of the Master.

Buddhi should subject to scrutiny all the wishes of the Mind. It is only when Buddhi is lit by the splendour of the Atma that it can recommend any course of action to the senses, through the mind. Calamities happen only when Buddhi is not alert or is circumvented by the Mind. Let Buddhi take all the time it needs to sort out the pros and cons. Haste makes waste. Waste results in worry. So, do not be in a hurry.

Haste leads to confusions and blunders which cause disappointment and anger. Anger has to be overcome by guiding the mind on to peace and equanimity. "Santhih! Santhih! Santhih" that mantra will quieten the waves of anger.

Man can have no fear when he negates the objective body etc., declaring, "I am not the body, I am not the sense, the mind or the intellect." There is no profit if a man flees to the forest to escape attachment to the non-real. Renunciation can be cultivated without these extreme measures. Doubts too will haunt a person until he cognises the Truth. When doubt enters through the front-door; faith departs through the back door! Doubt comes upon people like a heart-attack; it overwhelms a man all of a sudden. The Gita says, "Samsayaatma Vinasyati" (the doubter is destroyed). So, Gurus must enter upon their task with full faith. The ideals of the Bal Vikas movement are the highest; the task of fulfilling them is the holiest of tasks. Knowing this but yet not doing one's best is indeed treason to oneself. Mere talk cannot go far. Man is concerned with the, moon that is hundreds of thousands of, miles away; but he is not concerned with his nearest neighbour! Do not instruct or instill magnificent ideas and colossal thoughts; teach them small, practical ideas and simple items of behaviour, through your own example and loving exposition.

Only the teacher of teachers can direct the Bal Vikas Gurus. That is to say, he who has mastered the process and problems of education, the significance and secrets of education can so direct. He must be able to correct the Guru's and convince them. It might happen that State Presidents may not all have these abilities. Their abilities might well be great in other aspects of the organisation. They might have specialised in other fields of service. So, my suggestion is that the State President should not be related in any way with Bal Vikas. He has to organise, supervise and give guidance to the Bhajan Mandalis, the Seva Samitis; the Seva Dal and other service units. The Bal Vikas Gurus will benefit more through the very Apex of the Organisation. Women in charge of the Bal Vikas are easily moved by excitement or by dejection and it is better they do not immediately carry their problems to the State President; by the time they communicate to the Central Authority, the emotion would have cooled down. They can be directed more firmly by the Centre and they will follow the directions more willingly, if they emanate from the Centre. So, they have, hereafter to write to the "Convenor, Bal Vikas, Gurus, Prasanthi Nilayam" for advice, direction redress, and send a copy of the letter to Indulal Shah, Secretary, World Council. I shall look into all these letters myself.

Of course, our Bal Vikas Gurus should not indulge in jealousy or fault finding. They can undertake the task of teaching only after they rid themselves of evil traits. If Gurus talk ill of other Gurus and promote misunderstandings and factions, the children can never improve. So,

resolve now to adhere to the right path. If two Gurus quarrel or become unfriendly, both will be removed; no inquiry is necessary; we condemn both for both are, involved. One poisonous insect can destroy an entire crop. Since we have not been very strict all these years, we find the number of Bal Vikas pupils is very low even with such a large number of Gurus. Each Guru must serve at least a hundred pupils in one year. Then only can we have at least a hundred thousand or more, getting the benefit. There are nine crores and twenty six thousand children, boys and girls, in our country aged below ten. Those below 16 are 22 crores 600 thousand in number. At the rate at which we are training the children, when can we teach the crores? The present tortoise speed will not help.

The aspirations and ambitions of youth are being inflamed at great speed; you have to canalise them at equal speed. Then only can a balance be secured. The rains falls profusely; the water seeps in and is stored underground. But man pumps the underground water, faster and in greater quantity than it is collected below the soil. So, drought intervenes. Therefore, go fast but be steady and sure about your work.

Another point: You have to teach the equal validity of all faiths. Teach them through quotations from the Bible the ideal of Christianity. So, too, use the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, etc. and the Koran to acquaint them with the ideals held aloft by those faiths. Also tell them the stories contained in the scriptures of all religions. Do not belittle any religion, or give predominance to any single religion. There was a suggestion that children must be taught the entire Gita. That is a mistaken view. Of course, if they desire through their own ardour and enthusiasm, do, not stand in their way but what we have to do is, to place before them in a simple style the teachings of all faiths. The Sai Religion is the harmonious blending, through love, of all religions. Though some followers of other faiths feel that Sai Religion is contrary to theirs, we should not entertain similar feelings. Ours is the totality, the sum. So, we should not limit or restrict our vision.

Lead the children along the joyous path of Truth. Let your faces ever shower smiles, springing from the Bliss you earn from the faces of the children. Let them sing the Bhajans that glorify God. Do not fall into the traps of anger, jealousy, and pride. You can avoid them through steady and sincere attention to the task you have undertaken. May the children you serve become heroes in the revival of the, ancient glory of the motherland.

—All India Bal Vikas Gurus Conference, 21-11-1979

A Mind Full Of Questions

What is the purpose of our existence?
How do we abolish all resistance?
How may we attain our ultimate goal?
Why do we contract disease and grow old?

How can we become more perfect being?
How can we begin to start believing?
How do we remove the ego from our mind?
How may we make peace with our enemy time?

How do we detach our worldly senses?
How can we conquer such enormous fences?
How do we tread the path of bliss?
How do we decide which roads to miss?

A mind full of questions such as these,
Will never allow us to see,
The simple solution to all our problems,
Is to leave them in the hands of Baba!!

—*Amita Saxena (Age 13) California*

Devalued Man

To whom does the body belong? To the mother who brought it forth, or the father who promoted its growth? Or, does it belong to the grandmother who delivered the mother? No. It belongs to none of these. It is a mere material container. You are not the body; you are the resident of the body; the Kshetrajna in the Kshetra—the Knower of the Field presiding over the Field. Ignoring this, man is misusing the holy container for unholy purposes and complaining when the effort brings only suffering. The car is not intended to be as such; it has to serve as a vehicle for the one who owns it. The body too is just a vehicle, to be used by the Atma, for promoting the welfare of the world, for proving the validity of Dharma, for probing into Truth and for experiencing the omnipresence of the Divine Principle. This is the pre-eminent purpose of the incarnation of the individual and of his sojourn in this body.

Every activity performed with this end in view is thereby sublimated into a *Yajna* or holy ceremony, for it is devoid of egoistic desire. Just now, the Seven-day Vedapurusha Sapthaha Jnana Yajna is coming to a close; today's ritual is the Valedictory Oblation. It marks the 'Samapti' or the End. Samapati means, the attainment of Brahma, the Universal Absolute. That is the final goal of all ceremonies and activities, all rites and rituals.

You might have noticed that the Vedic deity, Indra, was invoked every morning and evening during the week and offered sacramental food. Along with Indra, many other gods too were welcomed and propitiated. Indra is not conceived as a distinct Person residing in Heaven. He is the monarch of the senses of man; He is the God in charge of the mind which operates the senses, and can also control the senses. Indra's controller aspect is known as Rudra. Indra is delineated as armed with a wheel, with ten spokes—the ten being the five senses of perception and the five of action. The Rudras are eleven, for in their case, the mind is added as the eleventh. Indra is known in the Vedas as Puruhoota, an appellation that means, "He who is called upon, often." We have to call upon this Indra often to control the senses and keep the mind on an even keel.

We must be always aware of the Divine Principle, Indra, that overlords the senses and the mind. Indra holds the mind back from the senses which pursue every whim and fancy that they encounter. The reins of Indriyas or Senses are in the hands of Indra. The mind is also subject to gusts of hatred, anger and greed. These have to be sacrificed on the altar of the mind in the name of the presiding Deity. This is the real Yajna on which man has to spend his skills and energy. This Valedictory oblation will ensure the destruction of the beast in man and enable him to shine in his own glory as man. The seed attains its full glory when it sprouts, breaking through the soil, and grows into a tree clothed in green and decked with loveliness. Man too has to break through his earthy, earth-bound crust and become a full free fruitful human, filled with humanity. Every attempt in this direction is a Sadhana worth practising.

Therefore, strengthen the inner vision and seek to establish your self in perfect equanimity, unaffected by the clamour raised by the senses. In Prasanthi Nilayam, steps are being taken stage by stage to help Sadhakas to succeed in gaining the inner vision. Puja, Bhajan, Japa and Tapas must not be allowed to draw your awareness away from the high level of consciousness you have reached or are striving to reach. You must diminish more and more the outer rituals; you must withdraw your attention more and more from external activity. You should endeavour to be exemplars, not exhibitionists.

Singing aloud Bhajans or blatant Dhyana sessions or attention-drawing rotation of rosaries—these are helpful for the time, only to avoid gossip or scandal-mongering or argumentative conversation. They cannot take you forward or inward; they may even drag you backward! Pompous and extravagant ceremonies that are designed to attract the attention of others have ruined the fair name of Indian spirituality. Even the recitation of Vedic hymns have suffered from exhibitionist inclinations of pundits. Words are cut into absurd syllables in order to yield gymnastic pronunciations which jar the ear but impress the unlearned. The meaning of the text is ignored whenever such effects are sought to be produced and great harm is done to the Vedas we adore.

That sense of adoration must be fostered by thought, word and deed. No injury should be caused, no pain inflicted, through the words one utters or the deeds one is engaged in. Nor should even a harmful thought pollute the purity of the mind. Resolve to reform thought, word and deed on these lines and be assured that you have entered upon a more sacred Yajna than this one.

Be specially warned of the vagaries of the tongue. Guard your health by disobeying it wisely; guard your reputation by enforcing silence on it. The tongue revels in five ungodly games: uttering falsehood, indulging in slander, maligning others, gossiping endlessly, and justifying one's faults. These Yajnas teach us to hold the senses in check. The tongue is verily a dangerous instrument; it has to be used with caution.

Succeed in the struggle against the persuasive pulls of the senses; then, you deserve to be called the Yajamaan, the Master who has victoriously accomplished a Divine Task. Yearn to be the Master, not the servant who is denied access to the treasure chest in the house. Do not be satisfied with the role of Pashu, the bound animal. Strive to be a man and become God, the Pashu-pati, the Lord of all Life. The Vedas exhort man to speak the Truth and to march along the path of Justice. But, he has become deaf to this Call. No wonder, man has become despicably devalued today, that he is cheated at every turn and decimated on the roads. Earth, sea, water, air—mind, senses, reason, body—all are polluted and poisoned. To save man from degradation and destruction, the system of values has to be overhauled. Character, straight forwardness, humility, detachment, simplicity—these must be restored to the position of man's highest ideals. Even the bodies in which we dwell have to be given up one day; they decay and disintegrate. Wealth, fame, authority—all these are but temporary tinsel. How long can a person stick to the chair from which he wields power over others? It is the ego that prompts him and deludes him into the belief that it will last. Mankind is adrift, with no apparent goal. The holy task of fulfillment is forgotten. The sacredness of life is ignored. Unless these are rediscovered, goodness and godliness cannot thrive in this country and elsewhere.

Embodiments of Love! The demoniac forces of egoism, envy and greed have to be exorcised soon. Then alone can man blossom into his Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Then alone can the tongue utter sweet words of self-less Love; then alone can the heart urge the hands to engage in Loving Service; then alone can man justify himself before mankind and attain the Divine.

—*Divine Discourse, Vijayadashami, 1. 10. 79*

Sri Sathya Sai Study Circle

Members of teaching faculties of several prestigious scientific and humanistic Institutes at Bangalore and of the University of Bangalore and the colleges affiliated to it have established, with the blessings of Bhagavan and under His guidance, a Study Circle in order to analyse the ills now rampant in the field of education and evolve remedies based on the ideals of Sai education. The Study Circle has, as its primary aim, service to humanity through educational reform. It will bring together all who are interested in the promotion and expansion of this constructive revolution. It is dedicated to infuse among teachers, parents and students the spirit of universal love that Bhagavan embodies. It will also contribute to the development of rural areas and the uplift of the neglected sections of the community through proper educational projects. Prof. S. V. Pappu, CISL Department, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore-12, the Convener of the Study Circle, is enrolling as members of the Circle persons who are interested in the objectives it has placed before itself.

—Ed.

Light spreads; it mingles with the light from other sources of light; it has no boundaries, no prejudices, no favourites. You may not like your neighbour, but, the light from the lamp on your verandah shines hand in hand with the light from the lamp on his verandah. You cannot keep it back!

Learn this lesson of light and love; move out, clasp, spread, expand, give up limits of mine and thine, his and theirs, caste and creed in one limitless flow. That is the culmination of all spiritual Sadhana.

—Baba

Meditation

"To get at the core of God at His greatest one must first get into the core of himself at his least, for no one can know God who has not known himself."

After seating oneself in a comfortable and steady posture, steadying the breath, Pratyahara (withdrawing of the senses from the sense objects) and purification of all the organs of the body (Anga Nyasa) is to be done. Light is the greatest purifier. It dispels all darkness. Light is made to traverse throughout the body, purifying all the limbs and senses, then it is installed in the lotus of the heart, in which is to be enshrined the Bhavachitra of the Form of the Lord for the purpose of Dharana which would lead to Dhyana and ultimately to Samadhi, i.e., of being at-one-with with the Supreme Self (God).

Meditation For Beginners

First, when you sit for meditation, recite a few slokas on the glory of God, so that the thoughts that are scattered could be collected. Then gradually, while doing Japam, draw before the mind's eye the Form which that name represents. When your mind wanders away from the recital of the Name, take it on to the picture of the Form. When it wanders from the picture, lead it on the Name. Let it dwell either on that sweetness or on this. Treated thus it can be easily tamed. The imaginary picture you have drawn will get transmuted in to the Bhava-chitram, or the Emotional Picture, dear to the heart and fixed in the memory; gradually, it will become the Sakshatkara-chitra when the Lord assumes that Form in order to fulfill your desire. *This Sadhana is called Japasahitadhyana*, and I advise you all to take it up, for it is the best form of Dhyana for beginners.

Within a few days, you will fall in line and you will taste the joy of concentration. After about ten or fifteen minutes in the, initial stages and longer after some time of this Dhyana, have some Manana on the Santhi and the Sowkhya you had during the Dhyana, that is to say, bring back into your memory the joy you experienced. This will help your faith and earnestness. Then, do not get up suddenly and start moving about resuming your avocations. Loosen the limbs, slowly, deliberately and gradually, and then enter upon your usual duties.

Do not get discouraged, that you are not able to concentrate long from the very beginning. When you learn to ride a bicycle, you do not get the skill of keeping the balance immediately. You push the cycle along to an open maidan, and hop and skip, leaning now to one side and now to the other and even fall with the cycle upon you on many an attempt, before you are able to ride with skill and to never more worry about the balance. Automatically, you are able to make the necessary adjustments to correct the balance, is it not? After getting this skill you can ride through the narrow streets and lanes and you do not need an open maidan; you can negotiate your vehicle through the most crowded thoroughfares. So too, practice will equip you with a concentration that will sustain you in the densest of surroundings and the most difficult situations.

The Most Effective Form Of Meditation

As regards the technique of Dhyanam, different teachers and trainers give different forms of advice. But, I shall give you now the most universal and the most effective form. This is the very first step in spiritual discipline. Set aside a few minutes everyday at first for this, and later, go on extending the time, as and when you feel the bliss that you can get. Let it be in the hours before dawn. This is preferable because the body is refreshed after sleep and the peregrinations of daytime have not impinged on you. Have a lamp, with an open flame, steady and straight, or a candle before you. Sit in the padmasana posture or any other comfortable Asana, in front of the candle. Look on the flame steadily, for some time, and closing your eyes, try to feel the flame inside you, between your eyebrows; let it slide down into the lotus of your heart, illumining the path. *When it enters the heart, imagine that the petals of the lotus open out one by one, bathing every thought, feeling and emotion in the Light and so removing darkness from them.* There is no space for darkness to hide. The light of the flame becomes wider and brighter. Let it pervade your limbs, now, those limbs can never more deal in dark suspicious wicked activities; they have become instruments of Light, and Love. Let the Light reach up to the tongue, falsehood vanishes from it. Let it rise up to the eyes and the ears, and destroy all the dark desires that infest them, leading you into perverse sights and puerile conversation. Let your head be surcharged with Light and all wicked thoughts flee there from. Imagine that the Light is in you, more and more intensely; let it shine all around you, and *let the Light spread from you, in ever widening circles,* taking in your loved ones; your kith and kin, your friends and companions, nay your enemies and rivals—strangers, all men and women, wherever they are, all living beings, the entire World.

Since the Light illumines all the senses everyday, so deeply and so systematically, a time will soon come when you can no more relish dark and evil sights, yearn for dark and sinister tales, crave for low harmful deadening toxic food and drink, handle dirty demeaning things, approach places of ill-fame and injury, or frame evil designs against any one any time. *Stay on in that thrill, of witnessing Light everywhere.* If you are adoring God in any form now, try to visualise that Form in the all-pervasive Light. *For Light is God; God is Light.*

Practise this "meditation" as I have advised, regularly everyday. At other times, repeat the name of God (any Name, fragrant with any of His many majesties), always taking care to be conscious of His Might, Mercy and Munificence.

Advanced meditation on "soham"

Resolve on this holy Shivaratri to visualise the Siva, who is the Inner Power of all. *With each breath, you are averring, 'Soham'. I am He;* not only you, every being avers it. It is a fact which you have ignored so long. Believe it now. *When you watch your breath, and meditate on that grand truth,* slowly the I and the He will merge and there will no more be two, for Soham will become transformed into OM, the Primal sound, Pranava, which the Vedas proclaim as the symbol of the Nirakara Parabrahman. That OM is the Swaswarupa, the reality behind all this "relative un-reality."

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

—Baba

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14

Education *sans* wisdom, mere wisdom bereft of discrimination, action without discretion, erudition lacking sagacity, power not justified by deservedness, statements not based on truth, music wanting in melody, adoration not sustained by devotion, a person devoid of commonsense and character, a student not endowed with humility and a discourse that fails to inspire, serve no useful purpose.

In addition to knowledge derived from the sacred texts, one should gain wisdom through experience. Education and knowledge without personal experience will be futile. Wisdom lodged within us will be of no avail if it is static. It will assume the form of mere scholarship. If such learning is brought within the ambit of practice and experience, it is creditable. Acquiring and hoarding of wealth will be of no avail if it is not consecrated and spent for the welfare of the world. Similarly mere acquisition of knowledge from books is a futile exercise. Knowledge becomes blessed only when it is translated into experience and actions which promote the good of humanity. This translation of knowledge into experience is possible only when one passes through the three stages of Knowing (*Jnatum*), Visualising (*Drashtum*) and Entering (*Praveshtum*).

First, one must learn about the precious truths contained in the sacred texts from veterans in the field. When you learn about them you naturally take an interest in them. Then you develop an urge to visualise those truths at any cost. This is the first stage of Knowing.

In the second stage, we carefully peruse, examine and collect such sacred texts wherever they may be available. We read and directly visualise them. With great perseverance we enquire, comprehend and enjoy them. Thus we derive some satisfaction that we have discerned certain profound truths. This is the second stage of Visualising.

It is not enough if we make progress in the first two stages. We must experience what we have known and seen. By entering arena of experience, one should feel complete identification with the Ideal. If one lies down idle after having consumed food it will cause indigestion. However, if one consumes daily the requisite quantity of food and undertakes some physical work it will be digested and, by being converted into blood, will offer nourishment. In the same manner, we should translate into experience and action what we have known and seen, by assimilating it and utilising it for the progress of our country as well as for the welfare of humanity.

It is easy to memorise passages from books and deliver lectures. Knowledge acquired merely through the reading of books can be termed bookish knowledge. This is quite an ordinary type of knowledge. At least to some extent what has been heard, seen and understood should be put into practice. It has to be experienced. This is the stage of Entering.

In our ancient sacred lore are contained several precious truths. Invaluable gems lie hidden in them. Many scientific theories relating to the atom are also to be found there. Students should seek to unravel these hidden truths and harness them to the effort for human welfare. There must be an urge as well as the determination in them to explore undiscovered truths. They should not rest content with delivering discourses and appearing on forums of discussion.

Only those possessing a genuine spirit of enquiry can disseminate real knowledge in the world. Mere superficial knowledge will be of no avail. There is no knowledge that can surpass the knowledge derived from direct experience. It must be acquired through self-effort, initiative, determination and perseverance. It should be utilised for technological development and increase of production which make for the country's progress.

It is necessary to derive wisdom from experience but it is equally essential to develop the faculty of discrimination which enables us to employ it for the well-being of the country. Education without discrimination, and wisdom without discernment are of no use. Education is one thing and discrimination is quite another. Discrimination is the faculty that enables us to distinguish good from bad and confers upon us the ability to decide when and how much importance, is to be given to various aspects in a given situation. Discrimination is a component of wisdom. Without discrimination one cannot pursue the right path. It is a mark of sagacity to display discrimination in all our actions. Through researches in atomic energy one may invent destructive weapons which can reduce to ashes the entire world in a second. The same atomic energy might help us to generate millions of kilowatts of electric power which could be utilised for industries and agriculture, transforming the country into a smiling granary. An educated person should display discrimination in such matters and take the right course of action. Man's discoveries and inventions should not be used for evil purposes which lead to disaster and destruction. Discrimination guides us in properly employing them for augmenting production and promoting human welfare.

A man endowed with wisdom and discrimination will be honoured and adored even though he may not have wealth or position. A person devoid of wisdom and discrimination can never blossom spiritually even though he may be an eminent educationist, a prominent scientist or a multimillionaire. One without wisdom and discrimination cannot even distinguish between *dharma* and *adharma*. Therefore, every student must acquire wisdom and discrimination without resting on his oars after gaining theoretical knowledge. He should develop far-sighted vision along with wisdom and use it for the uplift of society.

In addition to wisdom, discrimination and experience, one should also possess worldly wisdom which is known as commonsense. It cannot be acquired through books. In order to gain it one must travel extensively. It is for this purpose that our ancestors went on pilgrimages to see, speak to and touch the feet of holymen in sacred places. They also saw many wonderful sights and objects in this diverse universe of God and derive many valuable lessons there from. There are several objects in nature which teach valuable lessons imparting wisdom. The development of commonsense consists in comprehending the origin and nature of these objects.

One should grasp the significance of history, culture and civilisation and propagate it. One who intends to undertake such propagation must first of all comprehend the nature of the soul. In this world there are several branches of learning like physics, music, literature, art and mathematics. Of all these forms of knowledge, Self-knowledge is the supreme sovereign. Without its attainment one cannot enjoy any peace. Though one may gain renown and recognition in the world, one will not experience happiness without Self-knowledge. "Knowledge of the soul", "knowledge of God" and "spiritual knowledge"—all these expressions connote that wisdom which promotes full awareness of soul and God. Self-knowledge is that knowledge by acquiring which everything else is known. A person with self-knowledge can indeed be acclaimed as all-knowing.

Secular learning cannot confer on us abiding and absolute peace. Self-knowledge alone can help us cross the sea of sorrow. So all should strive to attain this Self-knowledge, which can be acquired through purity of mind. Purity of mind can be attained through pious deeds, sacred acts, charity, helpful nature, compassion and devotion. Disinterested action consecrated to God purifies the heart. The Sun of Wisdom dawns in a pure heart. The dawn of such wisdom exalts Man to the status of God.

(To be continued)

The Form of the Formless

‘He (the enquirer) cognizes only that idea that is presented to him. It (Atman) assumes the form (of what is cognized) and this protects (the enquirer). Possessed of that (idea) realises it (as the sole essence)’.

—*Mandukya Karika (II-29)*

Brahman being the Reality in everything that is seen and unseen, the Reality that is the substratum of all existence, the scriptures declare that it is immaterial in which form we visualise It and in what manner we seek Its realisation. In fact, Advaita Vedanta sees nothing as Real apart from that Reality and does not recognize the separate existence of the phenomenal world. Barring the very few who live in the world having transcended Maya awaiting the fall of their physical body, to all others like us the world is very much in existence. The principle that makes for the world of names and forms is Maya. The dualities and pluralities of the world, birth and death, pleasure and pain, success and failure, are our constant companions. That is the nature of Maya. In fact, Maya gives man freedom of great many choices. It enables him to break the tiny atom and unleash a power which once was incomprehensible to his own thinking. It even prompts him to leap from the earth to the moon, or from one planet to another. It is 'magnificent'—stored with all that one can think of. It is the power of the Lord; 'She (Maya) gives birth to the entire world'; 'It is very wonderful and of a form which is inexpressible (anirvachaniyam)'.

But Maya involves bondage too. Man is caught in the net of death and darkness, of pain and fear. He is constantly the victim of dark passions, lust and greed, anger and hatred. He is thus a complex of freedom and bondage. 'We are born in Maya, we live in it, we think in it. We are the philosophers in it, we are spiritual in it; nay, we are devils in this Maya and we are Gods in this Maya...The whole human knowledge is generalisation of this Maya, trying to know it as it appears to be,' says Swami Vivekananda. Maya is therefore as true as our very existence in the world. But its reality goes only to the extent of the 'serpent in the rope'. The serpent exists only so long as the reality of the rope is unknown. And this knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, is barred to us as things are, on account of the primordial ignorance (Avidya), the individual counterpart of Maya. Man acts in the world—the world of causes and effects, gets bound by the fruits of his actions, develops Vasanas (tendencies) and wallows in the cycle of births and deaths. He has to shed that ignorance.

He is equipped for this; for, he is the only being endowed with an intellect, he is the only being with the freedom to evolve himself and achieve Divinity, the only being who can, with discrimination, understand the Reality in himself.

It is true that there are great many forces within us and without, which draw us constantly towards the world of objects. That is the nature of the ignorance already referred to and that is what creates for us the bondage from which we have to liberate ourselves through a conscious effort along the spiritual path.

The question which naturally arises is: How far is the goal and how arduous is the path? The answer is that the goal is as far or as near as we conceive of it or would have it. It is far if we are constantly moving away from it, if we are continually chasing the illusion leaving the substance, following the shadow leaving the source of light. Our journey is long if we seek the goal in the heights of Kailasa, or in the holy places sanctified by the Leelas of the Lord, or in the sanctum sanctorum of the shrines. Lest this should be misunderstood, these journeys, pilgrimages and worships have definitely their role in the spiritual efforts of the aspirants. But all these constitute aids to the sadhana—aids to overcome the call of the flesh, disciplines to still the mind and to direct the 'eyes' inwards. In the end we have to find the Reality within ourselves, in the inmost

core of our being—nearer than the nearest to us. We wandered around only to develop a detachment to the world of objects and an attachment to the Divine, to train our intelligence which is part of the gross and the physical, to see the Subtle and the Real within. The Unity between these two already exists; it is ever present. Yoga is not achieving anything outside ourselves; it is not bringing together two things which are wide apart. It is the realisation, the experience of the Unity which exists. 'This self is Brahman (ayam atma brahma)' declares the Upanishad.

A mere intellectual understanding of this Unity however, does not take us any nearer the realisation which is our goal. Jnana (spiritual wisdom) is not the capacity to quote extensively from the scriptures. It is the capacity to experience the Unity that already exists, and once that experience is achieved idea of duality, names and forms ceases and one is able to see nothing but the Supreme in everyone and everything. 'That Atman cannot be attained by the study of Vedas nor by intelligence, nor by much hearing. It is gained by him who chooses it alone. To him the Atman reveals in its true nature' (Kathopanishad II-23). We have the examples of evolved souls like Ramana Maharshi, Sri Ramakrishna and others who despite their near ignorance of scriptural teachings became great Jnanis through the realisation of that Unity and lived as Jivanmuktas in the not too distant past. Their experiences, like the experiences of the sages who gave us the scriptures, are today serving as beacon lights in our paths to higher evolution. That is not saying that the study of Scriptures is not necessary or helpful for the spiritual aspirant. But a clear distinction has to be drawn between a Jnani and a person of knowledge or even erudition. The knowledge gained by worldly means should percolate to the inner depths of man and awaken in him the thirst for knowing the Reality behind all that is known, the Unity which has already been referred to.

Jnana being the realisation of that Unity, all Sadhana (spiritual efforts) should culminate in it. The Lord of the Gita while expounding various disciplines suited to aspirants at various stages of spiritual evolution, and various situations in life, declares that everything should end in Jnana. There is nothing on earth equal to the purity of Jnana...He who has faith, who is absorbed in it (Jnana) and who has subdued his senses, gains Jnana and having gained it he quickly attains the Supreme Peace'. (Gita IV-33, 38, 39). However the Lord Himself reminds Arjuna, the difficulty in acquiring that Jnana of Seeing in all manifested things the Unmanifested, which is incomprehensible to the senses, to the mind and to the intellect. As the Eternal Guru, the Lord recognises this limitation in Arjuna, the man, and immediately suggests, the proper approach, not one but a variety of them. 'But those who laying their actions on Me, intent on Me, meditating on Me, with unswerving devotion; Those whose thoughts are set on me, I straightaway deliver them from death-bound existence' (Gita XII-6/7). The Lord does not even stop here. He advises him to concentrate on the Lord, fixing his thoughts on Him, or if this is not possible, to perform all actions for His sake, or to renounce the fruits of all actions.

All are free to approach the Lord in any manner they like. 'As men approach Me, so do I accept them. Men on all sides follow my path, O Partha' says the Lord (Gita IV-11). The importance here is of following His path. No one can desire for material pleasures and simultaneously for spiritual Grace. We are very much here in the world; but we cannot be of the world, if we have to achieve any progress in spirituality We cannot run away from the names and forms. But the same names and forms are to be used to reach the Formless. It is in this context that the opening

passage from Mandukya Karika has relevance. The Puranas play an important part in leading man through the world of objects to the realisation of the Unity. It was the Great Vyasa who gave the Vedas including the Upanishads in the form in which the world has them today. It is the same Vyasa who authored the Puranas including the immortal Bhagavata and Mahabharata. While the Upanishads dealt with the Formless, it is not an anomaly that the Puranas catered to man's need for Names and forms, for his spiritual evolution. The question whether the Divine forms and names were real or only symbolical is beside the point. Nor is there any doubt of the efficacy of the Names and Forms, for we have the unmistakable examples of evolved personalities of this very age, like Sati Meera, Sant Tukaram, Sri Ramakrishna and Maharshi Aurobindo of later years who through their attachment to names and forms attained Jnana and Jivanmukti.

It is important that great Acharyas like Sankara were not unconcerned with forms of the Divine for their worship and adoration, and for guiding the aspirants on the spiritual path. These forms might be symbolic; but, for the understanding of the human mind, a form with Divine attributes had to be conceived. Sankara's Dakshinamurthy, while endowed with a form, is no other than the non-dual, Atman and self. (*swatmanameva adwayam*). Again in Soundarya Lahari Sankara's personification goes much further, and the Goddess is visualised in all her physical glory. It establishes a personified, though conceptual relationship with other deities. The invocation ends with declaration of the Unity of the self with the Supreme.

One of the greatest Jivanmuktas of our time was Ramana Maharshi. His life was his teaching which in the characteristic brevity of his language consisted in the dictum; 'Know Thyself'. He also conceived of a form for the Formless in Arunachala Siva.

In the meditational approach to the Realisation of Self which is generally known as Raja Yoga, and of which Sage Patanjali was the earliest exponent, the path culminates in the total surrender of one's ego to the Supreme Power. This has to be achieved by turning the mind God-ward and making it one-pointed. The final stages of Patanjali's yoga are Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi (i.e., concentration, contemplation and absorption). In Patanjali's own words: 'Through *swadhyaya* (self-study or study of the scriptures) there is a meeting with one's chosen deity' and also 'perfection in meditation comes from preserving devotion to Easwara' (II-44, 45). Thus Patanjali also recognizes the necessity of a deity, a form, for meditation. Bhagavan Baba says in the context of meditation: 'You have perfect freedom to select the Name and Form that gave you the necessary encouragement. When you meditate, the mind often runs after something else, it takes another road. You have then to plug the outlet, by means of the Name and the Rupam, and see that the even flow of your thoughts towards the Lord is not interrupted.'

The humble peasant woman who traverses miles to visit a shrine and make her offerings at the feet of the idol of her Lord, the householder who finds solace in chanting the thousand names of the Nameless morning and evening, the Sadhaka who assiduously tries to still his mind and turn it inwards and contemplate the glory of his Ishtha (chosen deity)—the path followed by everyone of these should ultimately converge in Juana, in the realisation of the Unity. It is immaterial how many years or how many lives it takes for each one to reach that goal; in the spiritual path man's life-span has no significance. Time is not a measure for the Timeless.

Except for those who have attained the acme of perfection and for whom 'all this is Vasudeva' and who according to the Gita are rare (sudurlabha) the form is a necessary aid or even an inescapable necessity in their sadhana. 'You can grasp with the reason that you are endowed with, only concrete Name—Form—Attributeful things so, God has to appear before you, with Form, Sakara, Saguna, Sarupa, so that you can love Him and serve Him and follow Him and get liberated by Him' says Bhagavan Baba.

So, let us hold on to a Form of the Lord, and see in it the love that it represents, the Bliss that it exudes and the Grace that it bestows. Let us with unstinted devotion continue to do so until we are able to see the Form merge in the Formless and declare with the sages, Neti, Neti. It is not necessary for us to crave for absorption into His Being. Once we do our part the rest is vouchsafed by Him. 'I take them once for all to the other side of death (the ocean of birth and death' (Bhagavata III-25). It is immaterial which form it is, so long as there is unsullied devotion in us. There are Jivanmuktas who reached the ultimate state through the Forms of Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, Siva and Durga. Today we have the unique good fortune which only the Gopis of Dwaparayuga had, of having the Lord with us in physical form, in our own form—Whose Form we can see, Whose words we can hear, Whose Lotus feet we can touch and with Whose unbounded Grace and Compassion we can hope to succeed in our sadhana. Let us, by our devotion, be worthy of taking His proffered Hand in our progress towards evolution.

The form of the Formless is what you and I visualise Him to be and which we shall hold fast, with love and devotion, until He takes us beyond all names and forms.

—C. P. K. Nair

The Kingdom

Students! Embodiments of the Divine Atma! And, supporters and promoters of education! This Kali Yuga offers more facilities for liberation than any previous one. For, mankind is much cleverer now; there are educational institutions even in the farthest corners of every land. But, it is a pity, peace of mind has become very rare among men. Why has peace remained out of reach, in spite of the plethora of gadgets and contrivances that offer man comfort and pleasure?

The fault lies in human conduct which runs along evil lines. When man thinks, speaks and acts along virtuous lines, his conscience will be clean and he will have inner peace. Knowledge is power, it is said.; but virtue is peace. The world reveres even today great men and women who have lived exemplary lives of virtue. Jesus, Muhammad, Zoroaster, Buddha, Sankaracharya, Madhwacharya, Ramanujacharya and others were able to command the loyalty and adoration of people, solely on account of the purity of their conduct and actions. They have become immortal residents in the hearts of mankind. Scholarship cannot confer this high historic ascendancy. Mastery of books may help you to expound or exhibit your dialectical skill. But, what really is the width and depth of your experience? And, just examine how conceited you have become! Man must saturate his daily life in truthful speech, virtuous acts, and holy thoughts.

Education must equip you with a discrimination sharp enough to discover these virtues. You must know what truth is and develop love and loyalty to it. And, remember, acts of virtue grow out of the suppression of selfish desire or Tyaga. You must keep high ideals before you and be prepared to sacrifice even your lives in achieving them. Never pollute your speech with falsehood; never poison your thoughts with hatred and greed; never degrade your body with violence in any form.

It is tragic that not even a small fraction of the student community values these ideals and endeavours to realise them. We have in this country plenty of scientists, scholars, spiritual teachers, and seasoned politicians. But of what avail? They work at cross-purposes, each one unconcerned with the rest. One scientist is the rival of another; one scholar is at loggerheads with another expert in the same field. And, of politicians, nothing need be said. When this vice of disunity rules peace and prosperity can never be established in the country, in spite of all the progress in technology, scholarship and spiritual exposition. They can be developed only when mutual cooperation, friendly feelings, love and compassion grow in men's hearts. The world can shine, fresh and fair, green and grand, with festoons and flags on every doorstep, only when these qualities are fostered by man.

Today, there is a great need for every one to dwell upon the axioms that Dharmaja, the eldest of the Pandava Brothers kept before himself. When Krishna asked him, one day, where his brothers were, he replied, "Some of them are in Hastinapura City and some others are in the forest." Krishna was visibly surprised. He said, "Dharmaja! What has happened to your brains? All of you, the five brothers, are here in the forest, as you know. No one is in the City of Hastinapura!" Dharmaja replied, "Pardon me, Lord! We are 105 brothers in all." Krishna pretended that the statement was wrong. He! recounted the names of the five and queried the reason why he added a hundred more. "My father's sons are five; his brother, the blind Dhritarashtra has a hundred sons. When we fight with them, we are five and they are hundred. But when we don't, we are a hundred and five."

Thus, when hatred and greed end in fighting, brotherhood is broken and hearts drift apart. Today, this fractionalisation is evident in every field including even our Samitis! As a natural result, anger, envy, faction and friction are fast increasing.

This is the reason why students have to uproot these evil tendencies from their minds. The mainspring of all these faults is egoism, the belief that the little self has to be satisfied at all costs. I derive much Ananda, watching 'wild' animals in their own habitat. Their movements, their relations with others of their kind, their free uninhibited lives are very attractive to behold. They do not bewail at the health and happiness of other animals. They do not grieve, lamenting their misfortune, comparing their fate with that of other denizens of the forest. They do not clamour for fame. They do not plan and prepare to earn positions of power and authority over other animals. They are not eager to accumulate possessions that are superfluous. When we consider these traits, we are led to conclude that they are leading lives of a higher grade than men. Men have the extra qualifications of education; they have the moral sense, and the capacity to judge and discriminate. But yet, they are caught in the coils of greed. Greed is the seed-bed of grief.

Education promotes greed, instead of paralysing it. The aim is to earn more monetary income; so, the struggle is directed to the acquisition of degrees which bring higher salaries. The learned man is anxious to exploit society, to pilfer from society by fair means or foul. He is not eager to give to society, to benefit Society. He is concerned with what he can *get from* society, not with what he can *give to* society.

Boys from the villages are ungrateful to their parents who have bartered their wealth and their comfort for the sake of giving them the chance of education. As soon as they secure a degree (which is at best a convenient beggar's bowl), they flee to the cities and accept a job there for a pittance. They settle in the cities, neglecting their parents and treating their hereditary professions with contempt. Nor are their lives in cities any smoother; they are led into wasteful and damaging habits until they pine for peace and joy. Instead, they must remain in the villages where they first saw the light of day and dedicate the skills they have acquired to the service of its inhabitants. This is their real task.

I know that it is very difficult for students to overcome the banal influence of society and of the elders; they do not come across inspiring examples to follow.

Old Students of the Sathya Sai Colleges must enter the World fully equipped with courage, compassion and inner peace and render selfless service to the people. Be vigilant always that you do not deviate from the ideals marked out by Me. Participate in all activities, armed with humility, a sense of honour and the skills needed to triumph. Distinguish yourselves in the moral, material, ethical and spiritual, as well as in the worldly and technological fields. Do not extinguish yourselves, as soon as you proceed out of the Brindavanam Campus. So long as you are within the area, your style of dress and your manners, your character and conduct are different from what they become when you pass out. This relapse into old and unwelcome levels reveals a fundamental flaw in character. Such persons can be written off, for they are of no help to any one. Indeed, they are a burden on society. They are weaklings who revel in imitation, they are heroes who rely on their eyes and ears and who value their own national heritage.

You have resided in Brindavanam for 5, 7 or 9 years and experienced maternal love, more intense than what a thousand mothers can offer you. If you go out of Brindavan and adopt the behaviour-patterns and life styles considered fashionable by the outside world, how can you be considered 'an Old Student of the College?' "He who chops the nose of his mother, can pluck the nose of his aunt as a flower from its stalk" says the proverb. When you commit treason against God so freely, how can you be expected to honour human rules of conduct? I desire that, from now on, at least, you will steadily develop noble thoughts, holy feelings and self-less actions, and maintain the fair name of your College. Students occupy the role of the heart in the physiology of the social organisation. Whoever hurts the society in which he dwells or brings disrepute on it is a traitor. Whichever position you occupy, wherever in later life you reside, you must draw on yourself the admiration of others, as a student of the Sathya Sai College, by your humility and discipline, your manners and habits and by the simplicity of your dress and sweetness of your speech. If you parade your transformation by the style of your tie and pants, by your long hair and hippie type of moustaches, how can you claim to be an 'Old Student' of the Sathya Sai College? Your dress itself will proclaim that you are not. Prove that you are true heroes, true servants of the poor and the distressed and recipients of true education.

Of course I am warning you against falling into wrong ways of living. One day Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya shaved off his thick overhanging moustache and with a clean face, he went to an old friend and shocked him into the question, "Sir, why this transformation today?" The reply was, "I cultivated the impressive moustache out of pride that I was a man; but, I realised that I could not relieve the misery of a single fellow-man. So, I felt I could not justify the moustache any longer." The manifestation of manliness has to be done by involving ourselves in social service and reducing the pain and poverty of human beings like ourselves. Allow yourselves to be judged not by your dress or the growth of beard, but by your motives and actions, your progress along the path of practising the ideals implanted in you by Sathya Sai.

Do not seek to secure jobs in order to earn high income. But, wherever you are, to whichever job you are attached, be vigilant that you do not slide into wrong. Money comes and goes; but, morality comes and grows! Amassing money is easy; no one is to be appreciated for that. It can be accumulated through cruel or unjust means, through falsehood and blackmail. A beggar in Bombay had 60,000 rupees tied round his waist, when his corpse was examined by the police. Only beggars are prompted by the urge to gather riches; so, you reduce yourselves to the level of beggars when you prosecute your studies with the sole purpose of becoming rich. Study and earn knowledge in order to rescue the world from decadence, in order to develop peace and joy throughout all levels of society, and in order to add your mite to the prosperity of the state. The members of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai must follow those ideals and spread them throughout the world. You claim to belong to the Kingdom of Sathya Sai; therefore, you have the special task of propagating the ideals of Sai by both precept and example. Direct your lives as citizens of the "Kingdom of Sathya Sai." Let the Name be your guide and your goal. Thyagaraja lived up to his name. When the ruler offered gifts of precious gemstones, houses and land, he spurned them, declaring, "My heart is laid at the Feet of Rama. You cannot secure it in exchange for this trash." Ramarajya has become a word charged with sanctity because Rama made his kingdom the home of Righteousness, Justice and peace. You have a great responsibility because you have named your association, the "Kingdom of Sathya Sai."

Some 'old students' of the College are worried because when they come to Brindavan later, I have not spoken to them or even cast a glance at them. The reason is they are not even identifiable as students who were in the College for five or seven years. Good thoughts, words and deeds have not taken root in them. Your action has produced the reaction. Sai only reflects your mind. He has no prejudice or preference. He is a mirror wherein you can see yourselves as you really are. In order to correct their mistakes and remove their faults, I have sometimes to use harsh words but you may rest assured that my sole aim is to turn you into better ways; I have no anger in me. It is the inner compassion which takes the outer form of anger. I have caused these colleges and hostels to be constructed and lakhs of rupees to be spent every year, not for my sake but in the hope that at least a few among the students who join them will follow the ideals I set before them, and stand forth before the world as examples. Listen to that call and let it reverberate in your hearts every moment of your lives.

—Annual Day of Kingdom of Sathya Sai Prasanthi Nilayam 22-11-79

The Next Step

Whatever originates does degenerate. All things seen as objects lose their identity in the bottomless pool of Time. Man, however, wanders about in the objective world presented before him as form, and name, seeking to extract there from permanent peace and unalloyed bliss. He is engaged in fallow pursuits and nefarious tactics which fail to provide him the key to the Absolute and the Eternal. Does the key exist in the outer world or in the inner? So long as man embroils himself in the 'Seen', he cannot see the 'See-er'. So long as your attention is caught by the flowers in this garland, you cannot cognise the string that holds them together. Inquiry is essential to discover the base which upholds the garland. So too, inquiry alone can bring into human experience the Atmic base which upholds the objective sensory world.

The world can confer, at best, only momentary joy. Happiness, prosperity and power are but flashes amidst the dark clouds of misery, poverty and defeat. Kith and kin of whom we are proud and in whom we lay our trust succumb to death and depart without a word of farewell. But, we do not learn the lesson; we cling to the belief that the outer world is the treasure chest of peace and joy.

In all temples where idols of Rama are installed, we find idols of Hanuman too, kneeling in front, with eyes fixed on the Rama He serves and loves. In temples of Siva, we find Nandi and in temples of Vishnu we find Garuda idols; they too appear intent on adoration only and awaiting, with unwinking eyes, the orders of their Masters. Their vision is one-pointed; their goal is eternal Bliss; their strength is in their inner victory. They have turned their faces from the Particular to the Universal and so they too share our reverence and worship. The journey to God makes the pilgrim also revered; the journey to Mammon is worthy of only rebuke.

There are only two roads before man: the road to God and the road to Mammon. Few are those who choose the first and reach the Goal that lies within them, where the Atma shines in supreme glory. The multitudes trudge along the second road and waste their lives in the wilderness to which it leads. There, the beast in man asserts itself and suppresses the excellences with which he is endowed.

Almost always, man is anxious to ignore the faults and failings of the objects that draw his attention: If he only recognises these, he is certain to evaluate them correctly and behave more intelligently. When man becomes aware that the cobra is a poisonous snake and that the leopard is a cruel beast, he avoids them with constant vigilance. Similarly, when we become aware of the transitoriness and triviality of worldly triumphs and possessions, we can easily detach ourselves from them and concentrate on inner wealth and inner vision. All things in the outer world of objects are subject to change. Impermanent objects can confer only impermanent happiness to man who is himself impermanent. How can it ever be otherwise? Only the spring of Bliss can confer Bliss. A fitful spring, a drying decaying spring can give happiness only in fits and even that will before long decay and dry.

Atma alone is the ever-full and ever-fresh spring of Bliss. The Atma is the motivator of the physical machine known as the Body. It can be inferred only through the performance of the

machine. The Atmic Energy motivates every Being in the Universe—Man, Animal, Bird, Worm, Tree and Grass. Once man contacts it, he is blessed with Universal vision, absolute delight and eternal wisdom. Every one has the thirst to realise it and be with It but only very few take steps to reach it. Thousands proclaim the glory of the Atma but only a handful strive to attain it.

Sage Sukra who was the preceptor of Emperor Bali is described in the Bhagavata as a great exponent of the doctrine of charity. He could expatiate on the merit that can be acquired by gifts offered to pious persons and to the needy. But when Bali was offering a gift to God Himself (in the role of Vamana, a young Brahmin student) he advised the Emperor to desist. His action belied his words. Profession is one eye and practice, the second. Therefore, according to the story, when Sukra attempted to prevent the gift, he became blind in one eye. Those who hold forth ideals in profuse eloquence must demonstrate the value of those ideals in their daily lives. Otherwise, they become Sukras who can only speak; they have no honest faith in their own words. Since devotees stop halfway and start extolling the Guru and his teachings rather than experiencing their value and validity, the Atma and the Infinite Bliss It can confer, remain undiscovered by aspirants.

The Atma cannot be grasped through metaphors and examples. No form can contain It; no name can denote It. How can the limited comprehend the Unlimited, the Now measure the Ever, the Wayward understand the Stable? The Kathopanishad described how God Yama parried the steady stream of questions, which the boy Nachiketas asked him in right earnest, about the Atma. Yama tried His best to cool his ardour by promising to confer on him boons regarding wealth, power and long life. But Nachiketas spurned these trinkets. He replied, "Dharmaraja! All-powerful Yama! I know that the senses, which are eager to earn these gifts you offer, are polluted by them and are destroyed pretty soon by their contact: I am not seeking from You these evanescent joys. Tell me of the Eternal and the True—the Atma!" On hearing this, Yama said, "Son! You yearn for Wisdom; you are not attached to Wealth. Well. I shall fulfill your request."

Emperor Janaka, too, on one occasion, told himself, "My great-grandfathers, grandfathers and father commanded vast wealth and spent their lives in unstinted luxury. But they have all become the dust out of which they emerged. Man cannot escape this fate. Why then should he hanker after these petty pleasures? Let me use this life, this physical machine, for realising the ultimate goal, the basic Truth, the fundamental Atma." Consequent on this firm resolution, Janaka was able to succeed in the arena of spiritual endeavour. The poet sings, "Janaka had God ever in his thoughts, even while engaged in discharging his daily duties as an Emperor. And, by this Raja Yoga, he attained the supreme stage of Liberation from bondage to the individual self." The body is but an instrument to discover the Indweller. Withdraw from the outer to the inner and learn to visualise the Motivator, the Atma—that is the lesson which the seers and scriptures teach, To engage ourselves in the purificatory exercises, to pursue the inquiry into the Reality of God, Nature and Man, and to experience the ecstatic delight of that Discovery, the Body is very necessary. It has got to be kept healthy and alert, free from passion and sloth, balanced and expectant of victory.

Of course, the Atma is everywhere, at all times. It is like milk and its colour. It is white, everywhere, at all times, under all conditions, as milk or as butter, cream or ghee. So too, the Atma, persists unchanged, however many changes the thing motivated by It might undergo. The

Atma contacts the senses of perception and affects the mind; it awakens the intellect to discriminate and decide upon the lines of action. The Atma activates the instruments of thought, speech and action, of expression and communication. The eyes see; but, which is the force that prompts them? You may have ears but who endows them with the power of hearing? Words emanate from the mouth; but which is it that urges us and frames the manner and content of the speech? That force acts like the cells in a torch which provide the bulb with the current to illuminate it. Doctors know that the body consists of cells, billions of them, alive and alert, busy and active. Each cell is motivated by the Atma; it is immanent, all over. The Atma is in each of them, as well as in every spot of space. When we realise it as such, it is experienced as Effulgent Total Splendorous Light: Endless, Incomparable, Unique Light.

The ancient seers ignored the World as irrelevant and immersed themselves in inner inquiry until they contacted the Universal Atma and filled themselves with Ananda. They had to limit desires, control their cravings and live in the conviction that the destiny of Man is to divest himself of the animal heritage and to sublimate his innate humanity into Divinity.

Consider for a while the fate of the rulers of all realms, the leaders of arms and nations, the Presidents and Prime Ministers, emerging from oblivion and merging in the same—did any one of these carry with them when they passed away any portion of their wealth or possession? When one dies, another takes his place; when he dies, still another is ready to assume the role. And all are equally forgotten—except those who have heroically realised the Atma and raised themselves to the Divine State. So, believe that the struggle for status, for power, for fame and for wealth is not commendable at all. Having been blessed by this chance to live as human beings, have as the ideal, the Realisation of Reality. The Upanishads exhort you to march on to this goal. They address you as "Amrutasya Putraah!" "Children of Immortality." Try to deserve that honour, to achieve that height. Learn to use all your skills, all your intelligence, all your time for attaining that victory. You are Gods in human form, for only Gods can be immortal. You are embodiments of the Divine Atma. Do not degrade your lives in low pursuits. Spend it in sacred thoughts, loving service, self-less acts and sweet words of Solace.

—*From Divine Discourse-Prasanthi Nilayam. 25.9.1979*

The Right Type Of Education

1. What is education?

Definitions apart, education is a process by which a human being is nurtured and taught how to cope with the environment, how to manifest his potentialities and lastly how to become a useful member of the society in which he lives in. This means education should—(1) Provide information and skills to meet the basic human demands viz. life, liberty and happiness (2) inculcate values and develop character so as to manifest the divinity within man (3) help man to become a useful member of the society in which he lives.

Bhagavan Sai says, "We have got Vigyan and Pragyan, two aspects of learning. Vigyan is what we call science, understanding the world as it is. Pragyan is the higher learning—the science of controlling the inner feelings and consciousness." Thus one can see Education should provide Vigyan and Pragyan; one can add Sanghikagyan or awareness of social ills and their cure. Vigyan gives knowledge and skill while Pragyan gives balance and insight.

When information does not lead to skill it remains only as an undigested fund in the brain—more burden, than nourishment. Pragyan should inculcate in man the fourfold awareness: awareness of the body, awareness of the prana, awareness of mind and awareness of awareness itself. This is possible through Yoga and allied sciences. Further, Sanghikagyan must lead man to Loka sangraha, teach him how to be a responsible citizen and how to serve the community as the best way to serve himself.

2. The malady of the indian scene

The Indian educational scene is a shocking mess. If all the educational institutes disappear overnight nothing tragic can happen. Soon we may have to start deschooling also!

Why? The basic malady of education in India is that it is not rooted in Indian culture and ethos. "After 32 years of Independence we are still rootless quasi-colonials who look upon an Anglo-American accent as the passport to paradise, viz., the Civil Services and the prestigious Business Houses." While accepting the technology and science of the West we have accepted the evils also—a hedonistic philosophy with emphasis on sex and violence, love of speed and greed, anxiety to make a quick buck by any means, double-think, double deal etc, as if these are not borrowed counterfeit ideologies like democracy, socialism and secularism for reconstruction of our society. If one asks the politicians to define these words there will be as many definitions as there are politicians. These are only catch-words to cheat the gullible public. This again is the alien virus which is eating into our vitality.

The Indian concept, on the other hand is Dharma, in every walk of life, in every human endeavour. Its emphasis is on Truth at any cost. Its appeal is for peace and its means for the reconstruction of Society is Love. The Indian passion for the search for God is through both secular and spiritual Living. The kind of education that is given in our schools and Colleges is completely alien to these noble ideals; no wonder, educated Indians are strangers in their own country!

To reverse this trend the first thing that the enlightened should do is set up good examples before youth by their conduct. Who should teach the teachers? Parents and teachers should realise that as the water in the tank, so it is in the taps. The elite should not be ashamed to be what they are. They should set trends and fashions to others to imitate and emulate. Honesty, truth, love, charity and such other concepts should be made fashionable. Swami Vivekananda used to repeat again and again, "We are surrounded by too many persons, who are willing to compromise and temporise, so many 'boneless wonders' for whom expediency is all." The elite should pluck courage and speak out clear and loud for those values which they hold sacred. They should not swim with the tide and degenerate into a mass of mediocrity.

3. Reconstruction of Indian education

Why should we blindly imitate other systems? The noblest sons of this great country have given rich concepts. Swami Vivekananda talked about scientific religion and man-making education. He exhorted again and again that we should dehypnotise ourselves; his watch-word was Abhi—Be Fearless. Rabindranath Tagore talked about the Religion of Man and Viswamanava, the universal man. Aurobindo talked about the Ascent of man to Divinity, while Gandhiji gave the gospel of Swadeshi for personal betterment, Satyagraha for political and social transformation and trusteeship for economic reconstruction. Our Beloved Baba has been bringing about a silent revolution through the concepts of Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, and Prema. He has emphasised the value of Bhajan as personal sadhana and of Seva as community sadhana and the need for Love to bring out that Peace, Santhi in human relations. He teaches people to follow Dharma in all walks of life so that there is harmony in and among men. Adherence to Truth brings in the transformation necessary to know the real nature of things and wraps man in Santhi, which is very necessary for secular and spiritual life. Baba is the Premamurthy who transforms men by pouring that immortal nectar called Prema into desiccated hearts.

All that is needed therefore, is to weld these concepts into a blue-print for our new educational system. Let us see how we can do this. First we should provide the necessary information and skills to our children to cope up with the complex environment. Since science and technology are a must to survive as a nation we cannot run away from them; science education should go on and be updated as and when new information is won. But we should retain the freedom not to imbibe the accompanying maladies.

Second: We have to teach the child the concept of One World and how to live in harmony with different races, religions and languages. He should be taught enough Swadeshi, to develop self-respect to revere, his country, its religion and culture. He should also develop self-reliance. He should be taught to practise Truth at any cost, Love at any cost and Sacrifice at any cost, so that he can use the spiritual strength to redress individual and social grievances. He should also be taught the purpose of human life and how to achieve the same through Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. He should also be taught to become a responsible citizen contributing to mutual betterment and to peace by the teachings of Bhagavan Baba.

—Dr. P. Ramamoorthy M.Sc., Ph.D.

Dhyanadarshana

(Theory and Practice of Meditation)

Compiled and Translated by B. Srinivas Murthy from Bhagavan's Divine Discourses

What Dhyana is

Dhyana is a self-motivated, self-suggested and self-induced state of super-consciousness. It is an aid to the attainment of higher altered state of consciousness.

The nature of mind

If you think about an object incessantly, imagine its form vividly, remember it constantly, chant its name repeatedly, and brood over it passionately, it will make an indelible and everlasting impression on your mind. A mind capable of becoming insanely preoccupied with mundane ambitions will be equally capable of becoming magnificently obsessed with spiritual aspirations. Just as a lovely form lures a voluptuary a divine form enraptures a devotee. If any form of the Immanent Cosmic Self, Omnipresent Divinity and Eternal Reality is constantly reflected upon, It manifests Itself as a thought form, reveals Itself as a vision, and ultimately materializes Itself as a Divine Existent.

Man's mind is an immaculate mirror. It provides an undistorted image of an object reflected by it. A mind polluted by profane thoughts mirrors the same profane thoughts. The human mind is a *tabula rasa*. It is naturally pure, amoral and neutral. If it is exposed to evil influences, it becomes evil. An immaculate mind will be dehumanized by diabolical desires. A mind irradiated by the lambent light of divine love becomes divinized and sanctified. Such a sanctified mind becomes a radiant mirror of the Life Divine.

What meditation means

An ordinary human mind is perpetually preoccupied with mundane matters. It is eternally engaged in the contemplation of its environment. To attain a higher altered state of consciousness this mundane mind must turn inwards and concentrate its attention on the inner personal self. In other words, meditation is mental regression from extreme extroversion to profound introversion.

The vast universe around us is in an eternal state of dynamic equilibrium. Our external world is in a state of perpetual flux. All material objects, the entities and entities of this restless universe are mutable and transient. They have illusory forms and are evanescent existents confined to our spatiotemporal continuum. All worldly values are purely relative and have no absolute worth. Meditation is the search for that noumenal reality which lies behind the phenomenal appearances created by our conscious sensations, perceptions and conceptions.

Five dimensional personality of man

Man is a microcosmic replica of the macrocosmic creation. His body is composed of panchabhutas or the five primordial principles of earth, water, air, fire and ether. He is animated by five Jnanendriyas or the five doors of perception represented by his eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin corresponding to the five sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Our knowledge of the external world is inferred from these visual, aural, olfactory, palatal and tactile sense

data. The human body is constituted by panchakoshas or the five subtle sheaths. It is energized by panchapranas or the five vital energies.

The ever-changing, evanescent and irreversible human organism composed of panchabhutas, animated by panchendriyas (five Jnanendriyas assisted by five Karmendriyas), constituted by panchakoshas, and energized by panchapranas is subject to decay, disintegration, dissolution and death.

Jyoti represents the immortal atman

But, there is an asomatic, immutable, imperishable, indestructible and supra-spatiotemporal subsistent which survives the dissolution of the panchabhutas, panchendriyas, panchakoshas and panchapranas. It is the immortal atman or the discarnate personal self. It is essentially a divine Jyoti, a lambent light radiating the golden glory of God, the Cosmic Self. It shines with an ever lasting and inextinguishable effulgence.

Let us take the example of a tank full of water. Let each person remove a tumblerful of water from the tank. The level of water goes down and the tank becomes empty. Let us also imagine a heap of sand. If each person removes a handful of sand from the heap, the sand disappears.

Let us next consider the phenomenon of the eternal Jyoti shedding its lambent light of love and divinity. It represents the immortal atman. An infinite number of jyotis can be lighted with the aid of the Jyoti. But, the brilliance of this primordial archetypal Jyoti does not diminish. This original prototype continues to glow with the same pure primal effulgence. It goes on gleaming eternally. Hence, a steadily shining Jyoti is the most appropriate form to be meditated upon.

Ekagrata

Ekagrata is one-pointedness of mind. It is undivided attention concentrated on a definite form. It is the reduction of the span of attention to a single point. It is the convergence of all thought waves at the focus of attention. A large number of upadhis or practical aids are available for the attainment of Ekagrata. Contraction of the normal span of attention leads to deep concentration. Likewise, expansion of the normal span of attention leads to diffusion of thought and the divergence of thought waves away from the focus of attention. In other words, Ekagrata or one-pointedness becomes Anekagrata or many-pointedness.

Consider the example of a vessel filled with water. If the vessel is steady, the water in it will also be steady. If the vessel is, shaken, the surface of the water will be disturbed by little ripples. Then, imagine a maelstrom in an ocean. The terrible waves thrown up by its deep whirlpools can wreck the largest steamers.

The lake of the human mind

The human mind is often likened to a lake. If the placid lake of man's mind is agitated by turbulent waves of passions and ambitions, he becomes unhappy and restless. In a similar manner, frequent and undesirable bodily movements like changing postures or making gesticulations cause irreparable psychic damage to human personality. They affect mind and body like the waves thrown up by a whirlpool. Young men endowed with robust bodies and energetic minds are likely to be excited by vicious thought waves generated by wrong postures

and violent gestures. Body and mind interpenetrate each other. You cannot control your mind without disciplining your body.

Mind is disturbed by body movements

Man's body is interpenetrated with mind. Mind can be regarded as the embodied self. During meditation the body should be quiet, steady and motionless. Then, the mind interpenetrating with the body can attain tranquility. If bodily postures change continually, the mind gets agitated. A disturbed and worried mind makes the clear stream of consciousness murky and muddy. The uncontrollable meanderings of mind disperse its thought waves from the main focus of attention.

Mind is a power pack of energy

Man's mind is endowed with stupendous potential energy. It possesses innumerable unutilized and unmanifested potentialities. It is subtler than the subtlest form of matter. It is a power pack of preternatural energy.

Personal self is cosmic self

Let us fill a little cup with salt water from the sea. The water in the cup and the water in the sea are the same though the cup contains only an infinitesimal fraction of the seawater. Likewise, the microcosmic personal self is the same as the macrocosmic Universal Self.

Padmasana

The practice of padmasana or the cross-legged lotus posture is of paramount importance in meditation. A Sadhaka should keep his backbone straight. No part of the backbone should be bent. Many youngsters walk like hunchbacks. Sitting straight is essential for all forms of meditation. Many men and women do not know how to sit straight. In course of time their backbones acquire the curvature of an easy chair. The head, shoulders and back of a Sadhaka should be erect. He should not recline backwards, stoop forwards, or bend sideward. The entire body should be quiet and relaxed. An imaginary straight line passing down through the centre of the top of the skull of the Sadhaka should be almost perpendicular to the seat on which he squats during meditation. The total mass of his body should be equally distributed and balanced around this imaginary axis. Those who cannot learn the padmasana may adopt the sukhasana or any convenient and practicable posture.

The importance of the cross-legged lotus posture technically known as padmasana cannot be overemphasized. Its regular practice is conducive to physical fitness and mental alertness. The practice of padmasana is an integral part of Dhyana. Its esoteric significance is closely connected with the chakras or plexuses.

Chakras

Man's body consists of a number of chakras or plexuses. A chakra is the centre of a subtle network of nerves. A complicated and crisscrossed web of veins and arteries radiate from each chakra. In the opinion of occultists and clairvoyants, a chakra is a small circular segment where the subtle astral body coincides with the gross physical body. Muladharachakra is the perineal plexus situated in the perineum between the genital organs and the rectum. It is also known as the basal coccygeal plexus.

Kundalini shakti

Muladharachakra or the perineal plexus is the storage cell of kundalini shakti, the primal parapsychical energy latent in man. It is a subtle esoteric form of energy congealed around the muladharachakra. It is symbolically depicted in treatises on yoga as a small sleeping serpent with three coils and a half. It inhales and exhales rhythmically. It transmits super physical impulses along the subtle axis connecting the six occult plexuses. One-pointed attention, complete concentration, steady contemplation and deep absorption sustained by strong self-motivation lead to the ultimate altered state of consciousness.

In the most profound state of meditation the coiled serpent symbolizing the primordial energy of kundalini is slowly awakened from its spiritual slumber. The potential energy of kundalini gets converted into kinetic energy. It levitates slowly along the subtle axis connecting the six chakras or plexuses viz., the aforementioned muladharachakra or the umbilical plexus, anahatachakra or the cardiac plexus, vishudhachakra or the pharyngeal plexus, ajnachakra or the brow plexus, and sahasrara chakra or the crown plexus. Sahasrara means a thousand-petalled lotus. It is regarded as the king of plexuses. It is situated at the top of the skull. When the awakened kundalini shakti reaches the sahasrara chakra an adept acquires preternatural powers. The communion of the personal self with the Cosmic Self is the ultimate goal of dhyana-yoga.

Voice of silence

The voice of silence is the voice of God, the immanent Cosmic Self. Hence, perfect solitude is a prerequisite for the practice of meditation. You may choose for meditation any convenient place you like but it should be as clean as possible. A solitary spot, a serene atmosphere and a spiritual environment promote pure thoughts, sublime sentiments and unselfish emotions. A polluted place promotes polluted thoughts. Pollution is spiritually contagious. Pollution of the atmosphere pollutes mind and body. A sadhaka's attention is likely to be distracted by the diabolical thought forms created by a polluted environment. Serenity and solitude are essential for the purification and tranquillization of body and mind

`Solitude in multitude' and `Multitude in solitude'

When a large number of people have to practise meditation at one place they should not sit in an overcrowded manner. They must not touch each other. There should be no physical contacts during meditation. Mental tranquility and physical euphoria are essential for acquiring higher altered states of consciousness. Even in an overcrowded room `solitude in multitude' can be experienced if all sensory stimuli and responses are scrupulously avoided. Sadhakas should cooperate with one another in maintaining absolute silence.

In general, collective meditation is self-contradictory and self-defeating. Group meditation is a misnomer since no meditation can be practised in an uncontrollable crowd. As meditation is a solitary spiritual exercise, the question of mutual collaboration does not normally arise except in telepathic communications. It is exceedingly difficult though not absolutely impossible to gain one-pointed attention in a large congregation. During congregational meditation a Sadhaka may shut his eyes but his mind may wander from one thought to another. He is likely to become listless and restless. He may be tempted to see what others are doing. He is apt to indulge in comparisons. He is likely to forget that sadhana is a personal spiritual practice in which com-

parisons are invariably odious. Each Sadhaka should formulate his own unique spiritual programme. He should not worry about others. He should try and listen to the still small voice of his own inner silence. It is only then that he can experience the most sublime divine afflatus, the highest altered state of consciousness. If two or three bangles are worn on each wrist the slightest movement causes a series of tintinnabulations. But, if each wrist is adorned with a single bangle no sound is produced. The striking contrast between the 'one' and 'two' is picturesquely expressed by the epigram: 'EK niranjan do gadbad' (one creates calm and two create a storm).

Meditation is reduced to an exercise in futility whenever two or more persons try to work together as a team. It is necessary to repeat that there can be no collaboration in meditation. However, it may not be always possible for a Sadhaka to have a separate cell or cubicle for meditation. Nevertheless, it should be possible for every Sadhaka to isolate himself physically from others, insulate his body and mind from all external and internal disturbances, and become a lonely island in a turbulent sea of distractions. He should try and withdraw himself into a spiritual shell of his own. He should cut off all sensory contacts with his physical environment. He must endeavour to confine himself to his own personal aura though he maybe compelled by circumstances beyond his control to stay in the company of other Sadhakas. It should be clearly recognized that a soul which has discovered its own inner tranquility can enjoy 'solitude in multitude' just as a sick soul suffers from 'multitude in solitude'!

Purity of mind and body

A sadhaka should cultivate ceremonial purity by keeping his body and mind clean. The human body is a tabernacle consecrated to its personal self which is identical with the Cosmic Self. A sadhaka should regard his body as a temple of the living God. He should purge his mind of all morbid emotions and fill his heart with divine love.

Preparation for meditation

A sadhaka should not practise meditation squatting on bare ground. The subtle occult force or esoteric energy generated during deep meditation is akin to a current of electricity. It is common knowledge that an electric circuit is connected with the earth to avoid accidents like electrocution and short-circuiting. The earth conducts an electric current and dissipates its high potential. Thus, many electrical hazards are either completely eliminated or partially minimized. The subtle current of esoteric energy generated during deep meditation flows along the backbone of a Sadhaka. This esoteric energy should be utilized for acquiring higher altered states of consciousness. Hence, a Sadhaka should always squat on a mat or a carpet during meditation. He may use an ordinary mat. It also serves as an efficient shock-absorber. A simple mat woven with durbha grass or tunga reeds will be useful (Tunga is an aquatic weed growing in shallow streams). It is necessary to reiterate that a Sadhaka should never squat on uncovered floor during meditation. This preliminary precaution will protect him from the psychic and physical hazards involved in spiritual sadhana.

Every serious student of the spiritual science of noetics should remember that such rituals are only external paraphernalia. They do not form an integral part of meditation. They are only aids to the attainment of higher altered states of consciousness. Any cunning charlatan can squat on a mat made of weeds, practise padmasana or the cross-legged lotus posture, join his thumb and index finger in the form of chinmudra, and keep his eyes half closed. It may be a mere pose for

hoodwinking gullible people. Unwary persons are fooled by such theatrical gimmicks. But, an adept can easily distinguish genuine spirituality from spurious ritualism.

Man's mind is a mad monkey

A novice must try and transcend all trivial worries, wavering moods, fickle thoughts, inexplicable phobias and unpredictable manias that torture and torment his monkey mind. Many students switch off the lights and settle down for meditation. But, they cannot switch off their thoughts. One thought leads to another, sparking off a sort of mental chain reaction. It is the nature of mind to go on recalling, recollecting, remembering, reflecting, reasoning, thinking and worrying. Man's mind is a mad monkey. It cannot spontaneously acquire Ekagrata or one-pointed attention. It is like a monkey, who can never keep quiet. You may give him all sorts of sweetmeats. But, he will go on scratching himself and jumping from one branch to another branch.

An idle man's brain is said to be a devil's workshop. It is dangerous to keep the mind idle. It must always have some work to do. It should never be given a holiday. An unpreoccupied mind destroys the individual himself. The human mind works without respite. It cannot rest even for a single split second. Its spiritual appetite should be whetted in order to prepare it for meditation. A slothful mind remains slothful forever. It is only an energetic mind that can develop strong self-motivation, for the cultivation of Ekagrata or one-pointed attention, complete concentration, steady contemplation, deep absorption and non-dualistic meditation.

Meditation is not concentration

Many lay-persons believe that meditation and concentration are identical. They are not. Concentration is not a lower form of meditation. They are related but not similar. The first step in meditation is self-motivation. Self-motivation should enable a Sadhaka to attain Ekagrata or one-pointed attention. Contraction of the normal span of attention leads to concentration. A man might say that he has been meditating for many years and that he has not been able to achieve concentration of mind. But, it is obvious that one need not practise meditation for cultivating concentration. Concentration is a natural mental faculty. It is a spontaneous intellectual activity. It is an integral part of all worldly activities. It is inseparable from the karma of human life. It can never be dispensed with as long as karma is being worked out. It is an essential element of all voluntary action. In fact, you cannot do anything without concentration. If you have no concentration you cannot walk along a street, eat your food, write a letter or read a book. When you read a book you concentrate on the juxtaposition of letters, words, sentences, paragraphs and chapters. Thus, you try, and grasp the meaning of words, sentences, paragraphs, chapters and an entire book. Without concentration you cannot understand even a single word. In a similar manner, you cannot compose an ordinary letter decently without concentration of mind. Consider the example of eating your meal. When you sit down for your meal you have to distinguish chutney from sambar without mixing them up. If you have no concentration you cannot eat your food in a socially acceptable fashion. When you are walking along a road to go to your college you concentrate on the traffic to avoid accidents. Concentration is such a common faculty that you need not make any special effort to acquire it. It is so universal and phenomenal that you need not even think about it. You need not practise meditation for acquiring mental concentration. If you try to do so you will be putting the cart before the horse. Thus, it becomes clear that concentration and meditation are two separate faculties though they are always interdependent.

and interconnected. Concentration is sensory, empirical, rational, logical and intellectual whereas meditation is suprasensory, supraempirical, suprarational, supralogical and suprainTELlectual. Meditation is an intuitive and mystical experience. In short, concentration is a conscious activity and meditation is a super-conscious experience.

From consciousness to super consciousness

Eyes see. Ears hear. The nose smells. The tongue tastes. The skin feels cold and warmth. Hands and feet do work. Manas discriminates. Buddhi reasons. Eyes, ears nose, tongue, skin, hands, feet, manas and buddhi are indriyas. Their functions depend on sensory impressions.

Concentration is achieved when the activities of the various sensory and motor organs are organized, correlated, coordinated, synthesized and synchronized. Concentration is an activity of the conscious mind. It is entirely dependent on the sense data supplied by sensory organs. It is always subservient to sensations. It can never be an independent mental faculty. But, meditation is a supramental experience akin to intuitive insight and mystical revelation. It can be described as a state of suprasensory experience or extrasensory perception. Since concentration is an indispensable natural activity it must obviously form the foundation of meditation. The steady transition from concentration to meditation is the summum-bonum of spirituality. Concentration depends on indriyas and the indriyas are regulated by mind. Thus, it is only by transcending the mind that the transformation of concentration into meditation becomes possible. Consciousness should evolve into super-consciousness.

Education in the Sai Era

Over three hundred educationists actively engaged in the profession and deeply interested in the process of guiding the youth of the land gathered at the Sri Sathya Sai College Auditorium at Brindavan, Whitefield for a special meeting of the Sri Sathya Sai Study Circle to listen to Bhagavan's Message on Sunday 10th February 1980 at 10 a.m. Prof. V. Pappu, M. Sc., Ph.D. of the Indian Institute of Science, the Convener of the Study Circle, welcomed the gathering and laid at Bhagavan's Lotus Feet the homage of the members and of the devotees present. He prayed for Bhagavan's Grace and Blessings for the projects contemplated by the Study Circle. He spoke of the silent but significant revolution happening before our very eyes in the educational field in the institutes, schools and colleges established with His Blessings and being run under His guidance. He declared that Bhagavan would rectify the deficiencies and defects that are causing the disintegration of the educational system which we are witnessing today.

Prof. V. K. Gokak, M.A., D.Litt., renowned educationist and former Vice Chancellor of the University of Bangalore said that changes in the quality and content of education have been long over due. The responsibility for the stagnation in the field of educational reforms has to be laid on placid public and the media, the sloth that has taken hold of the universities and their academic councils and the too busy politicians. Governments have no inclination or incentive for calm creative thinking. Therefore, attempts are made only in a token way to fill a few gaps in the system by well-meaning idealists who start and struggle with schools which the nation really needs. Supplementary courses on Indian Culture and Spirituality are sponsored by Bhagavan and

under His Guidance in various states. Sri T. A. Pai referred to the sense of helplessness which has overcome all those who toil in the educational field. The problems cannot be solved by the intellect only. Love alone can touch the heart of those who are swept by the current restlessness and Baba, the embodiment of Love, can alone lead us and guide us in the task the Circle has undertaken.

Bhagavan, then, gave His Divine Discourse.

Education must enable a person to discriminate between light and darkness; it must foster and promote the precious wealth of moral strength and spiritual victory, must purify the inner impulses of man. Mere mastery of books does not entitle a man to be known as 'educated'. Without the mastery of the inner instruments of emotion, no man can be deemed to be educated. The latent has to be cleansed so that the patent can flourish. Experience is essential for the confirmation and consolidation of what is learnt from books. We do not see any sign of this in the present educational system. There is no attempt to awaken the Divine in Man, no awareness of the possibility of rising to the psychic plane.

The ideal that is held before the student in our educational institutions is different. They are engaged in a mechanical process of turning out young men and women who detest work that soils the hand, that disturbs the folds of their dress. They instill the passion for profit in the hearts of the learners; they ignore the urge to sympathise and to serve. Education must result in wisdom and character as its products. It can be acquired only by hard living, by spending days of toil with no respite for even sleep. But present-day education makes those who undergo it, mere bond-slaves to their senses. They do not know how to avoid this bondage. The educated revel in envy, greed and egoism. What the country expects and demands from the educated person is, however, that he should set the example of honest labour, lighting the lamp of knowledge in every home.

When you think it over, you will discover confusion, uncertainty and indecision in every section of the educational system. The remedy for this unhappy situation lies in the revival of ancient ideals and practices with slight adaptations to suit the changed times and circumstances. For, these ideals and practices enshrine values that are eternal and essential.

For example, though the Russians and Americans boast that they have advanced far forward in the fields of science and technology, one has to admit that this country had made vast progress in them even in the Vedic Age. The Atharva Veda embodies many technological secrets and scientific laws which were directly utilised by Westerners. Western scholars are investigating the possibilities of the exploratory laws mentioned in this Vedic text. Mention is made of aerial vehicles, of gravitation, and of various other scientific principles and appliances. They have inspired many inventors and technicians in other lands through the ages.

Indians have developed a fascination for foreign lands. They admire the achievements of other people but ignore those of their own people. The faculty of initiation is subdued by this faculty of imitation. As the proverb says, "they prefer the stale dal dish available at the neighbour's home to the well-cooked tasty dish available at one's own home. As a result, we are unable to identify and promote the knowledge and skill that we have mastered in our own country."

The Wright Brothers are declared to be the pioneers, the very first to fly a heavier than air plane in the sky. Their powered flight took place on December 17, 1903. But, a German had actually forestalled them by his flight on September 13, 1896. We must note that even earlier than this German, on August 14, 1895, an Indian belonging to Bombay, Shivaram Bapuji Kadalekar by name, had succeeded on that date. His name failed to draw public admiration and his feat was not acclaimed because of the envy, selfishness and quarrelsome nature of our people.

Unity of minds, mutual love and cooperation are the qualities we have to develop today. Education is not for securing University degrees. Give up this mad pursuit after diplomas, which cater to the ego and increase the distance between you and others. Develop the desire to serve others and equip yourselves through education the skill needed to serve them better. Education must enthuse youth to understand the precious heritage of Indian culture and spirituality and to evoke the higher powers they possess. Though there are perennial sources and springs of strength within them, they behave like weaklings and ignoramuses. Patience, tolerance, tranquility, and calmness have to be implanted in the heart. Forbearance (Kshama) is Truth, Righteousness, Right Living, Love, Non-Violence—all virtues rolled into one.

Education has to cultivate humility and discipline, but, actually today it is yielding a harvest of pride and envy. Vidya means Vid (Light) ya (that which gives). So Vidya or education has to shed light, illumine the dark spots in the mind and intellect. It does not indicate mere book-knowledge. It has to clarify the kinship of man with other men and his intimate relationship with Nature. It must harmonise one's earlier experiences with one's present experiences, and guide one to profitable and beneficial experiences in the future. It must validate the knowledge gained from books by these experiences, and by that process, it must make man more and more human, until he becomes Divine.

Riches beyond reasonable limits will result only in disaster. So too mere scholarship, beyond limits, will bring about only pride and competitive struggles. Of course, information of a certain quality is desirable in a certain quantity. But, without a parallel and simultaneous cultivation of morals and self-awareness, scholarship will only be a burden and a danger. The cultivation of a social consciousness is also very important. One must not learn to live like a drop of oil on a pond of water; it spreads all over the surface and will not tolerate anything else. One must join others in common tasks and contribute one's strength and skill to the common pool. A single thin string cannot bend even an ant but hundreds of them twisted into a rope hold back an elephant. This is the effect of united effort. Willingness to act in cooperation with others for a common cause is a very desirable trait. But, now, what is happening is only 'operation'!

What can gatherings, meetings and session of learned bodies achieve? The conclusions arrived at after extensive discussions are not put into practice at all. Large sums of money as well as countless reams of paper are wasted. The recommendations and resolutions must be tested on the touchstone of practice. The money can be better spent on raising the standard of life of the village folk. You have formed a Study Circle. Study the best means of bringing peace and apply those means in a few villages to prove their validity. They can then be taught to people in other lands also. Members of the Circle can help students, who are handicapped or defective, and who have not been able to keep abreast of the rest, by giving them extra attention and special guidance.

The clouds gathered thick in the sky have in their midst streaks of lightning. So too, there has to be wisdom, illumining the clouds of knowledge. The learned man's life itself must shine as his message to mankind. Every particle of strength, every moment of life, every expression of virtue, every manifestation of intelligence must be directed to the fulfillment of this high purpose.

When the name of the drug is repeated, can the disease be cured? Can poverty be overcome by reciting the name, Dollar or Rupee? Can the reading of the menu-card remove the pang of hunger? A pass in the examination does not make a person more useful or wiser, Lecturers and professors of the teaching faculty constitute the overhead tank and the students are the 'taps'. When the tank is filled with potable water, the taps too will yield water with which men can slake their thirst. The duty of teachers is to correct and counsel the students, charging them with enthusiasm and courage and removing their sloth and vacillation. This is the underlying object of all the curricula and classes—to eliminate narrowness of outlook and to promote wide, inclusive modes of thought, word and deed. The faith in the one-ness of all must be rooted and strengthened. The Upanishad declares, "All this is enveloped by God" and the Gita declares, "All this is the Lord" and "The Lord is in all beings." Consider every student as one's own son, who is eager to learn. Consider every subject you teach as a means for instilling faith in God. When you teach physics, lead the students into the magnificent mystery of philosophy also. While teaching botany, guide them into the sublime secrets of the tree, and of the Creator who has blessed it with them. Life is a tree; mutual relationship we cultivate and cherish is symbolised by the branches, twigs and leaves. The thoughts arising in the mind are the flowers. Ananda or bliss is the fruit. And Virtue is the sweet juice it contains. The tree is held firm by the very roots which feed it. The roots symbolise faith, self-confidence.

At present, discipline has almost disappeared from the educational field. Professing one thing and doing another have become a universal vice. The nation can prosper and be happy only when education develops in an atmosphere of truth, love and reverence.

The participants in the Study Circle, later visited the Prajnana Pradarshan—the museum of Indian culture and spirituality, at the Sri Sathya Sai College.

Food and Health

Every activity of man is dependent on the energy he derives from the intake of food. The spiritual Sadhanas he ventures upon depend for their success on the quantity and quality of the food, taken by the Sadhaka, even during the preliminary preparations recommended by Patanjali. The most external of the five sheaths that enclose the Atmic core, namely the Annamaya Kosa, has impact on all the remaining four—the Pranamaya, the Manomaya, the Vijnanamaya and the Anandamaya. The Annamaya Kosa is the sheath, consisting of the material flesh and bone, built by the food that is consumed by the individual.

Food is generally looked down upon by ascetically minded Sadhakas and seekers and treated as some thing which does not deserve attention. But, since the body and the mind are mightily interdependent, no one can afford to neglect it. As the foods so the mind; as the mind, so the thought as the thought, so the act. Food is an important-factor which determines alertness and sloth, the worry and calm, the brightness and dullness. The scriptures classify food as Satwic, Rajasic and Tamasic and relate these three types to the three mental modes (Gunas) of the same names.

Man is the only living being which dislikes raw food found in the natural state. All other animals eat things as they are—grain, grass, leaves, shoots, fruits. Man boils, fries, melts, mixes and adopts various methods of cooking in order to satisfy the cravings of the tongue, the eye and the nose. As a consequence, the food value of these articles are either reduced or destroyed. When the seeds are fried, they do not sprout; that is clear proof that the 'life-force' is eliminated. Therefore, uncooked raw-pulses just sprouting, are to be preferred. Also nuts and fruits. The coconut, offered to the gods, is a good Satwic food, having good percentage of protein besides fat, starch and minerals. Food having too much salt or pepper is Rajasic and should be avoided; so also too much fat and starch, which are Tamasic in their effects on the body.

An intake of too much food is also harmful. Simply because tasty food is available and is being offered, one is tempted to overeat. We have air all around us but we do not breathe in more than we need. The lake is full but we drink only as much as the thirst craves for. But overeating has become a social evil, a fashionable habit. The stomach cries out, 'enough', but the tongue insists on more, and man becomes the helpless target of disease. He suffers from coercion, high blood pressure and diabetes. Moderate food is the best medicine to avoid bodily ills: Do not rush to the hospital for every little upset. Too much drugging is also bad. Allow nature full scope to fight the disease and set you right. Adopt more and more the principles of naturopathy, and give up running around for doctors.

The type of food that you consume decides the degree of concentration you can command; its quality and quantity decide how much your self-control is lessened or heightened. Polluted air and water are full of maleficent viruses and germs and have to be avoided at all costs. There are four pollutions against which man has to be vigilant—of the body (removable by water); of the mind (removable by truthfulness), of reason (removable by correct knowledge) and of the self (removable by yearning for God). Vaidya Narayana Harih, the Shrutis declare. God is the Doctor. Seek Him, rely on Him, you will be free from Disease.

—Baba (From Discourse on Hospital Day. Dasara-21-9-1979)

How do you know He is God?

In connection with a job search, I once met an elderly and well educated person. I showed him a copy of a book that I wrote. He looked at the second page where it was noted that the book was dedicated to "Bhagavan, Amma and Nanna". He asked me who the "Bhagavan" was. I have

stated that the Bhagavan is Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The scholar quickly and unhesitatingly remarked that Baba might be a great saint, but certainly not Bhagavan (God). After a while I collected the copy of my book and left the company of the Scholar.

I left the Scholar, but, I could not leave my thoughts. The Scholar's remark was all the time in my mind. Apparently his contention was that Swami could not be God. A response came to my mind. He who can say that Swami is not God must have to prove that he has known God. Suppose I see a metal and say that it is not gold, it is implied that I know gold. Similarly if some one says that Swami is not God, then it is implicit that he can recognize God. Indeed, the individual ought to be knowing God thoroughly well, otherwise, he can not distinguish from others who are not. So, I have decided that if some one says that my Swami is not God, I will simply ask him: "How do you know?"

Frankly, the fact that I have discovered that question has pleased me for a while only. After all just as I can ask: "How do you know Swami is *not* God?" I may be easily subjected to the counter question "How do you know He is God?" Naturally it is very desirable to know the answer to this question rather than to learn to raise the previous one.

Until I progress in my *sadhana* and become closer and closer to Him so that I can see Him in absolute unmanifest *as well as* relatively manifest *Swami*, I can not really know the answer to the question: "How do you know Swami is God?" But, though it is not needed to begin my *sadhana*, simply to enjoy the bliss that Swami gives me, I ought to have some answer, more down to earth of course, to the said question. Also it is not palatable to my *ego* to evade the answer to the question by saying that *sadhana* alone will give the answer (though this is the true answer). Hence I came to a conclusion. Until one can identify through *sadhana* the manifestation of the absolute in the form of Swami, one needs some transient working proof to cultivate the faith that Swami is God, and to be guided by this faith on the path of *sadhana*. Most Sai devotees, I believe, have used the following characteristics of Swami as the proof of His divinity and to say that He is God.

1. The Supernatural phenomena associated with Him (only God can do them).
2. His emphasis on all religions (only one absolute God or his real manifestation can emphasize this.)
3. His pure love (He gives and gives and forgives, never asking anything in return except love. One has to shed a thousand tears and beg Him to accept even a small gift which He does only to please His devotee).
4. The transformation He brings about in human behaviour (only God can correct people since He does this out of love)

etc. etc. etc

It is important to recognize why the above characteristics are noticed as the proof that Swami is God. I think it is because none of us wish to consider anything less than the above as characterizing God. This is so because the ego in us does not permit us to see God in everyone and everywhere. We direly need a personal God because we like to be corrected, questioned, patted and loved by someone much higher than the average human beings. For all these reasons

we see Swami as God. Clearly this is not the real proof. Real proof can be obtained only through *sadhana* and only when it can be realized that the absolute has indeed manifested as Swami and also when it is realized that the absolute is also manifest in all creation.

Thanks to Swami, I have learnt one thing. Every time I meet people who say that Swami is not God I have learnt to respect them and not to argue with them. For, what I know is no superior to what they think they know. I cannot prove and they cannot disprove. If my faith gives me joy and bliss, they too get something out of their faith.

For common people like me, the nice distinctions between yogi, saint, sage, incarnation and absolute God are totally irrelevant. All of them are divine just as one's mother, father and teacher are.

Twameva Sarvam Mama Sai Deva.

—Bhanoji Rao, Washington DC U. S. A. 23-24, November 1979

Patanjali and Baba

Having followed the path of Raja yoga for 9 years and having taught Hatha yoga for 5 years, becoming a Sai devotee generated some initial conflict and confusion within the mind.

Raja yoga is the path of developing the will so as to control all of the vehicles physical, pranic, emotional and mental. This development of will-power seemed sometimes, at least superficially, to conflict with the idea of Bhakti or the surrendering of the will to the divine.

One seemed active, the other, passive sort of relying on "something else" i.e. God, to do the work.

Baba has through his Grace slowly removed this conflict and shown the way of harmonizing these paths, at least for this particular Jiva.

Firstly, God is not "someone else", but one's own inner self. So "Easwara-Pranidhana" or resignation to the will of God, is nothing other than submitting to the will of one's own higher self. We are surrendering the "ego-will" to the "soul-will". Because most of us cannot detect our own "soul-will", it has to be objectified in a form of Easwara (such as Baba, Krishna or Christ), which is the will of the oversoul or Paramatman.

Patanjali, in his Yoga Sutras, the basic authoritative textbook on Raja Yoga, mentions "Easwara-Pranidhana" in 3 sutras as a prerequisite to the path of yoga, a technique on the path of spiritual development and a self-sufficient means by which to obtain Samadhi, and union with God. (Sutras I-23. II-1 and II-32).

Furthermore, in studying Patanjali's description of the degree of self-control needed for achievement of Samadhi and liberation, one begins to realize that, in this Kali Yuga, it is virtually an impossible task. The conditions are simply not conducive to the achievement of such detachment and discrimination on one's own steam.

Not only that, but Hatha and Raja Yoga without a sense of self-surrender and humility can sometimes lead to an enlargement of Ego. One develops a sense of "Spiritual Pride" at having accomplished something, or being "better" than others. Nothing could be more destructive to spiritual progress and human harmony.

We need in this phase of human development "Easwara", Himself to grace us with His Divine help in these efforts.

Sri Aurobindo expressed to one of his disciples in a letter: "Hardly anyone is strong enough to overcome, by his own unaided aspiration and will, the forces of the lower nature; even those who do it get only a certain kind of control, but not complete mastery, will and aspiration needed to bring down the aid of the Divine Force and to keep the being on its side in its dealing with the lower powers. The Divine Force fulfilling the spiritual will and the heart's Psychic aspiration can alone bring about the conquest."

A devotee asked, "What exactly is the function of Grace in helping spiritual progress through Sadhana?"

Bhagavan answered, "Grace from your own self is the most important and 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 the Ego with the help of Seva."

And interestingly enough Baba's thought for this day (Aug. 17, 1979) at Prasanthi Nilayam concerns the same subject.

"God's" Grace is the shower of rain, as the sunlight. You have to do some sadhana to acquire it, the sadhana of keeping a pot upright to receive the rain, the sadhana of opening the door of your heart so that the Sun may illumine it. Like the music that is broadcast over the radio, it is all around you, but you must switch your receiver on and tune in, to the right wavelength, so that you can hear and enjoy it. Pray for Grace, but do at least this little Sadhana. Grace will set everything right. This is the product of Sadhana; the conviction is of slow growth but it has to be acquired. This is the nature of Grace; it fulfils every variety of wants."

So this Jiva has felt growing within himself a balance of self-effort on one band in the form of disciplines such as Yama (Moral restraints), Niyama (observances), Asana (exercises), Pranayama (energy control), Pratyahara (withdrawal from senses), Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation), and on the other hand a supplication of the ego desires and fruit of actions to the Divine will. This Sadhana is done with daily regularity, including repeating the name of God as much as possible throughout the day and all activities.

Before each act of sadhana or other important acts such as work, eating, walking, sleeping etc. all is offered to the Divine will. A sample offering:

"Dear God, who are the Unmanifest Reality
And in your manifest form as Sai Baba,
Please accept these actions and tapas,
That through this effort
And by Your Grace,
These vehicles will be cleansed.
Let the dam of the ego be removed
That the river of my Life may flow into your ocean of Love.
That I may become an instrument of your Divine Will.
That every thought, word and deed
Will be in accordance to the Dharma.
Thank you God."

In such a way, there is a balance between the practices of yogic self-effort and submission to the Divine Will and supplication for Divine Grace. "God helps them, who help themselves."

—**Bob Najemy (Athens)**

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

15

Human effort constitutes the prime step in man's endeavour to attain this highest state of Godhood. God's grace is the second essential factor. Anyone can strive for and attain self-knowledge. Men and women, rich and poor, all are eligible to kindle in themselves the flame of spiritual wisdom. Distinctions of race and religion, caste and creed do not come in the way. It does not matter if one has no secular education, no grounding in physical sciences, or is not well-versed in worldly lore. In the modern world it is not that easy to gain this Self-knowledge. All the same, one need not give up efforts in a mood of frustration and despair.

At times people relentlessly seek spiritual knowledge at the expense of secular learning. This is not desirable. Some miss both and wander aimlessly between the two, such a predicament too is undesirable. Secular learning should not be neglected. It is beneficial to acquire spiritual vision while seeking mastery over secular lore. So, youth should necessarily spend some time everyday in meditation upon God.

Young men have to spring into the sphere of action and strive to the best of their ability for the building up of a resurgent India, and a happy peaceful world. They must shed nepotism and the desire for power. The desire to uproot corruption and immorality, and the urge to work hard should firmly be implanted in the heart of every student. Mother India's future depends on them and she is waiting for them. Even as it is the duty of children to serve and please their mother, it

is the bounden duty of every child of mother India to make her happy. To serve the motherland selflessly should be the sacred ideal of one's life. Thus, it is the duty of all Indians to engage themselves in the dedicated service of mother India. Such an obligation on our part may even be described as forming part of 'Desa niti' (nobility of character of the individual vis-à-vis his motherland). Therefore, every student must inculcate in him a wider perspective of national unity and integrity. A person without character can neither uplift himself nor be of any use to the country. Those who sacrifice their interest, seeking the welfare of the nation discharge truly their duties to their motherland.

Sacrifice too is an aspect of character. It is one of the qualities which young men should imbibe. It is often thought that charitable and philanthropic acts make for sacrifice. But there is a vast difference between charity and sacrifice. Charitable people give only a fraction of their bounty to others. Giving of land, distribution of food, contribution of physical labour and spreading of education and knowledge belong to this category. Through acts of charity no man ever gives up all that he has. One is not cursed to be born penurious if one does not perform acts of charity. Going a step higher some retain for themselves what is just and essential and give away the rest to society. Such people win the highest acclaim in the world. Our sacred texts prescribed that a portion of one's possessions must be offered to the poor and helpless. Neglecting this injunction, one should not accumulate lakhs of rupees in a selfish, callous, unfair and unjust manner like an avaricious curmudgeon. Such a miser will become a victim of disaster and degradation, sooner or later. It is inevitable.

Wealth piled up through unfair means is the result of exploitation of the blood of the poor. Young men ought not to become slaves of such unfair existence and adopt exploitation as a means to living. Even God will not forgive such selfish exploitative lives. He who piles up wealth without enjoying or giving to others will be damned after death; the progeny of such people too will be damned in future.

There are four inheritors for hoarded wealth. The first is Charity, the second, the king. Fire is the third inheritor and robber, the fourth. The first claimant is Charity and the major share goes to him. Students should recognise the profound significance of this truth and utilise the wealth they acquire for the welfare of mankind.

Sacrifice is the highest step. One who has the true spirit of sacrifice gives to others without any hesitation or reservation, smilingly and gladly, even his dearest and highest possession. Surrendering the fruit of action to the Lord is real sacrifice. A Tyagi does not shrink even to give up his body, regarding it as worthless straw. Sacrifice means something more than giving up of wealth, gold, and material objects. Evil qualities like hatred, jealousy, wrath and malice which have become ingrained in man over many life-times should be discarded. There is no happiness greater than that obtaining from sacrifice. Only those who sacrifice are the children of immortality because they live forever.

When we study our epics and legends we come across numerous figures who embody such spirit of sacrifice. Emperors like Sibi and Bali, heroes like Dadhichi and Karna belong to that illustrious line. We need today such persons animated by the spirit of sacrifice among the political leaders and students. They should forget selfishness, crush egoism, dispel desire for

power, and put an end to pettiness of mind, and pledge themselves to establish righteousness, to dispense justice and to promote the welfare of society.

Unfortunately, words are losing their significance. Sacrifice, justice, righteousness, and service have lost their meaning and degenerated into a business. Selfishness looms large and dances like a destructive demon among the students, politicians and educationists. Clamour for power and the desire for position are uppermost in the mind of man. Our country which was once celebrated as a land of sacrifice, dedicated endeavour and penance has degenerated into a veritable playground for ephemeral joys. And this is the reason for the country's many afflictions and ailments.

This state of things must come to an end and there should be a change for the better; then our history will be repeated and our former glory revived. Thousands of sacrificing spirits should emerge from your midst. Every Young Indian should be enriched once more by the spirit of sacrifice.

Sacrifice is sweeter than enjoyment. Sacrifice should become the aim of life. Only through sacrifice can one attain peace. Sorrows do not flee from us as long as the mind is not at peace with itself. Agonies dwell forever within us. Without the tranquility of the soul any amount of wealth cannot be of any use. Surrendering the fruits of action with a dispassionate mind is eligible to be termed sacrifice. Purity of mind alone can confer upon it tranquility. The Upanishads have proclaimed in a full-throated voice that sacrifice alone leads to immortality. Sacrifice is the chief trait of the pure. Therefore, every student must imbibe and display the spirit of sacrifice in his life. He should not become a victim of the disease of enjoyment.

Unfortunately, there is a wide-spread opinion circulating freely that education is for job but not for the expansion of illumination. This is deplorable. Wisdom is illumination. It is the aim of education to radiate that light of wisdom. Such wisdom bestows upon man real power. Wisdom enables us to recognise mutual relationship of objects and individuals and to know the precedents and antecedents of each object.

How can this illumination enter man's being? By listening to and going through great books like the Vedas, the Vedantas, the Upanishads, the Koran, the Granth Saheb, the biographies of noble souls, books dealing with physical and technological sciences and psychology, one gains this light. Alongside with wisdom, discriminatory approach and logical thinking can be gained by reading them. One should not depend entirely on knowledge derived from sacred texts but depend upon wisdom arising from experience.

The shape and the content of education must change. Professor Gunnar Myrdal of Stockholm University visiting Delhi in 1972, said, "The educational system of India is not progressive. It fosters the mentality that we shall not soil our hands." All Indians, especially students, should recapitulate these words. This remark pin-points the tendency of our students to lead comfortable lives under electric fans, resting in air-conditioned chambers, avoiding manual labour, its stress and strain, sweat and dirt, without even one fold of their ironed clothes getting crumpled.

This attitude is a far cry from the ideals of obedience and humility instilled by education. Students must strive to impart to the people around them in society, the sacred ideas they have imbibed. They must spring like tiger cubs into the arena of the villages and cleanse them of all sorts of pollution. They must teach and train the illiterate residents of the villages to live decently and with dignity. Students must strive along with the villagers and lead them forward. Students of today should pose lofty ideals of life to the world through their exemplary lives.

(To be continued)

The Absolute Encounters Me

I went to Whitefield on 30th of June 1979 to meet the Principal "Sri Sathya Sai Arts, Science and Commerce College." I reached there at about 11 A.M. I went to the Principal's office, but found that he had gone out and would come only on Monday. The day I went to see the Principal was Saturday. Then I went to bus-station to catch the bus for Bangalore. When I went to bus-station I found that the next bus would come at 12.30 P.M. So I went inside the Ashram because I was in very severe tension, and wanted a quiet place. So I went and sat behind the closed Information Office.

As I was sitting I felt someone's hand on my shoulder. I looked back and saw clearly Baba standing behind me with an evergreen smile on his face. I neglected him, because I thought I was dreaming. I could not believe it, because Baba was at Puttaparthi at that time.

I again felt someone's hand on my shoulder. This time as I looked behind Baba said, "Tum Bahut Pareshan Hota Hai, Utho, Utho," (Why are you worrying so much? Get up, Get up.) I could not believe my eyes but, stood, because it was Baba's order. I was fully taken aback. I became nervous too. Baba then said, "Admission Ke Liye Aya Hai? Abhi Tum Vapas Ghar Jao! Jab Swami Tum Ko Bulaiga Tab Tum Ayega. Swami Tum Ko Puttaparthi Me Hi Bulaiga. Abhi Tum Vapas Apne Ghar Jao." (You have come for admission. You go back home. Come only when Swami calls you. Swami will call you at Puttaparthi itself. You go your home back.)

Then I said that I wanted to get admission now only. Hearing this Baba said, "Abhi Swami Tum Ko Nahi Bulaiga. Abhi Vapas Ghar Jao. Jab Swami Bulaiga Tum Aana." (Swami will not call you just now. Return home. When Swami calls you, only then come). I again asked the same thing and Swami again replied the same thing.

Then I asked why he called me from Lucknow. He said, "Tum Ko Jis Kam Se Swami Ne Bulaya Tha, Woh Kam Pura Ho Gaya Hai. Ab Tum Ghar Jao." (The work for which Swami had called you has been completed. Now, you return home). He further said, "Tumhari Ma Ko Kabhi Kabhi Pet Me Taklif Hoti Hai." (Your mother suffers from stomach pain off and on). I said that I did not know. He said, "Accha, Accha." (Yes, Yes). Saying this he produced Kum-Kum and told me to give it to my mother. Then he asked me, "Aaj Swami Ke Charan Nahi Chuyega." (Today, would you not touch the Lotus Feet of Swami.) I fell down on his Lotus Feet at once and when I got up, Swami had disappeared. If there had been no Kum-Kum in my hand I would have

thought it as a dream, but my hand was full of Kum-Kum. So I had to believe it. After that I went back to Bangalore and Lucknow. My mother who was very ill has become normal. Afterwards, Swami did call me for admission in the newly started College at Puttaparthi. But, I could not travel so far at that time. I am praying I could join the College soon.

—*Viswajit Singh, Allahabad*

The Avatar

An Avatar is the appearance on Earth of God in bodily form. It is a Divine Incarnation which happens when times are dark and evil seems to prevail. Its purpose is to redeem the human race and inaugurate a new age...Each Avatar when he appears is an embodiment of eternal Truth and what he teaches is but a revised version of the perennial philosophy. Different periods of history and different types of culture require different ways of revealing the nature of Reality and the meaning of existence. But always the essential message is the same...As Radhakrishnan says, "It is not so much the contraction of Divine Majesty into the limits of the human frame as the exaltation of human nature to the level of Godhead by its union with the Divine."

The belief that God and the Avatar representing Him are identical is clearly illustrated in St. John's Gospel where Jesus says, "If you know me, you would know my Father also." And, as he says again, "He that has seen me has seen the Father." We conceive God to be infinite and without form. A divine incarnation may seem incompatible with this conception of God as a formless entity. Yet, we believe that the Supreme Being is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, because these qualities logically belong to the very nature of deity.

If this is so, we cannot deny that God has the power to assume any imaginable form including a human shape. Consequently, it is not unreasonable to suppose there are times when God may find it necessary to incarnate as a human being in order to fulfill a particular purpose...

There is nothing illogical in thinking of God as a person, if God creates, pervades, unifies and sustains the Universe. He is everything and therefore as much a person, as a principle, or a process. God cannot be defined and, everything we say about Him is necessarily false or only partially true.

God is a person; God is not a person. Paradoxically both statements are true in a sense. Our argument can only be reflected by denying the very existence of God. It is only because our limited understanding is incapable of reconciling opposites in a greater synthesis of ideas, that we believe one statement is inconsistent with another...

In recognising an Avatar we must remember that there are grades of manifestation. Some reveal the presence of a great spiritual teacher, one who is a sage or saint. A few reflect the glory of the Godhead in a perfect human embodiment. Avatars are seldom recognised as such by their contemporaries. The ignorant masses are incapable of understanding what is happening before

their very eyes. Nevertheless there is always a small number of sufficiently awakened souls who perceive the meaning of extra-ordinary events they witness...

In his previous book, 'Sai Baba, Man of Miracles,' Howard Murphet described what he saw and learnt when he first met this remarkable human being. He has now written a further account of Sathya Sai Baba and his Divine Mission...(Sai Baba Avatar). He is in no doubt, according to the publisher's blurb that "Sai Baba is the Kalki Avatar, the light which was promised to earth when the evils of the Kali Age which we see all around us have reached a level requiring the direct action of God.

Certainly, in these times, when mankind is threatened with destruction, the need for an avatar is more urgent than ever before. The testimony of Murphet and other votaries whose intelligence and integrity we have no reason to impugn points towards the acceptance of Sathya Sai Baba as a genuine manifestation of Divine power.

Murphet clearly realises how tremendous is the claim being made on behalf of Sai Baba. He was asked whether Sai Baba can succeed in transforming the present situation through spiritualising a sufficient number of individuals to ensure a complete change of direction for mankind. And he confidently replies that it is in the Avatar's nature to accomplish successfully his mission.

—**W. H. Mackintosh, From Review article, "Psychic News."**

All men are of one lineage; they are of the Divine lineage. Awareness of this alone gives you the right to call yourself a man. Learn to live as man. This is the Sadhana; this is the message of Sai.

The men and women bound by mutual interest in society are not merely families, castes, classes, groups or kinsmen or kinswomen; they are One Atma. They are knit by the closest of family ties; not only the one society to which they feel they are bound, but All Mankind is One. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, as the Sastras declare; the whole world is one family. This unity must be experienced by everyone.

—**Baba**

Dhyanaadarshana-II

(Theory and Practice of Meditation)

Compiled and translated by B. Srinivas Murthy from Bhagavan's Divine Discourses

Meditation is conquest of mind

The sadhana of Dhyana starts at the lowest level of sense data. The way of knowing called sensationism is the most primitive faculty of living organisms. The organization of sensations into perceptions is known as empiricism. The generalization of perceptions into conceptions is known as rationalism. Intuitionism and mysticism are suprarational ways of knowing. That is why, indriyas (sensory and motor organs) have to be harnessed by controlling manas (mind) which is their master. If the master is controlled his servants can be easily snubbed. Mind is vicariously response for the erratic behaviour of sensory and motor organs. The sense data supplied by eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin impinge on mind which selects some sensations and then organizes them into perceptions and conceptions. If the mind is mastered all Jnanendriyas and Karmendriyas can be conquered.

Millions of soldiers are deployed in war. Each and every combatant need not be captured and killed in order to win the war. If the commander-in-chief is captured the army will surrender unconditionally. A country can be conquered by capturing its king.

Psychosomatic relationship

Manas or mind is the master of Jnanendriyas or sensory organs and Karmendriyas or motor organs. Hence, it should be first conquered in order to transcend our sensations and suspend our metabolic processes. Intelligent diplomacy is needed for the conquest of the mercurial human mind. It should be conditioned and disciplined with the aid of spiritual practices. It should be clearly recognized that mind and body are normally inseparable. They interpenetrate each other. Mind is an embodied form of the personal self. It is a unified structure of the energy of consciousness. It may be regarded as superphysical energy or paraphysical matter. It cannot express itself without the material medium of a gross physical body. It communicates with the external world through its five doors of perception. A disincarnate mind cannot have meaningful intercourse with the material universe. The well-known psychosomatic phenomenon pertaining to the intimate connection between psyche and soma or mind and body is of supreme importance for spiritual aspirants. A subtle personal self manifests itself as mind in a gross human body, expresses itself in various ways and communicates with other human minds or embodied selves. In other words a material body is essential for the self-manifestation and self-expression of a personal self and its communication with other embodied selves.

Meditation is not self-mortification

On account of this phenomenal psychosomatic relationship a Sadhaka should always keep himself physically fit and mentally alert. An optimum psychosomatic euphoria is essential for maintaining steady and sustained spiritual advancement. The physical body should be neither pampered nor mortified. Mortification of the material body does not lead to intellectual illumination or spiritual enlightenment. Self-mortification results in physical senility and mental deterioration. Mental equanimity cannot be achieved without physical euphoria. Hence, a

Sadhaka should avoid self-torment and self-punishment. It is necessary to reiterate that the human body should be preserved like a temple of the living God.

Life is yoga

The paramount importance of correct posture cannot be overstressed. You should always sit straight or stand erect wherever you happen to be. The mental equilibrium and physical discipline acquired through meditation should be transferred to everyday life because all life is yoga. A Sadhaka should keep his body straight and his limbs supple. He should always try and sit straight. Wrong postures and awkward gestures debilitate the body and enfeeble the mind. Hence, a Sadhaka should not bend his backbone and subject his body to all sorts of ugly contortions. A sound mind cannot be developed without a sound body. An emaciated, enervated and emasculated individual cannot do any serious sadhana. A Sadhaka must be straight and supple like a reed. A correct and beautiful posture can be acquired by regular practice. A perfect posture facilitates meditation.

Significance of jyoti

A Jyoti is the most suitable object to be meditated upon. It should be a steady lambent light or a gently glowing flame like a candlelight or the flame of an oil lamp. A flame has profound physical and spiritual significance. The biopsychophysical human body is in a state of dynamic equilibrium. Every person is surrounded by his own individual bioplasmic aura. A flame is not a solid, liquid or gas. It exists in the fourth plasma state of matter. There is a significant resemblance between the dynamic equilibrium of a human organism and a glowing flame, and between a bioplasmic human aura and the plasmic state of a shining flame. Meditation on a flame is tantamount to meditation on the bioplasmic aura of the personal self-identified with the immanent and omnipresent Cosmic Self or God. A Sadhaka should sit in front of a Jyoti, relax his body and fix his attention on its lambent light.

Preparation for meditation

Gaze steadily at the gleaming Jyoti before you. Stare at it steadily. Stare as long as you can. Then, close your eyelids slowly. Visualize mentally the Jyoti before you. During this process of imaginative re-collection and re-creation of the previously perceived Jyoti you should neither shut your eyes nor keep them open. If you keep your eyes open your attention will be distracted by extraneous sights. The span of your attention will be extended and your Ekagrata or one-pointedness will become Anekagrata or many-pointedness. Your latent Rajoguna will flare up. But, if you shut your eyes tightly you will fall asleep. Squatting in front of the Jyothi, fix your attention on its golden flame. Then, begin to gaze at the tip of your nose with ball-closed downcast eyes.

From attention to concentration

Your mind has a tremendous capacity and a gargantuan appetite for work of all kinds. It requires proper food for thought. There are various types of food. The most wholesome food for thought is provided by the divine pabulum of spirituality. Contract the span of your attention by making it one-pointed. Then, extend the duration of your one-pointed attention until it becomes steady concentration.

A slothful mind tends to become sinister. You might have seen a monkey tamer in your village. He exhibits his monkey at country fairs. He fixes a long pole on the ground and commands his monkey to climb the pole. As long as the monkey clammers continually up and down the pole it has no time for mischief. Man's mind is a monkey. If it is idle it becomes a devil's workshop and resorts to all kinds of monkey tricks.

`Soham'

You must make your mind do work which is stimulating, illuminating and enlightening. The most congenial, appropriate and inspiring work for your mind is provided by the repeated practice of `Soham'. The two syllables `so' and `ham' represent the act of controlled breathing. `Soham' is an esoteric mantra or occult incantation for harnessing and disciplining the monkey mind of man.

The practice of `Soham'

`Soham' is practised in the following way: Inhale air through one nostril. This is `so'. Then, exhale air slowly through the other nostril. This is `ham'. Practise the slow inhalation and exhalation of air steadily for a couple of minutes before the commencement of concentration. Repetition of slow inhalation through one nostril followed by slow exhalation through the other nostril to the accompaniment of `Soham' disciplines your body and tranquillizes your mind.

Cover the right nostril with the tip of the right hand thumb. Cover the left nostril with the tip of the right hand middle finger. Put the tip of the index finger at the centre of the forehead between the eyebrows. Uncover the right nostril. Inhale air through the right nostril keeping the left nostril closed with the tip of the right hand middle finger. This act of slow and steady inhalation through the right nostril is accompanied by the utterance of the primary sacred syllable `so'. After inhalation retain the breath for some time before exhalation. Uncover the left nostril. Then, exhale air through the left nostril, keeping the right nostril closed with the right hand thumb. This act of slow and steady exhalation is accompanied by the utterance of the secondary sacred syllable `ham'. Repeat these slow and steady acts of inhalation followed by exhalation for a couple of minutes. During these rhythms of inhalation and exhalation the tip of the right hand index finger should touch the centre of the forehead between the eyebrows. This exercise of regulated breathing is known as `Pranayama'. Regular and systematic practice of Pranayama purifies your body and tranquillizes your mind. It rejuvenates the psyche and regenerates the soma. It gives the wealth of health and the benediction of bliss. Personal guidance of a master is absolutely essential for Pranayama.

Mira's devotion

Mira was an ardent devotee of Lord Sri Krishna. She used to meditate continuously on the physical form of Lord Sri Krishna. Her ignorant husband and shrewish mother-in-law misunderstood her devotion to God. They teased, tortured and tormented her in all possible ways. She expressed her love for the Lord by composing and singing devotional songs of great fervour and piety. But, her husband and mother-in-law were too brutal to appreciate the divine love described in her sweet songs. They had filthy and vulgar minds. They mistook her divine love for physical infatuation, carnal lust and voluptuous passion. Her husband turned her out of his house. She did not know what to do or where to go. It was in that hour of extreme distress that she composed the classic lines: `Chalore man, chalore man Ganga Yamuna teer chalo.'

She exhorts her mind or inner self to concentrate its attention at the centre of the forehead between the eyebrows. It is the place where the third invisible eye of wisdom is situated. Prayag or Allahabad is situated on the banks of Triveni, the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the subterranean stream of Saraswati. Allahabad is really 'Ahladbadd' which literally means the city of bliss.

Another line from Mira's song has great significance: 'Ganga Yamuna nirmala pani!' The clear waters of Ganga and Yamuna stand for the regulated process of controlled inhalation and exhalation. It is a symbolic representation of the concept of 'Soham'.

There are some more magnificent lines in Mira's song: "Moramakuta pitambaradhari Kundala rajatashareeri chalo." In these lovely lines there is an implicit allusion to 'kundalini shakti', the primal energy latent in man. 'Raja tashareeri' is an individual glowing with argentive effulgence, the lustre of silver. He is a holy man who finds his ultimate spiritual fulfillment in the gradual awakening of Kundalini Shakti.

Pranayama

During Pranayama or regulated respiration, inhalation and exhalation are accompanied by the subconscious and sub-vocal incantation of 'Soham, Soham,...' A Sadhaka's mind should endeavour to listen to the repeated utterance of 'Soham'. All his thought waves have to converge on 'Soham'. His mind should become obsessed with 'Soham'. He should limit his span of attention to 'Soham'. Concentration is attained by reducing the span of attention. The Sadhaka's mind should act as a vigilant sentry of 'Soham'. It should become a master of the situation. It should intensify its concentration on the gleaming Jyoti for at least a couple of minutes. Extension of the duration of concentration leads to the altered state of consciousness known as contemplation. The Sadhaka should continue in this state of profound contemplation for some more time. In deep contemplation the Sadhaka destroys the dichotomy between the Jyoti and all other objects in the world. The Sadhaka and the Jyoti alone exist. The next step is absorption in the Jyoti. The Sadhaka enters a state of empathy. He identifies himself with the Jyoti. He interiorizes the external Jyoti in his own inner self, which is transfigured and transformed by the radiance of the Jyoti. In a state of deep absorption the dichotomy between the Sadhaka and the Jyoti does not exist. The Jyoti is visualized as an integral part of the Sadhaka's body. After the successive states of self-induced motivation, one-pointed attention, intense concentration, prolonged contemplation and deep absorption are gone through real meditation begins. The altered state of consciousness leading to non-dualistic meditation is picturesquely described as 'the blossoming of the lotus of the heart'.

Interiorization of the jyoti

The interiorized Jyoti is consecrated in the tabernacle of the Sadhaka's heart by a sustained effort of imaginative empathy. The vision of the Jyoti is retained in the lotus of the heart that has blossomed spiritually. As soon as the holy Jyoti is installed in the lotus of the heart the blissful state of 'tamasoma jyotirgamaya' is attained. The darkness of spiritual ignorance is dispelled by the eternal Jyoti representing the lambent light of wisdom. The golden glory of the Jyoti reaches the Sadhaka's throat. From the throat it reaches his hands. From the hands it reaches his stomach. From the stomach it goes down to his legs and feet. From the feet it rises up to his cranium. From

the cranium it reaches his Sahasrara chakra, the crown plexus known as the thousand petalled lotus. Finally, it emerges at the centre of his forehead between the eyebrows. The Jyoti emerges as an aureole or halo around the Sadhaka's head. It radiates from the Sadhaka's body as a divine aura. The interiorized argentine effulgence and golden glory of the divine Jyoti will illuminate every limb of the Sadhaka who has reached the acme of spiritual ecstasy.

The jyoti spiritualizes body and mind

When the spiritual effulgence of the divine Jyoti is reflected in the Sadhaka's eyes they are purified and sanctified. His looks beam with benevolence and become a potent antidote to the malevolence of the notorious evil eye of vicious people. His eyes sparkle with love and compassion. When the interiorized Jyoti penetrates the Sadhaka's tongue his speech is sweetened and made as mellifluous as the manna of Gods. He is no longer influenced by evil talk and malicious gossip. When the interiorized Jyoti enters his ears he will begin to shun slanderous speech. When the divine radiance of the Jyoti illuminates his hands he will refrain from evil actions. When it reaches his feet he will seek the company of virtuous people. He will no longer haunt places of vice. When the celestial 'Jyoti' illuminates the Sadhaka's brain all vicious thoughts and evil desires vanish. The Sadhaka's stomach filled with the spiritual glory of the Jyoti will discard evil food. Thus, the interiorized divine Jyoti transforms the physical body of the Sadhaka into a temple consecrated to the Cosmic Self.

Exteriorization of the jyoti

Then, this spiritual splendour should be transmitted to friends, relations, foes and wild animals. The Sadhaka discovers his kinship with the entire creation. His passion for all becomes universal compassion. He experiences the divinity of humanity and the humanity of divinity. The interiorized Jyoti is ultimately absorbed as the celestial light of cosmic consciousness. Its astral projection within and without the Sadhaka's body may be continued for nearly half an hour. During this interval the doors of his perception will be cleansed by a spontaneous sublimation of his animal instincts.

Imagine a huge tree among whose sprawling branches thousands of birds have built their nests. As long as the birds perch on its branches the ground under it will be made dirty by their droppings. You may sweep the ground every morning but it becomes dirty again as soon as the birds arrive in the evening. When you are sweeping the ground the droppings will fall on your body also. That is why you will have to drive away the birds permanently to keep the ground clean. The place becomes clean as soon as the birds fly away.

Bio-psycho-physical catharsis

Thus, if the Sadhaka's mind galvanized by self-motivation follows the arduous path of undivided one-pointed attention, intense concentration, continuous contemplation and deep absorption culminating in the interiorization of the effulgent Jyoti whose lambent light illuminates every indriya of his body, then the next step will be spiritual realization through profound meditation. Purification of mind and body, purgation of malevolent emotions and the cleansing of the gates of perception are desiderata for all types of meditation. It is only after this biopsychophysical catharsis that it will be possible for a Sadhaka to consecrate himself to the life divine.

Sense subservience to sense transcendence

The infrasensory or subconscious mind 'below the senses' is essentially instinctive and habitual. The suprasensory or superconscious mind 'beyond the senses' is mainly transcendental and supramental. Subservience to senses is an essential characteristic of motivation, attention, concentration, contemplation and even absorption. Transcendence over the senses leads to the altered state of consciousness known as supramental meditation. A Sadhaka's mind should liberate itself from its bondage to senses, rise above them and attain the ineffable state of Dhyana. This sadhana will not be possible unless it is backed by powerful self-motivation for achieving spiritual experience.

Sense-independence

While progressing from a state of sense-subservience to a state of sense-transcendence, a Sadhaka's consciousness passes through a state of quiescence, comparable to a common overlapping zone of neutrality. This is a sort of buffer state between the two states of sense-subservience and sense-transcendence. At the frontiers of this no man's land the passport of sense-independence should be shown. This intervening state of consciousness is the overlapping zone of contemplation and absorption.

Salokya, sameepya and sayujya

The primary state of sense subservience encompassing the mental activities of motivation, attention, and concentration is known as salokya which corresponds to the universe of pluralism or the world of names and forms. The secondary state of sense-independence encompassing the mental activities of contemplation and absorption is known as sameepya or proximity which corresponds to the universe of dualism. The tertiary state of sense-transcendence is meditation. It is sayujya corresponding to the ineffable experience of oneness with the Cosmic Self. It is a non-dualistic state of consciousness in which the personal self is immersed in cosmic consciousness.

Love is a rose

Consider the example of a rose plant. It has branches, twigs, leaves and flowers. You may be lured by a beautiful rose. It has a thorn like every other rose. You are motivated by a desire to have a rose. You have to fix your attention on the branches, twigs, leaves and thorns also because you must distinguish the rose from other parts of the plant. Then, you have to concentrate on the rose and pluck it cautiously from the plant without getting pricked by the thorn under the rose. If you are a devotee you will most probably offer the flower to God.

Human love and divine love

Man's life is like a rose plant. His relations and friends are branches and twigs. His thoughts are leaves. His animal lust is the thorn under the rose. His selfless divine love is the rose flower. It is said that every rose has a thorn. There is no rose without a thorn. Likewise, there is no 'human' love without animal lust. What should man do in order to extract 'divine' love from human love? He must pluck the 'rose of immaculate love' without getting pricked by the thorn of voluptuous lust.

Love is your offering to God

Man's heart is a flower of love blossoming in the bog of sensual desires and mundane aspirations. This immaculate flower of divine love should be separated from the plant of profane

life. The flower is a naivedya or an offering to Paramatman, or the Cosmic Self. The pure, holy, untarnished and unselfish love in the human heart is an immaculate blossom. It should be offered at the alter of God conceived in any form you like.

Meditation on a personal god

If you feel that a Jyoti is too impersonal to rivet your attention you may visualize any other divine form in the Jyoti but not apart from it. You can mentally exteriorize on the centre of the Jyoti any deity or personified abstraction of divinity that you might choose. Some people are naturally anthropomorphic. They cannot think about Nirguna-brahman or God without name and form and attributes. An abstract or nonanthropomorphic God cannot be visualized by many people. They cannot help visualizing God in human form. They regard God as an embodiment of all human excellences. They are free to do so because anthropomorphism is always preferable to atheism and agnosticism. Humanized religion is more popular than abstract religion. There is no harm in meditating on a personal God if you cannot visualize Nirguna-brahman. You may be a devotee of Sri Rama. Then, you may visualize Rama's form in the Jyoti before you. If you love Sai you may imagine His presence in the Jyoti. If Vighneswara is your favourite deity you may imagine the likeness of Vighneswara in the Jyoti. You may choose any deity you like from the vast pantheon of the world's religions and meditate on that deity's form in the lambent light of the Jyoti

Paranjyoti

But, one thing you must not forget. It is the fact that the entire creation is bathed in the divine-light of Paranjyothi, the Archetypal Jyoti. You can visualize all ephemeral forms of the kaleidoscopic panorama of the universe in the eternal effulgence of the comprehensive and cosmic paranjyothi.

Meditation on Sai

If you can afford to devote more time to meditation, here are some more hints for you. You may imagine the physical form of Swami. Shut your eye's for a minute. Imagine the thick kinky mop of hair framing Swami's head like a divine halo. Imagine His long saffron robe. This will not take you more than a moment. Keep this form before your mind's eye as an impressionistic outline to be filled in with more minute details. This bare outline may make only a momentary impression on your mind. Your mind may be able to retain this form for a split second. But, you should not stop with this. You have to fill in all the details from head to foot by exercising your imagination. Begin with the head. Imagine the visage and profile of Swami filling in as many details as you can recall. Visualize the eyes, the nose, the mouth, the ears, the lips and every feature of Swami. Thus, imagine the form, step by step from the face downwards. Visualize every aspect of the form of Swami. Then, mentally retrace your path of visualization slowly from the feet upwards to Swami's head of thick curly hair. This will take you another ten minutes. You will have already spent twenty minutes in meditating on Swami's physical form.

Sakshatkara

In this practice of meditation based on imaginative visualization there are three stages. First, you start with an imaginatively visualized representation of Swami's form. Second, this abstract form becomes a concretized thought form. Third, this thought form is revealed as a vision. This is known as the spiritual experience of Sakshatkara, the final consummation of meditation.

Many people think that meditation is an occult faculty. It is not. It is a natural faculty of the human mind when in a state of perfect inner tranquility. The tranquillization of the mind has to be practised slowly, steadily and spontaneously. The advanced Sadhaka will experience the self in its disincarnate state, the noumenal subsistence of the soul apart from the phenomenal existence of the physical body. It is an overwhelming experience in which the personal self transcends the barriers of the spatiotemporal continuum.

No man becomes a saint in his sleep. A Sadhaka cannot overnight attain the highest altered state of consciousness. The sadhana of Dhyana is a slow, steady and spontaneous spiritual exercise. Nevertheless, a Sadhaka should start early, drive slowly and reach safely.

But, Dhyana without daya, or meditation without compassion is a negation of religion. Spirituality without love is an exercise in futility. Your thoughts, words and deeds should be inspired by pure selfless love—‘Start the day with love, spend the day with love, fill the day with love.’

—*Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan*

Eternal Harmony

*It may be possible to acquire proficiency in all branches of learning,
Or win victory in debates in the assemblage of scholars,
It may be possible to give away as charity houses, lands, and cows,
and even to fly into the skies and count all the stars,*

*It may be possible to know and name all the Jivas in the world,
or attain mastery in Ashtanga Vidya,
or to reach the Moon,
but alas! so difficult indeed is it to gain mastery over one's senses (Indriyas),
steadying of the mind and gaining inner vision, and to be able to maintain peace
and equanimity at all times.*

*One can attain mastery over all the Sastras, or
become a proficient scholar in Veda and Vedanta,
One may be a king, living in a palace
or a great warrior winning victories in battles,
One may have conquered the Goddess of poverty and won all the riches,
But, alas, all these are of no avail, unless one has devotion and earned the grace of God*

Prema Swarupas (Embodiments of Love)!

Unless man has understood his inner nature, unless he has mastered his mind and has grasped the Inner Truth, he can be of no use to the world.

The individual is primarily responsible for the good of the world, to uphold the values of life and strive for the good of the community.

Today, the scientists and leaders of the world have forgotten the true values of life and the real good of the world. They are obsessed only with the idea of the material progress. Unless they are awakened to the spiritual values of life, there cannot be any happiness peace and prosperity in the world.

Without spiritual basis, even if men have eyes, they are blind, even if they have ears they are deaf only; even if they be intellectually brilliant, they are insane. Spirituality alone confers true vision, and makes man full and wholesome.

Today man is a contradiction in himself. His thoughts, words and deeds are incongruous. Without this harmony how can he contribute to harmony in the community and in the world? He can only create chaos. That is the misfortune in the world today. Man has therefore to understand himself, his own dignity and his inner spiritual reality, then only will he have the right perspective. Otherwise, it is like the story of the ten foolish disciples. Each one of them does the count and find they are only nine and waits for the tenth missing man. Each one of them has forgotten to count himself and thus has plunged not only himself but the others too in grief. The leaders and the so-called scientists of the world today are just as foolish as the ten. Without trying to understand one's inner reality, they try to probe the moon, the planets and stars.

First, one has to cultivate purity of thought and mental equanimity. This mental equanimity is not something which you can purchase or obtain from outside. One has to generate it from within. When one has gained equal-mindedness, amidst, pleasure and pain, he will be free from sorrow and will enjoy peace.

Man has to understand the reasons for sorrow. There are three types of sorrows for man. The three sources of these sorrows in Vedantic parlance are—(i) Prakriti, (Nature) (ii) Jiva and (iii) Daiva (Individual). These are Adibhoutik, Adhyatmic, and Adidaivik.

We should first try to understand what Prakriti is. Prakriti is not a permanent reality. It is something which has come in the middle; it is only of relative value. Whichever is not a lasting reality so to say, is an untruth. We should therefore transcend the consciousness of Prakriti. It is only when we forget what we should forget we will be happy.

The Prakriti we see around us cannot give us happiness. From moment to moment it is changing. The experiences Prakriti gives us in the waking state get obliterated in the dream state, and that of the dream state cease when we wake up from the dream. The dream experiences are our creation. And so are the waking state experiences! What we see is nothing but our own creations. The vision-experience of the world is but a projection of our mind and the reflection of our own inner thoughts. As the thought so the vision of the world. It is just like how the colour of glasses you wear determines the colour in which things appear to you. If you wear red glasses, everything will appear red. If you wear green glasses, everything will appear green. Pure thoughts make the world appear as Pure. If you view things with Prema, with a loving heart, the whole world, the whole creation will appear to you as a reflection of Prema.

It is selfishness fouling our love that is veiling the divinity from our vision. What is the reason for selfishness which is veiling Divinity from us? It is simply our attachment to the body; it is the weakness of our mind and our enslavement to our senses.

What is the way to overcome or sublimate this selfishness? For this, first we should have a proper evaluation, a proper understanding of our body, senses, mind, etc. They are not ourselves. In ignorance we identify ourselves with them. They are our vestures, they are like the dress we wear. The body is not we, the sensory organs are not we; the mind is not we. They are merely our vestures. That is why we say "this is my body, etc." We never say 'I am the body'. We should therefore try to realise that we are really apart. The Self that is apart from these is the real entity in us, and that we are.

About the body—"Dahati iti Deha"—it is said. That means that which is burnt or cremated ultimately is the 'Deha'. That is not all. Actually, the body is undergoing the process of being burnt all the time, all through life. It is being subjected to burning process by the fire of troubles and sorrows. The body is known as Sarira. "Seerati iti Sarira"—what is constantly wearing out is Sarira. The body is continuously decaying, it is continuously wearing out. It never remains the same. It is born as a baby, then grows into a child, then becomes young, then starts becoming decrepit with the passing of years. It is subject to constant change.

In the Bhagavad-Gita, the body has been referred to as 'kshetra'. The general meaning of kshetra is 'field'. There is also another meaning for kshetra, a holy place. In the context of the first meaning, field, the body is the field and the Jiva is its owner. The kind of seeds you sow determines the kind of harvest you will reap out of the field. Do good deeds, then you reap good. Do evil deeds then you suffer evil. If you sow lemon seeds, you can't expect mango fruits to grow. So, we have to plant good ideas, good thoughts and good aspirations. The Jiva has to engage himself in good activity, putting the field to worthy use.

As per the second meaning of kshetra—which is 'a holy place', there is a Sanskrit saying, "Deho Devalaya Prokto"... which means, "the body is the temple of the Jiva, the ancient, who is but an aspect and part of God Himself." Therefore, we have to realise how sacred is this human body, which is the Abode of the most ancient Lord. The temple has to be kept pure, clean and holy. Mere external cleanliness will not do. There should be inner cleanliness also, i.e. the purity of mind. It is said, "water cleanses the body, truthfulness cleanses the speech (the word we speak), Vidya and Tapas cleanse the mind, and Jnana cleanses and purifies the intellect."

The physical body is constituted of the five elements, which are material in nature, and it has to therefore fall off and disintegrate one day or the other. The one that survives and abides eternally is only the 'dehi', the resident in the body. The resident of the body has neither birth nor death. He is the Atman and is an aspect and Form of God Himself. The body is just an Upadhi, a vesture of the Atman.

As to the sensory organs, they are like the reins of the horse. The senses have limits. Each sense has a specific function, e.g., the eye is for seeing, the ear for hearing etc. Each faculty has a particular and limited function. The eye cannot hear, nor the ear, see.

The senses are referred to as "Matra" in the Upanishads. "Matra" means 'measure'. The senses function as measures, assessors. We say, "the sugar is a bit less in this coffee." What is it that had made the measure and determined that sugar is less in the coffee? That is the tongue. We say that salt is less in the dal. It is again the tongue that has measured and determined that salt is less. We say, "that a man is beautiful, but his nose is a bit short." In this case, it is the eye that has measured and assessed this. When we hear something, we say 'it is good'. In this case, it is the ear that has done the measuring and assessing.

We are not to forget while the senses are meant to measure and assess, they have their particular function. God has given the nose. It is meant also for breathing in and breathing out. Instead, some use it for taking snuff. Each sense organ has been gifted by God to us to enjoy the beauty of nature and the beauty of divinity. It is not given to us to admire cinema posters.

We should also appreciate in what great harmony the senses function. The eyes notice something attractive, the mind wants to get that. The legs then take you there. The hands pick it up. Its acquisition brings satisfaction and joy to you. You see the co-operation that exists between all the sense organs. Further, also see how much mutual sympathy is there between them and in how much co-ordination they all work. When we are walking along the road, the eyes notice a thorn along the path and the legs instantaneously move aside or cross over the thorn. In case the foot is hurt by the thorn, the eyes shed tears. If the eye is hurt, the entire body feels the pain. Thus, the pain suffered by one organ is shared by others. What a great lesson in harmonious living they teach us!

The body is described in the Upanishads as a chariot, the reins as the mind, the senses as the horses, the intellect as the charioteer and the Atma as the Lord seated inside the chariot.

The mind is like the rein for restraining the horses (senses). Mind is a cauldron of Sankalpas and Vikalpas. It is a conglomeration of thoughts of various kinds. Sometimes when the thoughts become exciting, it gets upset and throws itself into grief. But in truth, it is just a bundle of thoughts. Just as the many threads spun together make up the cloth, so also the many thoughts make the mind. No thought, no mind either. A pure mind is one with good thoughts or God-thoughts. We have to eschew all bad ideas and bad thoughts and harbour only good thoughts. You should exercise your intelligence and discriminate which thoughts are good and which are bad.

The mind is also referred to as self, the pseudo-self. In truth, it is Maya. Everyone says, "I am mentally worried. My mind is troubling me much." But has one seen this mind? No one knows what the mind is but they suffer from the mind, from its illusory existence. The worry which you suffer is your own creation. Fear too is self-created. When we imagine the mind is there, it shows up. Deny it or enquire into it, it vanishes totally. Instead of enquiring, we give the mind undue prominence and allow it to ride over us and subject ourselves to suffering.

On one occasion, someone came to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and wailed, "My mind is troubling and torturing me." Ramakrishna gave a very witty reply; "Oh is your mind giving you so much trouble? Catch hold of it and bring it to me. I will punish it." Ramakrishna wanted to

stress only that the mind is but his imagination. It is our desires alone that create the phantom of mind. If desires are subdued, the mind vanishes.

We must delve beyond the body, beyond the senses, beyond the mind, beyond the intellect and reach the source of all these, the Atman. It is the substratum, basis and source of all else. For everything we see there has to be a base, which we do not see. For the car that is moving, there is the road, which is the stationary ground for the car to move on. The car may swerve but the road does not swerve. If the road also moves, what journey the car will make and whereto? So also, the Atman is the basis for the functioning of the mind and senses and body. Atman is their sole support and basis.

How do we understand the base of a thing? You have the garland here. You see only the flowers. But the flowers are strung on a thread, and the thread is the support for the flowers and is holding them together. But the thread is not seen. To see the thread lying in the centre, we have to part the flowers, some this side and some that side and then we will be able to see the thread. In the same manner, on the base of Atma, there is our body with a name and form. This material body with a name and form is an evolute, a sprout from the Atman which is the Root—source. If we can push aside this name and form, then we can glimpse the Atman. What is done instead is the name and form are given all importance forgetting the Atman altogether. The name and form are but transient. If the form itself is temporary, how can the name, just the label affixed for identity, remain permanent? No form, no name. The name and form are but an artificial creation. Atman alone is valid and real.

I have referred to the chariot simile. We have to remember the pre-eminent role of intelligence in the journey by chariot. The horses may have been bridled, the chariot is ready but if the charioteer is not there, what purpose will be served? There is a good motorcar. Petrol has been filled in the tank. Air has been filled in the tyres. But if driver is not there, of what use is the car? The intelligence, Buddhi, is like the driver of the car. The faculty that decides between good and bad and what course one should take is Buddhi. The Buddhi has to exercise its discretion in the light of injunctions from the Atman, its master. Buddhi is the superior-most amongst all the faculties, and its pre-eminence is due to its proximity and closeness to the Atman. The horses are in front of the chariot; the reins are outside equipments, but the charioteer sits close to the Master inside. Therefore, amongst the instruments, Buddhi stands foremost; below Buddhi is Manas, below the Manas are the sensory organs. Below the sensory organs is the body (gross body). The brilliance of the Atman directly falls on Buddhi which derives the maximum benefit and strength from the Atman. Therefore, Buddhi can judge aright and choose the right path. Only when a man uses his intelligence properly we call him 'Buddhimaan'. If he does not use his direction properly we call him Mudha or Aviveki. The Buddhi should exercise its control over the mind, and the mind over the senses.

But what happens generally is that the Buddhi does not exercise discrimination; the mind arrogates to itself superiority over the intellect and the senses arrogate to themselves superiority over the mind. And the chariot runs in the wrong direction and the purpose of the journey does not find its fulfillment. To avoid this, Buddhi has to act in the Atmic light, and the mind in subordination to Buddhi. When Buddhi is centered and anchored in Atman, it receives the Atmic light and brilliance and it gains its strength in fulfilling its role efficiently and fruitfully.

This alone is what is called spirituality and it is as much necessary, not only in our spiritual endeavour, but in our day-to-day life as well. It is not as if our daily life is different from Adhyatmic life. In our day-to-day life, if we use the intelligence to discriminate between right and wrong, and follow the dictates of the Atman, then everything will be all right. This is the Divine prescription and panacea for life. What is therefore first required is faith in the existence and supremacy of Atman. If one has no faith in Atma, no self-confidence, and goes ahead with his egoistic vanity, how can he ever benefit by the divine light and guidance? How can he derive the Atmic splendour?

Prema Swarupas! This created universe has two aspects. One is impermanence (Anityam). The second one is unhappiness (Asukham). In Gita, Krishna has said: "ANITYAM ASUKHAM LOKAM IMAM PRAPYA BHAJASWA MAAM" Nothing in this world can give happiness, i.e., true and lasting happiness. Mistaking this world as all and forgetting the Atman which alone is eternal and is the only refuge, is the greatest folly of man. Today, man is pinning all his hopes on this slippery world and is madly running after amassing and hoarding wealth only. Of course, material needs are to be taken care of, but within its limitations, and not at the cost and sacrifice of spiritual values. Money and mansions are not the only wealth. One has to acquire spiritual wealth, the wealth of the Spirit. Character is wealth. Good conduct is wealth. Spiritual wisdom is wealth.

Prema Swarupas! Try to promote the wealth of good conduct, strive to earn the eternal wealth of the wisdom of the Spirit. All other acquisitions will not be of any avail to you. They will attract relatives and friends to you just as frogs come to a pond when water is full. Once the pond dries up, not one frog will be found there. When one loses his wealth, his friends and relatives, all forsake him. Such is worldly love. Friends fall apart, kinship gets strained, brothers separate, families get estranged -this is the play of worldly wealth.

Therefore do not get obsessed in amassing worldly wealth. But strive to earn the wealth of good conduct. Cultivate love of the spirit and engage yourself in selfless service of others. Through service, you earn good character. It promotes pure love, and good character. Devote your body, mind and senses, in the service of others. "PAROPAKARARTHAM IDAM SARIRAM" it is said. This body is intended to do only good and service to others. The body is not gifted to you so that you may hate and nurture jealousy against others and live selfishly, worse than an animal. You should devote this precious gift of the body in selfless and loving service always.

You should also bear in mind that it is nothing great if one does good to one who has done one good. This is like 'give and take'. Doing good to the man in spite of the harm he had done to you is nobler. For a Sai Sevak, giving, giving only, should be the motto. Even if you do not get anything, in return you should be giving and giving.

Anyone may blame you, but you should ignore all such blame and go forward in doing service without rancour. Serving only is your duty. The universe is a manifestation of God. So also is the individual. All these three are like Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, the Trinity. Actually there are no Three, they are one, it is unified Godhead. Cherishing this thought of oneness, and serving the society is true Adhyatmic or spiritual life.

Further, you should take to "Sarvada, Sarvakareshu Sarvatra Harichintanam." It is just not sufficient holding a mala and doing japa, once in the morning during the Brahma muhurta time, once in the afternoon and once in the evening. All the twenty four hours you should be having remembrance of God. You should all the time be striving to awaken the spirit within you and for its blossoming (Atma vikas). This is the real purpose of life.

True education is only Atma Vidya. The education today is oriented towards earning money only. For feeding a small stomach, should one have to learn so many things? There is knowledge of music, knowledge of arts, science ...etc. But all pale off into insignificance in the light of knowledge of the spirit. All other branches of knowledge are like rivulets. "Nadeenam Sagaro Gathi", just as all rivers flow into the ocean, all types of education will find their true fulfillment when they lead and end up in spiritual knowledge and wisdom only.

Prema Swarupas! Everyday morning and evening, whatever work you may be doing, be doing it in the name of God and make your life sacred. You should not think that worldly life and spiritual life are distinct. Do not make such distinctions like the saying, spiritual life is sugar and worldly life is tasteless water. You have to stir the water in the glass, and let the sugar at the bottom dissolve well; then enjoy drinking the sweet mixture. In this way, worldly life should be blended and harmonised with spiritual life.

—Divine Discourse, Dharmakshetra

He Asks Us To Pray

As the 1980s begin, we do not find the world around us to be a dependable source from which we may draw security, joy and peace of mind. The cost of things and services, taxes, crime, the problems of our schools, bureaucratic control over our lives—such problems are escalating and show no sign of reaching a balance within the nation. And the world beyond the nation is in a state of sorrow, threat and violence. When we talk to friends and acquaintances, we can notice that the inner world of mind, feeling and spirit tends also to be in a state of worry and anxiety.

As a general proposition, we believe we would be happy if circumstances would turn favorable and remain so. But this concept is not agreed to by Sri Baba. He says that the only source of happiness is the inner spring of life. He explains that we experience happiness when a desire is satisfied because for a moment or so the mind is quiet and content, and the Source of life shines forth as bliss. But soon the mind is again turbulent, and once more we are searching for happiness.

For so many years we have been trying to get happiness by arranging and re-arranging our circumstances. This dreadful waste of time and energy can now be ended because we are a blessed people; somehow or other our fortune is so great. We have found One to whom we can give full-hearted trust; One who tells us most kindly, as a loving mother assures her children, that our Source is our reality and that we may take our stand there rather than in the ever-changing

world. Sri Baba says that once we have realized our Source, then we find that both inner and outer are one, and that only God exists. He explains very carefully how we may realize our Source. With this inward revolution, the outer world also changes and we no longer see the world as we have for the countless ages of the past.

If we truly have some understanding of our great good fortune, then the meaning of our Sathya Sai Baba Center emerges and can be discussed and; expressed in action. The vital point of our Center is Satsang, the company of high-minded devotees of the Lord. A solitary individual in this world is assailed on all sides by worldly values and he or she needs the status of a giant to stand unmoved and strong. But "we" gathered together are "One." And our strength is greater than the world around us.

May each of our Sathya Sai Baba centers be a Divine and holy Satsang throughout every year of the 1980s. Here is a treasure from Sri Baba in his own handwriting. May this priceless Divine Message from Sri Baba, sent with His Love and Grace guide us through each of our days.

Oh! Lord! Take my love and let it flow in fullness or devotion to thee
Oh! Lord! Take my hands, let them work incessantly for thee
Oh! Lord! Take my soul and let it be merged in one with thee
Oh! Lord! Take my mind and thoughts and let them be in tune with thee
Oh! Lord! Take my everything and let me be an instrument to work.

—*Sathya Sai Baba Council of the Americas*

Impact of Sai

More and more, after leaving the physical Presence, He fills and pervades one's whole being, walking and sleeping, irrespective of 'distance'. I am a woman of 70 and therefore will not be misunderstood when I endeavour to put into words something of His impact on a mere human in human terms.

He is the Mother in the safety of Whose loving Arms one longs to hide. He is the All-Powerful Father one implicitly trusts and obeys. He is the closest Friend to Whom one can open the deepest secrets of one's heart. He is the Child, away from 'Home', one longs to gather up with compassion in the isolation of His Mission. He is the God, the Logos, at Whose Feet one falls, and to Whose Will one longs to surrender the last breath of the restricting mortal body, to come nearer to Him in the freedom of death.

How small It is, the pale brown Hand
That holds the World!
How gentle is the Mighty Strength
That lifts Humanity from self-destruction!
Through future eons of Time,
When my struggling soul

Climbs slowly SAI-wards,
Imbedded in my consciousness,
To spur me on, will be the knowledge
That I looked into the Face, the Eyes of LOVE;
That once—nay twice—I held and kissed
The small brown Hand of God.

—*Peggy Mason, Tunbridge Wells, Kent*

Sai Family News

World Conference

The Third World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations will be held at Prasanthi Nilayam on 19, 20 and 21 November, 1980.

Seva Dal

During the full Solar Eclipse week when many hundreds of thousands of pilgrims gathered at Kurukshetra, the Seva Dal units of Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab held a Camp, from 14-2-80 to 17-2-80 on the bank of the holy Brahmasarovar, and rendered commendable service to the aged, the handicapped, the sick and the poor.

In Karnataka, every district is planning, with Bhagavan's Blessings, to run one Service Camp during the year at a festival site which attracts huge streams of pilgrims. The first Camp under this scheme was inaugurated by the State President at Sisanal, 60 Km. from Hubli on 25-2-80, where the Sheriff Saab Jatra drew about a lakh of pilgrims, both Muslims and Hindus. Sheriff Saab was a mystic poet and a realised soul. His Guru was Sri Govinda Bhatta of the same place.

Blood Donation

Sri Sathya Sai Centre of Accra, Ghana has won the 'gratitude' of the National Blood Transfusion Service by organising a four-day blood donation drive which yielded 416 units of blood.

Training

The meeting of District Level Conveners held on 9 Feb 80 recommended the establishment of an Institute which will train continuous batches of Seva Dal volunteers and Bal Vikas Gurus.

Sri Sailam, Kerala

The vast gathering on the Annual Day of the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Peeth, Sri Sailam, Calicut District, was addressed by the Hon'ble Sri V. R. Krishna Iyer, Judge, Supreme Court of India.

He directed the attention of all interested in the future of our country to learn and follow the educational ideals of Sri Sathya Sai Baba as practised, under His guidance, in such institutions in several parts of the country.

—**Ed.**

You who live in villages are the backbone of the nation. You grow the food and the material for clothing the People. You set the example of industry before the indolent. Your life runs on an even keel, following the regularity of the seasons. You do not hurry ahead of nature, as townsmen do. Develop amity and the spirit of mutual help. Villages have been ruined on account of factions. All the profit of hard toil is wasted in litigation, engendered by hatred and greed. The greatest instrument by which success can be assured for all your efforts is Devotion to God. That will give health, wealth and prosperity—for it will eliminate hatred, violence and greed.

—Baba

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16

The Veda is the Mother of all the Sastras. The Veda emanated from God Himself as inhalation and exhalation. The great sages, who were the embodiments of the treasure gained by long ascetic practices, received Veda as a series of sound and spread over the world by word of mouth from preceptor to pupil. Since it was 'heard' and preserved by generations by those who heard, the Veda is known as Shruti, 'that which was heard or listened to.' The Veda is endless. Who composed the Vedas? Until today, it has not been possible to reveal their names. Those who recited it had perhaps no desire to earn renown, for the names are nowhere seen mentioned in the Veda. May be they had attached no importance to their names, on clans or sects, or it is likely they had no kith or kin or clan. Whoever he or they may be, the sages were sure they were masters of all knowledge, for the sense of equality and equanimity found in the Veda is the innate quality of only such wise person. So it is very appropriate to infer that the Veda was given to the world only by persons endowed with all powers.

The word 'Veda' originated from the root 'Vid', meaning 'to know', "Vidam thu anena ithi Vedah". 'That which reveals and makes clear all knowledge is Veda'. The Veda can be mastered neither by limited intellect nor by limited experience. The sacred Veda instructs in all that one requires for his spiritual advancement. It instructs one in means and methods to overcome all sorrows and grief. It instructs in all the spiritual disciplines which can give him unshaken peace. No one has understood correctly the beginning of the Veda or its end. So, it is hailed as Anaadi (Beginningless) and Sanathana (Eternal). Since the first and the last of the Veda are not known, it is also known as Nitya, Everlasting. The intelligence of humans is tainted but since the Veda has no trace of taint, it is concluded that it cannot be a human product. So the Veda is also characterised as A-pourusheya (Trans-personal).

The Veda is its own authority. Each Vedic sound is sacred because it is part of the Veda. Those who have faith in the Veda, and its authority can personally experience this. The great sages were enriched by such experiences, and they have extolled it as the source of wisdom. These experiences are not bound by time or space. Their validity and value can be recognised not only in India but by people of all lands. They lay down basic truths, it can be asserted.

The Vedic religion originated, we do not, know when; others came later, yesterday or today. This is the difference. So, if something has to be known, it is not possible to succeed, with the help of the skill and strength that man has. Human intelligence can operate only within certain limits. *Buddhigrahyam atheendriyam*. But the Veda is beyond the reach of intelligence. Intelligence is restricted. It can deal only with facts discoverable by the senses and experiences related to these. It can act only in the area of the visible.

Mother Veda has been kind to her children—the human race. To sanctify its cravings and to uplift the race, she has posited the concept of Time—and its components, the years, months, days, hours, minutes and seconds. Even gods were declared to be bound by Time. The individual or Jiva is caught in the wheel of Time and Space and rotates with it, unaware of any means of escape. Really, he is beyond the reach of Time and Space. The Veda is bent upon the task of making him know this Truth, and liberating him from the narrowness. Mother Veda is compassionate; she longs to liberate her children from doubt and discontent. She has no desire to inflame or confuse; wise men know this well.

Gravitation has existed on earth since we do not know when. It had its origin along with Creation of the Earth. The Earth and the Force of Gravitation are both inseparable, indistinguishable. Just because it is not recognised by a few or because it is not visible as such, it will be foolish to deny its existence in the Earth. But the fact is, no one knew the existence of this universal force, though it was born along with the Earth! The force was operating even when man was unaware of it. At last, after analysing various principles and observing various experiments, the Western physicist Newton announced that the Earth had the force of gravitation. The world accepted his statement and placed faith in its truth. But, the force was operating all the time, even before the announcement by Newton. It did not start operating all of a sudden, when the experiments demonstrated it.

The Vedas are Eternal Truths; they existed even before the people of this land discovered, practised and experienced them. Just as Western physicists, announced the existence of gravitation after their experiments, the ancients of this land demonstrated the innate authenticity of the Vedas through their own experiences. Here too, the Veda existed long before it was discovered and put into practice. Newton's Laws of Gravitation benefited the whole world; they express universal truths applicable to all places and times. They are not confined to Western countries only. So too, the Veda is Truth not merely for Bharat but for all people on earth.

It is not correct to claim that Bharat or India is the birthplace of the Vedas. The utmost that can be said is that they were discovered by the people of Bharat. To ask why a happening in one place did not take place in another place also is the sign of a confused mind. The Divine Author decides what should happen when and where. As He decides, so it takes place. The atmosphere in India was congenial for the revelation and the growth of the Vedas. The Vedas were drawn towards the hearts of the sages of this land, this Karma-bhoomi, this Yoga-bhoomi and this Tyaga-bhoomi. Other lands pursued Bhoga and so their atmosphere was overcharged with worldly aspirations and achievements. The Vedic message could not therefore be easily understood there. Since in India, spiritual quest was sincerely pursued along with material objectives people here had the good fortune of the Veda Mata, Mother Veda incarnating here and became patent here.

Of course, this does not mean that the Veda Mata has not blessed other lands or is absent therein. It is like the force of gravitation, present everywhere. The Veda is omnipresent. The heroic sages of Bharat were able to receive the Vedic Message as a result of their Sadhana of denial and detachment as well as their capacity to concentrate, and to experience the Bliss resulting from practising it. They were so selfless and full of compassion and love that they shared with those who approached them what they had heard and enjoyed. They are therefore called "Mantra-Drishta". Through the long line of their disciples, the message has come down the ages and spread all over the land. Like a continuing flood, the mysterious Veda, was 'visualised' by the Sages as Drishtas. The Bharatiyas, people of this country, are well aware of this debt.

(To be continued)

Sri Sathya Sai—The Supreme Poet

—*P. Sitapati M.A. (Leeds) IAS, FRAS (London)*

Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the sage of Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh is well known in India and abroad, as the great Indian preceptor preaching the sermon of following the fourfold path of Sathyam or Truth, Dharma or righteousness, Prema or love and Shanti or Peace. Those who have come into contact with him also know that he is the very embodiment of love or affection. However it is not many, except those who have heard him in Telugu, who realise that Sai is a poet, whose compositions in Telugu rate very highly in literature. The poem composed by him are sung by him at the beginning of a religious discourse or during the discourse itself to bring home the message of his discourse. These poems are really gems of Telugu literature and the style in the poetry recalls to our mind two other great poets of the Telugu mother land Potana and Vemana. The sweetness of Potana's Bhagavata Kavita as well as the simple but telling poetry of the Yogi Vemana are both, to my mind, combined in the poetry of Sri Sai.

Here are a few examples of the poetic genius of this great Guru.

Sai's first well-known composition relates to the time, when, as a boy of sixteen, he announced that his disciples were waiting for him and he left his home to sit under a spreading tree to announce the coming of the Guru with the words "Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam, Dustara Bhava sagara taranam."

The composition calls the devotees to the Guru and says:

"Concentrate with mind And sing the glory of
The twin feet of the Guru That will release thee
From the formidable ocean of bondage"

The poem regarding the "Paramatma" and the illogicality of ignorance is compressed in a single telling beautiful Telugu poem which is translated below

"Just as stars are invisible in day light
The blessing bestowing Paramatma!
Oh! Man May not be visible to thee! On this count
Should you proclaim, 'He does not exist'"

A few other selected examples are given below:

Cultivate the soil of thy heart
The mind is the plough, goodness the bullocks,
Discrimination is the driving whip
Cultivate the expanse of the heart
Man's courage is the manure
Drops of love the seeds
Bhakti is the shower of rain
Thoughts be the weeds
Brahma-Ananda, the reaped harvest.

The importance and efficacy of "Namasmarana" that is chanting of the Lord's name is stressed in several telling verses.

Namasmarana is the essential path,
Hence worship by this method,
Brush aside other vidyas
Seeing that they be all spurious.
Waking up from bed and
Until bed time again,
To feed thy tummy
Without discrimination or limits
Thou spendest thy life,
Wasting away thy skills,
Forgetting the lotus-leaf-eyed one
To what effect-what great pleasures
Have you attained?
Pore over this Oh! Man.

And lastly advice to `working eves':

If all the eves leave home
For taking up employment
Who are the housewives to be
Incharge of the homely chores?
When husband and wife both attend office
Who will tend the home?

To teach others' children,
If mothers work in schools
Which mother will teach her children?
Sporting books like men
If women leave home
Who will tend the hearth?
The problem of income gets solved
But what of the short measure at home?

The importance of Satsang or 'good company' is described in a poem:

Combining with mud
Iron gets rusted
Combining with Fire
Rusted iron is cleansed
It's company alone
That is responsible for this
This is the path of Truth
That is the word of Sai

Baba Seen As Truth

Thought For Today

"You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free." Most all of us have heard this very old scriptural Essence many, many times. Now, this statement most certainly indicates to me quite clearly that truth not only can be confirmed or apprehended by the sense of hearing, but more effectively by the sense of *Sight*. That is, Truth can be actually seen in the case of divine personality in human form. I can think of no better human way of knowing the Truth than by the natural eye of mankind.

"Sounds that address the Ear are lost and die in one short hour; but that which strikes the Eye, lives long upon the mind; the faithful sight engraves the knowledge with a beam of light."

Because of a recent (1980) visit to mystic India, I firmly believe that just by seeing Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and knowing him even in a very limited or casual way, anyone can attain exposure to understanding of just what is meant by this word Truth. Really, self-enlightenment can surely come to any seeker from his works and words; that is, if one has spiritual yearning and an abiding interest for it. Baba, being divinity, can grant the boon of Grace to set at liberty anyone, anywhere, to freedom from bondage. No freedom is greater than the freedom of knowing *Truth*. Once *Truth* is known all conditions of ignorance simply fade away and are forever gone.

Wonderful Baba on Maha-Sivaratri day, a lunar festival, appears in public to the throngs who have gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam, India, from the four corners of the earthly and celestial worlds, and produces from within his own body the Siva Lingam, a resplendent symbol of truth.

A Lingam is an elliptical egg-shaped solid object (in most cases) that comes out of Sai Baba's mouth. The shape represents the apparent path of small matter in orbit motion, as well as that of the solar bodies of cosmos creation. It represents at the basic form of Creation as the sacred word "OM" represents basic sound.

When one sees Sai Baba, one sees Divine Truth in human form.

—James W. Johnson Cleveland, Ohio U. S. A.

Be Human!

You master all knowledge and win loud applause;
You can be hailed as a King and rule over the realm;
You can pile vast wealth, donate gold and land;
You can count all stars that twinkle at night;
You can name without doubt each living thing on earth;
You can teach the eight-fold skill to all who aspire;
You can reach the distant moon and proudly walk thereon;
But, you cannot be the master

of the five senses in your body
You cannot turn your face inward
And still your wayward mind.

We consider a combination of body, mind, intellect and senses as a human. This is not correct.

Mind is something we possess, body is something which we carry about; the intellect too is ours; the senses are dealt with by us. We are not the body, mind, intellect and senses. They are ours; we possess them. They are manipulated by us. We are distinct from all these. The day we recognise this differentiation and live on that knowledge-that day alone we become aware of our reality and our goal.

Is this body inert or conscious? Of course, it grows, it declines, it acts and it undergoes destruction. When the sweepings of your homes are daily thrown into a heap at the same spot, it grows into a mound. So too when food is daily provided, the body grows and when food is stopped it declines. So, the body is basically inert matter. It is called Deha in Sanskrit; Dahyate iti dehah; it is being burnt, as it is called Deha. The body is consumed by fire when life leaves it and it becomes a corpse. Also, it is being consumed by the flames of worry, fear and anxiety every day of its existence, from the moment of awakening at dawn to the moment of sleep at night. The body is also called Sarira; the word means 'that which undergoes destruction'. It is also praised as a temple where God is installed. The word 'Kshetra' usually applied to holy spots is also used to indicate the body. Therefore, it has to be used to further Divine purposes and to demonstrate the glory of the Divine that is installed therein.

The body is cleansed by soap and water but cleanliness which is godliness can be achieved only by inner cleansing. The cleansing of the body may keep physical illness away but disease (A-Shanti) of the mind requires inner cleanliness. Scent applied to the body might please the company around but good thoughts and sweet conversation will please them more and for longer time. As soap is for the body, Truth is for speech; both have high cleansing effect. The mind has to be cleansed by proper education, in the crucible of renunciation. The intellect has to be purified by universal vision conferred by wisdom. Education does not merely mean the study of books, nor the capacity to write books. Education is the gaining of illumination; it is light that dispels ignorance and doubt. It scatters the fog of ego. It confers humility and discipline. The MANAS must also be subjected to the process of Tapas or Discipline; the highest discipline is to speak as you decide and to act as you speak. Tapas does not require your escaping into the forest and meditating in the loneliness on God.

God is not an alien living in far-off lands
God is close to each, in the heart He shines;
Sin is not an act or fact in far-off lands
Sin is in your mind, polluting word and deed.

God or the Devil, Good and Bad are denizens of one's own heart. Where God is, there the Devil cannot be. It is like the game of 'musical chairs', only one person can occupy one chair 1 Seat God for ever in heart, after ridding it of other occupants. Let this inert body be activated by Divine Consciousness. The secular curriculum that you master in these Colleges is important so

that you may live on your own resources, without dependence. But this education cannot be the only goal or the final goal. But, the Resident of the Heart should be given-due reverence and homage.

Next the Senses. They serve to provide awareness of sound, tactile feeling, form, taste and smell. They should not be allowed to contribute to ill-health for the body and the mind. Each of them has a legitimate purpose, a limited area of operation. These should be respected. The tongue knows the measure of salt that can make the 'dal' tasty. In the Upanishads, the Senses are called Matrah or Measures. Each one is a measure that can operate only up to a limit. The tongue has to speak soft and sweet; the eye has to seek and see symmetry, harmony and beauty, the glow of Divine Ecstasy, the splendour of Divine Charm. The uncontrolled tongue indulges in four sins: lying, scandalising, vain gossip and wanton fault-finding. God resides in every one. The Lord has declared, "mamaivaamso jivaloke jivabhutah sanathanah—All Living beings are parts of Me." They are all parts of His Sanathana Self, His Eternal Self. So every one is the embodiment of the Divine. When any person is ill-treated or harmed, it is God who is the target of that sacrilege. We declare that Truth is God and in the same breath adore falsehood. Resorting to falsehood is a demon that possesses and overpowers the weak. Indulging in unnecessary talk, talking for its own sake, is a morbid habit. It is a waste of energy. It disperses company, for no one likes to listen to a bore. If he is tolerated for a minute, he will stick to you for days. There are others who spread stories about others and spoil your peace of mind by poisoning the springs of love. You must be engaged in developing the good in you, weeding out the bad qualities and heightening your purity and holiness. How can knowledge of the good and bad in others help you in this task? Talkative persons easily slip into scandal-mongering. Too much talk and a tongue addicted to scandal are twins; they work together and in unison. A poet addressed his tongue thus, "O Tongue! Knower of Taste! Relisher of Sweetness! Always prefer the Truth and the God." Even when speaking Truth, one should not inflame passion, diminish enthusiasm or inflict injury. "Satyam brooyaath, Priyam brooyaath: Speak the Truth; speak pleasantly," That is the counsel. "Na brooyaath Satyam Apriyam: If unpleasant, do not speak the Truth" is a modifying factor. Also, "Priyam cha na anritham brooyaath Because it is pleasant, do not speak falsehood."

The Lord has said in the Gita: "Annovega Karam Vaakyam satyam, priyam hitam cha: "Speech that does not offend, that is truthful, pleasant and beneficial" has to be practised. Such speech sanctifies the tongue. It knows and respects the limits. The ear cannot tolerate a false or discordant note. Every one of the senses responds within its own limits of tolerance and protests when that limit is exceeded or disregarded. You must be vigilant that they are put to use, with proper attention to those limits. When they stray from the path or overleap the boundaries, reason hides its head and you become less than human.

"You can master all knowledge and win loud applause"
The crowds that gather may praise and proclaim,
"Ah I what a wonderful lecture he gave!"
"You can be hailed as a King and rule over the realm"
"You can pile vast wealth and donate gold and land"

But, what is the result gained? Karna gave away the ear-jewels he wore; he even sliced off his skin-armour, when he had to give it away in charity. Wherein lies the key to greatness? Whereto

does the renunciation lead? The question is, does it purify the heart? Does it help manifest the Divinity within to manifest Itself?

The MANAS or Mind is known as Antahkarana, or since Kaarana means the 'sense', the Inner Sense Organ. The Manas is always engaged in Manana or Recapturing, Remembering, Recalling, Reflecting. As a result, it receives and rejects wishes. You may be alone and silent. But the mind is on a spree—wishing, desiring, planning to do or not to do. And it keeps the tongue busy, until sleep silences it. Or, the person might indulge in talking to himself. There are no standards which are kept in mind, while looking for things, talking about people and engaging in acts. Since these are done as soon as the thought arises or the will commands, the power of discrimination becomes weak. One must try to stay for a while in order to examine and judge. Develop the quality of fortitude, the strength not to yield to the opinions of others unless you find them to be right, the courage to bear criticism and face slander.

As regards Tapas, there are three kinds the Tapas of the mind, the Tapas of the body and the Tapas of the speech. Let me remind you that the Tapas of the body involves a few disciplines: The first is the process by which you revere and adore the elders, the teachers and God, serve them and honour their commands, put those commands into practice and earn their Grace. The second discipline is cleanliness, inner and outer. Outer cleanliness includes the cleanliness of the area surrounding you. The third is Brahmacharya. This does not mean merely desisting from marriage. It means becoming soaked in the holy Love for the Divine through transparent sincerity, unselfish will, pure consciousness and holy thoughts. You all know that Hanuman is described as the Eternal Brahmachari. He was married to Sri Vatsala but yet he deserved that description. How? Brahmachari means He who moves in Brahman. Hanuman had no other thought than Rama who is Brahman and so he is known as moving in Brahman and living in Brahman. Your thoughts, your feelings, your desires, your activities must all move in Brahman, the Universal Absolute. That is to say, whatever is spoken, whatever is seen, must be cognised as Brahman. That is the real Brahmacharya stage, not merely observing certain don'ts to control the senses and the mind. The next Discipline is Absence of Violence, Ahimsa. It does not mean merely not injuring a living being. You should not cause hurt even by a word or by a look or gesture. Tolerance, fortitude, equanimity—these help you to be steady in Ahimsa. They will remove all chances of your causing pain to others. This is called Sahana or Kshama. Assess the worth of whatever others say about you or do to you and cultivate fortitude, the wisdom to appreciate their behaviour and pardon their faults. This capacity is as valuable as Truth, as Righteousness, as Wisdom, and as Non-violence, Renunciation, Delight, and Compassion. It is all that one need possess for spiritual advance.

Living becomes a glorious experience only when it is sweetened by tolerance and love. Willing adjustment to each other's way of living, cooperation in common tasks, these make living happy and fruitful. Modes of behaviour have been laid down and proved beneficial by centuries of practice. These have to be observed with modifications to suit the conditions of today. We are 'developing' in each department of life. The pity is we are not 'developing' the unique qualities of 'human beings'. Develop the Atmic awareness; develop the consciousness of the Divine, the acquisition of Divine attributes. Expand love and understanding. When students consciously and steadily strive to develop these distinct human qualities, education will give them valuable

experience, and both will equip them for transforming society. The nation and all mankind will derive benefit there from.

—*Divine Discourse at Sri Sathya Sai College for Women, Anantapur, 17-2-80*

Greatest Australian Miracle

—*Howard Murphet*

Early in 1976 my wife and I became acquainted with Pearl Harrison, a retired secretary of the medical faculty of a Sydney University. At first we thought this just a chance meeting, but later we wondered

At that time the manuscript of my book, "Sai Baba Avatar" was ready for the final draft to be typed for the publishers. As Pearl still liked to do casual secretarial work, it was agreed that she type the manuscript. In this way she became exposed to the wonders of Sri Sathya Sai Baba for the first time.

One of her granddaughters, nine-year-old Mayan Waynberg, sometimes used to help her by reading aloud the material to be typed. While the grandmother was somewhat sceptical about the miracles, the granddaughter accepted the truth of them without question.

The first few chapters of the book had been completed, when Mayan, who was looking very pale and bruising too easily, was taken to a doctor for a blood test. The doctor was so appalled at the results, that he phoned Mayan's mother, Helen, and advised that the child be collected from school and taken home immediately. He also arranged for her to be given a bone marrow test at the Prince of Wales hospital in Sydney.

Blood tests showed that Mayan's haemoglobin count was less than half what it should be, and the white components of her blood were about a third of the normal level. Bad as this was, the worst were the platelets which were down to only one fifteenth of the normal count.

Her disease was diagnosed as aplastic anaemia, in which the bone-marrow fails to produce the vital blood components in sufficient quantity to maintain health and life.

Mayan was put under the care of a specialist who told her mother that the only treatment for the disease was the use of certain drugs; one was a male hormone, Prednisolone, and another Fluoxymesterone. Both of these have very distressing side-effects, such as stunting growth, causing puffy obesity, and bringing a growth of hair on the face while causing baldness of the head. The specialist said that the child would need to have blood and bone-marrow tests constantly to monitor her condition. This in itself was a terrible ordeal for everyone concerned as Mayan had a deep phobia about needles piercing her skin and drawing blood.

But the very worst aspect was that, after going through all this, and suffering the terrible side-effects of the treatment, she would still not be cured. One of the medical men told Pearl the depressing truth that the drug treatment could do no more than prolong the child's life for perhaps a few years, but could have no effect in the long run. Moreover, the child could not live a normal life even for the short time she was kept alive.

Then Pearl Harrison thought about the Sai miracles she had been typing. She writes: "I must admit to complete lack of faith in religion, considering myself a Jewess by tradition but not by observance. I had typed about many miracles that Sai Baba had performed, and had thought how interesting it all sounded intellectually, but, had not this dreadful illness occurred to my own granddaughter, I might have let it go at that. It was as if my mind suddenly opened with a jerk, and I began to think perhaps there was something real in all that I had typed. Howard and Iris were most concerned when I told them about Mayan, and said they would come over immediately, and Mayan could start taking Vibhuti."

Lord Sai is specially interested in all those in whom his devotees are interested. But he had earlier told me the Divine cure requires faith, belief and surrender. Could we find these ingredients in this Sydney suburban home? When I said earnestly to Mayan: "But you must really *believe* in the power of Sai Baba," she replied, without hesitation: "Oh, but I *do*." In the way she said it I sensed the simple child-like faith that is so important—and yet so hard for most people to achieve. Her grandfather, Jack Harrison, gave me a hope that perhaps he too might have the helping faith, when he said: "I'm going to India as soon as I can to thank Sai Baba for curing Mayan." The cure had not yet begun, but he seemed to have no doubt that it would take place.

Pearl, on the other hand, had her intellectual barriers to overcome. The mother Helen, though apparently sceptical, was willing to try the Vibhuti treatment. But constant prayer was important, we assured the family. They all agreed to pray to Swami; Iris and I prayed, too, fervently. We badly wanted Swami to cure Mayan of this terrible disease, not only because we felt love and compassion for the child but also because this could be the great Australian miracle that might bring more and more of our fellow countrymen to the Light.

However, the immediate question was should Mayan take the prescribed drugs? We knew from research into many cases that Swami sometimes cures *through* drugs, while preventing any side-effects. Yet sometimes he will not have drugs used at all. The only way was to ask him, and in the meantime let the child start the drug treatment. The doctors had said the side-effects would not become evident for about three months.

By good fortune our friend Lynette Penrose was about to set off on a visit to Swami. Incidentally, it had been in her home in Balmain that we first began Sai meetings in Sydney. I believe they were the first in Australia.

Lynette agreed to take a photograph of Mayan and letters to Swami. We hoped, moreover, that she would be able to ask him verbally if the child should or should not take the drugs prescribed by the doctors.

No long after she reached India, an airmail letter came from Lynette. She had been granted an interview with Swami, had given him the photograph and letters, and asked the important question about treatment. She wrote that when he looked at the photograph, his face had become "very soft and compassionate" and he had said: "No, no drugs, just Vibhuti in water twice a day."

Pearl Harrison writes of the situation: "When this message came back, we had to decide whether to take her off the drugs and give her Vibhuti only. Mayan made up our minds for us. She said, 'If Sai Baba says I should not take drugs, then I won't take them'. So after just three weeks on the drugs, she went off them and has taken only Vibhuti since." This was putting complete faith in the Divine Power of someone no member of the family had ever seen, except in photographs.

We thought it might help at the receiving end of the healing current if Sai Baba meetings were held at the home of the Harrisons in Greenacre. They readily agreed to this, and their house became the second centre for bhajan and study groups in Sydney. Soon Jack decided to convert his big garage into a Sai temple, and erect a new car-port to shelter his car. The necessary changes to the building's interior were made and a beautiful shrine erected there by some of the devotees who had been to Swami. The temple acquired a sacred atmosphere and the size of the group began to expand, people coming from all parts of the metropolitan area, and from distant places in the Blue Mountains and the South Coast.

The meetings were a great success. It was surprising to see how quickly and wholeheartedly the Australians took to singing bhajans. Many learned to lead, the child Mayan being one of them.

Mayan's health was showing a steady improvement. The family had decided not to tell the doctors immediately that she was taking none of the drugs. She was taken to the hospital for tests every two weeks, and the medical people were delighted-and perhaps surprised-at the results. There was a dramatic rise in her red blood cells, a good improvement in the white cells, and the platelet count was slowly creeping upwards.

After a few months the red and white cell counts were quite normal, and the tests were then given every two months instead of every two weeks. Her platelets were showing a rise of about 10,000 at each test, but they still had a long way to go to reach normality.

The doctors had tested Mayan's sister Alona, who is about a year the senior, for bone-marrow compatibility with that of Mayan. They advised, after the test, a bone-marrow graft from the sister, saying it would help Mayan fight the disease.

Again a devotee going to India from Australia asked Swami if this operation should be performed or not. He replied that the child was getting better, and would soon be completely well. "There is no need for an operation," he said. So no operation was performed.

In November 1978, soon after Iris and I arrived in India on a visit to Swami, we received a letter from Pearl Harrison telling us that Mayan's last blood test had shown her platelets as even better than normal—in fact, 174,000.

Early in the next year Jack and Pearl Harrison with their two granddaughters came to India to thank Swami for the miraculous cure.

This Divine healing across the thousands of miles had worked steadily, taking nearly two years to effect the complete cure. The time factor has, perhaps, something to do with the receiving ground—the depth of faith, belief, surrender to God and the intensity of prayer. But there are, no doubt, other inscrutable factors too. There may have been karma to work out, for instance, or something to be learned from the period of waiting.

All we can say is, that in moving through hope and prayer and worship toward this great Sai Cure, the whole family—with some relatives and friends as well—moved into the Sai Family. Their outlook and values changed when the Joy and Love of the Lord came into their lives. From being a family without religion they became one with a true spiritual religion—the Sai religion. While blessing Mayan with a cure of the body, the Divine Hand had touched many other lives for a cure of souls.

How pleased and grateful to the Lord we, ourselves, were that the great Australian miracle had come to pass!

"Is this a Prison, I am in?"

—Sirikul Charungmathong, Bangkok.

Only the worst type of offenders who commit heinous crimes such as murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug trafficking, matricide, patricide, etc., are sent to this Gang-Kwang Central prison. I had committed none of these; yet I was given this special 'treat' because of my threat to report many high level illegal activities I had known of. Shivaratri was drawing near and I had planned to go to Puttaparthi. Two days prior to my intended departure I was hoodwinked and put behind bars. My aged mother was waiting for my arrival at Prasanthi Nilayam.

To her utter dismay and grief, I did not turn up. Communication between us was cut off. My world had ended abruptly. The magnificent edifice I had built up, undergoing so much pain, struggles and sacrifices during two decades, had tumbled, leaving nothing redeemable. From the high position of a senior employee in a large commercial firm, drawing an enviable sum as salary, I had dropped overnight to become a pauper. I could not summon courage to face the agonising and degrading change in my living pattern. I could look to no quarter to draw solace for my parched mind. No one of my 'friends' and 'admirers', including those who had the resources to extricate me, bothered to come near me. My relatives were far away. Money, I had not accumulated for use in such emergencies—most of my income having gone for the welfare of my adopted children, a dozen in all, orphans and destitutes.

Thus I was in a soup; with loss of freedom, lack of financial resources, no friends, no relatives. I am a celibate. It was really a struggle I encountered for food and other minimum needs. For

almost a month, my food contained no salt! Moreover, I had opted to be a vegetarian, ever since I set foot on the sacred precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam.

I was prone to ask in the beginning, "Why this to me, Baba," "Am I not the devotee you love most?" "Why did you not extend your Abhayahastha and save me from this grisly disaster?" "what about the plans I was to put into action to propagate Your Message in this part of the world?" "Who will provide sustenance to my now forlorn adopted children?" "What will happen to my worldly possessions, several truck-loads of them, I wantedly or unwantedly accumulated all these years?" "Will I ever see again my parents both nearing 80?" And the worst yet of all disappointments was my inability to visit Puttaparthi to pay obeisance to my Sadguru, my Liberator. After my first visit, I had vowed to make a yearly pilgrimage to Prasanthi Nilayam, the Abode of my Lord (at quicker intervals, if possible) with the aspiration that longer exposure to His Grace and Glance would wean me away towards Sadhana and enable me to become one of the messengers of the Sai Era of spiritual joy.

Meanwhile, a lump appeared on my left ankle, following hard labour in the sun during the first three days of my prison life. It was accompanied by fever; I was confined to bed for three months unable to use my leg; the bone had enlarged and hardened. The doctors frightened me saying that the leg might have to be amputated, because of the damage to the bone. It was this "Baba's Lump" that sent me to the Hospital and created a congenial attitude for my thinking about my worries. It was, while lying almost crippled in the prison Hospital ward ruminating over the recent and distant past that it dawned on me that "the gloom I was under, was after all nothing but a shade of the caressing arm of my benevolent and beloved Lord. With that discovery, all my blues vanished and I was 'liberated'.

I found myself asking, "what happened, after all! Is it that bad? Are you not happy to get rid of, at long last, all that world of worries which had been growing with you and haunting you for thirty years? Were you not entreating Bhagavan for remedies to cure the various maladies that plagued your life. You were yearning for a change in your profession. You wanted plenty of free time at your disposal for rest, recreation, sleep and outing, all of which you never had enough. Only a miracle such as the present situation could have saved you and set you free from the financial muddle you had created through professional miscalculation. Be glad and grateful that Bhagavan has taken you under His wings and kept you safe and sound."

In one single sweep, Baba wiped away all my problems and ills. He lifted me from that sad, stupid, struggling world and deposited me safely within this 'sanctum sanctorum', enabling my mind to undergo grinding, polishing and purification. Here, I revel in an atmosphere of extreme ecstasy, charged with the warmth of spontaneous Divine Love; emanating from my omniscient, omnipresent, omnifarious Lord. For, He says, "Those of us who dismiss a criminal from the mind as soon as the prison doors are closed, with him safely inside, will be surprised that I am there, inside the bars, assuaging the bleeding heart, the penitent mind, the vigilant conscience, the innocent sufferer, the child aware that it has erred and is determined not to err again." Here I have found peace of mind at last? To say so might sound absurd, ludicrous and incredible. But that is precisely the state I am in, at present, if analysed and assessed.

In the first place, the responsibility of setting right the financial mess has now shifted from my shoulders. During the interview at Prasanthi Nilayam, in 1976, even though I had not opened the subject in spite of its hanging heavily in my mind, Bhagavan told me, while patting me affectionately and blessing me with the Divine Palm on my head, "All the money that you advanced to your friends will not come back but, don't worry; everything will be alright." In fact, the prime motive behind my trip to Puttaparthi was to evoke Baba's sympathy and blessings to obviate this distressing situation. As He willed, this burden does not exist any more!

The next problem which seriously vexed me was my profession which was eating away my health, with 13 to 14 hours of drudgery made me more torturesome by pestering customers who were always at my heels for favours. I never had enough sleep, food, rest or recreation. My health was in jeopardy and I was myself never conscious of this. I had no time to think or worry about it. I could have been permanently hospitalised.

Pointing out that the condition of my eyes, throat and stomach was not good, Baba materialised for me a small quantity of white medicinal powder to eat; it tasted very bitter. Thanks to this present 'catastrophe' brought about by Baba's Divine Will, I am in exuberant health, physical and mental, to the envy of all. The manual work allotted to me is health-giving. I do it with gusto because 'work is worship'. We are locked in at around 5 P.M. and let out at 6.30 A.M. These 13 and odd hours, though confined to 2 square yards of space, belong entirely to me and are best utilised, namely, for prayers, meditation, reading books on and by Baba, yoga practices, culminating in 6-7 hours of sound sleep.

During wakeful hours and the intervals of leisure, I do not let my thoughts stray into the wretched realms of wasteful existence outside the prison. My once weary mind runs to the Divine Mother to get recharged and rejuvenated and to rest, cuddled in Her Arms. I have now enough time for rest, recreation and sleep. I bask in sunshine and drink in Baba's fresh air as long as and as much as I want. I practise yogasana both morning and evening. I also do free teaching for a couple of hours daily which has contributed much to the increase of my own knowledge in many fields. Above all, I am well-treated, respected and loved by fellow-prisoners numbering about a thousand and also by the prison guards. Often, I wonder, "Is this a prison I am in?" and each time, I am reminded, "This is where Baba resides."

Another source of considerable worry was the children I have adopted. With sufficient money at my disposal, I had given them too much attention, care and love and nearly spoiled them. Now devoid of my support, they have learned to stand on their own legs and with the Grace of Bhagavan, three of them have got settled in life with the capacity to look after the rest to a certain extent. The last of my adopted children is an orphan girl, abandoned by her parents in one of the local hospitals. I took her in my custody when she was only three days old. Receiving her in front of Bhagavan's Portrait, I had dedicated her to the Lotus Feet. I had intended to give her complete education in Baba's institutions in India. She is now five years old and has joined a local school with the help of her governess. She is a very intelligent and sweet girl liked by everybody. I leave her future for Baba to take care of.

Regarding my parents, both are in fine spirits and fairly good health. If it is Bhagavan's will that I should have reunion with them before their final journey, I will make it. Otherwise again it is His Divine Will and I will take it, however painful it might be.

Coming to my future and reputation, what future and reputation are needed for a man of 53, who is on his journey homeward, who has no wife or children, who has no ambition to amass wealth or acquire power to be wielded over others? When I go out, what I might need is, barely 2 sq. yards of sleeping space, the simplest food that will keep hunger away and minimum clothes of utility value. My wardrobe, during the heydays, used to be overstuffed with dresses and at the time of my arrest, I had over 50 sets. Ironically enough, today, even rags are difficult to obtain. Whatever comes to my hands are treasured as valuable possessions, because of its usefulness. What a contrast!

My worldly possessions? Bhagavan says, "Give up and gain; renounce and become richer." My residence has been taken over by the landlord for failure to pay arrears of rent. I do not know where my possessions are at present. Once, they used to serve me as wonderful distractions. I could sit for hours gazing at them, keeping my troubles and worries at bay. Now that my worries are obliterated, they have lost their charm for me. I don't want to claim their ownership or chase after their present owners. I was only a temporary custodian for them; they have changed hands after their sojourn with me. They have taught me the important lesson that I should not waste so much money, time and energy over such worthless things. My eldest daughter, a slum child, when suddenly lifted and placed amidst these luxuries of life, used to tell me often, "It is better to be poor rather than be rich, surrounded by countless paraphernalia which are only sources of worries and troubles." She had never appreciated or taken interest in these, my treasures. Now, I realize how weighty her words were.

And finally, my pilgrimages to Puttaparthi? During the interview He gave me, I asked Bhagavan *when* He intended to visit Bangkok. "*When you go, I also go,*" was His reply. Yes. He came with me and has been with me ever since. Whenever I am overcome by depressed moods, I sing the glory of the Lord or draw inspiration from within myself, where He is seated. To some who long to visit Him again, Baba asks why they should want to undertake another journey involving money, time and hardships, while He was with them all the time, wherever they were. This question is directed to me also. Baba had not permitted me to touch the Lotus Feet, but my brother and their daughter were! Each time I attempted, He stopped me, saying, "Not yet." Recently in a vision, He granted me that vision also, saying, "Touch as long as you want," rolling up the robe from His Feet. I had groused about my disappointment at Puttaparthi four years ago.

When the news of my arrest reached my friends, some of them made mordant remarks, like "Why Sai Baba did not help him?" A few well-wishers also repeated the same, with candour, out of sheer sympathy for me. To all of them, I can only repeat Bhagavan's Message: "Do you think I will confront you with pain where there is no reason for it? Open your heart for pain as you do now for pleasure, for it is My Will wrought by me for your own good. Welcome it as a challenge. Do not turn away from it. Turn within and derive the strength to bear it and benefit by it." They are infected with worldly desires and naturally my lot is bitter to their taste. They do not realise that "the surgeon's knife heals where it wounds." The situation I am in is a very great blessing in disguise, specially designed by Baba as a panacea to cure my ills.

To sum up, what I have to do now is to wait for the 'All-clear' signal from Bhagavan and walk out of here. Until that day of deliverance, I can afford to wait patiently in this sanctuary, realizing that "Man has come into the world to make his mistakes, to suffer thereby and to grow in strength, wisdom and stature from the sufferings. I accept suffering and pain as His Grace and expect my humble self will thereby be well groomed to become one day a soldier in His Army and to be led by Him into Victory."

Sathya Sai Vahini
SRI SATHYA SAI BABA
17

The scriptural texts of India—the Vedas, Vedangas, Upanishads, Smritis, Puranas and Ithihasas—are repositories of profound wisdom. Each of them is an ocean of sweet sustaining Milk. Each is sacred and sanctifying. The waters of the Ocean can never be diminished in volume however many pumps you employ to drain them. Enormous quantities of water are turned into steam by the hot rays of the sun, bundled as clouds, and returned to the earth as rain. This helps the harvesting of grain and renders the land green with vegetation, big and small. The wonder is that in spite of this tremendous uptake and down-pour, the level of the ocean does not go down even by an inch. Furthermore, even though thousands of live rivers pour their waters into the seas, the level is not seen to increase in height. Similarly, the personages, who have supplemented their knowledge of the scriptural texts with the awareness of their validity acquired by practising the lessons contained in them, are not affected by praise or blame, whatever the source and quantity. Their hearts will stay pure, unaffected and calm. The holy scriptures of India are strongholds of such sustaining lesson.

However, one can imbibe those lessons only to the extent of one's patience and intelligent skill. After mastering the texts and gaining experience in putting the lessons into actual practice, one can share the light and the joy with others. Only the texts of India insist on the value of actual practice and the need to confirm the truths by experiencing their work.

If a person desires to understand clearly the sacred books and scriptural texts of India to imbibe their message, he must learn the Sanskrit language; he cannot avoid that responsibility and that duty. The very mention of Sanskrit immediately arouses in many among us a prejudicial attitude. "It is the dead language of a dying culture; it is bolstered by the faltering attachment of antiquated conservatives," the contemporary moderns declaim. They condemn the language as surviving only in meaningless formulae, in fast vanishing rituals and ceremonies, in wedding rites and other futile occasions. It is a very difficult language to learn, it is said. Such beliefs have dug themselves deep into the minds of moderns. These banal opinions and false attitudes have to be exorcised first, from the minds of men.

Sanskrit is an immortal language; its voice is eternal; its call is through centuries. It has imbedded in it the basic sustenance from all the languages of the world. Revere Sanskrit as the Mother of languages. Do not ignore its greatness or talk disparagingly about it. When you yearn

to slake the thirst for nectar, offered by the Vedas, you have to learn Sanskrit. In order to interpret the Vedas and elaborate their inner meanings and mysteries, the sages have left behind textbooks of complementary sciences like grammar, poetics, philosophy and astrology. Their researches and books range over several fields of knowledge like astronomy, geography, jurisprudence, ethics, epistemology, music, psychology and rhetoric. Even Western scientists are struck with admiration at the wonders of astronomy they have unveiled and the truths they have unravelled in other sciences; they have benefited by the clues provided by these sages and they are engaged in further research encouraged by the discoveries of these ancient seers. They have acknowledged that these Rishis have advanced far more than the Greeks in their astronomical knowledge. In the Vedas and the supplementary literature they produced, we can find already revealed many secrets of nature, hailed as revolutionary discoveries by modern science, like the existence and explosive possibilities of the atom. Many sections of the Atharvana Veda are found to be mines of such important information when examined by westerners. The Germans established special institutes and universities in order to conduct research on the contents of the tons of palm-leaf manuscripts of the Naadee texts and horoscopes, and on astronomy, medicine, chemistry, toxicology, mathematics, etc. They are teaching Sanskrit so that this work may proceed successfully. In America, Russia and even in Afghanistan, the Universities are not only themselves eager to introduce Sanskrit as a subject of study but they are being pressed by scholars to do so! Foreigners are revering these texts from India, as gems of lucky discovery.

The science of Yoga was assigned great prominence in the past by Indians. Even now, in many countries of the world this science is being studied and practised. Institutions where yogasanas are taught exist in great numbers throughout America and Russia. In India, however, when the practice of Yoga or Meditation is mentioned, people respond with the feeling that it is a spiritual path related to the Vedantic school of thought. As soon as Yoga is referred to, many who hear the word get pictures before their minds of lone hermits in the depths of thick forests, wearing the ochre robe of monks and living on fruits, tubers and roots. Their opinion is that Yoga-sadhana is the ancient discipline practised by such homeless ascetics. This is an ignorant guess; it is not true at all. The Yoga science is today being probed by physicists and others in Western countries.

In this era of technology, it is becoming increasingly difficult to lead peaceful lives. Men are becoming the targets of various types of mental ailments. In countries on the front line of civilisation like America and England, people have lost the delight of natural sleep at night. They experience only artificial sleep induced by the tablets they swallow. As a consequence of these and many other drugs taken to ward off other ills, they suffer more and more from diseases of the heart and blood pressure. In the end, they render themselves unhealthy wrecks. Such lives are highly artificial. People are sunk in fear and anxiety; mentally on one side and physically on the other, they have no rest. Drugs, tablets, capsules and pills are produced by millions but the general health has not improved. Besides, new varieties of illness have emerged in order to afflict man, and they are developing fast. A few intelligent westerners have realised that their only refuge is Yoga; they have confirmed their conclusion by means of experiments; they have taken to Yoga with increasing faith. Note this important development.

(To be continued)

Science and Spirituality Two Sides of the Same Coin?

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

Preamble

We are living in an age of Science and Technology and that what we see and/or experience should be explicable from the standpoint of science, are more or less the slogans of modern educated people in general and rationalists and pseudoscientists in particular. It is significant that the Modern Man is often referred to as Technological Animal, Scientific Animal Etc.; possibly it is a true description for the Pasu (i.e., animal) aspect is definitely more in evidence than the Pashupati (i.e., Divine) aspect in the present-day-man.

There can be no two opinions about the stupendous achievements of science and technology, especially since the beginning of this century. In the spirit of the saying "Aanoraneeyan Mahatomaheeyan" of Bhagavad-Gita, Man has been able to delve deeper into the microscopic as well as the macroscopic aspects of our Universe to understand its mysteries through the so called scientific approach.

As we shall elaborate later, more often than not the Scientific Method is mistaken to be Science itself and this mistaken notion has done more harm than good in the development of scientific outlook in man and for that matter in the development of man himself as an integrated human being.

No one can deny the facts that, we have come a long way in the understanding of the structure of matter since the pioneering work of Dalton and in the understanding of the structure of our Universe since the breathtaking contributions of Kepler and Galileo. Despite the tremendous achievements in the fields of Science and Technology that have been registered so far, especially during the past couple of centuries, what man knows is infinitesimally small compared to what he should know. The intriguing question is: Will Man ever be able to know what all he should know? The question can be answered only by posing another question: Can an ant ever fathom the ocean depths and the kite the limitless sky? Similarly Man, no matter how many billions of years he spends in the cauldron of evolution, will still be a very tiny part of the infinite Universe and hence naturally it will be impossible for him to grasp and understand with his limited comprehension the mysteries of the limitless universe. True scientists like true Jnanis (wisemen) will admit to this as a fact with all humility as for example revealed through the following statement by Einstein: "The less knowledge a scholar possesses, the farther he feels from God. But the greater his knowledge, the nearer his approach to God."

It is a fashion now-a-days for every one who has the ability to read a few magazines on popular science to feel that he is developing scientific temper and as such he starts using jargon such as: "Seeing is believing"; the backbone of scientific temper is "experimentation, observation and inference." etc., etc. I want to put one question to such people. Has any one seen an electron? Still they are prepared to believe in its existence because the light bulb is glowing, the fan is running, the radio is functioning etc. In other words they are prepared to believe in the existence

of electron based on experience and faith. But when it comes to GOD they wish to see him to believe in Him. Isn't it amusing that people who have not been able to see a tiny electron are clamouring to see the infinite GOD?

With all the comforts and leisure that Man could get through science and technology, *peace of mind* still eludes him and he is more confused and finds himself at crossroads more during this century than ever before. This type of a situation has developed largely due to the seemingly divergent interpretations given to the role of Science and Spirituality in the development of Man. The Scientist in general feels that GOD is an unnecessary hypothesis; whereas the Spiritualist contends that GOD is an essential ingredient for Man's existence. Einstein, whose faith in God is unquestionable (though some of the rationalists and psuedo-scientists contend that Einstein believed in only Spinoza's GOD etc.), was supposed to have said: "Science without Religion is lame, but Religion without Science is blind." Overenthusiastic scientists and especially the psuedo-scientists interpret this statement to propagate the doctrine that Science alone allows a person to see through his life clearly and that the support of Religion at the most is like a walking stick to a lame man—useful but not essential. Of course the views of Spiritualists are not any less arrogant. They seem to feel that Science is something unreal and artificial and hence it has no role whatsoever to play in the development of Man and that Spirituality alone is of any consequence for this purpose. In fact a statement that Spirituality begins where Science ends is often made in order to project the inadequacies of Science and to establish the supremacy of Spirituality in the development of Man. So the question that naturally arises is: Are Science and Spirituality mutually exclusive or are they the two sides of the same coin in the context of the development of Man? I would like to answer this question, not as a scholar (because I am not one), but as a Scientist who firmly believes not only in God but also in the God given faculty called Common Sense. Before I project my views by way of an answer to the above question, I feel it is necessary for me to state my operational definitions for the words Science and Spirituality. In my considered view both the words have been misused in recent years and their legitimate meanings have become distorted beyond recognition.

II. What is Science and What is Spirituality?

Vichara (inquiry) for arriving at the Truth is common to Science as well as Spirituality. Theorizing, observation, experimentation and inference are the four corner stones upon which the edifice of Scientific Method rests and the Scientific Method is relatively a new endeavour. Unfortunately scientific method is confused with Science itself and that is precisely the reason why people keep on saying that Science is only a few centuries old. Of course the powers of Scientific method in unravelling the mysteries of Nature have never been more profoundly demonstrated than during this century, through the pioneering contributions of Newton, Planck, Einstein, Rutherford, Bohr, Fermi, Darwin and many others. But even before Newton discovered the Law of Gravitation, were the Planets not revolving in their specified orbits? Emerson said 'Man loves to wonder and that is the seed of our Science'. I am sure that Man, who inhabited this planet some millions of years ago, must have been wondering about the Sun, Moon, Stars and hence the seeds of Science should have been sown ever since Man came into existence. I would even go a bit further and say that Science was operative ever since the Universe is created by God and the understanding of that Science through Scientific Method is relatively a new

endeavour. Thus I have tried to differentiate between Science and Scientific Method in order to bring home the point that science is at least as old as Man himself.

Now turning our attention to Spirituality I contend that Spirituality, like Science, should be as old as Man himself. Because the first man must also have wondered about himself, in addition to wondering about Sun, Moon and Stars. This kind of reasoning leads to the conclusion that Spirituality and Science are two absolute states for all of God's creation in general and Man in particular. Then the following question arises: What is the equivalent of Scientific Method in the context of Spirituality? My answer is that Religion is the equivalent of Scientific Method in the context of Spirituality. Just as Religions of Man are designated by different names Hindu, Islam, Christianity etc., similarly the various scientific methods are designated Physics, Chemistry, etc. Each Religion prescribes a path for the understanding of the Ultimate Truth, just as each Scientific Method can be used for the understanding of the mysteries of Nature. Hence I wish to coin a word 'SELIGION' to designate Scientific Method as an equivalent word to RELIGION in the context of spirituality. Now I shall attempt briefly to answer the question that I posed in the beginning.

III. Are Science and Spirituality mutually exclusive or are they the two sides of the same coin in the context of the development of Man?

I have argued that Science and Spirituality are concepts as ancient as Man himself and Seligion and Religion are relatively new endeavours. Yearning for knowing himself (which we now call spirituality) and for knowing the world around him (which we now call Science) must have been the preoccupation of Man ever since he inhabited this planet. That *Yearning* only motivated Man to carry out Research (a Modern word may be) as Einstein aptly described as follows: 'One of the most powerful motives leading to art and science is the escape from mundane life with its painful crudity and bleak desolation, out of bonds of ever-changing personal desires. It urges the fine sensitiveness out of the personal existence into the world of objective observation and comprehension; it is this motivation comparable to yearning which inexorably draws the urban dweller away from his noisy, tortuous environment up into the calm of the mountain heights where his far-reaching gaze is drawn out through the pure air to peaceful contours seemingly created for eternity'.

Objective observation in addition to yearning is at the root of both Science and Spirituality. It seems Ramana Maharshi, when he was a boy, experienced death one day with himself being a conscious witness to the death of his body. Thus he came to the conclusion that 'I' has no birth and death; but it is the body that is really experiencing the cycle of birth and death. What a beautiful example for Objective Observation in the realm of Spirituality. As yet there is no documented evidence in Science for 'Objective Observation' of the type demonstrated by Ramana Maharshi. In fact the Heisenberg Principle of Uncertainty asserts that the 'Observed' is influenced by the 'observer' and hence the so-called 'Objective Observation' is rather impossible. But then the Principle of Uncertainty, in the light of my analysis, represents a limitation of Scientific Method (i.e., Seligion) and not Science itself. In my view when 'Objective Observation' of the type mentioned above in the context of spirituality becomes possible in the realm of Science, then Science and Spirituality become one and the same; because that represents the state when the I is totally annihilated and the Divinity in Man shines with its full

glory. Until then, in my view, Science and Spirituality should be considered as two sides of the same coin.

I believe that this approach lends itself to a comprehension of an Avatar or Incarnation. An Avatar is one who is born with the requisite fully effulgent consciousness to represent the state of amalgamation of Science (Prakriti) and Spirituality (Purusha) to Him. Thus he represents a state of personification of THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH (Satyaswaroopa) and we have in our midst such a personality bearing the name Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

With humble pranams at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Baba.

Life is one long ordeal. Remember this even when things seem quite exhilarating. Any moment, the road may turn into a morass, the sky may darken, and fortune fail. Earn the sword of Jnana to rend asunder the veil of Maya. While on the pilgrimage to the goal, discriminate between the Real and the unreal. If the eye does not help you to visualise God in every object it sees, it is far better to be blind. If your ear drags you into filthy cacophony it is far better to be deaf. The senses should not be encouraged to plunge you into the sensual. They must serve your real interests and sublimate your appetites. They must help you to merge in God.

—Baba

The Four Brothers

Rama is a Name that is sweeter than all the sweet things in Nature imbibed alone or together. It can never cloy on the tongue or mind. It has vast mysterious mystic potentialities to elevate man. So, one must endeavour to keep the mind ever dwelling on it. The story of Rama—The Ramayana—is but another version of the Vedas. In fact, it is said that the Vedas incarnated as the Ramayana, in order to help in the destruction of evil and the revival of righteous living, tasks which the Lord took upon Himself during His human career as Rama. Why! Rama and his three brothers are from one point of view the Four Vedas in human form. The Yajur Veda lays down the rights and duties of man, the Dharma which ensures Peace and Prosperity for him, both here and hereafter. So, it is represented by Rama Himself, for He put on the vesture of manhood in order to establish and exemplify Dharma. "Ramo Vighrahavaan Dharmah" is how the Ramayana described Him. —"Rama, the embodied Dharma."

The Rg Veda enshrines mantras or potent formulae. It elucidates them and elaborates their meanings. These mantras have the mantra 'Rama' as their crown. And Brother Lakshmana, who repeated it, recited it and relied on it, for everything in life and beyond, is indeed the embodiment of the Rg Veda. He teaches mankind that the Rama-mantra confers on man the Constant Presence of the Lord. The same Veda contains songs in praise of Creation and the Creator and through adoration sublimated in song, the Lord yields Grace. Bharata whose every thought, word and deed was an act of thanksgiving, a paean of praise dedicated to Rama, was the Sama Veda Itself. Then, we have the Atharvana Veda which is a collection of medical and ritual details, of charms and protective amulets to overcome internal and external foes. Shatrughna, whose every

name means 'the destroyer of foes' is therefore appropriately the avatar of the Atharvana Veda. This Veda enables man to conquer evil habits, attitudes and tendencies, so that he can listen to the Voice of God and gladly translate the words into daily life. Shatrughna demonstrated by his humility, loyalty and devotion how he had won victory over his ego, greed and anger.

Very often the mistake is committed of forgetting that Rama came, in order to lay down the norms of life and that His Life has to be observed and followed by mankind. He is the ideal Man, with qualities and virtues which every man can earn to elevate himself. Mere worship, empty adoration is not what the Avatar expects. Rama underwent trouble, disappointment and distress like any man, in order to show that joy is but an interval between two griefs, that grief is a challenge, a test, a lesson. He held forth the ideal relationship between son and father, husband and wife, brother and brother, friend and friend, ally and enemy and even man and beast. The Ramayana teaches also that, as a consequence of the individual's accumulated Karma consequence, children of the same mother may have opposite character and careers. The waters of a pond breed leeches as well as lotuses. Vali and Sugriva were brothers! So were Ravana and Vibhishana!

From another point of view, Rama and the brothers can be understood as models of the four primal goals of Man—the Purusharthas. Of these Rama was Dharma (Righteousness); Lakshmana was Artha (Prosperity); Bharata was Karma (Fulfillment of Desires) and Shatrughna was Moksha (Liberation). These four are the progeny of every human being, Dasaratha (ten-chariot leader). Man having five sense organs of perception and five senses of action ruling over Ayodhya, the City that is impregnable (the heart wherein God resides). These four goals have to be reduced to two pairs—Dharma-Artha and Kama-Moksha: man must struggle to attain prosperity only through righteous ways. The prosperity should be used to achieve and maintain Dharma. This is the reason why Lakshmana follows in the footsteps of Rama. He served as the right hand of Rama and for Rama's sake, Lakshmana bore all travails and agonies with a smile on his lips. When the demon Kabandha had both Rama and Lakshmana in his deadly clasp, Lakshmana offered to stay in those arms, advising Rama to escape and live. This is the reason why, when Lakshmana fell unconscious on the battlefield and could not be revived, Rama lamented, "Perhaps I may get another Sita, if this Sita passes away, but, O Lakshmana, I can nowhere get another brother like you."

Rama also shared with Bharata the love that Lakshmana poured on him so profusely. He told Bharata who prayed to him, with tears in his eyes, to return to Ayodhya as its ruler, "No. Father has ordered me to rule over the forests, helping the anchorites and hermits and saving them from the inroads of Demonic hordes. He has willed that you should rule over the Kingdom of Ayodhya. Let us both be loyal to him." That was the expression of His fraternal Love.

The next pair of Purusharthas is Kama and Moksha; the only Desire worth entertaining and pursuing is the Desire for Liberation. Bharata had it and Shatrughna shared it.

After the long pilgrimage to the shrines and holy spots of Bharat, Rama had a few years, until he was aged fourteen, of apparent introspection and solitude. He disliked food and regal apparel. He was not interested in materials and men. He waved his fingers and palms for no clear reason; he wrote on the air only He knew what. He laughed without reason. In short, His actions and

movements were exactly the same as Sai Baba's (mine) when he (I) too was in his (my) early teens. Vasishta attempted to bring His mind back to normalcy but that was only a stage which all Avatars are in, before they enter upon the task for which they have come down. Those years, the Avatar was designing His Master Plan. At the end of that period, the sage Viswamitra arrived at the Palace, asking Dasaratha to send Rama (and the inseparable Lakshmana) with him, to save the hermits from the demonic gangs who desecrated Vedic rites. The Plan started unfolding.

—*From Discourse on Ramanavami Day 25-3-80 Brindavan*

The Vibhuti

Divine Discourse (17-3-80), Prasanthi Nilayam

Anoraniyaan Mahatho Maheeyan (Minuter than the Minutest Vaster than the Vastest) is how Vedanta refers to the Absolute, the Brahman. The Vedanta tries by such descriptions to picture the highest Over-Self, but no description can help in identifying it or experiencing it. At best, the description can be only like what five blind men inferred about the elephant when each laid hold of a particular limb of that animal. Even those who have experienced cannot communicate the ecstasy, the peace, the light and the love fully to others. The prophets, sages and seers, to whom the establishment of 'religions' is ascribed, have proclaimed their awareness of the Brahman principle. Though the Charvaka school of philosophy denied God and the Jain and Buddhist schools declined to posit God, Sankara asserted that God is Formless, Attributeless, and is best described as Supreme Effulgence or Jyoti. He also said that the Individual is not different from the Universal, that Jiva is Brahman itself, that the manifold Nature is also Brahman, seen through a strange veil as a mixture of Truth and Falsehood, a peculiar make-believe called Maya or Avidya. Brahman is the Cause and Prakriti (Nature) is the Effect. Nature is the deluding manifestation of Brahman. It is what can be called Leela Vibhuti, expression of glory (Vibhuti) done as mere sport (Leela). When the Leela is perceived as apart from Brahman, it is a false and incomplete perception. The Leela is manifold; Brahman is One. To discover the One in the Many is the purpose of human existence. Brahman is Eternal. It is the Nitya Vibhuti, Everlasting splendour. It is named Kingdom of God. Leela-Vibhuti is Prakriti or Maya or Avidya or Satan with the deluding, deceptive diversities.

The objective world is the superimposition on Brahman that deceives and distorts the reality. Ignorant persons assume it to be real. Buddha characterised this world as (1) Sarvam Dukham. All is sorrow. It is called Martya loka, the world of Death. Nothing is stable; everything changes. The bud blooms and fades. The lightning flashes and darkness follows. Every individual, thing or even quality grows and declines. When hungry, we relish food and when we are full, we hate the very food that gave us joy. So (2) every thing is momentary, Sarvam Kshanikam. Also (3) Sarvam Svalakshanam. Every person or thing is unique; even identical twins have each some special quality or attitude. No two leaves even of the same tree are the same in all respects. The many are divided into many more by these differences. Thus, Buddha declared (4) Sarvam Soonyam. All are zeroes, invalid, value-less. Where are the fathers and grandfathers who have left? Only their memory remains. How many empires have been buried in Time?

The Leela Vibhuti is marked by these 4 characteristics. The Nitya Vibhuti on which it appears is described as having six characteristics—(1) Nitya-Eternal, (2) Avarnaniya-indescribable, (3) Nissankhya-immeasurable, (4) Nirupadhi-uncontaminated by association or impact, (5) Nirdoshi-unaffected by limitation or diminution (6) Samaana-rahitha-unapproached by anything other, incomparable, equal only to Itself. This Nitya Vibhuti is the Atmic principle that is the Reality of every human being. It manifests as Leela-Vibhuti and projects Itself as the many individuals and particulars by the interplay of the three Gunas.

The Satwic Guna (Mode or Quality) promotes peace, harmony and love. The Rajasic is related to Maya; it prods man into constant activity. The Tamasic has the peculiar property of twisting Reality out of shape and of making the True appear as false, the false as true, the transient and the trivial as everlasting and desirable. The subject as well as the object are both 'unreal'; only Atma or Brahman, that is the truth of both, is Real. That is why both are classed as Leela Vibhuti, the magnificence of the God's sport. Through that sport, as His Play, all this Cosmos has emanated.

This day is Yugadi, the New Year Day, the day when we take leave of the year 'Siddhartha' and welcome the year 'Roudra'. In the Leela such goings and comings, arrivals and departures are to be expected. The Moon (Chandra) is declared to be the King and Sun (Surya) the Prime Minister during this year. Saturn (Sani) is the Commander-in-chief. Among the Nine Planets, four are in favourable positions of authority and five hold harmful positions. The year is named Roudra which means 'terrible'; this indicates that the year will witness some agitations and face a few anxieties. But, the King and the Minister are powerful; they will be held in check. The favourable planets will ensure early and timely rains. So, peace and security have a good chance of spreading, if the mind (whose presiding deity is Chandra) and the intellect (whose presiding deity is Surya) work in unison. If the people use the mind, not to ruin themselves but to elevate themselves, certainly prosperity will result. People must take the warning and not allow themselves to be 'horrible' to one another like hordes of drunken monkeys.

They must remember the basic unity of all mankind. Ekoham bahusyaam. Ekoham is the Nitya Vibhuti; and Bahusyaam, the Leela-Vibhuti. Demonstrate that you are Divine to the very core, and not demonic. Your conduct and behaviour must declare your faith in your Divinity. The New Year Day is celebrated in the home, after painting and whitewashing it, hanging green festoons over the doors and sweeping and cleaning. The people themselves take elaborate baths, wear new clothes and partake of feasts and share in merriment. When so much care is taken to fulfill the needs of the body, calculate how much more care should be devoted to adore the Divine Resident in that body. Discard polluting habits and thoughts. Welcome new and holy deeds full of love and the spirit of service. Cultivate tolerance and compassion, engage yourselves in practical acts of Love and Service and make an all-out effort to see God in every living being.

Her Christmas Message

(To Seekers of Light)

Silent Night! Holy Morn!
All Is Peace! All Is Joy!

Round this holy one—Come once more!

The glow of his Dawn lighting the path of a Floundering Humanity to More Solid Ground Again! YES! HE IS HERE! Can we receive HIM? Can the established Religions receive HIM? Did they receive HIM 2000 years ago? 5000 years ago? 20,000 years ago? No! —Mat. 13:54-57; Mark 6:2-6; Luke 4:22-30; John 7:27-31; and many other World Scriptures! Only those with "ears to hear and eyes to see"—they could recognize HIM then and they can recognize HIM now I Who of us is one of these? And if not, so what? HIS WORK WILL BE DONE, HIS PLAN WILL SUCCEED—IS SUCCEEDING—NOW AND IN THE YEARS AND CENTURIES TO COME! Even as did THEY succeed at HIS first and other comings to Earth through the centuries, through the millennia! And all persons, and all peoples are, and will continue to be, the benefactors again, as

"HE RULES THE WORLD WITH TRUTH AND GRACE AND MAKES
THE NATIONS PROVE THE GLORIES OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND
WONDERS OF HIS LOVE!"

At this coming New Year of the 9-pointed Star, don't we see the NEW AGE, the MILLENNIUM, already setting foot in, as HIS TENETS of TRUTH, RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND LOVE continue (very slowly of course, but very surely) to dissolve the loudly resisting forces of lies, evil, violence and greed which had nearly overwhelmed the struggling Forces of Light, when, again, HE responded this time to the pleas of the SINKING HUMANITY for HIS RESCUING INCARNATION!

For 40 years has HE slowly built HIS STRUCTURE with MERCY, COMPASSION and SERVICE from ITS FOUNDATION in 1940, when at the tender age of 14 HE made HIS IDENTITY known to the few who could then recognize HIM! Today, as indicated in our recent yearly letters, HIS WORK; TEACHINGS and FAME have spread around the world! HIS claim? "MY LIFE IS MY MESSAGE." Anti-Christ? THE CHRIST was so accused, and persecuted, as were HIS followers for many centuries! Investigate HIM? Do I MEET HIM? Do! But hurry! HIS WORK burgeons—soon no time for the Special Blessings of Personal contact

The 9-Pointed Star: $1980=1+9+8+0=18=1+8=9$ = The Triple Trinity! The Three Triangles—The 3 Times 3! 9, all-inclusive number of completion-ending of the 9-year cycle, containing the seed of next cycle: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."—Rev. 22:13. HIS NUMBERS! HE! THE SOURCE OF ALL and the GOAL OF ALL ENDEAVOR! CAUSELESS CAUSE of all manifestations! WHICH now need not seem a far-off abstraction, for ITS AGELESS WISDOM HAS COME AMONG US! Descended, as before, in a form to which we may relate on our own particular, individual levels, as HE manifests on all levels of POWER to lift each who desires it into the next and the next and the

next level of awareness, however far and however rapidly as he or she desires or is able! How fortunate to be Earthlings at this period, even though it is the most evil age of many ages? For, all churches, all religions, all endeavors upward toward UNION with THAT SOURCE have HIS BLESSINGS, whether or not HE is accepted by them in HIS PRESENT MANIFESTATION!

Hallelujah! John 1:14 Rev. 19:1-16 Psalms: 150 OM Sai Ram!

May the blessings of his peace and wonders of his love dawn and grow in all hearts this Christ-mass and Triple triune season! Love to you and merry Christmas!

—*Elizabeth Hunt Skelly, D D., Ph.D. Escondido, Calif. USA*

Keep India Young

—*N. A. Palkhiwala*

I am very happy and I feel very honoured to be with you this evening. I always thought that whenever we have the good fortune to have Sri Sathya Sai Baba in our city, Bombay is richer for His presence and I can only hope and trust that He can find more time to be in our midst in the months and years to come. I honour Him and I respect Him, because I feel He stands for certain moral values and represents a certain moral force, which this country needs very badly today. It was said in the ancient scriptures of this country, "He who is born in fire, will not fade in the Sun" and I see Sri Sathya Sai Baba as one of those, who has been born in the fire and therefore will not fade in the Sun. When I look at the enormous crowd which has gathered to hear Him, I realise what a great force He represents in our lives and this is what we need more than anything else in this country today.

What this country needs today is not political leadership; what it needs is moral leadership and it is that leadership which Sri Sathya Sai Baba is able to provide to this country. Sri Indubhai told you about the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Seva Organisation, which today operates in various countries of the world. I know that there are more than 3,000 units of this Organisation functioning in different parts of India. 400 units of this organisation function in 43 foreign countries. They are running Colleges in Karnataka, in Andhra Pradesh, in Madhya Pradesh, in Rajasthan. They have an Agricultural Polytechnic in Bombay and a large number of Primary and Secondary Schools. Sri Sathya Sai Baba has realised that without education, this country has no future. This country, if it is to be built up, will have to educate those who are young today so that they can bring another outlook to bear on our national affairs, in our political life. It's a long, hard-work process. The apprenticeship to liberty, the apprenticeship to democracy is a very difficult process. It is not that problems of this country can ever be solved by slogans. They can only be solved by hard solid work, by the inculcation of the right values in the young men and women of this country.

Dr. Schumacher once wisely observed that "What a country like India needs is a threefold achievement. First, we need organisation. Secondly, we need education and third, we need discipline". And, Sathya Sai Baba's Organisation stands for all these three—Education,

Organisation and Discipline. His Message is for all to see. First and foremost, He has emphasised the great need to bark back to our ancient heritage. Just as the sanity of an individual lies in the continuity of his memories, the sanity of a Nation lies in the continuity of traditions of its heritage; and India's heritage is absolutely priceless. I am convinced beyond the shadow of doubt that there is no country in the world which has a heritage of the type which we have. This is the precious heritage of every Indian. In fact, our heritage is not only for Indians, it is for all mankind. That's why you will find a moral organisation, like Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Organisation, having devotees In all parts of the world, not only in India. This is the resurgence of India's spiritual force. And, if I am to sum up in one sentence the work done by Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Organisations, I would say, the task they have set before themselves is to renew the youth of India. This is an ancient land—5000 years of Civilisation and 5000 years of history, but it is still young and it has to be kept young in spirit. It has to be kept vigorous, vibrant. It has got to be kept alive and alert, and then alone can it fulfill the great destiny which lies ahead. Our destiny is not behind us. It is in front of us and it is only by realising the great heritage of this country, the priceless values which were taught in the olden days, that one can fulfill one's destiny as a nation, and our own humbler destiny as citizens of this great Republic

In the world today, if you look around you will find there is a lot of money and time spent in exploring outer space. The Vedas and the Upanishads of India taught us that there is 'inner space,'—inner space within every individual, which is even more difficult to explore than the outer space. In the Vedas it has been taught that there is a spectacle grander than the sea and it is the sky. There is a spectacle grander than the sky and it is the interior of the soul. The human spirit alone can comprehend Infinity and Eternity, concepts which the human mind cannot comprehend. In other words, there is a Truth, the understanding of which man can acquire by the development of his spirit, which far transcends what the intellect or what the mere mind can comprehend.

A nation gets obsolescent, it becomes old, infirm, then it even dies, unless it is able to renew its youth, and that precisely is the function of an organisation like this. Sri Rabindranath Tagore said that "Every time a child is born in this world, he brings a message from God, that God has not yet despaired of men." I think, it's a beautiful thought and every time you educate a child, you are building the future of this country. I have seen many educational institutions both in India and abroad, but I can say quite sincerely that in no educational Institution have I found discipline, greater sense of duty, greater sense of devotion and dedication, than I have found in the educational institutions run by Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Organisations. This is, I think, the greatest tribute you can pay to an educational institution. If you merely go to a School or a College, you may have training, but you will not have education. Training and Education are different things. When a child is educated, it has to be educated to become an integrated personality—a personality which can exude confidence, has a sense of justice and fairness, has a sense of goodness and beauty, has a sense of devotion and dedication, has a feeling that the country comes first and then the individual himself. These are the great values which have been taught since time immemorial in this country and Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Organisation tries to resuscitate, to revive these values and that's why I am here, to pay my homage and my tribute to the Founder of this Great Organisation, which is doing such fantastically meritorious work in different parts of this country. To Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself, may I say that "You Sai Baba, the Pilgrim of Eternity are with us—that's our good fortune. May you long guide us and let this country fulfill

the prophecy of Sri Aurobindo, who said "A day will come when India will fulfill its destiny, when the light of India will engulf the whole country, overwhelm the whole of Asia and go beyond the frontiers of Asia and pervade the whole world."

This has been the destiny predicted for this country not only by Sri Aurobindo, but by Swami Vivekananda, and the Great Mystic Poet Sri Rabindranath Tagore, and I have no doubt that every organisation of this type helps in a big way to make India fulfill that memorable destiny. On your behalf and mine, may I thank Sri Sathya Sai Baba once again, for all that He has given us and may He guide us for long, long decades to come.

Kingdom of Sathya Sai

On November 23rd 1978 the graduate students of Sathya Sai College Brindavan, have founded, with Bhagavan's inspiration and blessings the KINGDOM OF SATHYA SAI.

These young man have dedicated their lives to the Motto—'Service is God'. They have pledged themselves to carry out the Teachings and example of Truth and Righteousness of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Swami Says 'My life is my message' anyone sincerely interested in observing will discover that every action of Swami is in perfect accordance with truth. His life is dedicated to Dharma in the Highest Vedic Tradition. The example that Swami gives us every moment of his existence is not limited to Bharatiyas (Indians), but to all humanity.

For we are all his children, whether born in India or any other country in the world. Truth is universal. Language is no barrier in these matters, that is why in spirituality there is no difference between nationalities. Therefore everyone can qualify to be in the 'Kingdom'. If the 'Kingdom of Sathya Sai' is to be a real kingdom, it must have 'Citizens' apart from the founding 'knights'. Most of us who are too old, or not fit to be knights, must content ourselves with becoming citizens. The status of a citizen in the kingdom of Sathya Sai is a very important status. It carries with it the same responsibilities and the same rewards as the soldiers. Anyone who professes to be a devotee of Sathya Sai Baba, automatically has to undertake the pledge to become a noble and worthy citizen in his kingdom.

It is no longer enough to love Swami from a safe distance, or perform daily rituals to his image. The true devotee, a 'Citizen', must be dedicated in every word, thought and deed, every moment of his life, without reservation, to the task the Lord has undertaken when He came to this world in a human form—That, is the restoring of Dharma.

We can look upon Prasanthi Nilayam as The Capital of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai—The Kingdom of Dharma, in the Kali Yuga. How privileged we are to be part of this great event in the history of mankind! When each and every one of us is given the opportunity by Swami Himself, to be a living example of His Teaching. Let us think and realise fully the significance of

this. Surely all of us devoted to Swami have prayed at one time or other, for an opportunity of serving, or for some worthwhile task. Now that prayer has been answered. It is up to us to act, and prove by enthusiasm and determination, that we are willing to put into practice all Swami has been patiently teaching us over many years. Now is the time to prove devotion, for Swami's love, sweetness and beauty, His grace and His blessings, which we have imbibed for so long, were not like so many rose petals showered from the Sky—only for the moment. All that he is bestowing on us, is with reason—To make us better; stronger, that when the time comes to be counted, we may all be there as noble citizens ready to serve HIM.

Swami has given us countless sayings to be applied to each moment of our days. If we only remember them and keep them before our mind's eyes—if we transform our love for Him, and realise that obeying the word of God is the highest expression of Love! We are on the way.

Let each man, woman and child in the Kingdom of Sathya Sai, but specially those living in Prasanthi Nilayam, remember that they are chosen and blessed by God to aid him in his mission. Let us consider it a grace of God and a great privilege to carry out Swami's teaching in our every day lives. Let us remember with every breath from morning to night, that He lives in each one of us, and let us act with due honor to His presence. Let us examine our moment to moment actions—Let us utter the Truth at all times—Let us act with good intention always—gently and lovingly towards every one—Let no detail of our lives, public or private, escape our attention. Let each one be his own 'Soldier' in discipline and courage, in overcoming ignorance and bad qualities.

Let us remember that the world is watching day and night, ready to discover faults and failings in our highest ideal, The 'Kingdom of Sathya Sai'. Each one of us is equally responsible in his own action to make sure that Dharma can be defended in a world which is being destroyed by corruption, confusion, and decay.

Let us pray for our Lord Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai's blessing that we may repay His infinite love, by becoming examples to the entire world

—Lee, A Citizen

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18

The Vedas are the very oldest literary creations of man. The name 'literature' is used, at the present time, to connote writings scribbled while eager to find something to spend the time hanging on hand. They have no inner worth or significance; they destroy the traits of good character in the reader and implant bad attitudes and habits; they do not adhere to the path of Truth. Literature is a name that cannot be applied to such writings or poems that reel off tales that are false. It should not emerge from the egotistic fancies of the individual.

The Vedas are the soul that sustains the spiritual life of Bharat; they are the breath that keeps them alive. They possess a divine power, amazing in its effects. They are charged with the vibrations of mantras, which can be experienced by those who go through the process scientifically. They can impart also the strength derivable through symbols and formulae of Tantric nature. 'Tantra' means 'the means and methods of utilising the mantras for one's own good'. Man has physical and material power only. His Karma becomes holy and sacred when the mechanics (Yantra) of life are ruled by Mantra and Tantra. The technique of this Sadhana is in the Karma Kanda of the Vedas. The ancient sages became aware of this and has preserved it for mankind in the Four Vedas. Unable to grasp these truths, those who pride themselves as 'moderns' proclaim that the Vedas contain only meaningless verses and mantras which are learnt by rote and repeated by aged cronies. Not only 'moderns' but even those who earned distinction as "the foremost Pundits," those who expound the meaning of the hymns and go about among the people gathering fame use the Vedas for promoting their material well-being and not for helping them on the spiritual path. They are unable to discover the sacred task for which the Vedas exist. Whenever the chance arises, they benefit by the scholarship, but they are not eager or able to use the Vedas to purify their daily lives.

As a result, 'moderns' find it impossible to have faith in the Vedas. When the great Pundits do not seek to practise the Vedas they have learned and parade their lack of faith by not instructing their own children on the glory of the Vedas, they naturally cause lack of faith in the entire society.

Many others, in spite of their ignorance of the meaning of the Vedic hymns, walk in the busy places reciting the sacred texts in mechanical orthodoxy. Foreigners—especially the German scholars—though they have not learnt the Vedas by rote, have realised that the mantras possess and transmit profound power. They have carried during the centuries in their own country, portions of the Vedas and conducted patient and painstaking research on them. Consequently, they have unravelled strange mysteries. They found that the Vedas contain the secrets of all the arts which can confer progress on man.

As adjuncts to the Vedas, many scriptural texts emerged. The Veda (Knowledge) of Archery, the Veda of Ayu or Maintenance, prolongation and Preservation of life (medicine), the Veda of Planets and Stars (Jyotir Veda)—many such texts were composed and promulgated.

Sage Viswamitra discovered the mantra named Gayatri, which is affiliated to the energy of the Sun, Surya. This mantra has infinite potentiality. It is a vibrant formula. It has immense powers, powers that are truly amazing. For, the Sun is its presiding deity. Students of the Ramayana know that the same sage, Viswamitra, initiated Rama into the mysteries of Sun-worship, through the mantra Aditya Hridayam. The Gayatri enabled Viswamitra to use rare weapons which bowed to his will when the mantra was repeated with faith. Through the powers he attained in this way, Viswamitra was able to become a great scientist and create a counterpart of this "actual cosmos". The person who is able to increase in measure the capabilities of his hands and his senses is now considered a 'scientist' but, no, the term (Vijnani) was correctly applied in the past only to those who developed spiritual power and discovered the formulae for delving into the Divine within, those, imbued with faith and devotion, who could spontaneously demonstrate that power in actual day to day living. On the other hand, today, they know only a bit here and a bit there,

though they exaggerate and boast of what they have managed to learn. They are fond of pomp and proud display. They raise sky-high on the fumes of praise. Such absurdities are unbecoming. They are quite contrary to the behaviour of a true scientist. He is humble and meek. He is ever aware that, however much he knows, there is a far vaster field which he has yet to know. He is conscious that Divine Grace is responsible for what little he knows.

Viswamitra was a scientist who had recognised this truth. So, there is no scientist yet greater than he was. But, though a sage of such immense eminence and with so expansive a heart lived out his years in India, he is not remembered by the people of this land. They honour the foreigners who have glimpsed his greatness; they have placed their faith in these researchers who have elicited valuable lessons from the Vedas. The Veda is the Mother of Bharat or India. But the children do not revere the mother any more. They revere the stepmother and believe in her! It can be said that this is the result of the anglicised educational system.

Probing further and further into the scientific attainments of the sages of ancient India, the construction of Vimanas, vehicles capable of flying in space, is described by Sage Bharadwaja. Mental Science has advanced so much that they could reproduce what had happened or predict what would happen. The Science of Medicine was highly developed in India. It was Sage Bharadwaja who taught this science, for the benefit of mankind. Sage Atreya took up the task of propagating this science and technique of healing. Saint Charaka compiled all the kindred discoveries into a Samhita or 'Collection', named after him. It deals elaborately with diagnosis of diseases, methods of healing and cure, foetal development and many other essential but not easily discoverable fact of medical science. The doctors proficient in that science could, in those ancient years, surgically remove or correct various diseased parts of body, when the illness could not be cured by drugs. Saint Susruta has written in his compendium many surgical processes. This text has been discovered and is available for study. Dhanvantari, Nagarjuna and other sages have brought to light many other medical discoveries of Ancient India, made by adherents of the Vedic tradition of scientific research. There are also many valuable texts on ethics, jurisprudence and other social sciences which are invaluable treasures for all time, like the Dharma Sastra of Mann and the Nyaya Sastra of Goutama.

(To be continued)

Sense of Values

Discrimination and detachment are the first and the second steps that man has to take in order to reach the Eternal Atmic Truth. The mind can be steadied only by means of the mastery of desire, the quality of unwavering Detachment. Once the mind is still, peace reigns and bliss prevails. Detachment or the giving up of the tendency to pursue what attracts the mind, is often misconstrued as asceticism which renounces social and family life and escapes into the loneliness of the forests. But, it involves, more than anything else, awareness of the basic blemish in all material things. Without this inquiry and this discovery, all claims for detachment or renunciation are false. No one can have real detachment in their absence. The sense of dislike

that results from the recognition of the temporariness and triviality of pleasure is best called 'practical detachment'.

The giving up of external struggle is not enough, nor is it a great achievement. The real struggle is internal -the withdrawal of the extrovert senses into the mind and making them ineffective through the exercise of the intellect or discrimination. Investigate each material object that entices the senses by beauty, fragrance, sweetness and softness. Realise that these are all momentary, depending on your mental condition, physical health and emotional balance. Man is enamoured of such flitting phenomena; he accepts them as valid and valuable. He is entangled in these unrealities and he strays far away from the path of liberation. This is really not man's goal.

When we are drawn towards some source of pleasure, we examine it carefully and analyse the pleasure that it promises to give. Imagine that you have longed to eat a particular sweet dish. You have got it cooked and served on your plate. You are anticipating all the while the relish it can confer. But while about to place it on the tongue, the cook rushes in and informs you that a lizard-Tied fallen into the vessel in which it was cooked, and so, your favourite food is fouled and poisoned. This creates disgust and your attachment disappears.

So too, when you examine the quality of the pleasure you hope to derive or the fame you toil to earn by your struggles, you will certainly blame yourselves for being so serious about them. It may be asked: we build a house for us to live in; is that not a source of joy? We listen to fine music; is that not a source of joy? Does it not fill the heart with tenderness? In the same, manner, are not these worldly pleasures real? Consider for a moment, whether even fine music will give uniform joy, if listened to continuously for hours! Even the heavenly musicians, Narada and Tumburu will tire a listener if they hold forth for too long, however mellifluous be their voice. Sweetness too is bound to be disliked after some mouthfuls. After the limit is reached, every additional mouthful gives less and less pleasure, while disgust intervenes.

The classical poet-philosopher Bhartrhari asks, "How can medicine, resorted to for the sake of curing an illness, be deemed a luxury, a desirable pleasure?" Hunger is a 'dis-ease'. Food is the medicine that cures the disease. That is the plain fact but no one recognises it and behaves accordingly! They have made it a costly ritual, a futile feast, a fertile source of further diseases! For, they cater to the whims and fancies of the tongue and behave like slaves of the senses. The King was a-hunting in the depths of a forest from dawn until early afternoon. He was afflicted by intense thirst. At last, he found a hermitage where he took refuge. The inmates gave him cool clear water to drink. That was the medicine which he needed most. It made him fresh and fine. If the drink intoxicates him, robs him of reason and degrades his personality, it is the cause of many other diseases. Discrimination will reveal the dangers lurking in becoming a bond slave of the senses.

The special instrument that God has allotted man, namely, Buddhi or the Intellect, has to be used by man to become master of these down-dragging senses. The Intellect has to be used to judge and decide the means for the upliftment of the human to the Divine. It has to help man to realise God and nothing lesser than your excellences. Nevertheless, it is now misused in finding others' faults and belittling others' excellences. It is like using a mirror, not to improve one's appearance, but to ridicule the appearance of others!

The Antahkarana has four instruments that prompt man. Of these, Buddhi is twofaced; it draws light from the Atma to which it is closest; it illumines with that light, the mind and the senses. It regulates the passions and emotions, the impulses and instinctive reactions. Some perverse minds confront with questions, like, "Is not ensuring the safety and happiness of our wives and children our duty? How can you declare that it is not desirable?" Yes. But remember the prime purpose of the education you earn in this life is to concentrate on your Atmic Truth. Do not be diverted from this fundamental duty. Other activities must smoothen and straighten this Path. They must be contributory Sadhanas for this basic purpose of man.

—Divine Discourse 26-9-79

The Act of Surrender

On 15th October, 1977, Swami declared, "Each one of you announces yourself as 'I'. Listen! Sai and 'I' are ONE." Our joy knew no bounds when we heard this and later when we thought about its deeper meanings. Let us not forget that He also declared that day, "You call yourselves Sai devotees but your actions and thoughts are all contrary." I was sure He did not intend to discourage or disappoint us; He meant only to inspire us to greater effort.

So, come! Let us be even more enthusiastic to put His Message into practice. Let us make ourselves worthy enough to be called by Him-in His sweet and melodious voice-as true and sincere devotee.

We know that the same Atma dwells in all of us. Who or what is this Atma? Swami has told us that it is a part of Paramatma, a spark of the Divine, the Bhagavan our beloved Baba Himself, "Sai and 'I' are ONE". He created this wide boundless Universe for is His Leela, sportive Play. He created the human race and placed it on the highest level among all living creatures.

But, the moment human beings stepped on the world, from His Divine Loving Hands, they started to run helter-skelter in pursuit of sensual pleasure, like vehicles with no drivers, chariots without charioteers. Therefore, utter chaos prevailed and destruction descended on them. After getting loose from God's Hands, we drag our lives along the thorny wastes of anger, lust, greed and hatred, deluded by ignorance.

Obviously, we have no right to blame God who has been warning us from within and without, and is ever gracious to accept the position of charioteer for us, and hold the reins of our lives. He is so compassionate that He forgives our faults and is only too glad to lead us along the safe and smooth path of Sathya, Dharma, Shanti and Prema. We hesitate to surrender our lives to Him and miss the chance of saving ourselves from perdition.

Many a time, we bow to His portrait and say, "Swami! You know both the good and the bad that I think, and speak and do. From today, from this moment, I surrender to You, to Your Will. I shall not yield to my will. Lead me, guide me. I shall follow you." But, the very next moment,

the promise, the resolution fades away from our minds. When things go right as we desire, we praise Him. The moment our petty desires are not fulfilled, we rush to the same portrait complaining and crying; "Swami! I surrendered fully to You but you have refused to grant my one little wish." How foolish it is to behave thus!

Imagine, we make a few clay toys in a mood of joy. Will we not do our best to protect them from harm? Will we not be vigilant to shield them from injury? Will not the Creator, our God, do all that is best for our good? When a child falls sick, the mother would not give it things which would harm its health and worsen the fever. The child is ignorant, but the Mother knows, what is good for it and what is bad. Alas! We, foolish people, do not realise this simple fact. How much amused must Swami be, when, in spite of our verbal 'surrender', we cry before His portrait and complain!

If we have the genuine yearning, surrender is not a hard task. All we have to do is to offer our desires and propensities to the Lord, they are the hurdles and obstacles which produce joy and sorrow and prevent us from reaching the goal of merrgence in Paramatma.

My personal experience is that, in the beginning, it is very difficult to practise the sadhana of Surrender, because we have to accept all that happens to us as His Gift of Grace. But, if we do not waver, the Validity of Surrender will slowly dawn on us. We feel as if we are sailing away from the burdens of the world, safe in the ocean of Divine nectar, the boat filled to the brim with Divine Love.

Consider, which is better? To indulge temporarily in the transient material world or to immerse ourselves in the Bliss, which is for ever radiating from Sathya and the Embodiment of Sathya, Sathya Sai? Contemplate the lives of Prahlada, Lakshmana, Hanuman and Meera. Let us realise the Truth, right before us, now. Let us discard our lethargy and folly, make the best of this priceless Present and surrender at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan. He says, "Take one step towards Me; I shall take a hundred towards you." "Shed just one fear; I shall wipe a hundred from your eyes."

These words ring true for each one of us, who has come into. His Divine Fold. We are indeed blessed. We shall pray, "Let Thy Sweet Will prevail at all times, every where."

—*Sangeeta Kant, 1 B. Sc., Sri Sathya Sai College for Woman, Anantapur*

The Language of Hope

"Departed are those mortals who beheld an earlier dawn...
Now dawn has become visible to us." Rig Ved I. 113.11.

Faith, hope and love have been called the three graces, that is, the three gifts of God. A Faith, or Tradition, is a transmitted vision which can inspire faith. Faith is an expression of our

relationship with the time-tested values of the past, and its language is the wealth of spiritual forms from yesteryear that spur us on even now toward Realization.

Love is the ideal way of being in the present, of flowing toward our contemporaries, toward the eternal Lord. The language of love is service, universally understood and appreciated.

Hope is the spiritual confidence in what is to be, the will to experience that which is right, the orientation toward perfection. Vision is its language, prophecy being one form. It is with this language of hope that I am concerned in this brief article.

Various traditions, sometimes interrelated in their mutual influences, show that many centuries ago the prophetic intuition, the revelatory dreams and divine hopes of people remembering great spiritual leaders of the past, looked forward with longing to the next truly great incarnation. The Zoroastrians developed a schematic view in which three saviors (Saosyants) would usher in the righteous destiny of earth. The Buddhists envisioned with great devotion the future enlightened incarnation of Maitreya, who is to hold three great assemblies. The Jewish Messiah and the Hindu Kalki incarnation of Vishnu are also examples of humanity's presentiments, and though these figures' origins may be obscure they soon crystallized and were further articulated by later hoppers.

The future Savior image of prophecies is a key figure in the language of human hope. It is a symbol drawing on the memories of powerful spiritual figures of the past, and bespeaking an openness to the future, a yearning for a new incarnation, a fresh revelation of truth. Thus when poetic language, of this yearning becomes rigidified and dogmatic in the minds of literalist adherents over the generations the actualization of the original possibility is negated. For, the reality of the divine manifestation may not precisely conform to the hopeful poetic visions of the various religions' forward looking devotees. Yet we can understand the necessity of setting standards for the promised Incarnation so that false claimants might not fool the innocent and dash human hope to despair.

I believe the various inspired speculative probings of the future based on memories and hopes of a divine personality can be said to be fulfilled in Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and in some cases, Shirdi, Sathya, and Prema Sai together. Yet it is the heart, the spiritual intuition which most senses this, for in dealing with the detailed collected premonitions of generations of believers within a given tradition, we find internal inconsistencies, and in dealing with the different revelations of various cultures we find no perfectly neat and easy correspondence for every accumulated element, in each prediction, with the life and times of Sai. Yet in a deeper sense we can experience the meanings of the prophecies and know their correspondences. For the truth is, when all man's languages of hope cried out, Heaven responded with Sai.

—From the Notebook of an American Thinker

The Truth

There is God everywhere and there is no second entity anywhere. God is the Truth, the only Truth. In every article or thing, God is, as the Basis, as Understanding and Understandability, as the Source of Divine Light as Atma. Know that All exists, has awareness and bliss because of the Atma which All is. Truth is a word that is frequently used on platforms but the concept is still very hazy and often mistakenly interpreted. In reality, man is afraid of probing into his own Truth, lest his pet opinions and attitudes be proved hollow and dangerous. As a result, his actions and thoughts pursue disturbing and discordant paths.

What exactly is Truth? Is it the description of a 'thing seen' as one has seen it, without exaggeration or under-statement? No. Or, the narration of an incident in the same words as one has heard it narrated? No. Truth elevates; it holds forth ideals; it inspires the individual and society. It is the Light that illumines Man's path to God. A life inspired by Truth will enable man to live as man-not degrade himself to the status of a lower species. From dawn to dusk, from the moment of wakefulness to the moment of sleep, if he devotes himself to his own deeds, is that a life inspired by the Truth? No. By his good thoughts translated into good words and manifested as good deeds, man must promote Truth in society and prove its usefulness. He is the image of God. He must be aware of the image of God that shines in Society also.

The thought that arises in the mind, the word that sprouts from the tongue and the deed that engages the hand must all three be fully coordinated. Each one must be in conformity with the other two. They must be in unison with each other. If you have one plan in your mind and talk of a different one and execute something else, it is a false life, not a true one. The ancient text condemn such a person as a Duratma and extol the person whose thought, word and deed are all in line as a Mahatma.

Nowadays, people are fascinated by the false and keep away from the true. They ignore the True and pursue the false. They are not eager to know the Truth, the Eternal and the Absolute. Truth is the one awareness, the One Divine Energy that activates every living being, nay, every particle of matter. The tiny seed of a banyan tree does not reveal to the human eye or to the microscope the gigantic tree which it contains. The Divine Energy within it prompts it to expand and become the banyan. Every cell, every spot, every atom is Divine full of vast destiny. The recognition of this Omnipresence of God is the mark of the theist. The Atheist may proclaim that God is not, but, deep inside him one can find the awareness of the Omnipresence. That is his truth.

Now, about my Truth. It is impossible for anyone to discover and declare the Truth that is Sathya Sai. To ensure peace and prosperity is the task on which Sathya Sai has come amidst you. "Lokassamasthaa Sukhino Bhavantu" Let all the worlds be happy. All mankind have to be happy; all must rest in peace; all must be gladly engaged in fulfilling their duties. I long to shower Ananda on all. It is not an easy achievement to recognise and identify Divinity.

Yet, when the time is ripe and the fortune is imminent, that is to say, pretty soon, even that can be won by you.

—*From Divine Discourse, 8-12-1979*

The Way of Jesus

There are four types of persons—those who see only right everywhere, those who are less spiritual in their vision and so see right as right and wrong as wrong, those who shut their eyes to right and see only wrong and lastly, the worst of all, those who judge even the right to be wrong. No one brings wealth when he is born or takes it with him when he dies. Whatever riches one has accumulated have to be freely shared with others. The flowers scatter fragrance; the trees offer fruits in plenty. Instead of learning the lessons they teach, man pursues his own sense-cravings, and his urge for fame and authority over others. Contentment is the most precious wealth greed brings misery in its train. Contentment alone can lead man to the goal of life, viz., the attainment of Divinity.

A tender heart is more valuable than all material possessions. When moral and spiritual excellence is gained, the divinity of man becomes patent. Viswamitra was a powerful king, proud of his might and the vastness of his kingdom. He wished to defeat the Sage Vasishta but could not succeed. Thus he learnt the lesson that material, physical or mental powers are too weak to win over Divine Power. So, he entered upon spiritual sadhana to rid his mind of anger, greed and envy. As a result, he became himself a sage. The Kaurava Brothers, a hundred of them, were intoxicated by greed for more, though they had riches in plenty and kingdoms vast in area; so, they contended with their cousins, the God-fearing and God-led Pandava Brothers who were only five in number. In the end the Kauravas destroyed themselves to the last man and the Pandavas were blessed with victory. The brothers, Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu, succeeded in securing as boons from God mastery over the elements but they misused this power and spread havoc over all the worlds. So they were destroyed by the very evil they had let loose. Man has to acquire mastery over the foul urges in his own mind—lust, anger, hatred, jealousy. Then only can he enjoy the Divine Peace that is his birthright.

Every living being is on a pilgrimage—whether it is aware of it or not. The Bhagavata Purana, the ancient scriptural text, says that the destiny of all beings is to return to their origin. Lord Krishna has declared in the Gita that all beings have emerged from Him and have to merge in, Him. The sun causes clouds in the sky raising water from the sea as vapour; the waters of the sea fall as rain, the rain water accumulates and flows as streams and rivers, until it merges with the source, the sea. It is faithful to its destiny; it confronts bravely all the losses and obstacles on the pilgrim path. Every man has come into this world as a Messenger of God.

Jesus announced himself as a Messenger of God. He spent many years in austerities so that he could shower compassion and love on all humanity. Later, he asked himself, "Am I just a messenger, or am I more closely related to God, a part of God with the Divine as my essence?" Jesus spent twelve long years, wandering alone in deserts engaged in this inquiry. At the end of this period, he returned to the society of men and announced, "I am the Son of God," and showered on the people Divine Love, Power and Wisdom.

At that time, the priests of the holy temples of Jerusalem had become corrupt and commercialised. They had deteriorated into proud and selfish men: Jesus condemned them and tried to root out the evil practices. For, all forms in the eyes of Jesus were in the Divine Form and

he could not tolerate any action which tried to belie this status. So, when asked by people who he was, he could reply, "I and my Father are One." Jesus tried to teach everyone the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Tradition-minded and egoistic men considered Jesus a false prophet and they tried by every means to thwart his mission. Jesus, however, did not waver. Faced with opposition of all sorts, he continued to be an example of living Truth, and to purify society. Many disciples followed Jesus but throughout history, it has been the experience of Rama, Krishna, Jesus and Muhammad that disciples however close are seldom fully dedicated. Most are only part-time devotees. Jesus had 12 disciples, most of whom had faith in him and lived his teachings. But, Judas yielded to bribery. His greed made him betray his Master for a mere 32 coins. He could not find joy in life after this treachery. His mind gave him no peace. He had to seek refuge in suicide. Betrayal by people who pretend to adore is happening since ages. Corrupt, greedy and selfish people spread falsehoods about their masters. We hear of just, a few Judases, 2000 years ago. But in the Kali age, people are obsessed with money and Judases have multiplied. They seek to amass paltry riches whereas good character, good conduct and knowledge of God are the three treasures to be gathered. Land and building silver and gold, dollars and other currencies are temporary and trivial. They are possessions only until life lasts. But these three treasures will stay on, sustain you and strengthen you until you attain union with the Infinite.

Man has mastered astronomy; he knows all about the earth. He is conversant with all that is happening in America, Russia and England. But he does not know who he is, and so, all other knowledge does not make him wise. He is eager to collect information about every thing else but he never asks the question, "Who am I?" though he uses the expression 'I' and 'my' freely almost always. You are the farmer; the body is the field. Sow the seeds of goodness, you can get the harvest of happiness, sow the seeds of evil, you reap the harvest of grief. You are the cause of either of these. Do not blame others or impute partiality to God. Above all; do not rely on this impermanent objective world; it is full of sorrow and change. Cultivate detachment, equanimity and self-control and love. Develop Divine Knowledge about the higher levels of consciousness and the higher planes of existence. Knowledge leads to skill. From the skills in using such knowledge, one acquires balance. You must recognise that this life is a stage in the long pilgrimage and that we are now at a hotel, a temporary resting place which has also a watchman. The mind is the watchman. So, do not feel permanently attached to the mind or the body. This 'negative' body has the 'positive' Divinity within it. When you become all embracing infinite Love, the Divine will manifest in and through you. Try to be like Jesus.

Jesus was a person whose only joy was in spreading Divine Love, offering Divine Love receiving Divine Love and living on Divine Love.

There are various theories about the date of the birth of Jesus based on the 'bright Star that appeared on his birth.' It is visible once in 800 years, it is said. Some say he was born on the fifteenth day of September. But, he was born at 3-15 a.m. (early morning) on December 24, 1980 years ago. It was Sunday, The star that appeared that day appears only once in 800 years. Its appearance had nothing to do with the birth of Jesus. There is no rule that, when Divine Energy or Divine Incarnation descends on Earth, a star has to appear. That is the opinion of devotees only. But, Jesus was himself a 'Star' of infinite value, spreading brilliance of infinite dimension. Why posit another less brilliant glow?

Today is the Birth Day of Jesus, celebrated amidst December snow-falls with lights and Christmas Trees, and prayers. But it is useless to pray just one day and forget God through the rest of the year. It is an empty show; it does not emanate from the heart. We are true Christians only when we live according to the teachings of Christ and practise them in daily life. Even if we follow two teachings of his, that would be enough. Christ said, "All Life is one, my dear Son! Be alike to every one."

If we truly follow this, it would be enough to fulfill our destiny. When he was on the Cross and overcome with agony, an unseen Voice said from Heaven, "Death is the Dress of Life." The body is the dress which the Divine Spirit puts on. Therefore, we should not weep when the body is worn out or falls or is injured. Death is an event, that is the very nature of the body. Men seek the cause for death but no one seeks the Divine Source of Life. Be engaged during the brief span of life in glorifying God and in doing God's Work.

God has incarnated in human form, in order to inspire man to follow higher ideals not only in India but in foreign countries also. Men may be different in languages and life-styles but God is One and He is present everywhere. All religions speak of Him as Love and as attainable through Love. Forms of worshipping God differ, for they are shaped by time and place but Love is the basic content of all the forms. The Language of Love is understood and spoken by all hearts. There is only one race really, and that is the race of mankind. We now consider petty distinctions of nationality, race, religion and language as vital and hold back Love which must flow to every one from the heart. That was the life and message of Jesus. Nurture it in your hearts. Experience Jesus as your Messenger sent from God.

Love alone can reveal to you the Divinity latent in all. Love is God. Live in Love. Love lives by giving and forgiving; Self lives by getting and forgetting. Love is self-lessness; Selfishness is Love-lessness. Do not waste your life pursuing the narrow interests of the self. Love! Love! Become what you truly are—the embodiments of Love. No matter how others treat you or what they think of you, do not worry. Follow Jesus Christ. Love for your own evolution and not for what others say. Do not imitate others. Cultivate your own life. You have your own heart, your own opinion, your ideas, your own will. Why then imitate? Imitation is human, they say; but Creation is Divine. Follow your chosen path. Let your own experience of God be your guide and master. Do not go into the grave, weakly copying others. You won't find God if you search in the outside world. Your own heart shining with Love is God's Love. Follow the Master. Face the Devil. Fight to the end and Finish the game. You are God. The true you is God.

You are not one person but three—the one, you think you are, the one others think you are and the one you really are. You think of yourself as your body and its sense cravings. Others think of you as a personality. You are truly Infinite spirit Divine. You should constantly remind yourself, "I am God" "I am God" "I am God". The day you see yourself as God, you become God.

If you think 'I am human,' you will be led astray. Do not allow your body and the senses to dictate your moves. Develop the inner vision. The body is the cart, the Spirit is the horse. Do not put the cart before the horse. Spiritual practice is the only means of acquiring mental comfort and peace. If all the cars in America are placed end to end, it would reach the moon; but there is no

true happiness there, no Divine Bliss, no peace of mind. Cultivate, not riches, not comfort and luxuries, but Divine Virtues. Then you become fit to receive God's Grace. Why trade permanent peace of mind for impermanent physical luxuries?

Speak sweetly; give comfort with every glance of yours. Do not be slaves to your sensual desire. Prahlada told his father who had conquered the three worlds that he had failed to conquer lust and desire. You should conquer lust and vanquish anger. Exile from your mind greed, hate and jealousy. Dedicate your hands to the service of mankind. Jesus teaches infinite Love and Compassion. To resurrect Love and Compassion, you must kill jealousy and selfishness. Purify your hearts. Earn the true mercy of Jesus. Follow the path shown by him and reach the position he holds.

—*From Discourse on 25-12-1979*

Namaskaram is the Hindu way of greeting and reverently adoring preceptors and elders, with folded palms. What does it signify? The palm of the right hand is Tatt—the other, the that, the unseen immanent transcendent Universal and the palm of the left hand is Twam—the I, the Individual, the particularised, the Wave. When the two palms are brought together, and kept in contact, it means Tatt-twam-asi, the Truth. That and This are One, there is no second. Ekam eva, Adwitiyam. You identify yourself with the other and declare that the other's joys and sorrows are yours.

—Baba

There is no way to peace ...peace is the way

Throughout history there have occurred certain shining lights to guide humanity on its long and difficult journey back to God. Some of these examples have been religious, some spiritual, some political, and others have combined several different ways. Mahatma Gandhi taught us that social and political issues are not separate from, but are included within our spiritual evolution. He was an example of the active Karma Yogi who, rather than retreat from the world, enters it forcefully and correctly, accepting the solution of worldly political problems as part and parcel of the spiritual commitment.

Gandhi's emphasis is historically presented as one of political reform, but when has a strong spiritual leader not caused social and political reform? By his very presence and teachings, Swami alters socio-political structures, as did Christ, Buddha and Krishna. It seems that Gandhi's focus on political structures was simply a point at which he communicated with those who could benefit from this path.

In truth, inaction does not exist. Gandhi's resistance to evil, with his focus on socio/political problems, was active, not passive. Karma is defined by action, not by its absence. If one does not act dynamically in support of his or her beliefs, then an active failure to live morally has occurred. Beliefs left unsupported by action must be called into question. There is no neutrality

except in absolute unity: in the return to the One. All other action must be defined as life-sustaining or life-depriving, even if by default.

Gandhi recognized the necessity of making political activity consistent with spiritual beliefs, in his refusal to accept the authority of the State over that of God. He counted it his duty to steadfastly display his convictions of righteousness by consistently sacrificing the physical to the spiritual, at the same time, making it clear that they were irrevocably linked to each other. He has shown us that we must not stand idly by, while there is yet any injustice left on this planet. As it was his duty and obligation to call attention to suffering so that others might enjoy richer opportunities for peaceful, harmonious existence, so it is our duty and obligation to use his example in our lives. We should do all that we can, in an effort to incorporate Gandhi's principles of action, nonviolent action, into our spiritual development.

Regarding the politics of the world community, one should not support violence, coercion or deprivation of human dignity, either by obvious contribution to their causes, or by the failure to protest. Such actions are evidence of a lack of commitment. Commitment to right action demands right action, not attempted inaction. To close one's eyes, to ignore a distasteful situation, to refuse to hear the cries of the world's starving population is ignorance; a state of low commitment to the moral good. Nor is it acceptable to do nothing, in the belief that the small amount one could do would make no appreciable difference. As John Ruskin once said, "I am only one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something "

Swami has incarnated as an Avatar in order to confer Grace and to speed up the Karmic evolution of human beings. As this applies to individuals, so does it apply to nations. As the more evolved individual should, and does, feel the duty to aid less fortunate, or younger beings to speed their development, so must groups and nations act in a like manner. Just as India, by virtue of Swami's Grace, will once again assume her role as World Leader, so do individuals graced with stronger or more rapid development, naturally evolve into leaders, often even against their conscious will.

Swami instructs us to become instruments of God, and we pray for the knowledge to fulfill our duties best in directing our devotion. When we do find the clarity and correctness then, as Baba says, "The fires of anxiety cannot harm us." There is a special confidence born of this attitude that is at once a moral stance and a political statement.

Sathya Sai Baba teaches us that each calamity is a sign. If we are to correctly direct ourselves, we must learn to read these signs. He has stated time and again that he will not be diverted one single degree from his path, that his mission is set and nothing can change or alter it. What can and does change are the lessons which we require and receive, in order to realize our own divinity. Self-inquiry, discipline, prayer and steady Sadhana are the means for the individual's gaining spiritual power. The learning is through turning inward, but the power must be brought up and out, constantly expanding and unifying. The more advanced we become, the more unity we accomplish. The more power we develop, the more we share with others.

Mataji Indra Devi's love for children is a fine example. She has expressed her love in her devotion to the very children who have been mistreated or ignored by nearly all others. In her

creation of a school which cuts through political traditions, she is reflecting the pure love and devotion to the divinity in each child. It is of importance to see that this activity is clearly in opposition to the evil of classism.

The lesson here seems to be, that no matter how simple the spiritual expression, no matter how seemingly small or insignificant the human advancement due to this expression, it is always important and always political. Action between all humans is political, whether on a world or individual level. The small discipline of remaining unfashionably kind within all daily activities is a happy and powerful expression of our devotion.

Dr. Reyes, of the World University in Ojai, California, believes that a profound change in the destiny of the world can be positively attained if enough people simply utter the word "Peace" every day. No one other than God need be concerned with coordinating this effort. All those seemingly small, insignificant kindnesses by individuals throughout the world form themselves into a sweet but formidable pool of energy with which each of us can help transform our planet.

There are those who would argue that, since we are all one, since there is but one Truth and one God, we are not actually dealing with reality when we become involved with human politics. They contend that our concern with political considerations is an encounter with Maya, with mere appearances. But we cannot agree with such a statement. However much we are cerebrally aware of the facts of true reality, had we been adept in the past in living them, our present state of incarnation would not have come to be. We are here to learn through our experiences in dealing with this material plane, not by pretending to have already transcended it. We must not rationalize ignorance through contrived detachment. It is correct to act according to our present state, according to our sight rather than our concepts of what we should see. Concepts and beliefs are what lead us to see more clearly, bringing us ever closer to God, but we must not pretend to see that which is still invisible to us, to live that which we have not yet earned. If we accept Gandhi's words: "If training in physical resistance is possible, why should that in spiritual resistance be impossible?" we shall soon experience what every serious spiritual aspirant knows; that, as Swami says, "The world wilt melt away." Would it not be a wonderful accomplishment to help that melting be effortlessly into Bliss, rather than into pain and destruction?

—*N. L. Huberth and J. L. Sandel*

Youth with a problem

Question: "I tell my parents that I am not the body and so I do not wish to live my life the same as my father. But they tell me I am young and saying crazy ideas. I am not so young. I am in the second year of college. What can I say?"

Very often young people find that their thoughts and feelings are not at once agreed to by the older people. The elders have had a certain life experience and they naturally look to that, whereas your ideas may not as they rest on your own actual experience; the elders see this. Further, it may be that in common with other young people, you cater to body pleasures, and if

this is the case the elders will easily observe the contrast between your word and your action. It is not your youth that denies weight to your words and ideas. Were you to say from the basis of your genuine experience and your own force and genius, you could move the world, not just the elders in your family.

Despite your youth, you can have the direct experience of the truth of the world and the truth of yourself and thus be able to say to others with the force of truth. History has numerous instances of leaders and sages who were still in their youth. In His discourses, Sri Sathya Sai Baba explains how you may know Truth as it actually is, and He tells you that you may test His every declaration by means of your own action. Is it your wish to convince others? Then first convince yourself by the test of action.

By what action may you convince yourself that you are not the body and must therefore apply values to your life which are not the values of the people around you? Were your birth at some different time, an entire life could be spent in various trials and errors connected with this question. But now, in these fortunate decades, God Himself speaks to us in man's tongue and guides us.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai tells us that we will never know the Real by means of philosophical speculation, despite the honoured place given to philosophy by historians and other writers. Swami tells us very directly that the truth about oneself is revealed by self-inquiry, that in addition to active self-inquiry there should be sacred devotion to God and also some quiet time. The name, "meditation" is given to this quiet time, when you are alone with yourself.

The meditation recommended by Swami is that of Light. Instructions about meditation, as given by Swami, are on record and are available for your study at the nearest Sathya Sai Baba Centre.

Swami points out that in youth the mind is filled with dreams and fantasies and surging desires which inhibit calm, one-pointed self-inquiry. But this situation need not be a major obstacle, nor need it delay you at all, if you have the desire to make the inquiry, confidence in yourself, faith in Swami and sacred love for Him.

Call upon Swami for His help in this as in every life-situation, and start your self-inquiry, right now, dividing the phenomena of which you are conscious into two parts—"yourself" and "non-self". That part you name "yourself" requires first attention because it is only by virtue of senses, mind, intelligence and consciousness that you can know anything about something. Swami tells us to watch heart, words and actions as they come to your attention.

With sincere attention, and perhaps very soon, you will in a flash, as it were, catch your body at an instant when it is insentient, like the proverbial log, and the next moment you will see the mind entering into the body and then the body seems to be alive, vital and sentient. Or, if you do not catch this particular fact, you will catch another and that will do it. You will never again need somebody to pinch you and wake you up. You will be off and away, on your journey of self-inquiry, and you will never stop until you know that which needs to be known.

You have a gift of discrimination and intelligence, young man, evident by your interest in a deeper knowledge. Although you may not realize it, your family has the same interest as do you. They are as much interested in lasting happiness and freedom from sorrow and despair as are you. Find that treasure and share it, and it will be a blessing to your family that they have borne such a son as you.

With kind regards,

John Hislop

"Caught in a Trap"

Something very sad happened while. I was in India recently and I'm sure it happens more frequently than it should. There was a lady from another country who had heard about Sai Baba and having many problems, decided to go and receive Baba's Blessings` and help. This particular lady had been an atheist (her words), but because of all the glowing and glorious reports from others, she decided to go to India to see Baba himself. She had become very disillusioned because Baba was not paying any attention to her.

A friend of mine talked to her first, trying to explain to her that Bhagavan teaches mainly on the spiritual or intuitive level. My friend spent quite a long time with her but to no avail. The visitor had fully expected Sai Baba to talk to her, smile at her, call her in for an interview and miraculously solve all her problems. Those glowing reports of people being given so much personal attention had caught her imagination, she wanted that personal attention also and when it was not given she became extremely upset.

One day I sat next to her during lunch. She expressed her unhappiness and her disappointment. I also tried to help her but no matter what was said she did not seem to change her attitude. She must have left soon after that because we did not see her again.

What surprised me was that I too, had been caught in that trap. Five years ago I had had the great good Grace of being able to spend four months in Our Lord's Presence. He really babied me, so much attention! I was totally and thoroughly spoiled. But I had learned that He was teaching on the intuitive level and I was responding to many of His directions not really being aware of it. There was good reason for all that attention.

But this time things were different. My mind was in total chaos and confusion. Bhagavan bestowed some smiles but more often than not there was nothing. At least, at the time I felt there was not enough personal attention. Then came the day when I felt that the end of the world would come if He did not talk to me. Of course He did not and I went back to the room heart-broken, thinking, "But Baba I really wanted you to talk to me," and burst into tears.

Sounds familiar? So many people that I talked to had had almost that same experience. The fortunate ones are those who stay and try to make that mental breakthrough that puts them in touch with their intuitive Inner Self. When we can finally realize that Inner Self of ours and Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba or any favorite form or name of God are One, then we receive that personal recognition. Even if we don't, we have given ourselves the greatest of gifts, finding our "God" within.

During that first trip, I did not keep a diary and often have regretted it, so this time I kept a diary. Each day was recorded as it happened and later, on re-reading it, I was astonished at how much attention I had had! How could I possibly have felt neglected? It seems that no matter how much I received, I always wanted more. That must be the way it is until we finally surrender and merge in that Inner Bliss.

From the 15th of January through the 22nd we had Darshan from once to three times a day! And in those seven days Baba had either bestowed His Heavenly Smile, held my hand or talked to me four times! His thought for the day on Jan. 21st was: "Devotion is complete surrender—not a part time affair or something taken on credit. Every bit has to be earned and deposited. There are no over-drafts. Grace is won by discipline and virtue."

Is this just another glowing account of someone receiving so much personal attention? Perhaps, but even with all that attention, I fell into that same trap of feeling neglected. It only lasted for a short while but was most difficult to get out of. Earnest prayer, spiritual practice and Love was the only way out.

So I concentrated on helping others when and where help was needed. The more we do for others the less we think of ourselves and the more we will please our Lord. So trying to please Baba and not myself, paid off in ways totally unexpected. The rest of my visit is a long beautiful story. I pray that if you are contemplating a visit to Sai Baba that you will consider keeping a diary, recording thoughts and personal experiences (even with other people) and each day evaluating your own experiences. Even when we are not in His Presence, we are being taught and the most important thing to remember is that we ourselves have that 'Inner Teacher', the very same teacher who is manifesting in human form on the outer, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba himself!

Leta, Deogeff

Good News to All

On this day, June 22, 1978, as I am sitting in New York City writing, an Avatar is walking the earth, conveying spiritual blessings and mystical experiences to millions of people. Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is ushering in the spiritual regeneration of mankind for the New Age which is coming upon us. His miracles seem to be as endless as His Love, His every gesture struck spiritual chords in me and to so many millions of others who have also experienced Him. He invites any and all who doubt His Glory to come to Him and conclude for themselves. Sri Ramakrishna said, "The Avatars are born with Divine powers and Divine qualities When a Savior becomes incarnate, all are saved through His Grace."

The advent of the Avatar takes place only every few thousand years. For this reason it is of primary importance to all seekers of Truth and God. I speak of Him because I have seen Him and lived beside Him for two months. I have also experienced Him countless times in other parts of the world while His physical body was still in India. I invite all to read about Him, and inquire about Him.

Dr. N. Kasturi writes:

I too, demurred, doubted, and disbelieved Baba's validity with all the sarcasm and satire found in the novels, dramas, and essays which I wrote and published on various subjects. For many years I, too, in my stupid pride, did not make any effort to meet Him. I invite everyone

now, to come and share His Grace and Mercy and stand witness to the Divine Power that He personifies.

As the living God-man, Sai Baba promises salvation and liberation via the quickest channel to God—God in the form of man on earth. He is the perfect man and the perfect God. "My life is my message" Baba tells all. "I am the embodiment of Bliss, come take Bliss from Me."

I cannot think of a more optimistic way to end than to convey this news to all.

—*Lawrence Galante*

Man Against Himself

`You are agitated, I know, since the world today is tossed on tile waves of unrest and insecurity. But do not blame the world for it. The unrest is but the image of your own unrest, which you have projected on the world. The insecurity is fuming in your minds; the fear is raising its hood in your heart. The forces of the world, the beings in Nature are all unaffected, unchanged! You have changed, you are nervous; you are afraid, you have no peace!"

Bewildered and exasperated, the modern man looks at the stricken world, wondering why the crisis deepens despite his intellectual attainments, material prosperity and the continued progress of science and technology. It is to him that the Lord, Bhagavan Baba, the embodiment of love and compassion addresses the above words. It is to him that He points out the source of his troubles and the cause of his misery.

Sociologists and humanists, politicians and administrators—all are conscious of the catastrophe that man faces today. Some thought of wars to end wars; they made their weapons so destructive as to shower instant death and devastation on men and their habitations. In the process, they found their own spirits crumbling, their own existence in jeopardy. Of what avail is progress, which sweeps away in its tide man's peace and happiness, faith and hope and perhaps his very existence!

Is there then no hope for man and the world of which he claims to be the master? The answer is there in Bhagavan Baba who indeed is his hope, solace and refuge. Let us listen to Him again: 'Man or Manava as he is called in Sanskrit is a spark of Madhava or God. He can bloom into God. He is born to be perpetually happy, but is everywhere in misery...Man has lost knowledge of the one anchor which will, save him from the tornado, namely discipline of the vagaries of the mind.'

When the scriptures declare that the mind is both the cause of bondage and the means of freedom of man, when Bhagavan says that the fear and insecurity are the creations of the mind and when the Lord of the Gita points out to Arjuna, the representative of man that the crisis that he faces is not in the situation, but in his own mind, it is clear that man is actually caught in a struggle against himself. It is clear too, that if only he pursues the path of discrimination, he can achieve

that harmony which will vouch for him abiding peace and happiness in due course. This is not achieved either by being idle or complacent, nor by unleashing violence and acting with hatred. It is a call to man to arm himself (equip himself with discrimination) and fight (act as he should) without being concerned about the result (nirasee) and without identifying himself with the action (nirmamah), free from fear or mental worry (vigatha jwara). (Gita III-30). It is a call to perfection, egoless action, the one and the best means of overcoming the insecurity that stalks the world.

Why then does man helplessly allow his mind to tyrannise him and pull him down to live the lower self? Is it Maya and its individual counterpart, Avidya (ignorance)? He easily forgets that his destiny is his own making, that the Karma is what he has himself accumulated in the past; and he forgets too that God has endowed him with an intellect with its power of discrimination to enable him to crossover His Maya and reach the abode of Bliss. In fact Maya is the manifestation of God's creative urge. It is not independent of Reality; it has no separate existence, and though inscrutable, it is also the means to realise the Supreme Truth. While the Lord says that His divine Maya consisting of the modes (gunamayee) is hard to overcome, He does not leave man a helpless victim of an illusion. He immediately suggests the means to cross the ocean of Samsara or Maya: 'But those who take refuge in Me alone cross beyond it' (Gita VII--14).

What actually happens to man is that in his pursuit of happiness, he gets caught in the coils of Samsara. Despite his efforts and the resources thrown in by him, despite the pain and the suffering that he endures, that happiness eludes him or vanishes the moment he apprehends it. The irony lies in his mistaking the occasional pleasures which come his way for the happiness that he seeks. Pleasures, in fact, are the intervals between pains, and are inherent in the duality of the phenomenal world and like everything else of the world such experiences are ephemeral, transient, short-lived. The world can give only what it has, and life can give him only what he himself has given to it, now or in the past. Happiness, on the other hand, is eternal, abiding. The world of objects cannot provide it and man's search for it among the sense objects, despite generations of experience, continues to be an exercise in futility.

While Self-realisation is the only means of breaking the bondage of Samsara, and the course of man should ultimately lead to it, a true aspirant does not expect to reach his goal immediately, or in this life or the next. In fact he does not care how near the goal is. What matters is a clear understanding of the purpose of life, the willingness to shed the cravings of the flesh and the mind, and the Sadhana (efforts on the spiritual path) to achieve the purpose. Let no one vacillate over this, doubting whether the goal can be reached at all. He may be in a minority; but it is only a minority that can be IN the world and not be OF it. 'Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection, and of those who strive and succeed scarcely one knows Me in truth' (Gita VII-3). But never is the slightest effort of man on the spiritual path wasted irrespective of how long he takes to achieve that perfection. As Sage Vidyaranya says in his great treatise, Panchadasi, 'If the person does not realise the Self even after practising till death, he will surely realise It in a future life when all the obstacles will have been eliminated' (IX-36). The Lord of the Gita assured Arjuna of the same: In this path no effort is ever lost and no obstacle prevails; even a little of this righteousness (dharma) saves from great fear' (II-40), and also 'Neither in this life nor hereafter is there destruction for him; for never does anyone who does good, dear friend,

tread the path of woe' (VI-40). The stage which a real Sadhaka (aspirant) has reached in one life constitutes the starting point for his further evolution in the next.

There is no advice to man in the scriptures or in any other teaching to relinquish his relations with the material world and to lead a cloistered life. Such an interpretation can come only from one who is either ignorant of the Eternal Philosophy or who wants to discredit it. On the other hand the world is very much in the Lord's scheme of creation, and man has a rightful place and an important role in it. He has to serve the purpose of creation; that is God's will. 'Know then that Nature is Maya and the Great God is the Lord of Maya. The whole world is filled with beings who form his parts' (Svetaswataropanisad). We cannot discard the world, as much as we cannot discard the very principle of our existence. While being in it and acting in it, we have to go beyond it and thus realise the Truth which is its substratum.

The scriptures ask us to know That, by knowing which everything else is known and characterises the knowledge that we acquire of the world as inadequate for apprehending the Reality. That does not mean that the knowledge of sciences, arts or literature are unnecessary or useless. So long as we are in the world, and so long as we have to serve the purpose of creation we have to acquire such knowledge. But a clear distinction has to be made between Jnana (wisdom) which ends in the realisation of the Unity that already exists between the seen and the Unseen, and the learning that makes for erudition or equips one for worldly purposes. The scriptures recognise both kinds of knowledge, i.e., Apra Vidya (lower knowledge) and Para Vidya (higher knowledge). Even a great sage like Narada who had mastered Vedas, Itihasas, Sastras, mathematics, astrology, fine arts and so on, was unable to get over the pains and sorrows that afflicted the mind and body. Narada realises the inadequacy of Apra Vidya as merely the play of words and meanings (shabda-artha matra-vignanam) and approaches the great Sanatkumara for the knowledge of the Self (Atma Vidya) which would take him beyond all sorrows (Chandogyopanisad VII 1-3). That is not knowledge coming out of learning, but an experience which one gains when he is ripe for it spiritually.

Man is therefore OF the world when his ego identifies the self with the non-Self and assumes the role of the doer (Karta). As the doer he craves for the fruits of his actions; but he has no control over them. They may be sweet or bitter. He frets and fumes over his adversities, but does not see that they are the combined results of the quality of his actions, his past Karmas which have attained maturity in his Vasanas and his Prarabdha. Frustrated, angered and desperate, he engages in further actions only to find himself deeper and deeper in the crisis. Thus deceived by egoism and blinded by passions he gets from experience the very opposite of what he wanted them to yield.

The time will no doubt come when, experiences with their errors and retribution, suffering and despair, will confront every man with the insistent demand that he understand it and change his course. But that will be too long and tortuous. If only man realises the power of the intellect with which God has endowed him and which is illumined by Divine Consciousness (chit-prakasha), if only he listens to the message that the Supreme conveys to him in His various incarnations and imbibes the experiences of the seers and sages, he can develop the discrimination leading to the goal. He can be IN the world without being OF it and work out his Prarabdha with complete detachment. He apparently acts in the world as everyone would, the difference being that he

ceases to be the doer, and becomes the Witness. It is such a person that the scriptures call a Sthitaprajna (stable in intelligence)—‘He whose mind is untroubled in the midst of sorrow and is free from eager desire amid pleasures, he from whom passion, fear, and rage have passed away’ etc. (Gita II-56). The tenor of his thinking, and the equality of his actions change, and the world reacts towards him in such a manner that he experiences a peace within himself and a harmony with everything in nature.

‘When the desire for realising Brahman has marked manifestation, the egoistic desires readily vanish, as the most intense darkness completely vanishes before the glow of the rising sun’.
(Viveka-Choodamani-318)

—C. P. K. Nair

If you deny God, it is as if you deny yourself. There is no God, you declare; but, you assert that "I exist". Well, who is that I that exists, that exists throughout the varying stages of growth, physical and mental, in joy and in grief? That 'I' is God; believe it. For that 'I' sees with the eye, tastes with the tongue, walks with the feet, argues with the intelligence; but, all the while, it is conscious that it is separate from all these. When you affirm, "There is no God," you first assert and then declare the absence of that entity. You assert the non-existence of something that "is". That 'I' must be conceived as a wave of the ocean of God, not as the first person singular. That 'first' person leads you into the world of fear and greed. My house, my village, my community, my district, my language—it entangles itself thus more and more inextricably.

—Baba

On Science, Religion and Spirituality

In recent years there has been constant debate on superstition and launching of vilification campaigns against certain religions and their preachers from individuals in seats of authority fighting for rationalism and scientific attitude among the masses. Religion has even been equated by some with narcotics and hence to be abhorred. Just as these individuals have arrogated to themselves the freedom to campaign for rationalism so do the masses have the birthright to practise religion and religious beliefs of their quest for inner peace and happiness. Religiousness and spiritualism should not be equated, though the two may be coterminous. Abhorrence of religion, religious beliefs and spiritualism will only lead to an abundance of eccentrics, neurotics and an upswing of organized and sporadic crime and delinquency. Scientists and teachers must embark on a wider propagation of spiritualism among the populace as this alone will restore discipline and order among the nation.

The goal of a true scientist is the search for truth. This search for truth is devoid of subjectivity, personal likes and dislikes. A true scientist is a man of value rather than a man of success and is not afraid of facing the truth. Both ancient and modern histories have shown that the human race has settled questions of truth in theology, law or politics only by resort to force. This is an anachronism today. Adapting Steen's symbolic logic definition of truth to the present context we

may say that truth is a property of axioms. The scientific method is a deductive method based on certain implicit or explicit axioms and all deductions are circumscribed by these axioms. The fundamental premise for these axioms is the state of prevailing knowledge. It is important to realize this axiomatic foundation of science. Ignoring the limitations of the axiomatic basis of science leads us to bigotry and scepticism and disbelief in facts or events which are inexplicable through this axiomatic science. Unless these axioms are modified with the advancing state of knowledge the conclusions will be erroneous.

There is no inherent conflict or contradiction between science and spirituality dealing as they do with the physical and metaphysical. In the ocean of knowledge the part that is understood, and that too, imperfectly is a mere drop. It is unscientific to say that what we do not understand or cannot experiment upon or cannot perceive with our instruments do not exist. This is the beginning of all misunderstandings. Many areas of knowledge and many areas of everyday life do not lend themselves to experimentation or scientific explanation. In many other areas we do not even have scientific terminology to describe many phenomena. Here lie many of the so-called mystical phenomena; we call them mystical because of our inability to explain them with our limited scientific knowledge and techniques. Hence the phenomena are mysterious. Rushing to brand them as deception and impossibilities merely because they are mysterious and inexplicable in our current state of incomplete knowledge is tantamount to irrationalism.

Is it proper to debunk meteorology just because the prediction of meteorologists seldom comes true? Shall we discard western industrial technology just because we have failed in its implementation in India? Shall we stop the study of economics since we are in an economic mess despite our eminent economists?

We speculate on the origin of the universe, on the origin of life and the possibility of life on other celestial bodies. Little do we remember that the cosmological and the biophysical theories are founded on the contemporary body of understood knowledge. We speculate and use concepts of black holes, antimatter, quasars and pulsars for cosmological studies and reject similar events on the earth. The more we know the less we understand. Creation of matter, materialization of objects and levitation etc may belong to the unexplored and unknown.

The existence of life on other celestial bodies is an oft-mooted question. Little do we realize the meaning of life and of living organisms. Is life possible with elements other than carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen? Would it be impossible to have living organisms based on boron, silicon and similar elements? Do we understand their behaviour? Can we produce living organisms based on boron and silicon with elements other than oxygen and nitrogen? Can we conclude justifiably that since terrestrial life is based solely upon carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, life elsewhere must also be the same? Can we discount extra celestial intelligence from non-terrestrial organisms? Shall we dismiss these questions as stupid?

Do we understand the working of the human mind? How empirical is our understanding of the human mind today? Do we understand the elements of the conscious, the sub-conscious state and the human thought-process? Can we conduct controlled experiments into the mechanism of thinking without interfering with the organism, the environment and the thought process itself? How valid would be the results of such experiments with today's imperfect: instrumentation and

understanding of the life processes? Do we even have the necessary terminology to describe these phenomena? It is here the great philosophers, thinkers and scientists excel since they alone understand the limitations of the current knowledge. The true scientist with his uninhibited mind constantly strives to understand the universe better. The process is analogous to mathematical limiting process. Infinity is indefinable. Yet, the mathematician derives its properties. But since infinity is indefinable shall we discount its existence? As is the process of approaching infinity endless so is our quest for the truth.

All truths are relative and not absolute. We can only strive to approach the truth although truth will never be attainable. If this is realized there is no conflict between science and spirituality. A true scientist is ipso facto a spiritualist. Just as the great philosophers have struggled hard to understand and approach the true scientist strives hard to approach the truth although truth itself is unattainable.

The essence of the search of truth is a free mind. Prejudiced minds and minds tainted by inhibitions and the shackles of existing knowledge cannot think freely. It is most important to break the bonds of environment from the mind and seek the truth. Seekers after truth must keep their minds open to learn continuously from their own and the experience of others. Disdain, scorn, derision and denigration are unscientific.

Science and spirituality are universal and democratic and not authoritarian and hierarchical. Science hampered by authoritarianism harms progress. The great Indian Rishis and philosophers constantly admonished their followers through the ages never to accept anything as gospel and to question everything. Thus, they displayed the greatest intellectual freedom and encouraged similar freedom amongst followers. The Western scientific traditions too have emphasized free thinking.

—*Sridhar Ramachandra*

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19

Vedanta is the legitimate property of every section, every caste, every community, and every race, of the followers of any faith and persons of both sexes. Vedanta means Wisdom or Jnana. `Wisdom' relating to which field of knowledge? It is wisdom based on the knowledge of the Atma. This wisdom is the supremest gain that can be earned in life. What greater gain can there be for man than becoming aware of his Self, himself knowing himself? Faith in the possibility of knowing oneself is necessary for every student of Shruti (the Vedas) and Smriti (the Moral Codes).

The object seen is clearly separate from the subject who sees. This is a universally accepted Truth. Who is this I that sees? All things that have Form are recognised and seen by the sense organ, the eye. The eye sees the physical body, other individuals, even insects, worms and

things. It sees everything that is within its range. The body too is a *thing* that the eye sees, along with the rest. So, how can we conclude that the body *is* the I?

Then, who really is this I? Fire burns and also brightens. It burns things by heat and brightens them by the light it sheds. Fire is different from the things it acts upon. Now, who is it that knows this truth—the truth that 'fire' and the 'things that it burns' are different? It is the Atma. When a log burns, the fire is present and active in *all* of it. Similarly, the Atma entirely pervades the body, and enables it to perform deeds and to move itself and its limbs.

The light shed by the lamp is the instrument that informs us at night: "This is the cup" "This is the plate," The eye is but a similar instrument which informs us "This is a house," "This is a thorn", "This is a stone." The eye is not the Atma. In the absence of the lamp, the eye, or, in the absence of the eye, the lamp cannot cognise the house, the thorn, the stone, the cup or the plate. Both the lamp and the eye are media or instruments of 'illumination'.

The instrument, eye, *sees* the body, where it is situated. The body that is *seen* cannot therefore be other than a similar instrument. The senses are the experiencers of hearing, tasting, seeing, touching and smelling. When the eye has to be declared an instrument, the other four senses too have to be recognised as tools. All these senses are under the control of the mind which is their master. This has to be investigated. Even this is being controlled and conditioned by some other master. The mind cannot be the core of man.

The intellect or Buddhi examines the information materials offered by the mind. It is the instrument that judges and decides. For example, imagine a sharp knife. However sharp, it cannot cut a fruit on its own initiative. Nor can it cut the thinnest thread by itself. It can do so only when it is held by the hand of some one. The intellect is similar to the knife. It is helpless without the 'I', the Atma, which has to wield it.

Then, we have to consider another equipment of man—the Prana or the vital air. Can we nominate it as the 'I'? During deep sleep, man is not conscious that he is breathing and that the 'vital airs' are alert! Of the three states—the waking (Jagrata), the dreaming (Swapna) and the sleeping (Sushupti), though the Prana is existent in all, the man is not aware of the experiences of the waking state while dreaming, nor of the experiences of the dreaming state while in the wakeful state. While in sleep, the Pranas do not activate the intellect or the memory. They appear to be quiescent. When the boss is active, the dependents cannot keep quiet. Since they are not uniformly active always, Pranas or the Prana principle cannot be considered as the 'I' or Atma.

Now about the Ego. There are two fields in which it operates and so, it has two meanings: (1) Self-love, Ahamkara, the 'Dehatma', Body consciousness, the Exterior 'I' and (2) the Inner 'I', the Pratyag-Atma. Persons who do not know this distinction confuse themselves and assert that 'I' is applicable to the Dehatma. But, this is wrong. The body as we have seen is a tool, it is an object; it is the seen and not the see-er. How can the Ego, identified with it, be the Atma? This Ego also is of the 'seen' category. It is absent in sleep and is false in dreams. Truth has to persist unaffected, in the past, present and future. That which is absent in two states, how can it be true?

As a result of this inquiry, it has become plain that the senses, the mind, the intellect, the vital airs—not one of these can be accepted as Atma and accorded that validity. Therefore, the doubt might arise: what else, who else, is Atma?

That which has no entry or exit, that which has no hands and feet, no organs and limbs, no blot or blemish, that which is the minutest among the minute, the hugest among the huge, that which, like space, is everywhere, that which *is* all and so free from 'I' and 'mine', and that which is consciousness, as fire is heat, and the sun is light—it has no affinity with distress or delusion; it is supreme everlasting ecstasy, Param-ananda. It is the core, the heart of all beings; it is the awareness in all. It is the see-er of everything 'seen'; it sees all objects seen. Every one, whatever his nature or stature, who declares, after being served by the senses, "I see", "I hear", "I taste" etc., is really only talking of lamps, of tools and not of the Atma. The Atma is not a part-see-er, a series-see-er, a non-see-er or a pseudo-see-er.

The Buddhi, like the moon, has no light in itself. Like the moon it reflects light from another source which is adjacent to it, namely the Atma. Buddhi can operate only by reflecting the Cosmic Intelligence, represented by the Atma.

The Sun is designated the Cosmic Eye, Jagat Chakshu, a name based on the Sun's involvement with and proximity to other objects. The Sun has no ego-sense or a sense of possession and property, and no will or want or wish. By His very presence darkness disappears and light envelopes the world. So, He is called the Enlightener. But He is not consciously doing so, as if in duty bound. So the Atma too, has neither obligation nor application. If asked how the Atma becomes a 'doer', the reply is—is the magnet a 'doer', simply because the needle which is in its neighbourhood moves?

The basic question may now be raised. Does the Atma exist? If it does, how and with what proof can it be established? There is no need to prove that the Atma exists, for, if the Atma is capable of being proved by certain arguments and lines of reasoning, the existence of another person, who uses those arguments and follows those lines of reasoning, has to be posited. That person will again be the Atma!

Of course, some men may reply that the Vedas are the authority for the existence of the Atma and that the Atma can be experienced and validated through the Vedas. The Vedas do prohibit certain activities as Un-atmic or opposed to the norms expected from a believer in the Atma; they do recommend certain other activities like charity, moral behaviour, as Atmic. But, the Atma is its own proof, its own witness. Its existence cannot be established by other facts, or things.

The Sastras, which are scriptural texts supplementary to the Vedas, declare that God resides wherever six excellences are evident: Enthusiasm (utsaha) courage (dhairya) good-sense (sad-buddhi) strength (shakti) and adventure (parakrama) The inaugural prayer of man has to be directed to God (Ganapati) for these six gifts which can purify consciousness and reveal the Atma. One has to undertake the discovery of one's Atmic core, with bravery in the heart; this is no exercise for cowards. Wicked persons, waverers in faith, doubting hearts, woeful countenances, are destined to go through life as rogis (sick persons) and not yogis (dwellers in Atma).

This is the distinguishing mark that separates the `wise' (Jnani) from the `unwise' (Ajnani). Krishna spoke, laughing with an outburst of joy; Arjuna listened while overpowered by sorrow. The Jnani is always full of joy; he laughs. The Ajnani is afflicted with sorrow; he weeps.

(To be continued)

Seva Dal and Sai Education

—Prof. A. V. Krishnamurthy

What is SAI education? This is a question which bothers every one, in particular, everyone in Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Study Circle of Bangalore. Every one knows, Sai education is something different from other forms of educational processes adopted in various educational institutions. Every one knows that there is an element of spirituality in Sai education, perhaps much more explicitly than anywhere else. Every one feels that the concept of "Sai Education" is not easily comprehensible. Yet the search continues for this is what the Study Circle members want to practise, for they are all teachers.

Against this curiosity and search, if one looks carefully at the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai College in Brindavan, and in particular at the hostel attached to this college, where at least 450 students stay, today, one cannot escape the feeling that it is here highly motivated students, honest to the core, with excellent performance in their courses and eager to participate in selfless social work, with love are moulded. Naturally, since Sai is the prime architect of this endeavour, it is this type of education, which these boys have taken, we call `the Sai Education'. But this is not all, for, the prime factor in the making of these boys is the inexplicable divine Love of Lord Sai. This cannot be substituted. So, if Sai wants to create such colleges and hostels, He only can. Is it something that others, ordinary teachers like us can copy and implement in our way? If not, can our endeavour, to adopt Sai education, be a success?

Undoubtedly, it is impossible to copy in its entirety what is going on in the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Hostel at Brindavan. Frequent visits of Swami to the hostel, His day-to-day guidance, Presence in evening prayer session and His loving care, Divine and heart-stirring messages, personal attention to each individual student and many other inexplicable and un-understandable happenings cannot be realised, in any other institution. It is only possible for Him, the omnipresent and omniscient God, to impart education, in that manner.

If it is possible to implement it anywhere else, what is the use of trying to follow this type of educational process?

A close examination of educational process prevalent in this great institution reveals that this type of education can be divided into three parts

1. Conventional education (Vijnana) 2. Spiritual education (Prajnana) 3. Social service (Seva Sadhana)

The conventional collegiate education, in subjects like physics, and chemistry, Arts and Commerce etc. is imparted through courses conducted by highly dedicated teachers. The spiritual components of the education, which we shall call here 'Prajnana' is imparted through personal Sadhana, which takes the form of morning prayers (Omkar, Suprabhatam and Nagarsankirtan) prayer at the time of meals, evening prayers (Bhajan) periodic Satsang meetings etc. The divine discourses of Lord Sai and the summer course on spirituality and culture, impart the main thrust in this direction. It is, in fact, this component which brings in a conversion in the student. It is this which makes him, humble, hardworking compassionate, loving to fellow being and many other qualities which can never be described in full. Having acquired the skill to serve society through Vijnana and having developed the right attitude of love for his fellow beings, for work and his country through spiritual education, the student is eager to partake in service to society. It is here, the social service component in education helps him. This will be the test-ground or the laboratory to test himself. As the student involves in selfless service, dedicated to his beloved God, called "Seva", he experiences an inexplicable feeling which he loves to retain always. Perhaps this is "bliss". When such a phenomenon starts, the student becomes, in a way, irresistibly attracted to it. Willing to experience more of it; he involves himself in much social service, activity. In order to do better social service, he will have to improve his skills and hence will do better in studies. The cycle is a regenerative cycle. The sky is the limit for the quality of student.

We must note, the element of spirituality is the prime factor and it is this which is very difficult to be brought into other educational institutions, because, we have not understood well what spirituality is, nor have many teachers with personal experience in this regard. So we can think of only a minimum programme in this direction.

However small it is, it is significant, for it is regenerative. When once started properly, it takes on momentum.

Let us have a look at the present-day educational Institutions. With the lofty infrastructure and highly qualified staff on it, it is difficult to think there is a need to improve the quality of education as far as the conventional subjects are concerned. Where there is a need, the faculty and the authorities are well aware of the need. I am sure they can turn the earth into heaven. Thus, as far the first part of the components of the education namely, conventional education is concerned, we must conclude the present day educational institutions are doing just fine.

How to bring in the second component, namely, "Spirituality" into education? It is here there is some difficulty primarily because the authorities of the institutions may not believe in it, and competent teachers may not be available. Student and parent reaction may not be favourable. It is here, teachers' organisations like the "Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Study Circle" can contribute, by running short-term courses on "Spirituality and Indian Culture" for students from various institutions. Through such attempts, if the quality of students improves, this will be an eye-opener and will set the pace for others.

To complete the three components, we need a laboratory which can be used by the students to test themselves, giving them opportunities to involve in selfless service and imbibe joy of the real motivation for education. This forum is the Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Dal, an organisation devoted entirely to selfless social service. Students are welcome to join and benefit.

Thus, through coordinated efforts of educational institutions, Study Circles and Seva Dal, it is possible, to raise the quality of youth who will be invaluable to the mother country in the years to come.

The Study Circle and what it means to me

Dr. N. S. Lakshmana Rao, Professor, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

The Sai Impact

I seek the divine blessings of Parama Poojya Bhagavan Baba before I venture to share with you a few of my thoughts and to begin with I should like to narrate how I became a Sai devotee, one among several millions, perhaps. I have been in the teaching and research profession for the last nearly 30 years. Never have I felt so happy as I have during the last 6-7 months since the time I came into contact with Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Although I had been greatly influenced by the books of Prof. N. Kasturi and Mr. Howard Murphet for the last nearly 10 years, I did not have the good fortune of meeting the Bhagavan until recently. I had only a glimpse of His physical form when He was blessing many devotees in the premises of a Malleswaram school about 15 years ago. When I went to Anantapur about 8-10 years ago, for some examination work, I developed a very strong urge to visit Puttaparthi. But I was told by some friends that Baba would not be there and hence my wish remained unfulfilled.

It was sometime during the end of July or early August 1979, I had the pleasure of giving a drop to my good friend and colleague Prof. A. V. Krishna Murthy at his residence in Malleswaram on my scooter. He was kind enough to invite me for a cup of coffee. What caught my attention as soon as I entered his house after a flight of steps were 2-3 large size photos of our beloved Baba. Naturally I asked him whether he was a devotee of Baba. In his characteristic modest and unassuming way Prof. Krishna Murthy told me that, he is. During the conversation that ensued, I expressed my own irresistible interest to have Darshan of Baba sometime. May be my time at last had come to behold the glory of the Bhagavan soon. What a long and anxious wait!

Prof. A. V. Krishna Murthy informed me about the proposed Study Circle and asked the whether I would like to participate in it. I said I most certainly would be very happy to render what little service I can. I thought of my own student days at the Ramakrishna Ashram, Basavanagudi when I studied for my engineering degree from 1947-1951 would be of some help to me in terms of mental discipline.

It was almost soon after that, nearly 150 of us were meeting Baba on August 11th and 12th, 1979 at Puttaparthi. I always treasure, like many of us do I am sure, His illuminating addresses, given in two parts which lasted nearly 4 hours. I have heard many an inspiring lecture by spiritual

leaders of the Ramakrishna order. But I must admit the tremendous impact I had after listening to Swami's lectures was something beyond any description. The thrill I got was unbounded. I had never experienced such joy at any other moment in my life. My joy rose to new heights when Swami showered His infinite grace by materialising the sacred Vibhuti for me. Even as I was trying to contain myself, Swami called me by name and asked if I would like to say a few words before He started His discourse. I least expected that I would receive such an honour and honestly I did not know what to say. All that I was able to mumble, after mustering all my courage was something to this effect: "Swami, although we are all teachers in our own humble ways, we have come here to listen to you —the greatest teacher. We are looking forward to be guided by you in our activities." I then thanked Swami profusely for the honour done to me and sat down. Even to this day I treasure that first meeting with Swami which was like meeting the fountain-head of all knowledge. From then on my devotion to the teachings of Swami has increased manifold and I only wish and pray that we will be worthy instruments of the change that has to be brought about in our educational field at all levels.

Relevance of Swami Vivekananda

It may not be out of place to recall at this stage the analysis of the objectives of education and exhortation made by that great son of India—Swami Vivekananda. In fact this part of my article is taken from my address to the new graduate students in August 1979 of our Institute—the Indian Institute of Science. Even to this day, I strongly believe that most of his thinking is very relevant. Therefore I will devote the next few paragraphs in quoting him.

"...Our boys receive a very negative kind of education. It has some good points but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place, it is not a man making education...It is merely and entirely a negative education...Seldom are we given to understand that great men were ever born in our country. Nothing positive has been taught to us ...Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages and the encyclopaedias the Rishis...Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharat, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfill this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip them selves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and courage of a lion-is it worth the name?

...We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.

.....What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean meeting death face to face. It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round, that we want"

The Study Circle—What it can and should do:

According to my thinking, there should be study circles or groups in almost every institution under the guidance of a central study circle. It may be a good idea to categorise our problems and try to tackle them one by one. For instance we can classify the problems as pertaining to (i) Primary education, (ii) Middle School education, (iii) High School education, (iv) Collegiate education, (v) Post-graduate education, (vi) Management education, (vii) Educational administration, (viii) Scientific Laboratories, (ix) Industries and (x) Miscellaneous. These should encompass both the urban and rural scenes. We could concentrate our efforts on the following aspects:

- (i) Teacher - student relationship.
- (ii) Teacher - Teacher relationship:
- (iii) Student - student relationship.
- (iv) Faculty - student – management (Governmental or private) relationship.
- (v) Improvements in curricula, - subject wise.
- (vi) Imparting inspired instruction to students.
- (vii) Identification of creative minds and nurturing them.
- (viii) Integration of formal instruction with moral education including extracts from the teachings contained in spiritual scriptures such as the Bhagavad-Gita, Bible and Quoran.
- (ix) Setting apart sometime outside the normal instruction hours for the understanding of our spiritual and cultural heritage through our epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.
- (x) Visits to village schools and helping them with any problems they may have like making available good instruction material.
- (xi) Development of teaching aids at various levels.
- (xii) Preparation of good text books at various levels.
- (xiii) Preparation of good lecture notes in various subjects by experts in different subjects to be used by various schools and colleges.
- (xiv) Accent on the cleanliness of the premises of institutions, for, cleanliness is Godliness.
- (xv) Introduction of prayers with little books containing the meanings of these prayers.
- (xvi) Stressing on the importance of means to achieve our ends.
- (xvii) Development of qualities of mutual respect and love to fellow human beings and respect to the parents, elders and the learned.
- (xviii) To stress on the importance of service and sacrifice.
- (xix) To stress on the underlying oneness of all religions, namely Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteousness), Prema (Love) and Santhi (Peace).
- (xx) To practise what we preach and to be shining examples to others.
- (xxi) To make one's own life a message based on the noble tradition of Sri Sathya Sai Baba who has proclaimed "My life is my message."

One can prepare a much longer list. It is not that these are not known to our fellow members. Wisdom lies in taking up the challenge right in one's own sphere of activity and proceed undauntedly in spite of criticisms and initial set-backs. Truth has to triumph ultimately. I need hardly say that we require dedicated men and women to achieve our objectives.

A word of Caution. We should not attempt to tackle all the problems at once. We should proceed cautiously and step by step. It is not easy to clean up the cob-webs that have collected in our educational system over decades. It requires a lot of patience, perseverance, devotion, sincerity, hard work and integrity on our part. I am sure that success will surely be achieved at the end. Hope and optimism must be our watchwords in all our efforts. When the divine hand is guiding us, we can expect every dark corner to be illuminated soon. We should not despair even under very adverse conditions.

The canvas to be painted is very vast. Let us start by filling in the details bit by bit. I am sure the final picture will bring eternal joy to everyone and our mission will be accomplished. Rays of hope are already seen on the horizon.

Summing Up

Having worked in this profession of teaching and research for nearly 30 years now, I am convinced that this great country can still provide the right environment to achieve the ideals set forth by Swami Vivekananda of yester years and answer the clarion call given by Baba to restore education to its glorious heights. We have only to know the right doors to knock to help us "arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached."

We are eagerly looking: forward to His increasing guidance and blessings in our future activities for bringing about a sea-change in the educational environment of not only our country but also on a global scale. I for one, am convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that Swami's teachings alone can bring order and meaning to our educational system.

I am confident that our study circle under the divine guidance of Parama Poojya Bhagavan Baba will be the forerunner of a great renaissance in the educational field in our country and elsewhere. Education must ultimately mean

E—for Enlightenment
D—for Duty and Devotion
U—for Understanding
C—for Character
A—for Action
T—for Thinking
I—for Integrity
O—for Oneness
N—for Nobility

The Umbilical Cord

Each incarnated being begins as a cell in the womb of his earthly mother. He is one cell among millions of cells within that mother's body. There is no differentiation between the new being and the mother, who, in fact, is not yet aware of its presence.

Gradually this cell begins to grow, divide, develop and differentiate. It is becoming more and more individual, more and more, separate, developing life-systems of its own.

Yet it is still one with the mother, through the agency of the umbilical cord. The life force (Prana) and blood of the mother sustain the organism through this physical connection to its navel.

Although in the later months, consciousness is beginning to express itself through individual movements, the 'being to be' still resides in the warm, secure unity of the mother's womb.

Nine months pass. The traumatic moment arrives. The child passes out of its secure union; the cord is cut and the pain of separation sets in.

The separation of the bodies of the child and mother is a physical representation of the illusory separation of man from God, of the Jiva from Paramatma. The psychic scar left as a result of this trauma is the basic motivating force behind man's life on earth.

Each individual is seeking to re-unite with his mother at whatever level he may be able to relate. For some this means uniting with another human being. In many cases the relationships established are formed along the lines of parent/child. Really, each is seeking reunion with God, the real mother.

All love and even desire is based on this need for union, whether it be for food, relationships, material objects, prestige, art, knowledge or with God the divine source of all life.

In each case, the individual is relating from a different "chakra" or level of consciousness. He is seeking to recreate that security or "umbilical connection" by linking up with the world around him through the various energy centers.

For example, those operating basically from the lower three energy centers or levels of consciousness will seek security through union with food, sex, sensual pleasure or ego power.

The problem is that this seeking brings only momentary security or satisfaction. Because the object with which union is sought is transitory, then the resulting security or happiness is only momentary. More and more pain and suffering are created by the cycle of desiring, getting and desiring again. There is no peace. One does not get what one is really seeking.

Others, who have begun to feel the opening of the heart-center will feel the need to experience selfless love. This is the basis of all religion (which in Latin means to "relink"). That is, to

reconnect the individual with God, the Jiva with Paramatma, the "spiritual child" with the "Universal Mother".

This is the opportunity which each of us now has. For the Universal Mother of "Sai" has now taken physical incarnation in the form of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

He is the *divine ocean of Love*, the *universal womb of all creation* to which we can have recourse. A new "spiritual umbilical cord" can be created from our subtler bodies emanating from our heart centers to Sai, the Universal Spring of Prana, Love.

This subtle cord is infinite in length and eternal in duration. It is built out of purity, devotion and concentration. In order to strengthen this cord all other cords tying us to worldly security attachment must gradually be cut. *He* must eventually be our only refuge, our only security, the only object of our desire for reunion.

Purity of thought, word and deed is the basic foundation of this new structure. Selflessness and reduction of ego are the licence to build. Construction takes place through repetition of the name of God, chanting the greatness of God, selfless service to God as Humanity, and one-pointed meditation on God within the Heart and Mind.

When we feel lonely, left out, down and out, unloved, ungrateful, or depressed, let us remember that we are connected to our divine mother through a ray of Light which flows from our hearts to Sai, the Ocean of Love. Let us deeply inhale this love and feel peace and security within.

The main obstructions for this ray are selfishness, egoism and impurity of motive. Let us ask Baba to help us remove these obstacles, so as to clear our direct love-line to him. The surgery may be painful to the ego, but it will be worth it.

By emptying the heart and mind in daily meditation, we allow God to fill us. Slowly emotional, mental and psychic links to the divine mother are created. The umbilical cord has been reconnected; the illusory separation disappears and oneness with life is re-experienced

At least this is how it appeared to me one day during Bhajans in the Prasanthi Nilayam Mandir.

—*Bob Najemy, Athens, Greece*

Fill the Day with Love

The incident that I write about may be small but, it is, I believe, significant, for me and for all young men faced with similar situations. On 27, 28 and 29 March, a College in Lucknow had arranged a festival called "Bonanza 80." I had also been deputed to represent my University in the Fancy Dress Competition. I was aware that it would be a tough job, for nine teams were competing, including I. I. T. from Delhi and Kanpur. I slogged hard and perfected my item.

Originally, only one entry was allotted to each institution, but, later, two were allowed to participate. So, another student joined our team. The programme for the bonanza indicated that he had to go first on the stage and I had to follow him. But, when he was called, he was not ready with his fancy dress and so, I was sent first on the stage by the person in charge of the programme.

Pardon me, for telling you the fact. My performance brought the roof down; the applause of appreciation was so thunderous. The photographers clicked again and again. Reporters surrounded me when I came down and plied me with questions.

Next day, the papers praised my item very much. But, the name below the photograph was not mine! Since my team-mate's name appeared first in the schedule that was distributed, though my item was the first, the name beneath the photography was that of the student who performed after me!

The distribution of prizes was to take place that evening, during the Concluding Function of the Bonanza. I was very upset. I was told by the College authorities that my entering the stage first had led to the confusion. I found that the other person was put down as the prize-winner. His name was so announced on the Notice Board. I received a shock at all this blunder.

On my way back from the College, I came across the other fellow! He was on top of the world, literally jumping with joy! At this, I thought twice. What would Baba like me to do, I wondered. Can I make this fellow sad? No, I decided. The prize for me can be only a nine-days' wonder. But for him, it promises to be tremendous encouragement and coveted honour. I have earned the distinction of winning a prize, whenever I appear on the stage. So, it was a very difficult decision but I am glad I made it.

I must confess that had I not met Sai Baba at Brindavan, Whitefield, and listened to Him during the Summer Course on Indian Culture and Spirituality, I would never have decided so. He was the inspiration that led me to think, "Which is the prize you should seek—your companion's happiness, or, the thing the Organisers give?" and to arrive at the conclusion, "Give up and Gain."

—Ajay Pant III B. A. Lucknow

A Letter

—Annie Marie Marwaha, New Delhi

My dear

It was indeed good to receive your letter. It gave me some concrete thoughts about Swami. I well understand that all sorts of thoughts come to you after having seen Swami for only 3 weeks. The atmosphere in which you live is so different compared to the protected 'Abode of Peace' where He lives. I shall try to answer your questions as far as I am able according to my limited understanding. We cannot and should not expect understanding for our feelings from anyone. Only those who have shared our experiences can also share our feelings! We have to be tolerant!

Those people, two-thousand years ago, who flocked around Jesus were also not able to see the CHRIST in Him. Those who could were only a handful. Jesus moved among the masses, healed them, blessed them, forgave their sins and taught, that the 'kingdom of God Is within you'. (Exactly as Baba does to-day!) In those days the people also asked (like you today) "Who is greater: Moses, Elias or Jesus"? Basically, I feel, this question is unimportant. For us they are all giants; they are all snow-covered mountains. Whether one is a little higher than the other, is not visible from our viewpoint. If we let their lives be an example to us and we follow them then we might reach to some peak from where we can distinguish the difference. BABA says also "My life is my message." His life is spotless and unprecedented!

The great Ambassador of Vedanta and disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda says so befittingly about Jesus of Nazareth (the same words fully describe BABA): "The best commentary on the life of a great Teacher is His own life." 'The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head'. That what CHRIST says, is the only way to salvation. He lays down no other way. Let us confess in sackcloth and ashes that we cannot do that. We still have fondness for 'me' and 'mine'. We want property, money, wealth. Woe unto us! Let us confess and not put to shame that great Teacher of humanity! He had no family ties. Do you think that that man had any physical ideas in Him? Do you think that this mass of Light, this God and not-man, came down to earth to be a brother of animals? And yet people make Him preach all sorts of things. He had no sex-ideas! He was a soul! —Nothing but a soul, just working a body, for the good of humanity; and that was all His relation to the body. In the soul there is no sex. The disembodied soul has no relationship to the animal, no relationship to the body. The ideal may be away—beyond us. But never mind, keep to the ideal! Let us confess that it is our ideal, but we cannot approach it yet! He had no other occupation in life, no other thought except that one, that He was a Spirit. He was a disembodied, unfettered, unbound Spirit. And not only so, but He, with His marvelous vision, had found that every man and woman, whether Jew or Gentile, whether rich or poor, whether saint or sinner was the embodiment of the same undying Spirit as Himself. Therefore, the one work of His whole life was, calling upon them to realise their own spiritual nature. Give up, He says, these superstitious dreams that you are low and that you are poor. Think not that you are trampled upon and tyrannised over as if you were slaves, for within you is something that can never be trampled upon, never be troubled, never killed. You are all Sons of God-Immortal Spirit. He declared: Know ye, the kingdom of heaven is within yon," "I and my Father are one." Dare to stand up and

say, not only "I am the Son of God," but also to find in your hearts "I and my Father are one!" That was what Jesus of Nazareth said. He never talks of this world and of this life. He has nothing to do with it, except that He wants to get hold of the world as it is, give it a push and drive it forward and onward until the whole world has reached to the effulgent Light of God, until everyone has realised his spiritual nature, until death is vanquished and misery banished. (Vivekananda "CHRIST THE MESSENGER")

Is it not as if Vivekananda is speaking about Sri Sathya Sai Baba? Oh yes, Sri Sathya Sai Baba is for us today what Jesus was 2000 years ago. Unfortunately, such persons will not be recognised until they have gone a few hundred years. If we have this vision today already, then it is only by the Grace of God that He shows Himself to us.

Therefore, be not disturbed about who is or was greater. It is the same soul, the same Light, the same Power, the same Principle which incarnates itself from time to time in human form. One cannot discuss Baba without getting stuck very soon! He also does not want that we should do it! He is doing His work all by Himself. Often it is, when the soul is already on the path to God, that He does not interfere or even come into the picture. Therefore, He very often picks out people who have absolutely no faith or whose burden seems too heavy for them. You have seen Baba only for a short time and probably also know very little about Him. That is of very little importance. Baba had called you there and is working on you and for you. Without His calling you could never have got to Puttaparthi. The different religious opinions of different people should not disturb us. Baba says that all these ways lead to the same goal. All holy scriptures are wonderful and declare the Truth. Today, I understand my Bible much better after having studied Vedanta and Hinduism. Only now I am aware of the deep Truth that the Bible conveys. My eyes are opening up.

Baba understands all languages. He sees the heart and the soul. He looks for purity and for the real quest for God. Any planning is futile. It all depends on Him. If He wishes, He will call your wife tomorrow and she will come. If not, she will never see Him. Baba says, "There is only one language, the language of the heart. There is only one religion, the religion of Love. There is only one God, He is omnipresent." His greatest miracle is His Love. Is there anyone in this world who radiates so much Love and lives like Him? It is this Love which is the secret of His wealth. He gives wealth to His devotees, no matter where they are placed, out of the wealth of this Love.

In the Bhagavad-Gita, the Lord has given the assurance, "I shall bear the burden of your welfare, here and hereafter" (Yoga Kshemam Vahaamyaham). He has undertaken this task voluntarily. But mortals have to live, as ordained, adhering to the lines laid down. When they complain that they are not helped by God in bearing their burdens, they have only to examine their lives and discover how far they have kept the commands of God regarding the regulation of their lives. They do not examine their past nor plan for the future; they lament on the grief of the moment. They do not realise that the grief is due to neglect; in the past and that it is a warning and a lesson for the future.

—Baba

Does Man Possess Free Will?

Free will has always been a recurrent theme for people who revel in determinism. They want to determine the course of their action before acting, forgetting that, in the process, they deny free-will. If you decide to act in a particular manner, you cannot act otherwise, which means you are bound by your choice which again is arrived at not freely, but deliberately. All deliberate actions have predetermined consequences which, of course, limit the scope of actions, and generate further cycles of action-and-reaction. So the question 'Do I or do I not have free-will' is an involved problem which cannot be resolved on its own merit.

Let us now try to analyse it. The term 'Free-Will' may mean (i) Will of the Free, (2) Will which is free, (3) The ability to will 'Freely' and (4) Will to be free.

In this first case, Free will is the will of the Free Source. The Source from which will issues forth must not be bound by necessities of action or re-action; must not be bound by duties and obligations; must not be limited by dependence. Since in it there is no necessity of action, Will as a pre-condition for action does exist! So that even transcends any 'Will'. Now we arrive at a very interesting result—'Free-Will' in the 'Free Source denies itself!' Only one who is willing to have it, and yet has all power to exercise it or deny it, can be said to possess 'Free Will'. And we cannot have any doubt that man has no access to this. Therefore, Lord Krishna has made it clear that, He acts not because it is necessary for Him to act, it is incumbent upon Him to be 'up and doing'—but because men must act, for only in acting can they be Free. Those who must learn, must act; and those who act must learn—since God has nothing to learn, He is free from the necessity to act. So His actions are result of His will deliberately accepted as a necessity which He can freely fling into the air, to show others, how to be free from the necessity. Therefore Baba says, "Willing is superficial for me, for my grace is ever available to devotees who have steady love and faith." He is so much free that the Willing is not even outside Him, it is identified with Him, it becomes an automatic consequence, without even His being consciously aware of other's activity.

The second characteristics 'will which is Free' imputes to it omnipotence. Unless a power is able to do and undo everything it can not be called 'Free'. Man cannot shake even a blade of grass by mere willing! So how can he boast of Free-Will? In this case actions will follow Free-Will automatically. Will is not bound by, nor does it depend on actions to fulfill it. Mere Willing must generate a series of actions in no time to fulfill it. Or, it embodies in it even all Time and all Activity. So it is beyond Time and Space. The little will man possesses is not his, for it is activated by the tendencies of his mind. In a particular situation no two persons act in the same manner, for no two persons have the same set of tendencies inherited from their time bound life. No man is beyond Time and Space. So he is worked upon by the tendencies which are the instruments of his bondage. No one can say like Baba "I can transform the heaven into earth and earth into heaven in a trice" for no body's will is free.

Thirdly, 'Free-Will' presupposes the capacity to will 'freely'. This again must come from Omniscience. One who has pre-science and fore-science to the end of time horizontally and vertically can freely will. For his will is a part of that omniscience. He is not worried about the

consequences or causes—for He is the cause and He is the consequence. In Him lies all Time, or He is present in all Time. Therefore Free-Will is only an insignia of His Omnipresence. He is undifferentiated from Free-Will. There is none even to suggest to Him what to do and what not to do, for He is the Master who allots activity to all according to His Cosmic Plan. Baba time and again has declared that He has a definite plan which He has prepared for Himself. No power in the Universe can influence it, modify it or stop it. He will not budge even a fraction of an inch from all that He has willed to do.

His will must succeed. This He can say because He possesses Free-Will. Whoever has said it and carried it out with time except a Krishna or a Sai Baba? Not even Krishna displayed His Omniscience so explicitly.

Then we come to the fourth dimension of Free-Will. It is the will to be free. Yes, man possesses it freely. Man has been endowed with a will to be free from all bondage, a determination to carry out activity in this line and a capacity to mingle his conscience with pre-Science and fore—Science to make it omniscience. Since that Omnipresent, Omniscient free will is lodged in him also, He naturally wills to be one with it, to break loose from all bondage of tendencies, necessities, causes and consequences and arrive at the journey's end, which ends in the cognition of this Freewill. So long man is worked upon, he cannot work out his own freedom but unless he recognises and exercises his will-to-be free in higher and higher potency, he really cannot have Free-Will, for, only by freeing his will from the tendencies, can he achieve Free-Will.

Man as a child of ignorance has no Free Will. Man as a child of Wisdom has Free-Will, for Wisdom is synonymous with Freedom, and only with complete freedom does Free-Will exist, so only a mind free from tendencies, as in the language of Baba, a 'die-mind', possesses Free-Will. Mind is the sum-total of all tendencies, of all impressions man gathers from his contact of the world through senses, through tendencies, the residue of all impressions acquired through lives gone by. If man must will to be free, he must, to begin with, disengage his mind from the senses and make it draw light from Buddhi, or purified intelligence—Buddhi on the other hand should seek illumination from Atma and Atma, sort of sub-station of power, shall determine how much of the cosmic will shall penetrate into the system. Then gradually the senses shall merge in the mind, the mind in Buddhi, Buddhi in Atma and then Atma shall gradually fade away to mingle in Paramatma, the Cosmic Free Will which then takes over completely. Thus the will-to-be-free can achieve Free-Will. Swami Nigamananda so wisely points out that a self-realised soul does not have a 'Will' of its own, it becomes a vehicle for the cosmic Will to function through it. When one becomes aware of the OMNIPRESENCE of the FREE-WILL, all differences dissolve and there remains only THAT.

So it is meaningless for us to engage in endless argumentation whether or not man possesses Free-Will. The degree of freedom determines the 'freeness' of the will and so long man thinks himself a differentiated individual entity which must act and react, which must cause and welcome all that consequent upon it, which must be born and die, he cannot touch the fringe of Freedom. Therefore Baba asks a devotee, "What makes you think that 'doing' is so important? Be equal-minded. Then you will not be bothered about 'doing' or 'not doing' Our doing or not doing may reflect our BEING, but that does not determine our Being. In our will to be free we

can certainly try to attach ourselves to Him whose Free will shall flow through us and shall mould us into what we really are.

One who attains Free-Will need not 'decide' what to do and what not to do. Actions flow from him even without his being aware of it. Actions become only expressions of that all-knowing Will, become easy, become in technical term 'Sahaja-Karma.' He is not pestered by the necessity to judge, to decide and to act. All three stages take place simultaneously and the Will fulfils itself.

Though the spark can be the forest-fire, the spark is not yet that. Though the will to be free is derived from the FREE-WILL, it is not yet that. There can be only one Free-Will, for ONE alone exists. So long we are in the many, we identify with the many, we are not the ONE and we cannot inherit all that ONE naturally possesses or One naturally IS. And so long we are slaves to our tendencies, bound to our time-bound life, we have no Free-Will. Only in total freedom can we achieve it.

—*Bejoy K. Misra, Cuttack*

Grow Them Straight

Every moment spent with Bhagavan is an experience in education. The other day Bhagavan graciously took me with Him on a visit to the Gokulam, behind the Sathya Sai College. A young man requested Swami to bless the planting of a coconut sapling near the Gokulam shed. A pit had been prepared for the purpose.

When the young man placed the sapling in the pit, Swami noticed that it had been placed at an angle. He asked the lad to put it straight and only after this was done to His satisfaction did Swami allow the seed-coconut to be covered with earth before he sprinkled water on it.

The young man apparently did not realise Swami's concern, even in the matter of the planting of a coconut sapling, that it should be done perfectly with due regard for the way the tree would grow in the years to come.

For me, it was an unforgettable example of Bhagavan's attention to detail and his concentration on the achievement of perfection in any work, however apparently trivial or insignificant.

It was a powerful reminder to me of Bhagavan's profound concern to see that the students who came under His influence grew up as straight and upright persons, adhering to the path of Truth and Dharma.

—*V. K. N.*

In Mid-air

By the time we got to the Ashram, I was feeling fine. I couldn't believe that I'd ever been sick. I had my interview with Baba and he materialised some Vibhuti for me, opened my shirt and put it on my chest. I hadn't told him any thing but the next thing he said was that my heart was not damaged. (I had the attack in September and I was in India in November) "Good heart, don't worry. Why fear when I am here?" Then he materialised a ring and said, "Wear this, I will always be with you." I had a likeness of Baba in it. That gave me a connection with him and it started to change my life. It was so natural that I didn't even have time to be shocked about it. I had heard that he did this. In fact it was one of the things that kind of concerned me. Before going to the Ashram, I told Indra Devi that "Everything but the miracles, I can accept." Those miracles bothered me because I had read in Ramakrishna that you have to be aware of the Siddhi powers; they will lead you astray. So, I was afraid that showing off this power was somehow egotistical and not on the highest level of expression. Therefore I had doubts as to his motives in doing it. But when I got closer and began to experience it, I realised that it was so natural to him, and the reason behind it so sound, that I realised he was coming from a different space. He was not *becoming* something; he was that already. And so there was nothing that could spoil him.

Baba is here to try to evolve people out of the insanity they have created for themselves, into the Light. Anybody that comes into his orbit that's willing to meet him half way, he is going to do everything he can, to help, because that is his mission, that is why he is here. With a westerner it usually takes something to blow his mind to get out of the material world that he is trapped in, and out of his idea that everything can be figured out scientifically. So Baba creates something out of time, breaking what looks like scientific natural laws and creates a so-called miracle. That is very hard for some one steeped in the intellectual world to handle. They have to confront it and question it. And the only answer is, God. And most of the time, people who are intellectual cannot get to God, because it doesn't work for them.

It is the simple-minded person, the person who has faith and love that can embrace God without having to understand God. But it is the intellectual who has to *understand* God before he can embrace Him. And the understanding of God is impossible! There are millions of people out there trying to figure it out and going bonkers, because they can't. And, an act of suspension of time is going to stop people and make them pause and think.

The thing that blew my mind was not the creation of the ring. It was what happened when Indra Devi asked him if she could have some more of the healing ash, the Vibhuti, because she had given all of her first supply out to people. He said, "Yes" and, as I am watching, moves his hands in a circle and then holds both hands up as if to receive something. Then this urn about 4 inches high appears in mid-air and plops into his hands. I see this and I say, "That is not sleight of hand, that is not up his sleeve, that is something else!" And then he takes the top off and, on a piece of paper, spills out all of the ash. Then he pours again and another full quantity of ash pours out so that in total he poured out about double the amount the urn could possibly hold. Next, he puts half of it back in the urn and distributes some of the remainder to people nearby. What's left he puts in a little handkerchief bag that he gives to Indra. He touches it and says, "Now this will be an inexhaustible supply, so you won't run out." Well! She has had it for 10 years now and it is still flowing. And she has given it to thousands of people. So that was a miracle for me, much more so than the ring. Because I had been flirting with the concept of God and had studied

religion; but I had had no experience of God. After that experience with Baba, whether or not God exists, is no longer a question in my mind.

—*Richard Bock*

Our True Self

In the stillness of the day
He emerges
And walks among us
To the tune of Love.

He offers a smile or a touch
Or, may be, a glance;
And we are
Churning, loving

Exalting, worrying
Yet we know that in each
There is a purpose—"Purification."

He purifies our mind,
Our emotions, our body
So that the Atma may shine through.
We merge into Sai Consciousness
And become One with our True Self.

—*Bea Flaig*

Processions and Progress

—*Sonam Gyamtso*

The pine and fir trees seemed to be running back as the dusty jeep found its way up the winding bumpy road leading to Gangtok. As I sat brooding over the moments that I had spent in the proximity of the Yugavatar, Bhagavan Baba, I felt myself being transported several miles away, to the sacred soil of Brindavanam, where, for the past few years, I have been experiencing real compassion and love as I had never experienced before. I saw myself sitting at the Feet of my Master, singing His Glory at His Very Feet. These sacred thoughts churned up an immense sea of bliss inside me.

A sudden jerk and a bump brought me back to my present reality, from the realms of the blissful moment, and I saw in front of me an immobile row of vehicles. By that time we had reached the outskirts of the town and were about a half mile's distance from the town. The driver informed us that there was a big traffic jam due to some reason, which probably he did not know. As all the passengers got down to enjoy the fresh air that was prevalent in abundance, outside the crammed jeep, I too got down and walked over towards the other end of the long queue of vehicles. As I was nearing the first vehicle that was a State bus, parked right in front of the rest, I heard a group of people shouting in chorus, and was among the "fortunate few" to witness a cluster of young boys, walking in a long procession, carrying with them what appeared to be leaflets and flags and chanting a hundred and eight names of the Principal of the Government Higher Secondary School. What struck me most was the amount of zeal and determination with which they were demanding the immediate removal of their Principal. It suddenly occurred to me that how great a man could each one of those boys become, if only they would try to drive away the evil impulses that were giving them a fillip to carry on such a foolish exercise. I could not help comparing this procession with the one that I had seen and had also participated in, twice every week in Brindavanam, where young boys, like these ones only walk on the streets, singing the glory of the universal Master, in the early hours of the dawn. But alas; what a difference.

Processions of such youngsters, rebelling against the authorities in the Board of Education or the University, is a common sight today in almost all parts of the country, while some ignorant irresponsible parents foolishly boast of their sons being 'politically conscious.' It is the same Mother India which has produced sons ready to sit at the Feet of the Guru, offering all their dedicated service to get from Him the immortal nectar of real knowledge brought down from the past many Yugas by the sages of yore. It is hard to believe that in the same country, things have come to such a pass that a student questions the authority of the teacher to enforce discipline. Gone are the days when the harmonious relationship between the teacher and the taught prevailed. These days, every one is engaged in the pursuit of getting a degree or a diploma, no matter whatever means and shortcuts he may adopt. Every one is deceiving himself by trying to reach the topmost rung of the ladder without stepping on any of the lower ones.

What, then, should be the end of our education? The answer to this basic question lies in what Swami says about education thus:

“The end of education is character,
and end of wisdom is freedom.”

But it is a bitter fact that a modern student fills up his academic career by innumerable ill practices and immoral acts and ends it up by using his degree as a begging bowl, to get a job. Is this what education stands for? From the moment we are born and till we die, there is such a vast expanse of unexploited wisdom to be explored and experienced.

The present-day educational system has limited its scope from this vastness to the narrow alleys of mere academic career achieved through deceitful means.

There is not even a tinge of spirituality in that educational system.

How, then, are we to revive our ancient heritage, our moral values and culture, which had degenerated to its lowest ebb? Should we leave them to be trampled down by the hooves of the beasts of passion for westernization? The answer to these very urgent questions will be revealed to anyone who cares even for a while to peep into any one of the Sathya Sai Institutions that are fast growing in numbers and size? I joined the Sathya Sai College in Whitefield in the year 1978. I was plucked right away from the midst of the slush and mire of a so-called society, inhabited by people who lived a life of cannibals and savages, thoroughly uncultured, and yet who regarded themselves as among the highly cultured ones.

In the precincts of holy Brindavanam, I discovered a new world. I was caught in a whirl of wonders, seeing the students so much disciplined, so soft-spoken and well mannered, anxious always to help each other; so much so that I was flabbergasted. Here was a set of boys, totally different from the others with whom I had shared my previous years, moulded and made up from an almost different clay, who valued the codes of ethics, spirituality and righteous living more than anything in their lives. How beautifully they went in the streets early in the morning singing the name and the glory of the Lord thus purifying the entire atmosphere!

No more would the devil in me deceive, delude or tempt me for here I was enveloped in an aura of Divine Grace, a radiance of eternal Love and sublime existence. Brindavanam to me is a planet entirely different from this earth, completely tucked away from the polluted atmosphere of the world.

What is it that has wrought this otherwise almost impossible change in the youth staying in Brindavanam? The answer is quite simple and matter of fact. Academic pursuits alone do not comprise true education. Had that been the goal of studies, man today would not be living a life that all other inferior animals too live. There is certainly something that is of far-reaching significance, that is far beyond the mundane academic achievements. This 'something' is the remedy to all the miseries, the world of today is plunged in. Our educational system should be well oriented with spiritual training. The best example of this type of education is the Sai Education, which strikes a perfect balance between academic education, and spiritual discipline. At a time when even the last iota of our cultural heritage is being washed away by the waves of westernized materialism Sai Education alone stands as the panacea for our ailing society and a beacon of hope for all humanity.

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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In order to achieve victory while inquiring into the nature of the Atma, one has to pass through the Ashrams—the Four Stages of Life recognised and recommended by the scriptural texts of Sanathana Dharma. Each one while passing through each stage, aware of the duties and

responsibilities prescribed in the texts, learns for himself a quantum of the knowledge that leads to Atmic awareness.

It is only after the childhood years that the Ashram routine will have an impact on man. Until then, he cannot gather any special knowledge about his duties and responsibilities. Man, while alive, has boyhood, adolescence, youth, middle age and senescence, as stages of growth; there are also corresponding stages in the growth of wisdom in him.

In the first stage of boyhood, he is led from ignorance and 'innocence' into the world of knowledge, when he is accepted as a pupil by a Guru (Preceptor). After that, he has to serve the Guru and obey him, without feeling burdened and bound. In the second stage of youth, he has to share with society the means and measures for its progress and security; he has to start earning for his livelihood and spending his income with intelligent care; he has also the duty of providing examples to those younger than himself and guide them into socially useful paths. At the same time, he must follow the footsteps of elders and learn from them lessons for his own advancement.

In the third stage of adult-hood, intelligent attention has to be paid not only on one's own advancement and the advancement of the family and society but also on the advancement of the people generally. That too is the responsibility of the grownups and they must acquire the skills necessary. They must have wider visions of the peace and prosperity of all mankind, and try to contribute to both, within the limits of their capacity and resources.

Old age is the fourth stage. By the time one reaches this stage of his journey, he must have discovered that the joys available in this world are trivial and fleeting. He must be equipped with the higher knowledge of spiritual joy, available through delving into the inner spring of Bliss. Through his experiences, his heart must have softened and be filled with compassion. He has to be engrossed in promoting the progress of all beings without distinction. And he must be eager to share with others the knowledge he has accumulated and the benefit of his experiences.

Thus, occupations and resultant attitudes have been assigned to the various stages of human life. Practice is as important for confirming one in wisdom as reading is important for confirming one in knowledge. Alongside knowledge, youth has to cultivate the good qualities of humility, reverence, devotion to God and steadfast faith. He has to engage himself in good works and enjoy them for the sheer elation they confer. During adult-hood, alongside the earning of wealth and involvement in the improvement of Society, attention must be paid to the promotion and preservation of virtues and to the observance of moral codes. Steps should be taken for improving one's righteous behaviour and spiritual Sadhana. All levels of consciousness have to be purified and then, directed to holy tasks.

During middle age, besides fostering the family and society, man has to live an exemplary life to inspire his children and hold forth before society, elevating ideals worth practising. No attempt should be made to belittle the Society and benefit only the family, for, it is bound to fail. The Brahman principle can be realised, only by purifying one's activity and utilising that activity to serve oneself in all. It can never be realised so long as one relies on the caste into which he is born, or the intellectual equipment he has added unto himself or the mastery of the Vedas.

He who is born cannot escape death, some time, somewhere. Every moment, many are born and many die. But man has to discover how to avoid death. Now, the Atma which is the core of man, is not born; since it does not take birth, it does not meet death. Death happens to the body with which it is associated, with which it mixes. The delusion that the body is the core, that the body is real, that verily is the death. Affliction by that falsehood is the act of dying. To be free from that delusion is to attain Immortality. The body it is that disintegrates, not the Atma, the Soul, the Self. The body is undergoing change every moment and the final change is death, when the Self, changeless, remains. When one believes that the changing body is oneself and starts referring to it as 'I', that 'I' dies, but the real 'I' is deathless.

As intense elevating activity and fearless inquiry into one's Truth are practised more and more, the consciousness that the 'body is oneself' can be overcome and negated. Consider the fruit of the tamarind tree. When unripe, it is not easy to separate the rind, the pulp and the seed. So too, those who have stuck to sensual desires and to fondling and feeding the body, cannot earn the awareness of the Atma. When the tamarind fruit becomes ripe, the rind can be broken off, the pulp gets detached from the seed and the seed can be isolated without effort. Inquiry and unselfish activity ripen the consciousness and the Atma can be isolated, from the body, clear and pure.

The body has five encasements which hide the Atma. These are grouped under three categories—the gross, the subtle and the causal. The physical case (flesh, blood, bone, etc) and the vital case (breath) form the gross body. When these two sheaths, the sthoola body (the gross body), fall or disintegrate, the body too falls and cannot rise.

The word sookshma which is generally translated as 'subtle' means in Sanskrit 'small'; it has another meaning too, "that which expands." Air expands more than water; space is more expansive than air. Compared with the expanse of the liberated soul, even space has to be considered 'gross'! Steam is more expansive (subtle) than water. Though a block of ice or a lump of camphor appear 'gross', they become subtle when heated or lit.

The rule of the world is that the seen causes the unseen, the manifested explains the unmanifested. But, the rule in the realm of the Spirit is different. The latent Atma causes the patent world. Being is behind Becoming, and finally, Becoming merges in Being; the patent is absorbed into the latent. As milk from the cow, from the Supreme Person flows the Power of Maya or Relativity as the Five-element constituted Cosmos (Prakriti), the patent manifestation. The Cosmos is cognised as a composite, just as milk is a composite of cream, curd, and—butter, which can be got out of it by the action of heat, and cold, and the addition of sour drops, and the process of churning thereafter. The churning separates the butter from the milk. In the same manner, through cosmic processes and upheavals of heat and cold, the Five Fundamental Elements (earth, water, fire, air, and space) were separated and Earth, this Ball of Butter emerged as the product of the churning. If any person or thing has one of the three character-traits (balanced, passionate, dull) predominant in the makeup, we denote him as having that trait. So also the Element, which is predominant in any created entity, gives its name to it. This is the reason why the world on which we live is called Bhoomi, the Earth. The realms

in space where the element of water predominates are known as Bhavarloka and Swarloka. The materials therein flow in currents and streams.

In short, what appears as the Five-Element-Constituted Cosmos is only the superimposition on God, of the non-real Individual Self and the Five Elements. God seen in and through the non-real appears as Nature. This is but a distorted picture of Reality, this ever-changing multiplicity. The fault is in the mirror that reflects, the mind that perceives, the brain that infers. What the mirror presents as true has no authenticity. The mirror is coated with dust and its face is not plain at all. God has no Maya; He has no intention or need to delude, nor does He will, that it should happen. But man in his ignorance sees things which do not exist and believes that they do exist just as he sees them. This weakness of his is named Adhyasa.

When God is reflected as Nature, the reflection becomes Maya. As milk curdles into yoghurt, God becomes Jagat or the World of incessant transformation, or Maya or the Image of the Unchanging Divine. His Will causes this unreal multiplicity on the One that He is; He can by His will end it. He is the Master of Maya.

God is omnipresent, omnipotent. Of the three entities, the Overself, the Self and Nature, Nature has, as its purpose, the fulfillment of the wants of man. God has no wants or wishes. He is the fullest and highest Attainment. The Ananda *of* every Being and *for* every Being flows spontaneously from God; His words to Arjuna in the Gita are, "I have no duty to discharge, O Partha, in the three worlds." He has created duties only to foster the consciousness of all living beings. He has no activity and no obligation. He brings about the result for every activity. Without Him, no activity can yield result! He decides which result should accrue from which act.

(To be continued)

Teaching and Learning in Ancient India

Who is the genuine Guru? The man who teaches by precept and example, good conduct, right thinking, loyalty to Truth, mental discipline, sense of Duty. Who is the genuine student? He who learns these. These are the qualities that will guarantee happiness here and Bliss hereafter. These virtues will effectively countermand the evils that degrade man into a monster.

The educational system, that brings both teacher and student together, has two aspects: the first, the provision of skills and information so that man can live in health and happiness and the second, the understanding of one's inner urges and their sublimation in order to attain lasting peace, equanimity and bliss. The two aspects are not opposed; they are bound irrevocably together. Both teachers and students have to recognise this truth.

Man is not a machine, contrived by clever combination of legs and hands, head and heart, mind and matter. In these and over these, there is an immanent but yet transcendent entity which is called Atma, the Overself. The physical eye cannot see It; the other senses too cannot comprehend It; It is beyond the realm of the "Seen." All that is sensed, all that is comprehensible

by the five senses, is "the Universe", the Jagat (ever moving, ever changing Cosmos). The 'seen' exists on the basis of the 'unseen'; 'the tree' is seen but the root that sustains it and bears it is invisible. The bungalow is seen; the foundational structure on which It stands is beyond sight. The self and the Cosmos created by the self are both having the Overself as their sustenance and support. This was the great lesson that was imparted to every generation by the elders in this country since ages.

Three or four centuries ago, before West secured a foot-hold in India, there were only a few Universities; they had no huge campuses and buildings; the home of the learned scholar was itself the College. He had four or five pupils only. There was no time-table for the classes. It all depended on the compassion of the teacher and the yearning of the pupil. He might instruct him in the silent hours of the night or during day, under a spreading tree or in the temple corridor. Men and women who came to the temple or who walked through the grove might listen awhile and learn a thing or two.

Besides giving instruction on basic subjects, each University attracted to itself and maintained a number of specialists in one special branch of study. The favourite subject, on which the University at Kasi paid special attention, was Grammar; the University of Kashmir had specialists in Rhetoric and of Takshasila (modern Taxila) in Medicine (Ayur-veda) the knowledge relating to long life and happy life. The University at Ujjain specialised in Astronomy and Mathematics, and the Navadwip University chose to pursue Jurisprudence more than other subjects of study. Amaravati, the Capital city, where Bharata, the brother of Rama ruled long ago, had a University where also the system of Indian Medicine propounded by Charaka and Susruta was taught for generations by expert teacher-practitioners.

Of course, these Universities were not mere purveyors of learning. They inspired their alumni to lead simple spiritual lives, speak softly and sweetly, and cultivate compassion, reverence and equanimity. The rise to Divinity was the only aim of the pupil; to elevate him to the level they have reached was the only purpose which the teachers had before them. Universities and other educational centres were in those days beyond the hold of the rulers. They were regulated only by the ideals and aspirations of lovers of knowledge and persons who had dedicated themselves to the cause. Among the primary and secondary schools, the colleges and centres of higher learning, most attention was paid by society and its leaders on primary education. Their endeavour was to plant pure, ennobling and strengthening thoughts and beliefs in the tender minds of children. The educationists of those days paid attention to problems like who are the most equipped and the most efficient to teach, which are the subjects which must be taught and when and where are they to be taught to whom. They tried to adjust the curricula and the syllabi in accordance with the needs, the aspirations and attainments of the learners. For, there was no room then in the learning-teaching process for compulsion or force. Since the classes had only six or seven or ten pupils, the teacher could discover whether the pupil had assimilated the subject and clarify immediately any doubt that disturbed his understanding. The teachers had an overwhelming sense of duty; the pupil had an equally overwhelming yearning to learn. So, *instruction* on topics useful for happy living and *inspiration* for discovering the spring of Wisdom, Power and Bliss, that lay in one's inner core, were both available to the pupil.

Most of the learning was by listening to the preceptor. Not only in the seats of higher learning, but even the smith, the artisan, the artiste, the carpenter, the farmer, the potter, the writer, the musician, the sculptor—all learnt from the elders by the silent process of lovingly listening and reverentially watching not through the process of poring over books.

Those days can be revived, if only you love and revere the heritage which is yours. Bharat is a garden of multi-coloured flowers—the flowers of the spirit known as Sanathana Dharma, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrians, Christians and Muslims. The truths they practise, the hymns they sing, the prayers they voice forth, are all filling the atmosphere here with Divine Fragrance. Bharat has, throughout the ages, welcomed and respected all faiths, with equal ardour.

In spite of this, the wrong impression that people here worship hundreds of Gods in the place of One is spread by ignorant persons. God is One; people call on Him in several languages—this discovery was made in India millennia ago. This was the first country in the world to proclaim it. Of course, the various qualities of this One God—His Compassion, His Wisdom, His inexhaustible Wealth, His Inscrutability, His Might—have been given names and forms but each worshipper of these is aware that they are only passing phases of the One Indivisible Eternal Absolute. Each trade, each profession, has a guardian deity, a facet of the Guardian of the Cosmos.

People here are aware of God in everything—the truck driver folds his palms before the steering wheel and utters a prayer, the potter bows his head before the wheel, the poet worships the pen, the musician invokes the deity in the harmonium before he starts playing on it. No one enters upon a task without prayer and making a sign of submission. This means that the spiritual attitude precedes the secular attitude of self-praise. The inner-significance of the Indian attitude is beyond the experience of people of other cultures. They ridicule Indians as adoring trees and stones, birds and beasts, mountains and rivers, believing them to be Gods. But, the Hindu adores the God whom he believes as manifest in the stone, not the stone itself as wholly and fully God. *Isavasyam idam sarvam*, the Upanishads declare to him. All this is God—even the bird, the beast, the snake, the eagle, the Peepul tree, the Tulsi plant. The Omnipresence of God implies the Oneness of God.

The ancient Universities emphasised this Immanence and Transcendence of God. Teachers did not calculate and clamour for wages. Their needs were fulfilled by society. They never worried about material discomfort. They were after spiritual treasures. Pupils too insisted that they should be shown the way to liberation from the shackles of material desires. Teachers were more affectionate towards their pupils than their children. They were renunciants, willing and eager to undergo trials and tribulations, ever contented, happy and joyful.

The pupils too were not learning with cushy jobs in view. They sought each subject of study as a step towards self-realisation. They valued the instruction, for it purified the mind and clarified the intellect and sanctified the vision. They had before them the ideal of becoming most useful for their parents, the society which fostered them, the country which hopes for the best out of them and mankind to which they belong. He who is the slave of desires is the poorest; he who is content is the richest.

So, cultivate the traits that students of past ages sought to cultivate. Become useful to your parents. Do not belittle them as illiterate or ignorant. They are far more knowledgeable than you. Do not cause tears to fill their eyes. Love them, revere them, serve them. Be humble and loving, wherever you are, in whatever company. Remember the Names of the Lord indicating His Glory, His Mercy, His Love. Then, all egoistic feelings will flee from you. Life is a game of football. You are the ball, and you are bound to be thrown and kicked about, this side and that. How long have you to bear this treatment? Until the air is full in the ball; deflate it, no one will kick it again. The air that inflates it is the Ego! When the Ego is out, Bliss comes in. When you are students, study without participating in other adventures like politics. They will only increase tension and anxiety and harm your studies. Let Discipline, Devotion and Duty be subjects/in your compulsory curriculum. Master these and you will win glory.

—*Divine Discourse -10. 7.80 Sri Sathya Sai College, Brindavan*

The Song He Sang

I recently had an experience which I would like to share with other devotees.

It came in three separate parts, each one being an answer to a question asked by the person with whom I was using a method of counselling based on meditation, in which I ask Baba to show me how to help each who comes to me with a problem.

The first part came in answer to a question asked by a devotee, Estelle Tepper, namely how to cope with the negative and materialistic people and situations with which she had to deal in her daily work.

As we both asked to be shown what she could do, a picture of Baba flashed into my mind as if on an inner screen. He smiled and pointed a finger at the hearts of several people who became transparent as I watched Him. He showed me that deep within each person's heart is a nugget of gold which is hidden from view just as gold is buried out of sight in a mass of rock until it is un-covered. He said that this was true even in people who have very difficult or negative personalities. He urged us to concentrate on this inner treasure which lies buried within everyone, and gradually, with practice, we will be able to ignore the outer covering of the personality which conceals it.

It was so clearly visible as He pointed it out in each person, and His message was so simple that we both agreed to practise this different approach in our daily lives.

A few weeks later I was again working with Estelle. This time she reported that the exercise had helped, but that she still experienced difficulty in remembering and feeling close to Baba and His teaching during the day while she was working and was constantly distracted by people and worldly events, which also drained her energy.

Again we asked for help with this situation. This time it was as if I were suddenly transported to Whitefield where I could "see" us both sitting waiting for Darshan, she in the front line, with me immediately behind her, just as Baba emerged through the gates of His house and came towards us. He stopped directly in front of her and proceeded to give an informal talk which I found I was able to understand and repeat to her, despite the fact that He spoke very fast.

He explained that when a person comes to Him, or starts to follow a spiritual path the gold nugget in his heart becomes alive like a glowing ember. However, it must be tended and kept alive just as a fire must be stoked and gently encouraged to burn brightly with the help of a pair of bellows. He went on to say that we all have a built in mechanism which can be used in a similar way to the bellows, namely, our own breathing, and that He would give us a simple breathing exercise to use to keep our embers glowing.

First, He told us simply to allow our lungs to fill with air without any effort on our part. He explained that the pressure inside and outside of the body will equalize if allowed to do so naturally.

When the lungs are full of air we should gently and slowly exhale the air, but direct the flow in the direction of the glowing ember within the heart to keep it alive. He demonstrated how the head can be inclined slightly down towards the heart to make it easier to visualize.

He made a point of telling us that the exercise can be done at any time and in any place; in a plane or car; at work or at home; alone or with people, and that there is no excuse for not doing it. Neither can it be forgotten, for, as He pointed out with an impish smile, no-one forgets to breathe! He went on to say that no tools are needed but that no-one can do it for another person, and added with another smile, that even He cannot do it for us. We must each take responsibility for doing it ourselves. "Who says it has to be complicated?" he asked, "It is as simple as breathing. You will soon become addicted to it and then it will continue without your constant attention. You will also have more energy. If your fire is going everything will be much easier. This tiny little exercise will grow and have far-reaching results if you remember to do it. It will expand your capacity to carry more light. Instead of being like a twenty watt electric light bulb you will be able to increase it to forty, sixty watts and on up."

Then He asked, "If I promise you to allow you to feel My presence now and then, will you do this exercise to allow you to feel Me within you? Is it worth a try? Of course it is, so give it a try."

In my inner picture, Baba then moved on down the Darshan line and the scene faded.

The next night Estelle had a dream in which Baba appeared to her and gave her Darshan.

We thought at the time that the exercise was just for us, until I was shown differently when I was working with my daughter, Sheila, a few days later, and Baba again appeared as we asked for guidance for some of her clients, as she is a psychologist.

This time Baba started by singing a short song which I discovered, to my surprise, that I could sing after Him. Sheila took down the words, but we did not record the melody. This is what I heard.

You never believe Me though you think you do.
You are always wondering what to do.
You ask Me and ask Me, but never listen.
I tell you and tell you that this is My mission,
To seek you and draw you and teach you the Truth,
Or as much as I know you can use.
Do not ask for too much or not ask at all,
But trust Me to give you your dues.

He then launched into a speech, saying, "Do not try so hard. Life becomes too complicated. Reach Me by relaxing with the meditation of blowing on the ember within you. You are all at different stages of development. Suppose that I am like a thousand watt light bulb. You are also light bulbs, and the same current flows through you, but your bulbs are of different wattage. The same God lights you all, but the current must be turned on, and your lamps kept bright by tending the ember. You can develop your ability to receive more light by slowly and surely amplifying your wattage with your breath. It is so very simple. Allow your lungs to fill with air, and then breathe it out like a bellows to bring to life the ember in your heart and increase the intensity of its heat and light. It will burn away all impurities and all ego-covering which hide the light, and allow it to shine forth. You can become mini-versions of Me. It is time for you to start to amplify your instruments. I am the living coal within each of you, waiting and willing to flame into light whenever you are ready to allow it to be brought out into the open where it can be seen by all as it works in your lives."

We hope each told other devotees about this exercise, and their reports have been so positive and so varied that it seems to be our duty to share it with anyone who would like to use it.

We hope that it will be as beneficial for everyone who uses it as it is proving to be for us.

—*Phyllis Krystal*

The Three Sorrows

Man has to encounter sorrow from three sources while here on earth. The scriptures mention these and warn men against them. They refer to them as Adhyatmic, Adibhoutik and Adhidaivik. Here Atma means the corporeal self and so, the first group of sorrows afflicts man through physical and mental illnesses. The second is derived from Bhoota, which means 'that which is created' and that group of sorrows is derived from living beings like snakes, wild animals, worms, insects, etc. The third word is Adidaivik, where daiva means a deity presiding over a force or phenomenon in Nature. So the third group of sorrows torture man through calamities like floods, drought & storm.

(1) The human body is the home of countless microbes, worms and various other parasitic beings. No one can be free from these disease-inducing causes. But, one can easily overcome this sorrow by developing feelings of compassion towards all beings and thoughts which thrive on Love and spread Love. Illness, both physical and mental, is a reaction on the body caused by poisons in the mind. An uncontaminated mind alone can ensure continuous health. Vice breeds disease. Bad thoughts and habits, bad company and bad food are fertile grounds where disease thrives. Arogya and Ananda go hand in hand. A sense of elation and exultation keeps the body free from ill-health. Evil habits in which men indulge are the chief cause of disease, physical as well as mental. Greed affects the mind; disappointment makes man depressed. Man can justify his existence as man only by the cultivation of virtues. Then he becomes a worthy candidate for Godhood. It is progress in virtue that announces the progress of man towards Divinity. Virtue also confers freshness, skill, and long years of youthfulness. The years you spend in College are the crucial ones when you have to start cultivating the virtues which are divine. That is the reason why I am emphasising before you the relationship between virtue, health and happiness. Once you slide into evil, there is no escape; you will be caught in the wheel of despair. Virtue alone will bring to you the Grace of God. Remember that nothing is so precious as Divine Grace. Thyagaraja dismissed the gift of a heap of precious stones because he valued the Presence of God as more than all the wealth of the world. A healthy heart is the temple of God. Its health is proportionate to the purity of the good taken and the purity of one's thoughts, words and deeds. Moderate food and moderate speech-these are the twin boons one should win by one's own exertion.

(2) Adibhoutik sorrow is caused by lower living beings, like flies, ants, mosquitoes, bugs, etc. It may be difficult to get rid of these, but one can practise mental restraint through yoga. Yoga is explained as the prevention of the agitations of the mind. When the mind is withdrawn from contacting the outer world through the sense-media, no anxiety or agitation can affect the persons. The mind has to be withdrawn from both praise and blame, for they make you either proud or angry. Pride is deplorable and anger is disastrous. Be always the same and watch with a balanced mind the ups and downs of life. Think of the transience of life and the triviality of wealth, power and fame. The body is a compound of elements; they have to fall apart. I am now directing that you be taught some Asanas in Yoga. They will help you to maintain the health of body and mind. You can acquire equanimity thereby, and earn genuine Ananda.

(3) Adidaivik sorrow is the result of natural calamities. In order not to be affected by these, one must practise Samadhi. Dhee means 'The Intellect'. Sama means 'equal'. Attaining Samadhi does not involve falling flat, shaking limbs or losing consciousness. It is not a dramatic trance scene. It is a characteristic of the mind, an outlook one has developed, to observe all events and persons without any attachment or aversion. This stage of the consciousness of man is also called Nirvikalpa, that is to say, devoid of (Vikalpa) Reaction, Response. The person who has mastered Nirvikalpa is free from wish, want and desire. So, he has consciously trained his mind not to respond to attraction and or react to repulsion. When the mind reacts, favourably or otherwise, to external events or internal urges, it undergoes slight distortions or Vikaras. Therefore, it cannot achieve transformation into divinity.

Divinity or the Atma is deep in the core of the consciousness of man. We do not keep gold, jewels and valuables in the verandahs and quadrangles of our homes. We keep only pots and baskets there. We keep the jewels in an iron safe in an inner room, away from public gaze. The body is liable to fall, to rot and to get burnt. When the age increases, we say that the person grows; but we do not notice that he is declining year by year and nearing his end faster and faster. In the box called the body is treasured the Atma. The sea keeps its valuables—pearls—deep down, near the floor. It scatters cheap shells on the shore, where people can pick them. So, to perceive the Atma, you have to turn your inquiry inwards. Siddhartha was a Prince, who commanded vast wealth. Bhagiratha too was a big Ruler. But they turned their vision into their inner levels of consciousness. They gave up wealth, status and luxury and lived in seclusion to devote themselves to the search for Truth. Can you condemn them for this? No. They made their lives more precious by that step.

I do not discourage you from mastering the subjects relating to this world. They help you to understand the world and its ways. But the various faculties of study—Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Mathematics—are only branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and fruits of the tree. You are now engaged in watering the flowers and leaves; you have to water the roots, which you do not see. The unseen is the base of the seen. Every one of these subjects of study is a tributary stream. They finally flow into the sea, the Atma Vidya.

The Atma Vidya has to be studied by every one of you. Or else, you cannot free yourselves from the three sorrows which torment men. Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara, (speak the Truth; observe righteousness), Revere the Mother, Revere, the Father, Revere the Teacher, Revere the Guest—that was the gist of the Convocation Address given by the Rishis on the conclusion of studies to the pupils in the hermitages. Now Convocations have become occasions for demonstration of indiscipline and irreverence. You have to restrain such tendencies and reform yourselves. Listen to the elders who have your good and Society's good at heart. Make Sruti into Smrithi—that is to say, treasure in your memory the good advice you have listened to and try to practise the same, until it becomes part of your character.

—*Divine Discourse, College Hostel, 13-7-80*

Vibhuti Journey

Today is a Thursday. I think that you must have a meeting of Sai devotees in your home, doing Sadhana and singing Bhajans and meditating on His beauty and glory.

I gave one package of Vibhuti to our friend Cata in Zagreb; she is a poet and a painter. She is over 80 and she is ready for the last trip. She loves Him so tenderly! I gave the second one to Zuza, one of His devotees who lives in Serajevo (Professor of English). This is the first time that he received a packet of Vibhuti all for himself and he felt transported to Heaven. He said he will keep it as a precious talisman. This third packet I opened in Zagreb and used a small portion. Here in Serajevo, I applied some of it to the forehead of my sister Yasminka. After that, just of a sudden, she decided to spare the money to go to Puttaparthi with me.

I have still the last package with me. I hope to give Vibhuti from it to some devotees from Belgrade ...Very likely to Lujubinka, who lives alone on the path of God. Vesna, who wrote 54 poems in Baba's honour, and Beans, Professor at the University of Belgrade, I find, have both received the precious Vibhuti from Sandweiss (USA) and through Gopi (India). Vesna is writing on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata; she finds Baba's discourses (Summer Showers 1978, 1979) of great help for everything she needs. She has a programme on Belgrade TV. Thousands of Yugoslav listeners can listen to Baba's Voice, for she has included a record of Bhajans (Govinda Hare, etc.), the only one we have.

—*Azra Begic*

Who is Sai Baba

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba—He is the very meaning of Life. From the first time I read a book about Swami and looked at His pictures, I could not forget Him. Without understanding it, I could not forget Him. Across the oceans He comforted, guided, helped this toddling child; unhappy, discontented, looking for Him. The desire to have the physical Darshan of Sai Baba grew very slowly at first until-five years after I first knew of Him, the need to see Him could not be denied. I could proceed no further until this was satisfied.

Coming home! Coming home! I began to realize that Swami is me; that spark of Self I have known all this life long. Being in His physical presence was like moving towards some place in myself where at last I felt at home. The various other ideas of who I was and what was important in life, which had always left me discontented, were replaced by feelings of comfort, familiarity, gratefulness and happiness; and the dawning realization that the contact of Baba was leading me to a place in myself where I felt more truly me.

Baba is Truth; His Life Is Truth. And Love. He is perfect silence and the lustre of lustres. He is a Teacher beyond words; constantly teaching through all life's dramas, reaching you wherever you are. We turn to Him, our hearts hopeful that our lives may be different; may be more a reflection of His lustre. He is all courage, all happiness, and, meaning. He is the embodiment of your truest Self and you cannot help but resonate to His Divine Charm and Grace.

- *Anonymous Me, Jericho Vermont*

"He CAN and WILL save Africa"

—Victor Kanu, Former High Commissioner in London for Sierra Leone

"Present in our midst today is Sathya Sai Baba, the Poorna Avatar of all times. He is really and truly God Incarnate. He is a great Wonder, a great Blessing; One whose Coming, Life and Teaching is relevant to the OAU (Organization of African Unity) and the 'African Condition'. I believe He Can and Will save Africa."

This confident and unqualified expression of hope and faith in Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba appeared in an article written by Mr. Victor Kanu, Former High Commissioner in London for Sierra Leone State, a leading spokesman for the All People's Congress of Sierra Leone, on the eve of the recent Summit Conference of the Organization of African Unity held at Freetown, capital of the West African Republic of Sierra Leone.

The article, published in a special brochure brought out by the Great Britain and Ireland Branch of the All People's Congress—the governing Party in Sierra Leone—testifies to the growing influence of Bhagavan Baba among large sections of Africans. Extracts from the article are reproduced here to indicate how the Africans look upon Baba as the answer to their problems.

After describing the early years of Baba and his miracles, Mr. Kanu writes:

His Mission

Sathya Sai Baba's mission is to save all mankind by restoring Love, Truth, Peace and Righteousness. The wonderful miracles He performs are but little manifestations of His power and glory so that mankind may see, believe and draw near. Miracles are in His words, "visiting cards" by which one knows the identity of the visitor.

His commitment to all mankind is stated quite unequivocally in His declaration, when He said,

"Getting to know memore clearly through the book of your own experience, is part of the destiny of man today, Each one of you has to be saved. I shall not give you up, even if you keep afar. I shall not forsake even those who deny Me, for I have come for all. Those who stay away and those who stray away will all be drawn near and saved; do not doubt this. I shall beckon them and bless them."

In the face of many religions, faiths, creeds and dogmas in Africa today readers would naturally want to know the answers to the following questions

- (1) Is Baba introducing a new religion?
- (2) What is His attitude towards other religions and forms of worship?
- (3) Must one give up one's faith in order to know and worship Him?

Characteristically, Baba answers these questions in His own words:

"All religions are Mine. There is no need to change from one religion to another. You carry on in your own established modes and practices of worship, and when you do so, you will come nearer

and nearer to Me. The universe is my mansion and even those who deny Me are Mine. Picture Me in any form and I shall present Myself before you. I am in the least of you, as much as in the best. Therefore do not slander or injure anyone, for you are slandering and injuring Me who is in him."

He advises mankind to be tolerant and treat all religions and forms of worship with respect and reverence:

"Let the different faiths exist, let them flourish and let the glory of God be sung in all the languages and in a variety of tunes. That should be the ideal. Respect the differences between the faiths and recognise them as valid as long as they do not extinguish the flame of unity."

National Matters

At a meeting chaired by the Finance Minister of Mysore State Baba made this profound and relevant statement:

"The link between the pundit and the politician, the religious leaders and the rulers has snapped and each goes his own way, irrespective of what the other thinks or feels. Long years of foreign rule during which the pundits were derided as symbols of an out-dated culture contributed to the widening of the gap. But even after that rule ended nothing has been done to reestablish the links. Sunk in the search of passing pleasure and cheap recreation, people have become deaf to the counsels of the post and the call of the sublime. Unless the people are trained to direct their newly won opportunities into channels of service and self-control, there will be large scale moral breakdown when the Five Year Plans stud the land with dams, power-stations, furnaces and factories; We must have a Plan, a well-thought-out Plan, for the moral education and the spiritual uplift of the nation, in order to avoid disaster."

We might add that the link between the armed forces and politicians in Africa has snapped, causing political and social disequilibrium. We cannot blame it all on the Imperialist. The solution lies in Baba's advice.

Why is it that in spite of the great efforts which African governments have made in lifting the material standard of their people there seems to be more instability, political and otherwise, after independence? Each African country has more of everything today—Schools, Universities, Hospitals, Roads, Factories, Airports etc.—than it had during the colonial days. The pundits will theorize and philosophize—everyone with his own explanation depending upon his professional training. Baba has the answer when he said

"The leaders of a country have to plan, not only for prosperity, but also for counteracting the calamity of prosperity. In the west where nations have the highest living standard, and the means of material comfort are within the reach of all, anxiety and moral anarchy are affecting the social fabric. The individual is torn by frustration and fear; insanity and suicide are increasing; flippancy, misdemeanour and irreverence are rampant."

The situation is worse when, as we find in Africa, most of the material things that lift living standards are the products of external countries. The need for planning against "the calamity of prosperity" is even greater.

May Baba's Grace be upon the 1980 OAU Summit Conference.

Heirs of a Heritage

When I joined this college I was a little apprehensive about being subjected to a different religious order than mine. I am a Christian by faith. But how ignorant was I! After being exposed to what Baba preaches, I now appreciate the Sai outlook which is the essence of all faiths and religions. As we look in to His 'Sarvadharmā' emblem, we find that all religions—Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism—find their concord, harmony, unity and oneness. Baba wants us to be the heirs of a heritage of the whole humanity and not merely of a particular religion or a particular nation. The Sai outlook is one that fosters and feeds all religions and emphasises their common greatness. Although religions may seem to be diverse, even antagonistic to one another, the basic teaching of all religions is about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all humanity. Baba says that all religions are equally great and true. They are all but different pathways leading to the same goal. Our Beloved Baba wants that all the votaries of each religion must cultivate faith in their own excellence and realise the validity of their own practice.

Baba does not only show us the path to Dharma but also aims to make us, the students, adept citizens of tomorrow. The present situation in the world is like a typhoon, causing unrest and confusion. No one has mental quiet; fear and anxiety stalk everywhere; panic reigns even while the conquest of space is being hailed. The student world is not untouched by this turmoil. The students strive in darkness groping for some ray of hope. They have no definite goals and aims and it is a time of crisis for them. Amidst this chaos, Baba is imparting his message to gain and ensure equanimity and joy. His insistence is on purification of mind and on practice of high moral virtues. Baba says that people suffer because they have all kinds of unreasonable desires and they pine to fulfill them and fail. The present day education concerns itself mainly with the responsibility of developing intellectual ability. Sai education supplements this and makes students develop their moral, ethical, emotional and spiritual facets. The aim is to have students of ideal character, with loving hearts ready to render service to anyone and harmonised in body, mind and spirit. We are a proud and privileged lot. It is through us that Baba intends to resuscitate and regenerate moral and spiritual glory as a beacon for the nation. Baba tells us, the students, not to neglect studies; but results in examination are not all important. It is the spirit of service that matters. Baba says that students should learn to console, encourage, strengthen and enlighten others, who are miserable, downtrodden, weak and ill-informed. He equips us for this role. Duty, discipline and devotion should be the watchwords. If boys and girls do not learn discipline in their school days, money and time spent on their education are a loss. We are being prepared shoulder the responsibility of tomorrow and ease the turmoil that makes campus life so dismal. Baba has shown us the light through the dark clouds that shroud the horizon today.

With reverence I say Pranam at His Lotus Feet and believe that man's next great step in evolutionary growth will be from a mental to a supramental state of being. Baba is emblematic of this advent. He is a living proof that a freely expanding consciousness is precisely the goal designated for the mankind.

—*Sabina Franklin, Sri Sathya Sai Women's College, Jaipur*

"Of such is the Kingdom of Sathya Sai"

Prahlada and Dhruva are legendary Child Bhaktas immortalised in the Bhagavatham. But to see the young children of the Sri Sathya Sai Vidyavihar in Ooty in the company of Bhagavan Baba, with their cherubic faces and their eyes shining with devotion and love, is to realise that here are the Prahladas and Dhruvas of our time.

If it was a rare privilege and blissful experience to accompany Bhagavan on his trip to Ooty to inaugurate the new three-storeyed building of the Vidyavihar, it was an equally revealing experience to witness what Sai Education was doing to very young children from many parts of India and the world. Here was the world in miniature, brought together by devotion to Bhagavan, and united by bonds of Prema and Bhakti.

How intense the children's Bhakti was, came to us as a thrilling revelation, when we took part in the Bhajan on August 7th evening in the Prayer Hall. Baba sat there, watching and blessing them while the children sang the Bhajans with deep fervour, keeping time with perfect ease.

When the children began Bhajan with the preliminary chanting of "Om", it was a thrilling moment for all of us. The sweet way in which all the children—ranging in age from four to ten—chanted the Pranava in unison could be an object-lesson to many grownups who participate in Sai bhajans.

What followed was no less thrilling. The genuine feeling with which the children rendered the bhajans—with accompaniments of musical instruments provided by the young students themselves—was deeply moving to all of us. Many children were so completely absorbed in the bhajans that they sang the songs with closed eyes and seemed oblivious of their environment. Only a genuine and intense devotion to the Lord could have produced such concentration in children so young in years.

Bhagavan, whose emphasis on bhajans as Sadhana is well-known, heartily enjoyed the children's singing and was immensely pleased with their profound devotion and their musical talents.

August 8th was a memorable day not only for the inmates of Vidyavihar but for numerous devotees of Baba who had come from many parts of India and from foreign countries to have Darshan of Bhagavan and witness the inauguration of the new building. Most of them had been

waiting from the early hours of the morning, despite the biting cold, to greet Bhagavan and receive His blessings.

The programme for the morning started with the hoisting of the School flag by Bhagavan, followed by a march-past and a display of gymnastics by the children. The smart turnout of the children—boys and girls—in their uniforms and the mass drills and physical feats performed by them were impressive.

After the gymnastic display, Baba proceeded to the new building, to the accompaniment of Nadaswaram music and the chanting of Vedic hymns, to cut the ribbon at the entrance and dedicate the building to the cause of Sathya Sai Education.

A delightful variety entertainment programme had been got up for the afternoon in the spacious auditorium on the first floor of the new building. The hall was full by the time Baba arrived.

The Principal, Mrs. Varma presented a report in which she pointed out that the school had grown remarkably in two years and that students from many countries and from many parts of India were studying there as members of one family. With only five standards at present, the school would be developed into a full-fledged high school by a phased programme.

The entertainment programme began with an invocatory song in English sung in chorus by the students with great verve and feeling. This was followed by a Bharata Natyam item featuring the dance of Shiva. A beautiful Rasa Lila dance, with Krishnas and Gopis in appropriate and attractive costumes, a lively and vigorous Bhangra dance, in typical Punjabi style, a hilarious farce in which a bunch of self-styled actors drove a film director to distraction by their antics—all culminated in the evening's crowning item—"Thus spake..."—which was designed to convey the message of all the Avatars and Messiahs from Buddha to Baba. It was a great moment for the entire audience when after Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, Sankaracharya, Kabir and Vivekananda had come up on the stage in succession and delivered their messages, a young Baba, with the red robe and the crown of dark hair and a beatific smile, appeared on the stage like an angel from Heaven, walked with measured steps and delivered the message which has been a balm to millions all over the world. The whole gathering was in rapture when the young Baba, at the end of the speech, burst into song in the precise manner in which Baba climaxes his discourse with a mellifluous Bhajan. When the diminutive Baba started singing, "Prema Mudita manase kaho", everyone in the audience spontaneously joined in the singing. It seemed as if, at that moment the spirit of Baba filled everyone in the hall with an indescribable bliss.

Bhagavan was so much delighted with the children's performance that even after the scheduled performance had been gone through, He asked the children to sing a few more bhajans before the Arati was performed.

When Bhagavan went up to the stage and stood with all the children, in their varied costumes, around Him, one was reminded of the remark of Jesus: "Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Seeing the children of the Sathya Sai Vidyavihar, one felt that the Kingdom of Sathya Sai is already here.

That night Bhagavan had His dinner exclusively with the children. And the next morning, He blessed them individually. The devotion and reverence displayed by each child as Baba approached him or her were profoundly moving. Verily, "of such is the Kingdom of Sathya Sai".

—V. K. N.

Qualifications

The Sadhanas of worship, of recitation of sacred hymns the reading of holy texts, listening to expositions of scriptural teaching—all these help to clarify the intellect and purify the mind. Dhyana promotes single-minded devotion to the ideal. Virtue establishes equanimity and cheerfulness, serenity and joy. The objective world is to be used by man to realise the immanence of God, His beauty, majesty and glory, and His infinite Grace and Compassion. Man is burdened also with a native proneness to avoid difficulties and to observe only variety. This is the primal Avidya or Maya, which parades before him the false as true and the true as false. It spreads its wares to distract the reason of man and catch him unawares.

Therefore, the craving for liberation is seldom awakened in man. This craving is called *mumukshwata*. It arrives only when one feels the prison closing around one; many believe so strongly that they are bound, that they suffer agony. But the majority spend life after life, ignorant of the fact that pleasure is but an interval between two pains and pain too is mixed with equally transient pain. The Divinity within struggles to break through the crust of Maya and holds the mind's attention to seek liberation. The promptings of this desire for freedom can become strong enough to achieve success if only, three more processes are gone through.

The first of these is Right Discrimination, or, *Nitya - Anitya - Vastu - Viveka*, the intelligence to identify the permanent and the temporary, which is the only instrument by which identity of the self with Brahman can be visualised. Sankaracharya has declared that the Jagat or the world is *Mithya*, that is to say, only relatively real; it is a mixture of the true and false, a superimposition of manifold appearances over a basis of the Real One. We are observing that, around us everything, even the most long-standing, is declining, disintegrating, dying. Change is the law that rules existence. The characteristics of every living being and non-living matter are undergoing modifications on account of the passage of time, movement in space and the impact of new causes. But, man must be aware of the screen on which the pictures of fire and flood flit, without burning or wetting it. When things come, they strike us as truth; when they go, they teach us they are false. We realise that the Creator alone is real; the Creation is subject to dissolution. Brahman alone is the permanent substance; all things other than It are transient. They have only ad hoc value. Whatever is earned is liable to loss; whatever is acquired, perishes; whatever grows also diminishes. That is their very nature. Knowing this, the aspirant for liberation learns to be a witness, an unwavering witness, of the behaviour of nature and of man.

The second qualification for the aspirant is laid down in the scriptures as "possessing the six virtues detailed in holy texts." These are (1) *Sama*: holding the mind in check from the pursuit of worldly pleasures, involving of course, the positive pursuit of elevating and purifying bliss, (2)

Dama: restraining the acting organs which grasp, taste, walk, etc. from all deleterious objects and objectives, (3) Uparati: establishing the supremacy of the Intellect over the senses and not allowing the mind to follow the whims of the senses, remembering the existence of Divinity in all and discarding other demeaning views of distinction, (4) Titiksha: calmly enduring heat and cold, pleasure and pain, profit and loss, fortune and misfortune, and avoiding all dual feelings of high and low which are but passing phases that seem important on account of our ignorance, (5) Samadhana: constant concentration of the mind on the goal of liberation and (6) Shraddha: steady unflinching faith in the teachings of sages and seers and in the possibility for realising the goal of mergence with God.

There is also a third qualification enumerated in the Vedanta. Iha amutra phala bhoga viraga, the giving up of all desire for the enjoyment of the fruits of one's action, both in this world and in heavenly regions after leaving it. People are now caught in the coils of desire for the fruits! Monkeys are captured quite easily by placing before them pots with long narrow necks having some peanuts at the bottom. They put their hand in and collect a fistful of nuts but they find that now the neck is too narrow for the clenched fists to come through. Nor are they willing to give up the nuts. So, they squat helplessly and are captured by those who have laid the trap. Man too holds on to the fruit and is caught in the see-saw of ups and downs. That is why I advise you to have less luggage for this journey through life. It means more comfort and it makes travel a pleasure as the Railway Department advises you.

By acquiring these three skills, the aspirant for everlasting bliss or Ananda, the Mumukshu, can easily attain the stage when the Reality is no more hidden from him, through ignorance, by the seeming manifoldness of Name and Form.

—*From Bhagavan's Discourse 13-6-77*

Global Bhajan

The 24-hour Akhanda Bhajan at all Centres of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation throughout the world will be held this year from 6 P.M. on November 8, Saturday to 6 P. M. November 9, Sunday.

—*Ed.*

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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The Veda is the most ancient as well as the most lasting knowledge (or Sastra) discovered by man. That is to say, man has not invented it; he has only recollected it in the serene silence of his soul. So, the Veda can lead man into the Vision of the Truth, unreachable by the senses and unrelated to the material world. It is inaccessible to human reason because it is transcendent. So, it

is described as Paramam Vyoma, the Great Protector, also as Indestructible, That, Truth. These words denote all the four Vedas, beginning with the Rg Veda.

The term Veda was originally applied to the Supreme Lord, Paramesvara, the All-Knowing. (Veththi ithi Vedah—He who knows is Veda). Then it was applied to the principle of understanding (Vedayathi ithi Veda), that which makes known is Veda. The Rg and other Vedas have the all-knowing characteristic. So this meaning too is appropriate. Later the word was applied to activities in consonance with the Vedas—activities promoting the goals laid down, namely Righteous, Economic, Volitional and Spiritual.

The Supreme Lord is All-seeing; He is the Person on whom the hymns of the Vedas converge. The Vedas enable man to get the vision of that Lord and those who have earned that Vision are the Rishis. They were guided by the Vedas; many psalms hymns and declarations emerged from them. As a result, the Supreme Lord Himself is referred to as the Great Sage (Maharshi) in the Brahma-Sutra. Among the 108 Names of Siva, the Supreme Lord, we find Maha-rshi and Mukhya-rshi (the Chief Sage, the foremost Sage). Even the Veda is personified and referred to as *Rshi*, for the same reason. Brahman (the Vast Expanse) is another word which denotes the Supreme Lord, as well as the Veda. Hence, all acts, undertaken with no other desire than the attainment of Brahman are also known as Brahma activity—a Brahmayajna. A Rshi yajna is a sacrificial act—with no desire to earn the fruit ensuing therefrom—designed to gain the Vision of Truth.

While performing such sacrificial acts and Yajnas, the expression, *Swaaha*, is used, often. Yajnas are pure, auspicious, sacred acts. This exclamation *Swaaha*, used while offering oblations or reciting the Veda is full of significance. *Kesavaaya Swaaha*. *Praanaaya Swaaha*, *Indraaya Swaaha*—in this manner is the expression used. The meaning generally given is "Let this be duly consumed. May these materials we are now placing in this holy fire be fully accepted and consumed, so that through this Fire they can reach the Deity for which it is intended—Keshava, Prana, Indra." Doubts may arise—why pray to Fire for something which is inevitable, because it is in the very nature of Fire to burn all that is put into it. But, the scriptural meaning is different. Kalidasa in the poem "Kumara Sambhavam" describes the Himalayas as "Devata-atma" (Divine Souled), that is to say, the Embodiment of the Divine. The scriptures distinguish the Divine Body and the Material Body, which each entity and being possess. The Divine Body of every one cannot be cognised by the Senses. When an oblation is given to it, it becomes sanctified. The *Aahuti* is trans-substantiated into *Havis*.

The oblation or *Aahuti* is thus described in the Veda. The offering and offeree become one through the acceptance. (The *Attha* and the *Adya*). Who in this case is the offeree, the acceptor? It is Agni, the Divine Power inherent in Fire, in the Sun, in the Warmth of the Vital Air that sustains Life. When with the recitation of the appropriate ceremonial formulae, material oblations are placed in Agni with the phrase *Swaaha*, it is not a mere exclamation, it is expiation, it is realisation of the prayer, which the ritual represents.

The Veda is known as *Chhandas* also. This name means pleasant, joyous; it is also associated with the kindred meanings—strong, vital, shielded. Since all these attributes and characteristics can be predicated of the Vedas, the name referred to above is very appropriate. The sacred

ceremonies and rituals which the Vedas expound, confer joy not only on the participants but on the entire world and even on worlds beyond. The Supreme Lord who is the source of Bliss is known in the scriptural text as Yajna-anga (having the Vedic ritual as His Limbs), Yajna-vahana (using the Vedic ritual as His Vehicle). When Godhead assumes Form the first manifestation is Hiranyagarbha (the Golden Womb). This too is embodied Bliss, having as vehicle, the Bird with wings of Beauty, or Garuda. The Supreme Lord is also known as Vrsha-ratha, He whose chariot is the Bull, the Symbol of Dharma (Righteousness). This is the reason why in temples we find the bird Garuda carved or kept as an idol before the shrine of Vishnu and the figure of the Bull or its idol placed before shrines of Siva.

Chha or Chhadana, has as its root meaning, another important aspect of the Vedas—shielding, fostering or promoting: Promoting the welfare, the ultimate liberation of humans engaged in the unceasing round of worldly affairs. Humans are ever caught up in activities pursued with the profit available. They have to be moulded as righteous men and women at the same time, the Tree of Life has to be guarded to offer them fruits and shade. The Veda has to shield from destruction, the activist `doers' (Karma lovers) through the evil temptation to court unrighteousness and, the inquiry-fond thinkers (Jnana seekers) through the evil, temptation to pursue the pleasure-bound senses. Since the Veda guides teachers and shields through the verses, these are called, in totality as Chhandas. Through their role as armour or shield, they shower Bliss on all who rely on them. "Chhadanath chhandasi." By shielding they become "chhandas".

There is a myth about the Vedic rituals, collectively known as Yajna. Once, the Yajna fled from the gods taking form as a black antelope; the gods went in pursuit, but they succeeded only in retrieving its skins. That skin became the Yajna, the symbol of the rite. The white, dark and tawny colours on that skin represent the Vedas, Rg, Yajur and Sama, and it was adored as sacred for this very reason. It was honoured as symbolising the Triple Knowledge, that is to say, Mastery of the three Vedas. It is used by the officiating priests and other participants in all Vedic ceremonials in order to invoke the protecting hymns, called Chhandas. The three colours are believed to represent the three worlds too and, therefore, he who is seated on the skin or wears it benefits the three worlds by his Vedic recitations and oblations.

The master of ceremonials at the Vedic Yajna is described in the Vedic scripture as the "Foetus in the Womb." As the foetus is safe and secure, with its fingers clasped and body prostrate enveloped in the mother, the priest initiate must be enveloped in the antelope skin symbolising Mother Veda. To human eyes, it is just a skin but during Vedic rites, it becomes a shield. This is the reason why, before wearing it the initiate prays, addressing it, "You are the shield, Sarma, shield me, as Sarma." Sarma since it shields from grief, injury, and wrong has come to mean happiness and bliss. Vishnu, the second of the Trinity, is the embodiment of Bliss. And Vedic sacrifices confer bliss. Vishnu is praised as Yajna itself (Yajno vai Vishnuh). The Lord, Vishnu is the embodiment of the Triple Veda.

(To be continued)

The Doctor's Profession

Health and happiness go together. Happiness is a vain dream if health is absent. The Shrutis declare that health is the very basic quality for man, since without it he cannot realise any of the four goals of life, right doing, right desiring, right earning and final release. A sound mind needs a sound body; the one reacts on the other. The world is supposed to be only the projection of the mind, when the mind is inoperative during deep sleep, the world too is inoperative and non-existent. The mind too has to be healthy. It should not be clogged by greed, envy, hate or pride. It should not be polluted and poisoned by antisocial inhuman plans and projects. It should be calm and clear, so that thought can see into its depths and get rid of the evil feelings and tendencies it evokes.

Virtue is the panacea for both body and mind. The virtuous person can be both healthy and happy. How is virtue to be cultivated? How can it express itself in daily practice? Through service to living beings, through Seva. Virtue must flow through the triple channel of Love, Mercy and Detachment in order to feed the roots of Seva. In order to urge humans into the path of mutual sympathy, continuous compassion and concrete service, they have been endowed with the instinct of gregariousness. Man is a social animal. Humans find solitary living, unnatural and miserable. The Ashrams of ancient times were academies where mutual cooperation and loving service were encouraged. The pupils worked as a group, tended cattle, served the household of the Guru and helped one another in all respects.

Doctors are, really speaking, the most important class of Sevaks, under present conditions. Theirs is indeed a noble calling. When Seva is rendered with love, intelligence and earnestness, it leads persons nearer and nearer to Divinity, for it draws unto itself the Grace of God. This is the reason why the scriptures elevate the doctor or vaidya to the status of God. "Vaidya Narayana Harih"; "The doctor is Narayana, He is Hari." He is Hari, the Remover or Destroyer, since he destroys the hurdle on the path of man to Sadhana. If the doctor is full of love and compassion, God works through him. The doctor is no longer he but it is Narayana who manipulates his fingers and dispenses through him.

Doctors, therefore, have to endeavour to become the receptacles of Divine Power during their healing process. How can they heal, when they are themselves ill, either in body or mind? When their minds are innocent and contented a smile will spontaneously shine in their faces and their words will be soft, sweet and tender—softer than any pharmaceutical balm. The manner and mien of the physician are more effective in drawing out the latent sources of strength in the patient, than the most powerful drug. A prayerful atmosphere of humility and veneration will go a long way to help the cure. We may say that the behaviour, the voice, the mien of the doctor count for fifty per cent of the cure, the drugs and their efficacy manage the other half.

Note that the science of medicine, practised by doctors in India is known by the sacred name of Ayurveda, the Scripture of Life. Its source too is as divine as the source of the Vedas! It has to be studied with as much awe and veneration as the Vedas are learnt, at the feet of the guru. It has to be practised with as much devotion and dedication as Vedic ceremonies and recitations are fulfilled. The Veda or knowledge that can confer Ayu (Life) is Ayur-Veda. It can prolong life, preserve and protect life from hazards.

The Ayurveda deals not only with the curing of ill-nesses but it also deals with the prevention of dis-ease. Absence of mental ease and equanimity leads to what we correctly call Dis-ease. One sacred duty of the doctor is to advise persons on how to preserve health and prevent disease. He has to be vigilant in society to discover and suppress every tendency in Ahar and Vihar (feeding habits and social entertainments) by which diseases are developed. The dress worn by humans, the houses where they live and the areas where they are situated, have to be tidy and clean. The food that is taken has to supply all elements needed to keep the body strong enough to resist illness. Even if it falls short a little in this respect, health can be maintained if it is unpolluted, pure and holy. The atmosphere breathed in, the water taken in, the ground lived on, the animals and plants that surround-all have maleficent microbes that may cause illness, if the mind and body are not equipped with powerful resistance armour. Exercise, bathing, washing, cleaning, etc are prescribed for this purpose. The body is the boat on which we voyage across the ocean of Samsara and it has to be kept trim and sea-worthy. The voyager too has to be strong, confident and courageous.

The current belief is that medicine is to be valued for its validity during illness. Its use ends with the cure. But this point of view has to change. Medicine is used to see that one does not fall ill, not to raise him up when he falls, just as the purpose of truth is to so live that one is not subjected to birth again.

—*From Divine Discourse*

The Interviews

—*Peggy Mason*

To the vast majority, especially Westerners, the idea of kneeling down and touching, with hands, forehead or lips, the feet of another human being is somewhat alien. Even my husband, Ron, *before* we went to India, said one day: "I don't know about all this kissing of feet. I feel I 'know' Swami so well in my heart that I could go up to him and simply, say 'Hallo Swami—I'm Ron'." I smiled to myself and thought: you just wait! Sathya Sai Baba only appears to be "a human being" because he has taken a human form.

Because *we* are merely human beings we can express our deepest feelings only through bodily actions. We cry, we laugh, we sing, we punch in anger, we caress in love—and when the inner urge is overwhelming, we go down on our knees.

Swami knows this deep need in those who flock to him, and allows it in certain circumstances—for our sakes. He in no sense requires it. In fact if he is talking to a group of men in the ashram grounds, and the women in the party all go down on the ground to touch his feet, he appears unconscious of it. No normal human being could be so *totally unself-conscious* as Swami is.

I remembered the words of a professor of psychology, president of a university, with doctorates in philosophy and literature and a brilliant academic record. He said: "When I first saw this

elusive man walking ...I thought, he is not of the earth, but has come to the earth to bless it ...I was a stranger and did not know how to behave ...If they took the dust from his feet into their mouths, I would do the same." And what manner of being is it that makes a hard-headed lawyer from South Africa write in his diary, "At *last*—Baba smiled at me at *darshan* this morning!"

So there we were, alone with the avatar in that small, bare room. And there, of course, was old Ron on his knees, tears running down his face, saying, "Swami, I can't believe it..." I, too, realised at last my ardent ambition to kneel down and kiss his foot. I wished the moment would last forever, but Swami said gently, "Get up, get up," and stretched out his small hand.

I could not resist kissing that, too. His other arm was round Ron's shoulders. "This is a good man," he said. "I know, Swami." He smilingly added, "Sometimes you have differences of ideas, sometimes a little short temper, but you have a good man here." I am happy to say that at other private interviews I was also to receive encouraging remarks.

I bent my head in front of him, as near as I dare, to hide my tears, and he put his hand on my head in blessing.

"Swami," I said, "I sometimes feel you are in our home." He thought, and said; "I am in your *heart*. But I came twice in a dream, but you wonder if it's just imagination."

He took hold of the chain round my neck with the pendant on it which a friend from Australia had kindly sent me after she had visited Baba a year previously. It was only a cheap one bought from a stall, but I treasured it because it had Baba's head on it. He handled the chain and with a smile examined the pendant for a long time.

"I've worn it for a year," I said. I was determined not to let the desire escape that he would replace it! I had not come to India to get objects from him, but to lay my love at his feet, I just wanted him to handle it; and thus consecrate it. This was exactly what I had prayed for, no more. Of course he knew this!

Ron asked if he could show Swami an article he had written on the similarities between Sathya Sai Baba and the Christ. Swami took the article and read out the first few lines in an undertone. Ron asked if it was permissible to draw the similarities. Swami thought a moment and said: "Yes, that's all right". Ron took back his article. I produced my own articles about him.

Then, to our joy, Swami asked, "Are you staying a little time?" "Of course, of course!" I said "Come back the day after tomorrow, and I give one hour to discuss all these things."

The words, when read, might appear casual, but Swami talks to you as if you are the only person in the world. He does so with tender concern, intimacy and emphasis, looking into your eyes, and with that beautiful, understanding smile. He gives everything.

With a last smile to us both, he turned towards an inner room through a curtain. He seemed to float away rather than walk, with that gentle movement which is indescribable. I have to keep on using the word "gentle" in connection with Baba. He is the embodiment of love. If, on occasion,

he ever *appears* stern in any way, it is only the appearance, only out of love, if correction is needed, or in order to induce people to examine themselves, to "enquire within", for their own sake.

I have no idea how long or how short that interview was, for time stands still in his presence. One is transported to another dimension. When he bestows personal attention, one experiences so much more than any actual words—from his expressions, movements, voice, and being within that radiant rose-pink aura, the memory of which can never dim once it has been experienced.

The fact is that no one can attempt to analyse or explain anything about him. As he once gave out: "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."

I passed a strange but wonderful night. My whole being, seemed galvanized into greater intensity and life.

During the interview Swami did what I am sure he had planned to do the day before I He took hold of my chain and pendant again, and asked: "Wouldn't you like a *real one*? This is imitation." Whereupon he circled his hand in the air and produced a charming silvery disc with his head on one side in bas relief, and the OM sign on the other. What a joy! It was of course what I had secretly longed for, but would not ask!

A little later he asked Ron what he wanted. Ron said, "To love more, and something from you, Swami." Immediately Swami circled his hand again, and produced a gorgeous oval ring made of Swami's "five metals," with a coloured picture of his head in enamel.

He leaned forward and pushed it firmly onto the fourth finger of Ron's left hand. It fitted perfectly, and was exactly what Ron had day-dreamed about in the aeroplane on the flight to India—even the correct finger!

But a further and most unexpected blessing was yet to come which completely overwhelmed me. During a general conversation Swami turned to me again, and asked, "Do you do *sadhana*?" (a form of prayer and meditation). "Yes, Swami." "When?" "At night, Swami." To my wonderment he circled his hand several times in the air. As everyone gasped, out fell a long, beautiful 108-bead *japamala*—rosary necklace. Its total length, were it undone, is 48 inches and can be worn doubled round the neck and still be ample.

It just streamed down from his fingers like a cascade of crystal light. With an almost casual gesture, he spread it out with both hands and threw it over my head onto my shoulders without touching a single hair. "Oh *Swami*!" was all I could say, hardly believing that I had been blessed with two gifts from him at one interview! (And always there was *Vibhuti*).

This is what he has said about such gifts: "Do not crave from me trivial material objects: but crave for *me*, and you would be rewarded. Not that you should not receive whatever objects I give as sign of grace out of the fullness of love.

"I shall tell you why I give these rings, talismans, rosaries, etc. It is to mark the bond between me and those to whom they are given. When calamity befalls them, the article comes to me in a flash and returns in a flash, taking from me the remedial grace of protection. That grace is available to all who call on me in any name or form, not merely to those who wear these gifts. *Love is the bond that wins grace.*"

At the end of the interview all touched his feet. He stood there, unconcerned, and then smilingly went into the inner room.

So there we were again, for the third morning in succession sitting outside Baba's porch in that tranquil leafy garden. The silence which literally bathes the ashram at Brindavan is balm to the soul. The raucous bombardment of pop music, television and radio seemed to exist in some other mad world of constant noise and unrest. Here it was difficult even to visualise our own little home so far away, yet I could hardly believe that at long last I was *really* in India, with the beloved Sathya Sai...

Baba motioned us all to follow him in.

We asked questions about a variety of subjects; talk of visitors from outer space, which I mentioned to my last article, about healing, and asking for his help in this if we mentally called on him; about mediumship, as we wanted to clarify a report I had once read that he did not approve of what mediums did. (But who can approve of what some mediums do?)

So we asked, "Is mediumship, to communicate with those in the spirit, provided the medium is honest and a pure instrument, wrong?"

"No, not at all," Swami replied quite categorically, indeed, as we had expected. We also spoke about the "very bad karma" incurred by man's abuse of the animal kingdom. When I mentioned science in this connection Swami raised his eyes, turned his head away and said, "Ah ... science ... I" with such pain in his voice. "It is essential to spread knowledge of the oneness of all life. God is in every creature."

Because it is written that the triple Incarnation of this avatar, "the Kalki Avatar on the white horse" of ancient scriptures as Shirdi Sai Baba, Sathya Sai Baba (and Prema Sai represents the Shiva, Shiva-Shakti, and Shakti aspects of divinity), we wondered if the next descent as Prema Sai, to come immediately after the present form is vacated at the age of 96, would be female.

Baba replied; "No, male. In Mysore—Karnataka."

There was one question I particularly wanted to ask Swami. Regular readers of 'two worlds' may remember that in April 1979 I wrote an article titled "Did Jesus die on the cross?" I said: "Swami, there's something I've wanted to know for a long time. Did the *physical* body of Jesus recover in the tomb? I mean, it wasn't a materialised body of spirit—like Yogananda's Master showed himself to him after he'd been buried?"

Swami said: "No—the physical body. No spirit materialised body. The physical."

I wished I had asked Swami more questions. Yet when one really thinks about it, many questions which leap to mind regarding past events are of academic interest compared to the here and now, and the living reality of the divine principle incarnate in Sai Baba at this most crucial period of the planet's evolutionary history. There was, however, a question which was most vital to us—to hear from Swami's own lips—and Ron "plucked up courage" to ask it.

"Swami, you are reported as saying, on Christmas Day 1972, that Jesus said: 'He who sent me among you will come again. His name will be truth. He will wear a blood-red robe. He will be short, with a crown (of hair).' Does this mean that it was you who sent Jesus into incarnation?"

With ineffable simplicity, never moving his eyes from Ron's, and in his soft, gentle voice, Swami nodded and said, "Yes."

Ron took a deep breath. "Then, in that case, are you what Western Christians call 'The Cosmic Christ'?" (The Cosmic Christ spirit)

Again came that simple, gentle reply, "Yes."

As long as I live I shall see his face as he gave this answer in a manner no ordinary human being could assume—so direct, so simply, so gently, and completely ego-less. For a few moments we said nothing, overcome by the impact of his reply.

Everywhere men and women of goodwill are expecting and praying for the Second Coming of the Cosmic Christ spirit. But whether they recognise it or not, it is here amongst us in the embodiment of selfless love.

The Sadhaka and the Scholar

Every animate being has to attain fulfillment; that is the destiny, however hard, however long, the journey. When and how are determined by the nature of the cumulative effects of many lives. The effects are shaped not only by the actions but even more by motives that induce them. The present condition of each is the consequence of past actions and motives. Present actions and motives mould the future. Each one builds his own fortune or misfortune.

But, can we assert that others are superfluous, that one need not and should not seek help from another? In order to attain fulfillment in the spiritual field, the help of those who have mastered the path is very necessary. The guidance can be transmitted only from one heart to another heart. It can be done only when intimate kinship is established between the seeker and the saint. Texts and commentaries, guidebooks and maps only breed doubts, discords, and discussions. Reason can develop only skill and cleverness. Experience achieved through intuition alone is valid in the realm of the spirit. For intuition to be illumination, the layers of egoism and its evils have to be

penetrated and destroyed. A guru will be of great help in this adventure. The power has to flow from the reservoir to the receptacle. He who has reached the goal can alone guide the pilgrim to it. Without him, the aspirant can only wander in the wilds. Some gurus initiate the pupil into a mantra or mystic formula and advise repetition of the same. But, they do not emphasise the innate Divine Reality of the pupil which they cannot ignore even for a moment, nor do they insist on the moral regeneration, so necessary for clarifying his inner faculties. The mantra-granting guru is the Deeksha Guru; the personality-recasting Guru is the Shiksha Guru. It is this latter Guru that is reverentially praised in thousands of ways in the holy texts. He removes the faults to vision and destroys the darkness of ignorance. He reveals the Atma to the individual and makes him free.

The Gurupoornima is dedicated to such gurus. Poornima, the Full Moon Day celebrates the fulfillment that is the goal of all life. We have the Vedic axiom that "this is full that is full; when fullness is taken from fullness, the remainder is fullness." This refers to the fullness of quality (Guna) and not of quantity. A block of candy is as sweet as a tiny piece taken from it; a drop of seawater has the same taste as the entire sea. God is present in this Fullness in the atom as well as in the Cosmos. He is Sat-Chit-Ananda in the least as well as in the vast. Both are full of God. He cannot be partly in one and wholly in another. He is indivisible.

This day is dedicated for thanksgiving to the Guru for, the Moon (the presiding Deity of the mind) today is full, clear, cool and bright! He has no blemish or dullness which diminish His Glory. The Guru too is pictured and praised today as unblemished, bright, and affectionate. He is full of devotion and the sense of surrender to God. He is tolerant and truly peaceful. He is the living example and embodiment of the virtues he desires us to develop.

The study of texts might remove some wrong notions and induce some right resolutions. But it cannot confer the Vision of Reality. Meditation is key to the Atmic treasure that is the real wealth of the individual. Meditation can progress and gain victory only when one wins the affection of great souls and obey their instructions.

In fact, God, the God within, is the Guru of Gurus. His Grace can make the blind see, the lame walk and the dumb speak. By a mere touch, He can demolish the sins of the past and erect the basis for peace and joy. God can be adored, worshipped and even imagined or pictured by man only in human form, so long as the consciousness as man persists, so long man cannot escape from this necessity. How can he travel beyond his limits? He can visualise God only as man, with superhuman or supra-human Power, Wisdom, Love, Compassion. He can never describe or delineate the Formless, the Attributeless, the Qualityless. It is only by means of form and attribute that one can pray, adore, worship or feel the Presence. And the form has to be human. Little minds with no faith may argue that God cannot come as Man but in fact God can be recognised only as Man by human. This explains the statement, "Daivam maanusha roopena" "God through human form", found in the scriptures.

The sum total of spiritual experience is "Knowing oneself". This does not mean the knowledge of one's capabilities and skills, wants and wishes, strength and weakness. It means the knowledge of who one is, what one really is. Sankaracharya has summarised this knowledge in three lines—Brahma Sathyam (God is Truth) Jagat mithya (Creation is an Illusion) Jivo Brahmaiiva naa paraa

(The Jiva—the Individual—is Brahma only—is God only—not else). Every 'become' has its source in 'Being'. Being is God. God and the Individual are the undifferentiated One. So human-ness is holy; it is neither mean or low. It has the status of God, though clouded and contaminated.

For this faith to strike deep roots in our minds and to keep us fixed in that belief, a Guru is needed. Vyasa is the first Guru who demarcated the path and the goal. So he is associated with the Poornima day. Vyasa means the person who has elaborated and expanded knowledge of truth, that is to say, the universal eternal Energy. Vyasa composed the Mahabharata, the 18 Puranas and the Bhagavata and helped mankind to earn peace and happiness, and to learn ways of fruitful adoration of God. Vyasa has also narrated stories of the human incarnations of Godhead. The three Gunas—Satwa, Rajas and Tamas have differentiated all beings into divine, human and demonic persons. Men are intelligent, curious and full of wonder, full of awe and the attitude of reverence. They are the only beings who have the longing to know themselves and to succeed in that effort.

There is a legend about the Truth. The Gods approached Easwara and pleaded with Him to keep the knowledge of Truth away from men and demons, for it would make them irresistible. So, it was hidden in the unreachable heights of the sky, the Aakasa. The demons lost interest in this kind of knowledge but men suffered agony in its absence. So, Easwara hid it in the Ocean and finally, when human yearning became overwhelming, Easwara planted it in the heart of every human being. But even there, it was not easily available for man. He had to penetrate through the veils of the five elements that comprise the gross body, the sheaths of the subtle body and the causal body, to have a vision of the indwelling Atma. To have this vision, one should become the master, for he alone can have access to the treasure-chest, the master of the senses and all other faculties. He should not be the servant of the senses and of the whims and fancies of the emotions and passions. The servant has access only to the cheap and perishable junk of the household. The treasure chest cannot be viewed by eyes blinded or befogged by egoism, greed and envy.

Gurupoornima is the day when you decide to become masters of your senses and intellect, emotions and passions, thoughts and feelings, by Sadhana. Even during Dhyana, the ego will obstruct you. Nivedita asked for advice from Vivekananda to gain one-pointedness during Dhyana. Vivekananda said, "Do not allow Margaret Noble to come between you and God." Margaret Noble as herself. "Nivedita" means "Offering". So Vivekananda explained, "offer yourself fully to God". This total dedication cannot emerge from scholarship. The scholar is polluted by ego; he delights in putting pros and cons against each other; he raises doubts and disturbs faith. They mix the secular and the worldly with the spiritual and the other-worldly. They worship God in order to extract worldly gain. But prayers to God have to be for spiritual progress.

Therefore, engage yourselves in Sadhana, without delay or dilatoriness. Cultivate virtues; be free from evil habits, thoughts, words and deeds. Grow in love and greet Nature with love. This is the way to Ananda. This is the message for Gurupoornima.

This, Too, is Baba's Grace

There are hundreds of stories of Baba's rescue of devotees on the physical plane. He also comes to one's rescue on the psychic plane, and He does it in such a way that there is absolutely no doubt of His Grace.

My story is concerned with two dreams. But first I must set the stage for the dreams, for the stage was set on the physical plane in an office.

The story is about personality conflicts in an office and two jobs and an attempt to upgrade these jobs to higher classifications under the governmental body's rules. The length of time of service was approximately the same for both individuals, the responsibilities of both individuals had increased proportionately with the growth of the division, but when the decision was handed down, only one job was re-classified to a higher grade, and it wasn't mine. It was not fair but nothing could be done about it under the present director, who consistently had refused to acknowledge that the quality and quantity of my work was more than mediocre, even though George, my immediate superior, has always given me excellent ratings. This director sometimes seemed to take a special delight in "baiting" me to see how I would react, and even went so far as to shelve a request for leave that had been submitted a month in advance.

So that was the state of affairs. My mind was constantly preoccupied with my difficulties, trying to find a way out. Time spent trying to meditate was nothing but a rehash of the same old problems.

One night I had a dream. In this dream a part of myself was wandering down a hall and came to a room. In this room an electric cord was plugged into a wall receptacle. I knew that this cord led to a movie projector in another room, and that a picture was being shown on the screen. Much to my surprise, I reached up and disconnected the plug and unseen by anyone, walked out of the room with a feeling of guilt, expecting the police to stop me. But no one did, so I proceeded out of the building, which seemed to be in a high school setting, and after a little difficulty made my way out of the crowd by going to the right. In trying to interpret the dream I decided that disconnecting the plug meant disconnecting myself from the job. There would be darkness and confusion while they tried to find out what was wrong with the projector, never looking to see that the power source had been cut off. I thought of myself as a power source for George, since I thought that much of his success had been due to my efforts and cooperation, and his success in turn had contributed to our director's success. There was a certain amount of satisfaction in that interpretation but the feeling of guilt I could not account for. Alas, I did not realize that what a part of me in the dream had done was mischief—whose definition according to the dictionary is "Harm, damage, especially trouble or vexation caused by human agency. Harmful quality or character. A source of harm, evil, trouble or vexation."

George, my immediate supervisor, suffers from diabetes and heart trouble and was recovering from an eye operation. I told him about my feeling, that I felt I had been treated shamefully. He replied that he would like to see me fight back, but I told him that I couldn't see that the position was worth fighting for and certainly did not want to draw the wrath of the director on my head.

I brooded over the apparent injustice, felt sorry for myself, and came to the conclusion that the dream was prompting a transfer. A constant battle was going on in my mind. I was feeling sick and didn't want to go to work. Would I be running away if I retired and went to India to be with Baba? What would I do when I had to come back, as come back one must? The small retirement income would soon be eaten up by inflation and depression. The coming holocaust would make things even worse. I couldn't arrive at a decision except to stand on my own two feet as long as possible.

George came back to work, but was visibly growing weaker.

I had another dream in it my mother was sick. I was in a cafeteria run by my boss. I looked at all the food but the only thing that looked attractive to me was a large bowl of grapefruit sections decorated with a cherry. I wanted to take them to my mother, but they were very, very expensive. I also realized that they would not taste as good as they looked because of the preservatives.

The dream woke me. I analyzed it and came to the conclusion that the fruit represented "the fruits of the action" to which I was not entitled. I would pay a high price if I purchased them. My sick mother was a part of myself, the best part, that was sick over the behaviour of another part of myself.

Back at work George became weaker and had to go back to the doctor. It looked like death might soon take him away.

This was where Baba stepped in, to save me from harming others and bringing upon myself some far-reaching consequences.

After work I went to the beach to go swimming. I carefully took off my jampala that Baba had placed around my neck, put it in my cosmetic case with jewelry, put the case in my purse and locked the purse in the car. I went swimming, then later sat with my back against a fir tree to recoup some energy. I went home, ate dinner, did the dishes and went to bed.

The next morning I reached in my purse for the jampala. It was gone. But the earrings and the rings were there. I searched the places I had been. No jampala.

I knew that Baba had taken it back. Why? To punish me? My thoughts whirled. I wasn't worthy of Baba's love, of His time and effort. I was lazy, I was a terrible example, a bad representative. Baba's purity couldn't stand my dark thoughts. I wasn't living the words of the morning prayer: "Let me speak sweet, soft words behave coolly and comfortably towards all, do deeds which shower happiness on all, form ideals which are beneficial to all." I examined myself. I prayed. I thought. What to do? A great weight had descended on my heart. I had sinking sensation in the solar plexus region. All joy and happiness had fled.

Then I remembered the dream and disconnecting the electricity. A prankster part of me had done that, and I had experienced a feeling of guilt.

George was dying. Could I be contributing to the cause of his death? He would leave a wife and five children, only one of which had completed high school. They were lovely children. Joan, George's wife worked very hard at an outside job. They needed both incomes to provide their family with food, shelter, clothing and books for school. Was this what Baba had been trying to make me see by giving me a quick blow to end the mischief which had been set in motion?

I made up my mind that since the prankster within me had disconnected the electricity in the dream, that in fantasy I would re-enact the dream, restoring the plug to the receptacle, with Baba helping me. I must do my best to rectify this situation which had taken place in the realm of the unseen and must be corrected in the same realm.

I prayed to Baba, taking His hand in mine. In fantasy I walked back to that dream hall, picked up the plug and with Baba's hand over my hand, inserted the cord into the receptacle. Then I practised meditation, using the image of the flame to cleanse my body, heart and, mind. I sent love and light to George for healing. Lastly, I accepted the situation. The Lord had placed me in this job and here I would stay until He saw fit to move me. I had failed the test in the School of life.

The next day at work George called to report that he was feeling much better and would be back at work on Monday.

Yes, that was the reason Baba had taken away my japmala, the only thing that would wake me up, to save me from the wrong of harming others and the awful consequences that I was bringing upon myself. That, too, was His Grace.

EPILOGUE

I woke from sleep before dawn and drafted these words. In the afternoon I got in my car after a period of prayer with a friend. I had visualized Baba with His hand on both our heads. I glanced in the direction of the glove compartment. A wisp of grey, almost like smoke, was drifting toward the floor and as I watched a Lincoln penny appeared on the floor. That was a sign! Baba had accepted my contrite heart by sending me a penny from Heaven!

—Esther Howarth St. Petersburg, Florida

Why Not You

BABA gives and we can receive

Whatever our need may be.
If you ask in love he will not refuse;
I have tried and he did it for me.

If you need greater awareness,
And knowledge you would accrue,
Try asking him if you feel the need;
I did so, why not you

You do not have to visit him
To feel him by your side;
And all your doubts and fears and hopes,
From him, you cannot hide.

So treat him as a parent, or even as your friend,
And grace and blessings will come to you
Until your journey's end.

—A. W. *FIX*, *England*

What you need to cross the sea of life is the bark of Bhakti, of assurance of Grace, of surrender to His will. Throw off all burdens, become light and you can trip across, with one-step on one crest and another on the next. God will take you through.

I ask only that you turn to me when your mind drags you into grief or pride or envy. Bring me the depths of your mind, no matter how grotesque, how cruelly ravaged by doubts or disappointments. I know how to treat them. I will not reject you. I am your mother.

—Baba

4/5 And 1/5

Dear Andrew! Your questions are—What does Baba mean by saying that Self-inquiry is 4/5 and meditation 1/5? What does God's Light mean? And what is meant by 'not doing anything' about one's faults and weaknesses, when discovered?

The response to your questions will be what Baba Himself explains in various discourses. You yourself can turn up these same answers, if you will watch for them.

Self-inquiry is vital to our attempt to get what we want—the Truth about ourselves. A good point for starting self-inquiry is to ask how much we are *awake* and how much *asleep*. A person may awaken in the morning half-drowsy. But he must fully wake up to the world around him and to his status in that world, in order to behave effectively.

Have you noticed that in doing some task, day-dreaming or thought-fantasy gets mixed with your concentration and so, you miss some essential requisite and as a consequence, errors creep in? Almost every one has this experience and so he understands the need to wake up before he makes a move or an effort.

It is the same in spiritual life. An inquiry or a doubt must arise as to whether or not one is cognising and experiencing himself and the world, in a way that fully accounts for the actual situation. From this self-inquiry there follows the perception of the need to question himself and the world more closely. The Buddha, all by himself, relying totally on himself, made this inquiry and finally, while seated quietly under a tree, *saw* the Truth of himself and the world as it actually is. Baba says that this, the cool direct path of Jnana, is exceedingly difficult.

The meaning of self-inquiry, then, is to make an intentional and *volitional effort* to settle the doubt that one may still be, more or less, dreaming and therefore not seeing things as they really are. When the questioning and observation of *oneself* and the world get under way, it soon becomes evident that the world, the perceived (*drishya*) is not wholly independent of the (*drishta*) perceiver since the perceiver is the instrument by which the failure to know that "failure to see what has to be known about the perceiver" may allow serious errors to creep into one's inquiry into the actual nature of things. Therefore, an absolutely essential aspect of self-inquiry is to expose and reject faulty and incomplete views about one-self, no matter how strongly entrenched in our experience and approval. Whatever cannot stand up under intense scrutiny is rejected and the inquiry continues. For example, the lifelong belief that "the body and I are one and the same" is, at best, an incomplete idea and inquiry must continue past that idea.

In a very concentrated mode, this self-inquiry is represented by the "Who am I?" question of Ramana Maharshi—he lived into this century as you will know. Baba informs us that, by itself, this intense self-inquiry is not enough. The successful way includes some meditation.

Then, there is the Bhakthi way of searching for the truth of one-self and the world. Either by means of intelligence applied to the problem or because someone, whom he believes, tells him, the inquirer adopts the view-point that duality is relative and that the ultimate reality of both himself and the world is the Omnipresent Divine Principle. For this individual, self-inquiry

means, "looking through every phenomenon, appearing as himself or as the world" and conceiving God as the essential Reality thereof.

All of the above is what Swami is talking about when He says that inquiry is 4/5 of the job of searching for the actuality of oneself and the world.

In this search, a person may decide to rely wholly upon his own intelligence and his own experience and learn through trial and error—a process that is certainly valid. There are many self-made persons in the spiritual world. But, it is common knowledge that in many fields of endeavour, if a person can find a master in that field, the student will reach the goal more quickly. From this fact arises the need for a Guru—the one who is master in the field and who is willing to guide the student so that he may reach the goal without undue delay and avoid mistakes.

The problem with gurus, according to Baba, is that, nowadays, competent gurus are not found. Today, the only competent guru is God Himself. Baba says that, for the true seeker, who prays to God for guidance, God Himself will appear as Guru. Those of us who believe that Sri Sathya Sai Baba is no other than the omnipresent Divine Lord, hold to His teachings with great tenacity. An important part of our daily self-inquiry is to be asking ourselves if we are in fact putting Swami's instruction into daily practice, with faith and enthusiasm.

As one studies himself, faults and bad habits come into view. Swami tells us that dwelling on one's 'bad side' is a positive hindrance to the discarding of the unreal and the revelation of the basic unchanging reality. It is not that one should live complacently with his faulty nature, one's imperfect personality, but it is, that once the Truth comes into view, untruth must yield. Swami asks, "Where does darkness go?" It does not go any place. Where there is light, there is no darkness. Swami, the Lord, is Himself Light and Love.

Within the field of that Divine Light, our bad qualities—creatures of darkness—cannot persist and thrive. By taking the Omnipresent God as the focus of our mind, emotions, and behaviour, we have Him in us, beside us, with us, every moment of our lives. Hold to His Light. Dwell in His Light. Let the darkness of the past and the shadows of the present fall away. That is the answer you will find Swami giving to the second part of your question. If you watch for them as you read Swami's discourses, He does give the answer again and again.

—John Hislop

A Christmas Message

As we approach another Christmas, another year, another era, and many of us are awaiting expectantly another manifestation of the Christ force to herald in the Golden Age, it may serve us well to ponder on the thought that this Christ force, in all probability, will appear in a very different vehicle from the one used 2000 years ago. Have you ever really thought about this?

Although we cannot really be sure how Jesus looked then, I wonder how many people today—especially how many Christians will accept the Christ force incarnate this time, and how many will reject Him, because He does not have the skin colour and features they imagine He should have. Think well on this. How will YOU recognize Him?

By His works and teachings, ye shall know Him

So until the time when you do know Him and accept Him lovingly, let us all joyfully do our best to serve Him as He would want us to do.

Serve Him, by serving one another, with love. Keep His teachings close to our hearts and always be appreciative that Jesus, and all the other Christed ones too, have so much love and compassion for mankind, that they incarnated once more, from their exalted planes to our mundane world to show us the way and lead us back to peace and unity with the Divine.

—*Anne Warren, Sydney, Australia*

Be a Hero

Through the affectionate care and counsel of my mother of revered memory, the seeds of spiritual aspiration were planted in my heart and fostered with vigilant attention. She initiated me in meaningful religious practices and guided me along the paths of truth, equanimity and right conduct. Since a few years, I was fortunate to secure the friendship and constant company of a few good men who introduced me to the treasure-chest of Sai literature. Studying those books and perusing the 'Sanathana Sarathi' and listening to their experiences, I earned firm faith in the Divinity of Sathya Sai. During the hours of meditation, I was even blessed by visions of Baba and intimations of His Presence. Ah! How rich was His Mercy! How deep was His Compassion! Whenever a cloud of doubt cast its shadow on my faith or across my path, the wind of His Grace wafted it away and made my mind free.

Ours is a small village. My forefathers eschewed the entanglements of political or economic ambition. They were happily engaged in religious and spiritual studies and sadhana. The family found joy and peace in the Gita Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj and other similar Satsangs. The village vibrated with holy thoughts. Recently, however, the fumes of factional politics and class conflicts have spread into even isolated villages and so, the springs of brotherhood and mutuality have dried up. My heart was filled with agony at the turn of events. But, since Baba has exhorted us in the Gita, "Uplift yourselves by your own effort," I continued my spiritual search, unaffected by external upheavals. Baba taught me, during meditation, to practise loneliness and love of God. Besides, I benefited greatly from some holy men and elders whom I contacted; I was able to rid myself of many negative attitudes and habits as a result.

On 20th March 1980 (or thereabouts) when I was reciting the Gayatri preliminary to meditation, the Mrtyunjaya Mantra silently interpolated itself and took hold of me. I had to recite it for long and give up the Gayatri. The mantra rolled on my tongue and echoed inside my heart. I inferred

that I was being instructed by Baba to repeat this Vedic formula which ensures safety from the fangs of Death. Thereafter, I began repeating it daily with all my heart.

Ten days later, on 31 March, about 2 A. M. when we were fast asleep in the home, absolutely unconscious of the outer and inner world, a band of violent antisocial revolutionaries surrounded my house and gained entrance, breaking open the doors. I was stunned and struck dumb. They looted and shouted; they plucked even the sacred Mangalasutra from the neck of my wife and rained blows on her. Then, they yelled 'death' for me and jumped in my direction. I was calling on Baba in my heart of hearts and He came to my rescue, pointing out a way of escape. Before they left they vented their still unspent anger on the beautiful picture of Goddess Gayatri which they stabbed with the daggers they had.

I realised that the Name of Baba which I had on my tongue had saved me from certain death. I bathed the Lotus Feet in my heart with tears of gratitude. When I was bewailing the loss of valuables, Baba's Divine Voice illumined my mind from His Form, I could clearly sense Baba during meditation, standing between my eyebrows in my forehead: "Which of them is yours? Why pine over the loss of things that did not belong to you?"

The agitation was quietened by this sublime revelation. I could win back the level of concentration which I had attained, previous to the dacoity. I could fix all my awareness on the splendour of Divine Consciousness which He vouchsafed to me.

My friends and well-wishers prompted me to take measures to punish the miscreants and take revenge against them. Man in the village knew who they were. But, during the hour of meditation, Baba told me, "They have inflicted injury on themselves. You had no injury." So I ignored the promptings and plunged in Sadhana again.

I stayed out of my village for over a hundred days after that awful night. The day arrived when I had to carry on my legitimate duty at the village, for I was a teacher at the village school. My friends and kinsmen advised me to stay away and warned me against returning. I must admit that my mind was unsettled again. I prayed to Baba for guidance. I sought guidance on the right step. During meditation, I heard Him quote in Sanskrit, "Iaathasya Maranam Dhruvam": "That which is born must certainly die." I thrilled from head to foot when these words entered my awareness; for, "the body alone dies; you are neither born nor do you die"; that was the instruction granted to me. I was reminded that I am eternal, immortal, and free from modification. I reached my village with a clear and courageous heart and I am engaged in the duty Baba has allotted me.

Imagine how many millions Baba has thus saved from frantic fear and anxiety! How many is He saving and guarding every moment! I have not had even the fortunate chance to have His Darshan so far but yet, He is guiding me and protecting me, directing me along the righteous path. When His Grace is conferred on even me, so copiously, one can infer how affectionately He is ever present with those who have surrendered their thoughts, their speech and their deeds to Him. In fact, Bhagavan has proclaimed in the Gita that He will grant Peace and Bliss here and hereafter to all those who are attached to Him and His commands. And, He is fulfilling that promise every moment now.

His Own Words

It was on Gurupoornima Day on 6th July 1963 at 6.30 P.M. that Sri Sathya Sai Baba revealed for the first time the secret and the history that lay hidden behind this Avatar of Kaliyuga. The occurrence of this Avatar was decided in Tretayuga when Lord Shiva conferred boons on Maharshi Bharadwaja who had invited both Shiva and Shakti to attend his Yaga on the suggestion of Indra in order to fully comprehend the fruit of Vedic study, and complete, which he couldn't finish reading even in three lives given to him.

(See Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol. III, 3rd ed., 1975, pp. 21-24) Baba said:

"Let me tell you one more thing: Nothing can impede or halt the work of this Avatar...The splendour of this Avatar will go on increasing, day by day. Formerly, when the Govardhanagiri was raised aloft by the little boy, the Gopis and Gopalas realised that Krishna was the Lord. Now, it is not one Govardhanagiri, a whole range will be lifted, you will see. Have patience, have faith...It is the same Leela: Using the chance to demonstrate to a doubting world the Divinity inherent in this Human Form.

Avatars choose the time and the mode of announcement of their Advent and Their glory. Even in This Avatar, such miracles had to be done, when I decided that the time was opportune for taking the people into My Secret. (6. 9. 63) Do not seek to measure Me or evaluate Me. I am beyond your understanding. You can hear My Foot steps, for, I walk with you, behind you, beside you.

Baba expounds His mission thus:

The SENSE of values has to be restored and faith in the Divinity of Man has to be restored. That is the task for which I have come. (20. 10. 63) Every step in this Avatar is due to my own Sankalpa, not due to the prayer or petition of devotees ...You do not now realise your good luck in getting Me as the Guide. I shall not rest until I reform all of you. The basement for My work has been completed: now, the structure will rise upon it. I go round the whole world alone, with no paraphernalia and no publicity, because I am established in my Own Glory. (22. 10. 63)

The Lord has come again on this Mission. He has collected the engineers, contractors and the labour for the purpose. He is now set on the task. My Mayasrishti, or creation out of the void is for some definite purpose; just as it was then (in Dwapara—as Lord Krishna). The aim is to purify and sanctify. It is My Visiting Card. Lord has come to restore Sanathana Dharma. So, He reveals its principles as follows:

"The three basic beliefs of Sanathana Dharma are:

1. the inevitability of Karma in life,

2. the fact of re-birth and
3. Divine Incarnation

If one has no faith in all these three, he cannot claim to be a Hindu; whoever believes in them can be reckoned as a Bharatiya, child of Bharat."

About defaming and defiling Baba with all the wicked vocabulary, He says:

"This was My experience in previous Yugas also. The successors of Sisupal cannot remain idle; but consider to what low level human wickedness has descended. I do not care either for praise or blame, I only pity these people who, in order to scrape together a few paise from the poor resort to such venial tricks ...I declare "Even if all the fourteen worlds unite together, the work for which I have come will not suffer a bit; even if earth and heaven combine, My truth can never be fully grasped."

Whenever there is a languishing of Dharma ...I create Myself, for it is part of primal resolution or Sankalpa to protect the spiritual structure of the Universe. I lay aside My formless essence and assume a name and a form suited to the purpose for which I come. Whenever evil threatens to vanquish good, I have to come and save it from decline.

The Avatar of Krishna was a full incarnation, with all the sixteen facets of glory. In the avatar of Rama, out of sixteen the three brothers had one each and Parasurama, the contemporary, had one, until Rama met and overpowered Him and drew within Himself the fraction of the divine power that he had. Other incarnations were for ad hoc purposes, the suppression of evil represented by one evil person or group of persons.

But, in this Kali age, the wicked have to be reformed and reconstructed through love and compassion. That is why this Avatar has come unarmed; It has come with the message of love. The only weapon which can transform the vile and the vicious is the name of the Lord uttered with love. At the present time Mahashakti, Mayashakti and Yogashakti have come all together in one human form; your endeavour should be to draw near and earn grace therefrom. (28.7.67)

Baba exposed His self in the following words:

In truth, you cannot understand the nature of My reality either today or even after a thousand years of steady austerity or ardent inquiry, even if all mankind joins in that effort. But in a short time, you will become cognisant of the bliss showered by the Divine Principle, which has taken upon itself this sacred body and this sacred name. Your good fortune which will provide you this chance is greater than what was available for anchorites, monks, sages, saints and even personalities embodying facets of Divine Glory. (17. 5. 68)

Since I move about with you, eat like you, and talk with you, you are deluded into the belief that this is but an instance of common humanity. Be warned against this mistake. I am also deluding you by my singing with you, talking with you, and engaging Myself in activities with you. But any moment, My Divinity may be revealed to you; you have to be ready, prepared for

that moment. Since Divinity is enveloped by humanness you must endeavour to overcome the Maya (delusion) that hides it from your eyes.

This is a human form, in which every Divine Entity, every Divine Principle, that is to say, 'all the names and forms ascribed by man to God, are manifest.' (Sarvadaivatva swaru-palaru dharinchina manavakaramleakaram). Do not allow doubt to distract you; if you only install, in the alter of your heart, steady faith in My Divinity, you can win a vision of My Reality. Instead, if you swing like the pendulum of a clock, one moment-devotion, another moment disbelief, you can never succeed in comprehending the Truth and win that bliss. You are very fortunate that you have a chance to experience the bliss of the vision of the Sarvadaivatwa-swarupam (The form which is all forms of all gods) now, in this life itself.

Baba revealed further:

Let me draw your attention to another fact. On previous occasions when God incarnated on Earth, the bliss of recognizing Him in the Incarnation was vouchsafed only after the physical embodiment had left the world, in spite of plenty of patent evidences of His grace. And the loyalty and devotion they commanded from men arose through fear and awe, at their superhuman powers and skills, or at their imperial and penal authority. But, ponder a moment on this Sathya Sai Manifestation; in this age of rampant materialism, aggressive disbelief and irreverence, what is it that brings to It the adoration of millions from all over the world? You will be convinced that the basic reason for this, is the fact that this is the supra-worldly Divinity in human form.

Again how fortunate you are that you can witness all the countries of the world paying homage to Bharat; you can hear adoration to Sathya Sai's name reverberating throughout the world, even while this body is existing-not at some future date but when It is with you, before you. And you can witness very soon the restoration of Sanathana Dharma to its genuine and natural status, the Dharma laid down in the Vedas for the good of all the peoples of the World. This Is the Sai Samkalpam.

—V. P. Gupta

“It was God's Will”

We often hear people talking about God's will. Whenever anything happens which is not as per their desire or as per their plans, they just say it was all God's will and thus try to forget the adverse effect of non-fulfillment of their cherished desire or at least try to absorb the impact that such a situation creates on their mind. This resignation to God's will is a sure way to keep oneself satisfied and contented even in unwelcome circumstances and there is therefore not much wrong in this sort of attitude. However, the fact is just the otherwise. Although one talks about God's will in adverse situations, he is actually repenting, cursing and regretting. He is ruminating over the sequence of events which resulted in failure to achieve the desired and is trying to think over the alternative decisions or actions which if taken at the right moment could have avoided the things happening in the way they did. Thus, leaving the matter to God's will is

just nothing but a mere verbiology, mere prattle. The desired result of leaving things to God's will is thus not achieved.

The dissatisfaction, discontentment, anger, malice and similar sentiments continue to remain as they were, rather, they get further fuel to burn with greater fury. The mental attitude of leaving things to God's will is not achieved and nor can it be achieved by simply reclining on this prop at the time of adversity. This mental attitude, this approach in practical life is possible not by remembering it at the time of failures but by following it at all times in one's life. Man has to remember that whatever is happening, good or bad, is God's will. They all are part and parcel of God's scheme and have to be accepted as such.

But this attitude does not appeal to the rationalist. He is not able to convince himself that wrong decisions, wrong actions, insufficient efforts on the part of a human, can also be God's will. Man was himself responsible for his actions and because of inadequacy of the effort or unintelligent decisions taken by him, he alone was instrumental in failing to achieve the cherished desire. It is mere escapism to just pass on one's short-comings and failures to God's will and thus, an invaluable opportunity to improve upon one's efforts or capability is lost. Therefore, it is argued that it is preferable or better to blame oneself for one's failures and thereby improve, than throwing the whole burden on God's will.

As we have stated above, merely by saying when one fails to achieve success in one's designs, that it was God's will, one cannot inculcate that mental attitude. Reliance on God's will, is a mode of living, to be constantly practised and not merely to be adopted at the moments of adversity. A person who relies on the will of God with complete faith, will, as Baba says, engage in good actions and will also take right decisions whenever called upon to do so in life. Because he wholly relies on the will of God, his decisions will not be actuated by anger, malice, hatred or even greed. He will be free from these evil traits and his Intelligence will emerge as an unsullied reflection of God's will. Whatever he will do, whatever he will say will be the God's will and God's will alone. Such a state of one's mind cannot be acquired simply by saying or uttering the words "it is all God's will." It has to be actually practised in life and lived. Man's intelligence being nearest to Atma as Baba says, is the nearest reflection of God and since all our actions and all our thinking take root in our intelligence, it is imperative that our intelligence is not allowed to be vitiated by the six maladies which are always on the prowl to grasp it. And of this purpose, there is no remedy as effective and as easy as complete faith and reliance in God.

Leave everything in His Hands and then act. There will be no occasion to repent or regret. At the same time even in the happiest moments of having achieved your wishes and desires, you will never feel that but for your decisions or actions, such results might not have been achieved. It was all God's will and therefore the chances of your getting bigoted and egoistic will be remote. And at the time of adversity God will be there to look after because it would be God's will and none of your fault. You will be the author of no action, no decision though to the world you will appear to be as such. Your life will therefore be completely peaceful, contented and full of bliss. You would have achieved and reached the real Goal of Life—God.

—D. P. Agarwal, Bhavnagar

Marvellous Reminder

I have a surprise for all mankind, to relate through you. From more than 2000 miles distance Bhagavan has created for a Christian girl named Tamar a small splendid Cross full of magnificent beauty.

About three months ago, Tamar asked for a packet of Vibhuti from me. I gave her one, from the quantity which Baba had placed in my hands when I took leave of Him last from Prasanthi Nilayam, I folded the packet in polythene and kept it in her purse. After a few weeks, she met Uida, my daughter. She told her that she was passing through miserable days. Her mother was in hospital and she had to spend most days serving her. Uida consoled her and advised her to 'see this month's new moon on Baba's picture'. That is to say, see the new moon on the first day of its appearance and immediately, look on Baba's Picture, a ritual that would bring good luck and good news. It seems Tamara was sad that she had no picture of Baba. But Uida had seen Baba's picture printed on the paper packets of Vibhuti which Baba had graciously given me. So, she said, "You have His Picture on the packet that mother gave you. Take it from your purse and see!"

When Tamara brought out the packet with the polythene around it, she was surprised, for it was rather heavy. She opened the cover and found a Cross on the Vibhuti packet, inside the polythene, resting on the picture of Bhagavan. It is apparently carved on mother-of-pearl and it has a charming floral border.

I think all Iran is honoured by this unique gift and this marvellous reminder that Bhagavan is present amongst us.

—Mahremat Jalayer, Teheran

Nagarsankirtan

A very familiar, serene scene greets the eye every Sunday morning in the grounds of the Perumal Temple in Singapore. Even as dawn breaks and the first strains of sunlight filter in through the misty skies, groups of people-men, women and children alike-all devotees of Sri Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba, move silently through the courtyard to assemble before the Ganesha deity, awaiting the start of prayers and Bhajan singing. These are the people who have chosen to awaken their day with the holy vibration of devotional songs, repeating the many names of the many different aspects or forms of GOD as He has appeared to MAN throughout history.

NAGARSANKIRTAN signifies to us peace-rendering, soul-searching mystic moments with our LORD, in which we actively participate. By attending this revered gathering, we are hoping to fill our lives with BABA's love and grace, and to instil in us the need to be close to GOD and to seek his guidance in everything that we set out to do. Unlike NAGARSANKIRTAN at

Puttaparthi, where devotees start at 5 a.m. walking along the town streets, singing Bhajans and invoking BABA's grace, in Singapore we commence prayers at 6-15 a.m. The Temple priest prepares the Ganesha deity for the first morning Puja.

Amidst this silent ritual comes the vibrant, echoing sounds of a solitary Nadaswaram player, whose short interlude signals the start of another day at the Temple. After receiving Vibhuti (Sacred Ash) and flowers from the priest, devotees seat themselves to chant the "21 OMKARAMS"; followed by the reciting of the "SUPRABHATAM". Once again, after paying the first homage to Lord Ganesha with a Ganesha Bhajan, we proceed to walk slowly round the Temple courtyard, singing Bhajans and gaining a spiritual momentum in ourselves and in our singing. With the end of the fifth round, the final Bhajan singer leads the congregation into the Temple domain. The Aarati song and the showing of the camphor flame by the priest provide a fitting finale to yet another special morning invoking BABA's grace, and expressing our untiring love and devotion for our Most Revered One.

But when all is said and done about NAGARSANKIRTAN and its procedures, do we at the end of it all feel emotionally changed. What is that magnet that draws people from all walks of life to congregate in such early hours of the morning to join in prayer? There is only one answer—It is BABA's magnetic presence that commands us to this morning prayer. He is aware of our every intention and depth of love for Him. He is the guiding hand that leads us onto the correct path in life.

Whatever our reason for attending NAGARSANKIRTAN week after week is it a step towards realisation of our alms. Whether we come to enjoy the Bhajan singing, or for just some peaceful moments with Our Saviour, are we fulfilling our need to be within the Divine Sanctity of BABA's Grace. Do we all go home satisfied and enriched with the knowledge that today's NAGARSANKIRTAN is yet another step towards BABA?

There is hardly a group of about 30-40 devotees who attend NAGARSANKIRTAN every Sunday. Surely, there are many other devotees who can well afford to join this prayer to GOD. After all, it is BABA Himself who revived this tradition of Bhajan singing in the streets, with the sincere hope that His devotees will carry out His Mission in the humblest and best possible way. What is most surprising is that all the SAI devotees who go to Puttaparthi make NAGARSANKIRTAN a must on their pilgrimage, yet it is completely forgotten on returning home.

With BABA's Grace, I have been privileged to attend NAGARSANKIRTAN for the past few months with my entire family. For my husband and myself, it has a fulfillment of our aspirations to draw closer to BABA's divinity, and to know, love and understand our "GURU" better. He is our Beacon Light to lead us to Kindly path and our absolute faith in the Almighty will see us through all the trials and tribulations of life and will help us enjoy the fruits of pleasure and comforts. For my two children, BABA is a household word. They sing His Bhajans all the time and invariably attend the NAGARSANKIRTAN which is an education in itself of discipline and dedication in worship. As the adage goes, "the family that prays (or for the matter does anything else) together, stays together." This is the thought most outstanding in the innermost recesses of

my mind and soul. Attending NAGARSANKIRTAN every Sunday gives me the added opportunity to seek BABA's blessings on my home and family.

NAGARSANKIRTAN is one of the steps towards self-realisation through establishing communion with the God Himself. It calls for a soul-searching on the part of the devotees to come up with ways and means for popularising NAGARSANKIRTAN in Singapore.

Lastly, let us join every NAGARSANKIRTAN with an open and pure mind. We would go home enriched with the wealth, love and kindness of the "SUPREME BEING" Who has chosen us to be among His millions of blessed children to share His boundless riches.

—By Sai Sangeeta

"Now, Take One More"

It happened two years ago, —that unforgettable incident and I had the most fortunate privilege to witness it!

We were returning to Whitefield, after two delightful days in Swami's Divine Presence, at Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Ooty. Swami was visiting the school for the first time, —it was started only a month back.

We halted at Muthumala Game Sanctuary, for lunch and rest, before proceeding on to Brindavan, where Swami had promised to be, by about 6 P.M. —that being the Shivarathri night.

The miracle I am about to describe took place that day—i.e. March 7th, Thursday 1979—between 11 A.M. and 12 noon.

After breakfast, Swami posed for polaroid photographs with each one of the party. He then turned to the student (still holding the camera in his hand) and said, "Now take My Photo" (i.e. Himself standing alone). He had an orange coloured robe that day and He stood holding his hands at the back, as usual. The photo slid down the camera—and a few seconds later revealed His figure, with the charming smile, and His bright orange robe. Immediately after, standing in the same spot, and in the same pose, He said, "Now, take one more." Down slid the film which, Swami caught in His hand, as He was doing all along preventing it from falling on the ground.

But, what did we see! In the place where we expected to see Swami's figure, enveloped in His orange robe, there stood a young Divine figure, in black and white. It had three heads and six hands. It wore a white garment, gracefully wound around His body, one end of the flowing garment around the bare body and drawn over the left shoulder in charming folds—like an Angavastra. Each arm was holding a different Insignia of Divinity; the lower left arm bent at the elbow, resting along the back and shoulder of a beautiful, well-fed, fully grown calf, which was half reclining on the ground—at the Feet of its Master, with its majestic young head held

majestically high. There were three or four dogs also in the background—all revealing the form of Dattatreya as described in Puranas—the integration of the three facets of the One God.

When I recovered from the wonder and the thrill of it all, I could hear Swami describing the various significances of the numerous details. And when I could put in a word, I asked Swami, the significance of the calf, (which occupied quite a big space in that picture). Swami replied smiling, "Don't you know? That cow represents Dharma! See! Swami is resting His hand on Dharma!" The rest of the explanation He had given to the students—I confess— had been lost to me in the wonder of my gazing at this, incredibly marvellous creation of Swami's Sankalpa, which transformed His Form into the Unity of Trinity, Dattatreya. A second later, Swami looked at the picture and exclaimed, "Where is my hair? All gone." No. They were not all gone—the thick crown that was on one head, had now been divided between the three Heads! And they were tied up in a sort of knot, on top of the three Heads!

And with an amused childish glee He added a second later "Look: There is Swami's mole on this cheek!" This He said pointing to a little black spot that could be discerned on the partially visible left cheek on the Head on the left side. While the Head in the Centre had the front view, the Heads on the left and the right sides, had only side views.

This is the first time, to my knowledge that a camera caught what Swami projected as Himself, through His Maha Sakthi and Maya Sakthi, with such intensity, that while He Himself was facing the camera in solid body, the lens caught, not His Physical Form, but exclusively the Form of the Figure projected by Him, in all its numerous minute details, to the exclusion of His Divine Form, which is visible to us.

May the whole world understand and realise the Lord for what He really is!

May His Gracious Blessings be on us all!!!

—*Dr. K. G. Thangamma, Nandanovanam, Ootacamund*

Our Transcendancy

I feel the Omnipresence of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as these words from Him flow through this pen. I give thanks to Him for giving us the chance to embrace His beautiful Divine Plan. These words that follow were given to me at 10 a.m. August 1, 1980, in my business office in Los Angeles, California. U.S.A.

"Living a life just to be terminated through a death has been the unspoken goal of man for far too long. This false understanding destroys his glorious ascendancy to the Throne that is here, on earth, awaiting his Coronation.

"The future beyond has been shrouded in mystery and this has driven him almost to the brink of no return. The time has come when man must be told more about the living God that dwells

inside of each person. He must also be told why God is there and how He came to reside within him. This inquiry should be pursued avidly by every individual not for the sake of learning but with the purpose of becoming That. The transcendency can come about. It is not beyond anyone's capability.

"God has become one with man. He has chosen that way to enable His wonderful Powers to be used for the expansion of His Plan. Man need not allow the finite mind to question His Infinite Mind as to the ultimate end of His unrelenting Force carrying all forward and expanding all beyond human understanding." As God is revealed in the individual so does God bestow the joys of that advent to him in a manner that encourages an even greater Closeness still to be experienced. Man then begins to assume his True Self. One might say that a death consumes the mortal and the Immortal assumes Itself. When man ascends to That Place he is beyond the unscrupulous grasp of the tyrant and the despot.

"To begin to achieve the Ultimate Condition in this body devote more of your time in close communication with the Inner One. Take the first step by deciding that you will bring the Lord's Name to your lips more frequently. This will immediately make the Inner Presence aware of your Love.

"Call your loved one, your child or your parent, by an endearing name and observe the smile you create. Call God by a name so sweet and He will watch the smile He creates. This smile that you enjoy is instant recognition of His acknowledgment of His Joy of your act of loving Him. The more you allow your mind to relate itself to the God in residency within the more you will feel your own transcendency illuminating. You will discover that you are rising above the petty harassments of the day and many things that are anchoring you. As God's Love flows within you, you will attract that same kind of Love that abounds everywhere.

"As you develop your Divine Plan the time will come when you will begin to live in the full glorious nature of the One you are. That nature holds a happiness and joy unbelievably beautiful. God has a sweetness that becomes yours as a Divine appreciation for your taking that first step towards Him for remembering His Name so lovingly.

"In life today we are more accustomed to following schedules and keeping to timetables. The mind is now used to that form of control. Therefore a suggestion would be, to make that first step to become a living participant in His Plan, to say inwardly to Yourself, 'LORD I LOVE YOU'. Do this religiously every hour on the hour.

"Just this simple sweet procedure carried out with Inner Love and Affection can bring about your own transcendency in the Temple of God that you now live in. Before I leave you now Silently pray 'LORD I LOVE YOU'."

—Charles Penn

Peace Through Seva

—Y. B. Dato' Lew Sip,
Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Malaysia

Let me tell you how I came to know of Sai Baba. I was informed that a certain group of public-spirited people were operating a weekly free medical clinic in a Squatter area in my constituency. This is a transit long-house area built to resettle illegal Squatters. There was no publicity when this medical service was launched. I came to know about it, quite by chance.

This episode brought several facts to my attention. (1) Devotees of Sai Baba included Malaysians of diverse racial groups and they belonged to different religions. The organiser is a Hindu, the Doctor is a staunch Catholic, the people they serve are Malays, Indians and Muslims. (2) This selfless service was being done without any desire for publicity. (3) The devotees of Sai Baba are those who have firm belief in God; they continue to pursue the religion of their choice or origin, they dedicate themselves to the service of mankind, regardless of race, religion or creed.

In a multi-racial country like Malaysia, where we have Malaysians of Malay, Chinese and Indian origins, and where we have virtually all the major religions of the world, this attitude of service to mankind regardless of race or religion is most laudable. If all the devotees of Sai Baba in Malaysia dedicate themselves to such services in villages, hospitals, old folk homes, orphanages, etc., they will, I am sure, create a tremendous impact on the nation. I cannot see a better way to instill Muhibbah or Goodwill that has been the call of this Government than by the type of service that I believe all of you are prepared to dedicate yourselves to.

I am amazed to find that increasing numbers of Malaysian Chinese are becoming devotees of Sai Baba. I understand that hundreds of Malaysian Chinese who, in the past would have no thought of visiting India, have, in fact, gone to India to visit Sai Baba. Malaysian Chinese are also here in this Camp. They have come from Kuantan, Penang, Kuala Lumpur and other parts of Malaysia. I am informed that, in the temple of Kuan-ti in Kuantan, classes are held for about 150 children by the devotees of Sai Baba, where they are taught religion and morality and also spiritual and devotional songs. As you are aware, in Malaysia the government has declared, Belief in God, as one of the tenets of the Rukun Nagara or, as one of the pillars of national life. If the youngsters of this country are able to turn to God and become aware of religion, spirituality and morality, there can be no better bulwark against Communism and Communalism and against the growing tide of Drug Culture and other aspects of Western influence.

If the Sai Baba movement in this country can bring people close to the religion of their own choice, if the movement can make people more conscious of God and their obligations, duties and responsibilities to their parents, their family, their schools, their state and their nation, then this movement will have done a great service to this country. I have been told that Sai Baba is a phenomenal force in the world today and that there are devotees of Sai Baba in virtually every country in the free world. I have also heard about various miracles happening in his personal presence and in the homes of devotees thousands of miles away from where he is located.

Religion has always been a source of inspiration to man to bring him along the path of righteousness and goodness. However in modern society, religion is losing its hold especially on the youngsters. Fast living is becoming a new religion. This has brought untold suffering to families. Parents who have dedicated their lives to the children find that they become liabilities, rather than assets. Religion is most important today not only for youngsters, but also for elders caught up in the rat-race for living.

Modern man can accumulate knowledge, power, and prestige but the one thing he cannot buy or acquire from others is internal peace. Internal peace is becoming a rare commodity today. The fact that wealth itself is not the answer to this problem is evident from the increasing number of suicides taking place all over the world. The fact that power and prestige are transient phenomena is evident from event taking place all around us. For man to acquire internal peace, the path of spirituality, morality and God is vital.

Many of us make the mistake of not bothering to give time to prayers, for religion, for God and for selfless service. However, if this is the message of Sai Baba and if all Sai Baba devotees dedicate themselves to tread the path of spirituality, along the religion of their choice and if they perform selfless service to their fellowmen, I am sure they will find the internal peace that they desire, while giving comfort and joy to others at the same time.

—*Concluding Address: Sadhana Camp, Port Dickson*

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22

Upasana means the acquisition of presence in the Presence of the Divine, the achievement of the bliss of adoration. Vedic tradition sanctions four paths as legitimate and fruitful to win this achievement. They are called Sathyavathi, Angavathi, Anyavathi and Nidaanavathi. We shall consider these in some detail.

Sathyavathi: The scripture defines the Divine thus: "Sarva Vyaapinam Aatmaanam, Ksheere sarpih iva arpitham"—The Atma is immanent in every thing everywhere, just as ghee interpenetrates every drop of milk. When the seeker pursues the Truth with this conviction urging his endeavour, his sadhana is called Sathyavathi (Truth-based). "Maaya thatham idam sarvam, jagadavyaktha moorthinaa," the Lord declares. "In My latent form, I am in entire Creation, operating the mystery. See in Me all this, see all this as Me." When one succeeds in this effort the Sathyavathi path will lead to success. "I shall be visible to you as all this and in all this," the Lord assures. The Lord promises this Vision of Immanence and Transcendence to whomsoever persists with full sincerity on this Sathyavathi path.

Angavathi: The Universal being is the Fire, the Wind, the Sun, the Moon and all else. He is the Breath that sustains life in all beings. He is the Fire that illumines all. He is the Rain that feeds the plants that provide sustenance. So, He can be adored either as Fire (Agni) or as Wind (Vayu)

or as Rain (Varuna), as having graciously assumed all those beneficent forms. This approach through the benign manifestations or Angas, is the Angavathi path. Anga means a 'limb', a 'fact', a 'feature'.

Anyavathi; Picturing the many-faceted Divine and symbolising, in perceivable ways, the attributes that are evidenced in each facet, the seeker endeavours to acquire the Presence of the Divine. One form of the Divine, the Omnipresent (Vishnu) is pictured as having the Conch (symbol of the Primeval word or Sound), the Wheel (Symbol of Time) and the Mace (symbol of Might and Majesty). With the facet to which is ascribed the power and willingness to overcome obstacles (Vighneswara), the single tusk symbolising sharpness and concentration is associated, Ishwara or Siva (the facet of disintegration and dissolution) has the Soola or Trident (symbolising in its three prongs, the Past, the Present and the Future). Rama, the form of righteousness or Dharma is always pictured with the Kodanda, the Bow which can send the arrow (will) straight to the target. Krishna, the manifestation of Universal love has on His Crown a peacock feather, symbolising the thousand-eyed glance of Grace. He bears a flute on which He plays enthralling tunes; the flute is the symbol of the ego-less desire-less seeker. The facet of Wisdom pictured as the Goddess, Saraswati, has a Veena in Her hand; the Veena is a stringed musical instrument, symbolic of heart-strings responding, with harmony and melody, to the gentle touch of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. Seekers meditate on these pleasing Personifications and the significance of the symbols of their attributes and adore the Divine in the Delight that wells up in their hearts. This is named Anyavathi Path—the Path through symbolised Divinity, Anya meaning the other, the adjunctory, the appurtenance.

Nidaanavathi: This path is slow but progress is always achieved when each step is successfully negotiated. "Sravanam (Listening to the Glory of God) Kirtanam (singing joyously His unique graciousness) Vishnoh smaranam (keeping in memory and recapitulating always the Majesty and Mercy of the Lord) Padasevanam (Aspiring to fall at the Feet of the Lord) Archanam (offering prayers to the image or idol of the Lord) Vandanam (offering gratitude for blessings received) Dasyam (Surrendering to the Will of the Lord) Sakhyam (Confiding completely in Him), Atmanivedanam (Dedicating thought, word and deed to Him) Thanmaya-aasakthi (Longing to merge in Him) and Parama-virahasakthi (Agony at slightest separation from Him)—these are the eleven stages which the seeker has to pass through, to win the final Consummation in Bliss. Hence, the name for this path is 'slow and sure' (Nidaana).

These four paths (Sathyavathi, Angavathi, Anyavathi and Nidaanavathi) are, each one progressively more excellent than the previous ones, as far as simplicity and in practicability are concerned. They award, in the end, Oneness with the Universal Will.

Of the various other Upasanas or Sadhanas which are mentioned in the sacred texts and practised by seekers, Pratheekopasana (Idol Adoration) or Prathi-roopopasana (Image Adoration) is included under Angavathi Upasana "Sarvathah paani paadam thath, sarvathokshi Siro mukham"—"Everywhere His Hand and Feet, everywhere His Head and Face." The Lord (Madhava) has His Hands everywhere, for He is in all. He sees through all the eyes. He thinks, plans and resolves in all heads. He eats through all mouths, hears through every ear. Through one Form, you can adore Him as all Forms. This is the highest ideal—He is latent in all beings;

He operates unseen in and through all. This is the Prathi-roopa-upasana, worshipping Him as present in each. There are sundry other Upasanas too, mentioned in the texts

Bhanopasana: Ascribing to the Lord the Highest splendour, the deepest compassion, the most potent Power, etc. and worshipping Him as such.

Geethopasana: Adoring Him as the Master and Preceptor who teaches the Gita and reveals the Way. The epic Mahabharata is revered as a Veda, the fifth one. It sets out the code of morality that man must adhere to, for realising his goal, both here and hereafter. It is an Inexhaustible treasure-chest or guidelines for righteous living and spiritual uplift. Here, the Lord can be seen on the theatrical stage of Dharmakshetra, with all the equipments and roles, the plots and counter-plots the denouements and devices, for his Cosmic Play, He is enacting in His own marvellous way. That play is the epic, the Mahabharata. In this play, the actors and actresses, the dialogues and texts, the cues and songs, have been assembled by Him. He is the cast, the director, the audience—all. It is Madhava who manifests as and manipulates in every thing and being. On one side, boundless material strength urged on by unrighteous greed and on the other, the apparently limited strength of the Atman, the ever-righteous. In the `Cosmic Confrontation and conflict between these two forces, the Lord stands forth as the arbiter, the supreme embodiment of the victory of Right over Might. This is the ultimate ambrosia available in the Mahabharata—the Bhagavad-Gita, the Song of Divine Triumph. The core lesson which the epic is bent on teaching is contained in the Gita—the seeker surrendering, with the words, "Karishye vachanam thava—Your word shall be obeyed" and the Lord admonishing the seeker, "Swadharme nidhanam sreyah—In fulfilling the duty assigned to you lies your safety and prosperity." All work should be tested on this criterion.

The path of dedication to the Will of God (Bhakti) should not be discarded, for it can lead you to all-round delight and bliss. Instead, if one closes his eyes and instills into himself the conceit that He is Brahman, he will miss the joy and become a victim of anxiety. When you pound husk, you cannot expect rice grains to result, can you? And, Krishna is no other than the very Brahman!

Adwathopasana: "The body of the Cow has milk in it. The Milk has ghee in it. But, the ghee cannot be a source of strength to the Cow. The milk has to be drawn, yeast added to curdle it, butter has to be churned out and clarified to produce the ghee which, when consumed by the cow, can give it strength. So too, though God is omnipresent and omni-motivating, He has to be discovered and cognised, in order to confer the Bliss, Awareness. Like oil in mustard, butter in yogurt, like water inside the earth, like fire in timber, God is present but not patent in everything. God is in the human body and in the human mind. To become aware of Him there, spiritual effort is necessary. When that is undertaken, the unity of both can be realised. One will not thereafter experience "two" or "difference". The awareness of the one without a second is `Liberation', release from bondage.

Yisishia-adwathia: (Qualified Monism) Ramanuja stressed on the problem whether the God whom one seeks to worship and realise as real must be conceived as being apart from oneself, or whether God can be conceived as in oneself. His answer is Life is the soul of the body; God is the soul of Life. God is the grantor, the force, the sustainer. Seek Him in that spirit. The

Supreme Sovereign Purusha in whom all the elements reside, and who is the indweller and inner motivator of all Creation can be known and experienced only by winning Grace through surrender. Understand well His transcendence and immanence and, realising one's deficiencies, surrender the ego, in order to partake of His Glory. The mental attitude of the seeker should be "Twam eva sarvam, mama deva deva: Thou alone art all, O my God of Gods." You are the urge, you are the path, you are the goal." The spiritual effort must be one-pointed, unwavering, untiring.

Dwaithopasana: (Dualism) The Dualistic outlook on the relationship between God and the individual is that of husband and wife. Vishnu, the Lord, the ever free, ever-full, has to be adored as the wife adores the husband. Among such Sadhakas, Chaitanya is most noteworthy. He established a distinct *Chaithanyopasana* itself. Without the anguished yearning for the Feet of Lord Krishna liberation cannot be gained. Why? Even purification of one's intelligence is not possible without that yearning. This is the assertion of Chaitanya. He declares that sages and others capable of being immersed in inner bliss can enjoy the ecstasy of the supreme consciousness through the contemplation of the auspicious, restorative and cleansing attributes of the Lord, Sri Hari. No text or scripture is needed for them to realise this bliss. Sunk in the waves of that Divine ecstasy, the person ignores all the norms of social behaviour and escapes from all conventions; he sings aloud the names of Hari, sheds streams of joy, dances in divine delight and experiences unadulterated genuine bliss. He feels that the Lord's Feet have made every inch of ground holy. Thus they sing the glory of the Lord fully attuned to Him. This Sadhana was emphasised, as the easiest and most fruitful, by Chaitanya. His chiefest goal was to attain the absence of body-consciousness, in the flood of ecstasy that surges from melodious group-singing of the majesty and mercy of the Lord.

(To be continued)

Subjective or Objective

—Lawrence Galante

In speaking to someone recently about Sai Baba, the person told me, "If you can find God in Sai or in anyone else then that person becomes God to you and you are benefitted by having found God in them!" I realize that there are many gurus, holymen, and highly evolved souls around. And I recognize that many are doing an important and beneficial task for the uplift of humanity. Yet I believe that Sai Baba stands different and apart from an ordinary guru, holyman, or spiritual teacher! A man finds his teacher or his teacher may find him, and the two benefit from the interaction. They fulfil one another's destiny. Both are brought closer to their goal. A perfect example of this can be found in "Autobiography of a Yogi" by Yogananda. When Yogananda first set eyes on his Guru Yukteswar, who was a 'realized' being Yukteswar told him, "How many years I have waited for you."

I claim that Sai Baba's Godliness is not merely my or anyone else's subjective projection, but rather, Divinity objectively expressing Itself through that sacred body called Sathya Sai Baba. Even if no one in the world acknowledged Him as Divine, He would remain the Incarnation of

Love and Goodness. Of course millions of people do regard Him as the Avatar of this Age. Kasturi opens his book "Sai Baba" with the sentence: "This is the story of the Lord come in human form." Yogi Suddhananda Bharathi, tells us; "I have practised Yoga for over 20 years; I have come in contact with Sri Shirdi Baba, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo, Sri Meher Baba and others; now, as a result of all this discipline, I have, met Sri Sathya Sai Baba." Kasturi also states in his introduction, "I have great sympathy for those who are unaware of Baba's stature, for I, too, demurred, doubted, and disbelieved Baba's validity with all the sarcasm and satire found in the novels, dramas, and essays which I wrote and published on various subjects. For many years I, too, in my stupid pride, did not make any effort to meet Him. I invite everyone now, to come and share His Grace and Mercy and stand witness to the Divine Power that He personifies."

It is easy to understand one man seeing goodness in another and projecting Godliness onto this man, but it is quite another story when someone who is either neutral or even negative towards Baba, comes to the same conclusions of Divinity. Study the neutral testimonies of Drs. Sandweiss, Osis, and Bhagavantham. I could also mention many people who approached Sai Baba with violent negativity and left revering Him as Lord. Indra Devi, famous yoga teacher and now a devotee of Sai Baba, tells an incident in her book "Sai Baba and Sai Yoga", of a man thoroughly annoyed at his family's devotion to Baba, who went to Him insisting that he produce a rainbow as proof of His Divinity. When Baba produced the desired rainbow, he then demanded a fruit not found in India. Baba instantly produced the said fruit and let him eat half of it and then gave the other half to an ailing person to relieve his problem. Thieves, when come upon by Baba dividing their loot gave up their evil ways and followed the masses in worshipping Him. And if these are not convincing enough, I would ask; is the opinion of a dead man subjective or objective? Sai Baba has stood over three corpses and commanded them to rise. They all resurrected. Are these subjective awestruck persons projecting Divinity? No, this is Divinity expressing itself regardless of the subjectivity of the situation. The power of Life over death is something relegated to God and, God alone. The Bible tells us that Jesus demonstrated this very same animating power with Lazarus. This is where subjective projections of Divinity end, and objective evidence of Divinity should be understood. Life over death is no easy matter. Authenticated and verifiable stories are also difficult to find. I personally meet Mrs. Cowan, the wife of Walter Cowan—the American whom Sai Baba resurrected from the morgue. I also met the neighbours who told me of the numerous changes that came over Mr. Cowan after his return to his body. These people are alive and may be contacted and spoken to, as I did.

Divinity Incarnate has the characteristic of manifesting miraculous power to help His creation and to convince it that God is and that God is with man. Most importantly God displays His power to bring the precious gift of faith.

"Unless ye see signs and wonders ye shall not believe." -Jesus. "It would not be incorrect to call Me the Incarnation of Love." says Sai Baba. And to staunch disbelievers; "If anyone asks you to show them God, don't hesitate to direct these people to Puttaparthi." Puttaparthi is the village of Baba's birth and the present sight of a spiritual center built around Him by His many followers.

One can point to several important differences between Sai Baba and other gurus. One is that Sai Baba has nothing to gain by helping humanity. He takes nothing from anybody. He is

complete always, in a state of God Union always. He cannot be uplifted. He has nowhere further to evolve. He dwells perpetually in the state of Transcendental Bliss. He is not of this world.

"I do not belong to any place, I am not attached to any name. I have no 'mine' or 'thine'. I answer, whatever the name you use. I go, wherever I am taken...I have a task: to foster all mankind and ensure for all of them lives full of bliss. I have a vow; to lead all who stray away from the straight path back again into goodness and save them." - Baba. - "Don't confuse Me with this body, I am never born nor do I die."

The Language of Devotion

'With their mind fastened on ME with love, they are no more conscious of their own people or even of their own self, much less of this world or the next— any more than the sages, lost in Yogic trance are conscious of this world of names and forms—and merged into ME like rivers that lose themselves in the waters of the ocean'.

Bhagavata XI-12-12

Man has developed languages to express himself and to communicate with others -with even those in the remotest parts of the world. He has languages to direct the course of rockets sent into space, to vehicles landing on the moon, or to man-made satellites orbiting the earth. He converses with machines (computers), discusses problems and seeks solutions which, in given circumstances, may be beyond the capacity of even the human brain. But of what avail are those, when he lives a total stranger to the ONE within him, the One who is the very substratum and support of his existence?

Learned disputations, sentimental orations and scriptural citations do not take us far, if what we want is freedom from the thralldom of the senses and release from the bondage of Samsara (worldly life). In His infinite compassion, Bhagavan Baba says: 'As a matter of fact, language is an impediment in dealing with ME. All languages have a place in the concourse of men, bringing out their feelings, hiding their weaknesses, shaping their thoughts etc., but I speak and listen to the language of the soul'. And love, devotion, equanimity, harmony and their variations constitute the vocabulary of that language!

The scriptures are unmistakable in their declaration that man's freedom from the bondage of Samsara—the world of dualities—and the attainment of peace and abiding happiness can only come from the conquest of the mind and the realisation of the Self. The Upanishad declares: 'The fetters of the heart are broken, all doubts are dissolved and all Karma melt away when He that is both high and low is seen' (Mundaka IV-2-2). That indeed is Jnana (Wisdom), the culmination of all austerities, all disciplines of the aspirant in search of Truth.

Thousands of years ago, the great teachers could however see that this path was not for ordinary men who are caught in the meshes of material life, undergoing the tyranny of the senses and trying to get a foothold on the raft which, with the Divine Grace—would take them across the

sea of Samsara. For them an equally efficacious and more practical course was necessary and this they found was the Path of Devotion or Bhakti. Vyasa, Suka, Uddhava and many others took to this path and exemplified its efficacy in leading to the state of Supreme Bliss of Sat-chit-ananda, the same state achieved through Jnana. If that was true of the epic period—the Bhagavata period, when spirituality was of greater heights, Bhakti is perhaps the only means today, when we have fallen into much lower levels in the scale of spirituality. Let there be no doubt therefore that while we seek the sustaining strength from the wisdom of the scriptures, and particularly the Upanishads, the path—and perhaps the only path—that we have today is the path of devotion. 'There is enough of Bhakti in every Upanishad, if you will only seek for it - but many of these ideas which are found so fully developed in later times in the Puranas and Smritis are only in germ form in the Upanishads' said Swami Vivekananda.

This understanding by itself may not take us nearer the goal, since Bhakti demands much more than what most of us who call ourselves devotees are giving or are prepared to give. Despite our thronging for the Darshan of Bhagavan Baba, despite our listening to the nectarine words of wisdom from Him, particularly declaring and emphasising the greatness of Love, despite the greatness of Love, despite the thrill that we experience from every thought of Him, we do not have the devotion to the Lord to merit Bhagavan addressing us as Bhaktas. He would only remind us our nature as embodiments of the Divine (Divyatmaswarupas).

Bhakti demands much more; it demands our living in God, in whatever form we conceive Him. 'The devotion, nevertheless, manifests itself in one, whosoever it be, when one has made oneself fit for such manifestation by constant Sadhana' (Narada Bhakti Sutra 53). The Gopis constitute the greatest example of Bhaktas and the greatness of their devotion which is comparable only with the Self-realisation of Yogis is what Lord Krishna pointed out to Uddhava in Bhagavatha (quoted at the beginning of this article) Even in this age the world saw similar heights of devotion in Sati Meera, Sant Tukaram, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and many more.

It was not a mere accident that the great Vyasa who gave the world the wisdom of the Upanishads, composed the Puranas and especially the Bhagavata Mahapurana—the scripture of Bhakti par excellence. Bhakti is thrice blessed according to Bhagavata, wherein Sri Suka says: 'Enquiry about Lord Vasudeva's stories purifies three—him that describes, him that enquires and him that listens (X-1-16)'. Acharya Sankara the greatest exponent of Jnana did not forget to tell aspirants on the spiritual path, that the best means of achieving the beatitude of Divine Wisdom was Bhakti, as it satisfied the emotional needs of the Sadhakas. He also composed several stotras (devotional verses) for worship of Gods and Goddesses. Such worship of the Deity with form, even with desire—desire for release—could according to him lead to the desireless state. In Viveka Choodamani we find him describing Bhakti: 'Among the instruments and conditions necessary for liberation, Bhakti (devotion) alone is supreme. A constant attempt to live up to one's own Real Nature is called single-pointed devotion' (Verse 32). Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi who was a Jivanmukta was steeped in Bhakti and at the very first Darshan of Arunachala he surrendered with the words, 'Oh, father! I have come here according to your orders and surrendered to you'. In fact he considered Bhakti as synonymous with Jnana. 'I approach Easwara and pray to be absorbed in Him and I then surrender myself with faith and concentration. What remains afterwards!' Let us mark the expression, 'surrender with faith and concentration'.

The Bhagavad-Gita, in fact, discusses only two Yogas, Jnana and Bhakti. Karma yoga and Raja yoga are really adjuncts to the path of Bhakti, the royal path for most. 'The difficulty of those whose thoughts are set on the Unmanifested is greater, for the goal of the Unmanifested is hard to reach by the embodied being' (Gita XII-5). With His love for Arjuna, which has a parallel only in the love of Bhagavan Baba for mankind, He suggests various alternative disciplines that could be followed according to one's emotional state and intellectual level: meditation on the Lord, performing actions for the sake of and in the name of God, renouncing the fruits of one's activity etc. The Lord finally enjoins on Arjuna, 'On Me alone fix thy mind, let thy understanding dwell In Me. In Me alone shalt thou live thereafter. Of this there is no doubt' (Gita XII-8). We have the same message from Bhagavan Baba, 'His (Bhakta's) very breath is God; his very act Is God; his thoughts are of God; his words are uttered by God about God'.

In the language of Bhakti all names and forms are one. To Hanuman and Vibhishana it was Rama; to the Gopis it was Krishna, to Sati Meera it was Girdhara Gopala (Sri Krishna); to Sri Ramakrishna it was the Mother—to most of us it is Bhagavan Baba. And the Lord has assured: 'whatever form any devotee with faith wishes to worship, I make that faith of his, steady' (Gita VII-21). All worship ennobles and elevates the soul.

The language of devotion is Love, unbounded Love; love that flows towards the Supreme, in whatever form it is visualised—Love that embraces all humanity, and all creation, of which the self-same Reality is the substratum. To such a man God is ever present, says the Lord: 'He who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me—I am not lost to him, nor is he lost to Me! (Gita VI-30). 'The love that he (man) has cultivated for men and things has to be sublimated into pure, divine worship. Then it gets transmuted as Bhakti', says Bhagavan Baba.

The language of devotion is adoration of the Lord, the adoration of the kind that the Gopis of Vraja had towards Sri Krishna; the craving for the Lord, the dependence on the Lord as one's own life-breath, the thought of the Lord rising uppermost in one's mind irrespective of what one does. That adoration manifests in diverse ways and derives its strength from meditation and worship, japa and bhajan, study, service of devotees, acts of loving charity, pilgrimages to places sanctified by His name and so on.

The language of devotion is the total acceptance of and total faith in the Lord—a faith which consummates in surrender, giving oneself to the Lord absolutely and utterly, with nothing asked, except His acceptance of our love and worship. Divine Grace is already with us; we have only to allow it free play, by making the mind pure for it.

The language of devotion is the dedication of everything to the Lord—not merely the results of one's action, but the actions themselves. Even if the mind vacillates and gives in to desire and anger, let these also be surrendered to the Lord. 'Dedicating all activities to Him, desire, anger, pride etc., should be directed only towards Him or employed only in the exercise of Bhakti towards Him' (Narada Bhakti Sutra 65). The most practical course has been outlined by the Lord in the Gita: 'Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eateth, whatever thou offerest, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerities thou dost practise—do that, O, Son of Kunti, as an offering to Me.' (IX-27). To Uddhava also, His advice was the same: 'With life and intellect dedicated to

Me and his mind and soul finding delight in courses of conduct pleasing to Me, man should gradually learn to perform all actions for My sake, remembering Me (all the while) (Bhagavata)'. No advice can be clearer.

Despite the advance of science and technology, despite the dizzy heights to which material progress has taken the world, the clouds of fear and frustration continue to darken the mental horizon of man. The human spirit is languishing in despair and darkness. But through all the din and clamour, one can hear, if only one listens to it, the voice of Bhagavan Baba deep and clear, calling one and all to take to the path of Love, the path that leads towards Him, towards the Splendour that He Is. We are only to take the first few steps to bring Him rushing towards us. With faith in His Grace, dedicating everything in us to Him, let us as our sadhana progresses, surrender to Him totally, so that one day, some day, He may recognise our devotion, and, in His own endearing way, address us as Bhaktas.

—C. P. K. Nair

The Third World Conference

Another World Conference ...
another 5 years in the most Supreme Advent!
Behold, the One Purusha who is so above
has come, to gather His Bhaktas from
across the globe!
Another Conference, to delve into His Majesty—
which is our very own—

To look upon Glory, Beauty and Truth, all
encompassed in one,
and to see our own faults
and where we can correct them-

Another Conference, where devotees gather
from around the planet,
discussing ideas—formulating
new patterns and bringing,
into fruition good deeds of Bal Vikas
Bhajans or Seva,

Teaching the young to respect the sacred ideals
found in all the major religions,
singing of God's Glory in all languages,
with devotion and Love
serving the needy—helping, wherever the
unity of all man inspires to act.
O Lord, Bhagavan Baba! As we gather at Your Feet
at this Third World Conference, let us
formulate the proper ideals and methods,

and serve your organisation to carry out
Your Will—let us sanctify our own lives
implementing the Guidelines in our own
Activities—and yes, O Lord —let the
fruits of all actions be Yours—yes, let
fruits of all actions be yours.

—**Michael J. Hollander**

What is the goal of human life? What is the objective that man must realize? Is it just eating, drinking, sleeping, tasting a little joy and grief and finally dying like any bird or beast? No, certainly not, a little thought will reveal that it is not so. The goal is Brahma-Sakshatkara, the realization of the Absolute, of Brahman (the eternal absolute). Without that no man can attain Shanti (Peace). He must win that Bliss of Divine Grace. However much one strives to extract happiness from the multiplicity of worldly things the quantum of satisfaction is very little, and, as for Peace or Shanti, one finds it impossible to get that through things of the world. The mind can have peace only when it merges in the Absolute Consciousness, the Primal Cause, the unchanging existence.

—**Baba**

Touch The Divine

—**Occah Seapaul, Trinidad**

Commenting on Avatars, Swami Prabhav Ananda of the Ramakrishna Order tells us that their validity is very often revealed by that unique power of transmitting spirituality and transforming men's lives by touch, look or wish.

It was the third day of the Dasara Festival 1979. I was among the thousands who thronged into the Poornachandra Hall to have that much-sought Darshan. My Lord was walking along the aisle when I lifted up some letters to HIM. Those life-filled eyes fell on me and the hand that was stretched out to receive the letters came into contact with my right forefinger. The experience began and my Master moved on. A deep stillness permeated and penetrated my whole being and for a moment I felt that I was alone in that huge hall. A few seconds of unawareness followed, and on my return to reality, I became aware of my inability to speak. The stillness within persisted, and I began to experience what I think has been referred to as the peace that passeth all understanding. In this state of bliss I lived within the depths of silence for five days. Bhagavan brought me to the realization that "Only in Absolute Stillness can you know me as I really am, and then, but as a feeling and as a faith."

Everyone who sits in the Darshan line, longs for a look, a word or touch from the Master and a few days after Dasara I was blessed with a very tender and meaningful experience. Sitting in the line for morning Darshan I summed up the courage to speak to Bhagavan as HE approached. Those love filled eyes met mine, and as I spoke, HIS giving hand reached out for my half-stretched one. The contact was made, and from the hand of the Divine was materialized a

large crystal type sweet. The Lord moved on and, as I clutched the sweet, the effect of that mother-like touch began to manifest itself. I sunk again for about half an hour into a great silence and I was made aware of the truth that "this Sai Mata has the love of a thousand mothers."

Years before the first meeting with my Master, I had prayed. "O Heavenly Father! If thou art incarnated on earth, draw me to thee and lift me to a consciousness of oneness with thee." They were Bhagavan's mode of revealing to me that HE was indeed the Heavenly Father to whom I prayed to be drawn, and who was fulfilling my prayer for a spiritually uplifted consciousness.

I urge all readers to understand the immense sacrifice the Godhead has made by incarnating as our Beloved Bhagavan. This form HE has assumed for lifting the consciousness of man from sensuality to spirituality, and if hearts are open and receptive, all can be touched and lifted.

Watch or Watchman?

A gift from Bhagavan is a lifelong benediction. When it happens to be a watch, it can be a multiple blessing. For one thing, it is a perpetual reminder of how time is fleeting and why one should make one's life meaningful and purposeful not in terms of the transient things of life but of the eternal. Moreover, anyone wearing Bhagavan's watch will have the compelling feeling that it is much more than a mechanical contraption that indicates the relentless march of Time. It is, indeed, a veritable Watchman, reminding the wearer of Bhagavan's caveat as to what a watch signifies in spiritual terms. Its constant message, in Bhagavan's memorable words, is a call to everyone to watch one's words (W), action (A) thought (T) character (C) and heart (H).

With such a watchman ever on the vigil, will anyone be tempted to go astray? If the Greeks made a gift of a horse to get behind the impregnable ramparts of Troy, Bhagavan presents a watch out of the abundance of his love and grace to get inside the ramparts of one's heart to make a better person of him.

Bhagavan in Many Lands

On the first day of June, I was in Bulgaria, having been invited to conduct a Yoga Teachers' Course by the Minister for Culture, when she was in India. I told her about Bhagavan and gave her the book, "Sai Baba and Sai Yoga" and showed the film on the 50th Birthday Festival. All this prompted her to drive to Prasanthi Nilayam and she returned greatly impressed by Baba.

My visit to Sofia was a beautiful experience. The class of 150 enthusiastic yoga learners consisted of university professors, doctors, engineers, artists and others. I had also to hold classes in three hospitals where the doctors and nurses had to be taught special Asanas and breathing exercises for patients suffering from various illnesses. I had perforce to talk of Baba when questions were asked why I had named the course 'Sai Yoga' and I had to bring forth the japmala of 108 pearls which Baba had given for passing on to the very ill in order to heal them. Many instances of Baba's Grace were related to me with tears of gratitude by those who learnt yoga from me. Professor B. was sent to me through Government channels in the hope that Yoga, Sai yoga to be more correct, might heal him. For some reason unknown to the doctors, he could walk only for a distance of about 50 metres. At that point, his legs could move no more, though they looked perfectly normal. During 40 years of teaching Yoga, I had never faced such an enigma. I gave him Vibhuti dissolved in water and applied a little on his legs, while he was holding the japmala and praying. The next day, he was normal and could walk miles with no difficulty.

There was a mother who was so stricken at her father's death while she was in the hospital that she refused even to see her newborn baby. She abruptly left her room when I entered it. I left some Vibhuti with her mother, asking her to give it to her in water. The next day the mother asked for the baby and fed her.

At Athens, devotees were eager to see the films and hear about Him. Then I left for California, Mexico, San Salvador and Guatemala. Bhagavan's message was received with stormy enthusiasm in all parts of Latin America, be it in Mexico, Guatemala, San Salvador or Lima in Peru. His name was on the lips of thousands and it has sunk deep into the hearts of those who have become His devotees. Faith was fertilised by many mysterious happenings in places where Bhagavan's portraits were adored. In Guatemala, a yoga student had a dream that she was working on a statue of Bhagavan. When her mother came to wake her up early next day, she was surprised to find her fingers covered with clay! Another lady running a shoe store had just returned from Prasanthi Nilayam. She encountered a hold-up by three gunmen. They asked for money and she asked Baba for help. Immediately, the fellow who drew out his gun, said, "I was misinformed" and wanted only shoes! Collecting the shoes, they made a fast exit. An armed robbery and all that the gunmen got was three pairs of cheap shoes!

In San Salvador, belief in Bhagavan's omnipresence and omnipotence rose greatly after the miraculous escape of Hernandez Quinonez. He with his wife was driving from their ranch back to San Salvador when several assailants stopped the car. At gunpoint, they forced the man to hand over his revolver and 2000 American dollars. While they were searching the trunk, the frightened couple started praying to Bhagavan for their safety. All of a sudden, the gunmen re-appeared in the window and gave back the revolver and the wad of dollars and disappeared into the darkness, leaving both of them dumbfounded,

One day at Lima (Peru) Elizabeta Maldonato took me to the office of her husband, a medical doctor, to show me the room which they had converted into a shrine, since Bhagavan had cured her from an incurable disease when she went with him to Prasanthi Nilayam last year.

"What do you say to this miracle?" Elizabeta exclaimed, pointing at a large Cross of yellow flower petals on the red carpet in front of the altar with Baba's pictures. "I had placed fresh flowers on these two vases the previous evening and left. By morning, the petals had loosened by themselves and scattered into this sacred shape. Quite a few did not believe the story, the miraculous denudation of the flowers and the mystery of the design which was formed. So, with tears in my eyes, I prayed for a sign. Within minutes, while we sat in meditation, after switching off lights and with only candles flickering, a footprint appeared on the carpet of petals, on the Cross! Baba's Foot!

You cannot imagine what was going on after that! Every one rushed forward to see it and touch it. People fell on their knees, crying and praying, embracing each other in joyful gratitude at this sign of Grace." "But when they were, all finally gone," said Elizabeta, "the Cross looked very disbaratado (disrupted), because so many petals were missing since people took them home and I had no heart to stop them. Sad and heartbroken, I asked Baba to restore the Cross. Seven weeks later, while the original petals were still fresh and fragrant (!), He answered my prayer. The blank spaces caused by the over-enthusiastic devotees were filled with fresh marigold petals from nowhere." I prostrated before the altar with the Cross and the Footprint yellow marigold on red carpet!

—*Indra Devi*

Journeys to the Presence

Meeting God in human form is a mystic experience for the sage, who yearns for nothing else than God Himself. For the ignorant it is an opportunity to experience security, knowing that God always is close to him and ready to render help. Nobody can be unaffected by a confrontation with God, whether He appears with or without form.

It was the karma of previous lives that sowed the seed of Godness into Curth and Sisko Orefjaerd. For Curth, this was done by his intimate contact with his grandmother who lived with her daughter and took care of Curth. She was a self-taught Yogi, who through common sense understood the mysteries of nature and experienced its omnipresent stillness (God). Curth shared her spiritual sensitivity, learnt to reach inner stillness by breathing and felt a oneness with all creation. Sisko was brought up in the circles around one of the leading theosophists in Finland. When they met, each one had the seed of Godness, sprouting within. During their years together, the circumstances of life developed their faith and belief in these Divine sparks.

Curth developed will-power through the comprehension that man can accomplish everything he wills. This resulted in a successful business career. But, as it always happens when will-power is

directed towards something else than God himself, a price must be paid. The price Curth had to pay was physical health problems. These; in their turn, offered Curth the chance to switch over to hatha yoga thereby curing himself. The sickness gave him also the chance to contemplate on the ever-changing and transitory nature of worldly life. His thoughts began more and more to go towards the goal of spiritual life, God Himself, whose nature has been described as sat-chit-ananda (pure existence, pure intelligence and pure bliss).

It was quite natural for Curth and Sisko to give up a planned luxury vacation in Hawaii and instead make a trip to Sathya Sai Baba, when an opportunity was suddenly offered them—an opportunity they had been waiting for a year since they had heard about Sathya Sai Baba.

On December 16, 1979, it started—the journey for which they had been unconsciously preparing themselves for more than half a century. They travelled together with nine other Swedes, all of whom were serious spiritual seekers. The first halting place was Ceylon, and here Curth's fantastic journey towards higher spiritual sphere started. During their week's stay there, the final ground was laid for Curth's confrontation with God. His meditation experiences were intensified to the extent that, for several hours at a stretch, he lost body consciousness and experienced the formless AUM vibrating through this endless Universe. This experience was so revolutionary for Curth, that he prayed to Sai Baba to awake him early next morning for continued meditation, practice, while the hotel was still quiet. Curth awoke Sisko at 3 a.m. next morning, shouting "Yes, yes Sai Baba, yes Sai Baba." Sai Baba had obviously roused him as an answer to his prayer.

After a trying trip they reached the village Puttaparthi, Sai Baba's birthplace. The two Darshans Sai Baba gives are, of course the dearest hours of the day. There is nothing priestly or ceremonial in His manners but His radiation is overwhelming, as a consequence of the enormous Love that is flowing out of Him. At Curth's first Darshan Sai Baba showed that He had noticed him, by giving him a deep penetrating look. At the next Darshan Sai Baba came up to Curth and asked him to come in for an interview.

When in with Sai Baba, He asked what was the peculiar locket Curth was having in a chain around his neck. "It is Shiva" Curth answered. Sai Baba said "No, that's wrong, it is not Shiva, it is just a monkey." Curth explained, "But for me it has been Shiva." "Yes, yes, I know" was Sai Baba's answer. He then took the locket in His hand and asked if Curth would like instead to have a locket with a picture of Baba's two latest incarnations, Shirdi Baba and Sathya Sai Baba. After an astonished assent from Curth He waved His hand, blew three times on the same and let the locket hang on its chain in front of Curth's surprised eyes. Then Sai Baba hung the locket around Curth's neck, blessed him and said that this locket would always protect him. The entirely shaken-up Curth was unable to express his thanks—he just fell down and kissed Sai Baba's feet. Then Sai Baba mentioned Curth's bad back, stroked it over and said that He would strengthen it. Afterwards Sisko had to help the totally shaken-up Curth, whom friends helped out of the temple ground, to their room in the village.

At the following Darshan Curth was waiting in striking deep meditation. When passing him, Sai Baba smiled and asked, "Are you happy now?"—"Yes, yes, very very happy."—

On the last, the seventh day of their visit, the whole Swedish group was called for an interview. Sai Baba went into the inner room and brought a stool for "my lovely son", as He called Curth, to sit on. At the end of the group interview Sai Baba gave a private interview to Curth in the inner room. When coming out He explained to the group, "This is my lovely son."

At 4 o'clock Curth and Sisko came once more to Sai Baba. Sai Baba asked what Sisko wanted to have. Upon her answer that she wished to get Love for conveying to people around her, she received an extraordinarily beautiful silver box with Vibhuti—and Sai Baba's instructions how and when to use it. When Baba asked what Curth wanted, he answered. "You know my thoughts and wishes." The present was a ring with a picture of Shirdi Baba, Sai Baba's previous incarnation.

Curth and Sisko left India firmly determined to return as soon as they had taken care of the duties that were waiting for them in Sweden. In Sweden the inner spiritual experiences continued, on Curth's part. In his meditation Sai Baba came and gave him instructions of both spiritual and worldly nature. Some of these experiences were so fantastic that Curth doubted their reality. Their correctness was, however, later on verified personally by Sai Baba, during Curth's second trip to India in March 1980.

During 1980 Sai Baba gave Curth an intensive spiritual treatment, consisting of discussions, materializations and visions, for securing Curth's sense of unity with Him. Curth could experience how Sai Baba worked in his body. Sai Baba is unbound by time and space. He uses His Divine form for attracting and astonishing the human mind and drawing it closer to His formless reality.

On several occasions Sai Baba had seen Curth go into Samadhi (yoga trance) and told him to gain control over the bodily reactions which arose when re-entering body consciousness. He also told Curth that what he was experiencing in his body as electrical vibrations and streams was the awakening of the so-called Kundalini power and the opening of Chakras. Further He explained how Curth should use his volitional control so that these reactions could be diminished. Sai Baba also assured Curth that He Himself would take care of Curth's spiritual education. On April 7th Sathya Sai Baba went by car to Ooty where there is a Sai school. He told Curth and Sisko to follow him there, which, of course, they gratefully did.

Here in Ooty, Curth could experience another aspect of Sathya Sai Baba. Sai Baba's stay in Ooty was coloured by a deep intimacy, which was fortified by; the relatively small crowd being there as well as the deep innocence and love which could be read from the faces of the pupils, when Sai Baba was moving amongst them.

One day Sai Baba called Curth and Sisko in. When they entered the room, there were already half a dozen students from the Bangalore University, some professors and a retired Indian minister seated around Sai Baba. Curth had thought that Sai Baba would give a discourse on some spiritual subject which He wanted also Curth and Sisko to hear. But, instead Sai Baba asked Curth to tell about his way of meditation and his experiences of Samadhi. Curth told how he had seen Sai Baba in the cosmos, surrounded by Godlike disciples, singing to His Glory. He

told also how he had experienced the entire absorption with God and how he became One with God in the highest state of Samadhi.

Back to Puttaparthi and the heat. When Curth and Sisko arrived, they were treated with all care and comfort. It could, however, not prevent Curth from getting, some days later, cramps in his legs and lower part of the body disabling Curth from going for Darshan. Sai Baba then saw Curth, blessed him and materialised Vibhuti, which He stroked on his legs. He explained that these cramps were the result of the mental experiences Curth had had. After this, Curth was cured.

Many conversations followed, and a new locket was created for Curth. Also here in Puttaparthi Curth had to speak to Sai Baba's students about his meditation. The second evening, when students and teachers were present, Sai Baba Himself told about Bhakti yoga, sadhana, etc. in Telugu—and everything was translated into English. He held up Curth as a model for yoga practicing.

Sai Baba created, with His hand, a green Lingam, where all the Chakras were marked with black dots. This He showed to all others present, but not to Curth. Afterwards, when He was alone with Curth, He showed him the Lingam and said, pointing to the dots: "These I have opened in you." On May 9th Sai Baba said, "Tomorrow we go to Bombay, you shall fly with me at 5 o'clock." It was, however, impossible for Curth and Sisko to get tickets on that flight. When Sai Baba heard this, He simply said, "No, it is not impossible, you fly with me." A man turned up with help and they flew together with Baba to Bombay. In Bombay Curth and Sisko experienced two days with wonderful Darshans, with thousands of devotees. Curth was asked to go home and start a Sai Centre there.

Blessings by Sai Baba, kissing of His feet. "No farewell! I am always with you." A long while Sai Baba held Curth's hands.

This was the most essential of all the great and wondrous things Curth and Sisko experienced in the nearness of Sai Baba's Divinity. Five months earlier nobody could have made them believe even a fraction of this to be true and possible.

—*From a Swedish Sadhaka's report*

Modern civilisation is based on technological advance, a degree of advance that can enable man to set foot on the moon and drop a rocket on Mars. But, there is a higher technology, the understanding of the deeper levels of his own consciousness and the transformation, through Dhyana (meditation) techniques of that Consciousness, into a source of power. This is Sujnana, wisdom, as distinct from Vijnana, which means science. There is also a Higher Understanding, called Prajnana, which transcends even the realm of consciousness, and takes man into the One Basic All-pervasive, All-inclusive Truth; then there is no Knower, no Known; there is only Knowledge.

—Baba

Mankind on the March to Prasanthi Nilayam

The Bhagavad-Gita says that those who are aware of the glory of the Lord take great delight in sharing their experiences with others of their kind, conferring both joy and faith in the process. Love for the Sathya Sai seen in every human being is the bond that holds together millions of hearts in all countries of the world. The bond is so soft and sweet that the hearts pine when apart and long to gather together at the Lotus Feet of the Lord. This bond is given expression every year, on the Saturday-Sunday previous to the Birthday of Bhagavan, by a Global Bhajan of 24 hours that brings the adoration for God full circle around the world. It was in 1975 that the Second World Conference brought us all to Prasanthi Nilayam for a festival of joy. Five years were an anguishingly long interval and so, the Third World Conference was arranged by the World Council of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations in November, 1980, during the Birthday Week of Bhagavan.

The number and enthusiasm of the delegates were naturally much more than in 1975. Larger contingents of delegates came from the West Indies, the African Continent, South East Asia, the Americas, Central Europe and the Middy East. Service centres of the Organisation had multiplied fast in India and delegates from these were present in huge numbers.

Prasanthi Nilayam was ready to welcome the delegates and other devotees, speeding to the Presence from the farthest corners of the World, to quench their inner thirst. The Vidyagiri Campus with the Easwaramma High School and the newly constructed Sathya Sai College of Arts, Science and Commerce, the Students' Hostel and the Primary School Complex could accommodate the two thousand overseas delegates and even those from a few Indian States in comparative comfort. To the West of the Mandir, beyond the four series of multi-storeyed flats, the vast open space was dotted thick with shamianas and tents; six spacious halls were built and a four-storeyed rotunda with more than 50 flats was erected not far from the Mandir. Over a hundred acres of land inside the ring of hills were filled with rooms and homes, tents and shelters equipped with water mains and drains, roads and electricity. The area was flagged and festooned, waving and quivering with banners and boards carrying artistic drawings in many languages—Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, Hindi, Oriya, Tamil, etc.—of the Message of Bhagavan.

About a 100 villages around Puttaparthi have been brought by Government, since November 1, 1980, under a new administrative division named Sri Sathya Sai Taluk. The Birthday Festival was for these villages, the inauguration of a new era of joy and love.

Accredited correspondents and representatives from a number of Newspapers and News Agencies visited Prasanthi Nilayam on November 13 and acquainted themselves with the main features and facets of the spiritual revolution of which it is the Centre, and of the World Conference which will witness its unfoldment. Bhagavan blessed the group when they came to the Prasanthi Mandir. Most newspapers utilised the occasion to highlight the significance of the Conference in healing the many unholy ills that have fastened on mankind. They published special articles delineating the uniqueness of the Sai Avatar, the Sai Ideals of Education that are being worked in practice in the Schools and Colleges established by the Organisation and the

various Social Service activities in towns and villages spontaneously undertaken in a spirit of Love by the units of the Organisation all over India.

Thousands thronged days earlier, to join in the bhajans and win the chance of Darshan. On 12th November the members of the many Committees charged with various assignments met to finalise the reception arrangements, and the details of service. An exhilarating and encouraging feature was the major share in service that was gladly borne by the students from the Sai College for Boys at Brindavan and the Sai College for Women at Anantapur. Batches of volunteers able and willing to carry out all the chores of service trained in Seva Sadhana streamed in from all the States of India and Bhagavan graciously awarded them initiation badges on the 15th November, reminding them of the need to adhere to Duty, Devotion and Discipline. The Central Ministry for Railways granted fare concessions for delegates travelling towards the Nilayam for this unique spiritual event. The Road Transport Corporations of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh allotted convoys of buses to carry delegates and devotees to the holy pilgrim centre, Puttaparthi. Along the railways, at Guntakal, Dharmavaram, Penukonda, Bangalore and at Bagepalli on the National Highway, members of the Sai Family provided rest and refreshments, guidance and goodwill to the sisters and brothers, proceeding to Prasanthi Nilayam.

On November 17, the devotees from overseas, men and women, were granted the pleasant privilege of singing Bhajans in the Divine Presence, on the dais of the Poornachandra Auditorium. The lead singers were from lands as distant as Japan, Mexico, and the United States and as near as Malaysia, Sri Lanka and South Africa. An upsurge of divine ecstasy filled the Hall as each Bhajan song was rendered by them suffused with sweet melody and sincere devotion.

Puttaparthi celebrated on November 18, the annual Festival of Gods; the deities installed in the historic temples of that village had their idols re-vitalised by Vedic worship at the Prasanthi Mandir and ceremonially placed on a chariot, amidst the acclamation of thousands of devotees while Bhagavan was Himself present in front of the chariot to bless them. The chariot was then drawn to the village by devoted hands, with village folk from miles around of all castes and creeds cheering and dancing, beating drums and blowing trumpets. That evening at the Prasanthi Nilayam also, folk dances of Himachal, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, etc. were presented by Bal Vikas children, singing songs in simple rural tunes on 'The Glory of the Sai Avatar'. There was also a Dance play on "Siva-Shakti."

The World Conference was inaugurated at 10 A.M. on 19 November Bhagavan graciously blessed the 12500 delegates who came in colourful procession, singing Bhajans, from the Southern Arch of Vidyagiri, through the road beside the Hostel, the High School, the College, and the Primary School, to the Northern Arch and the Gopuram, terminating at the Auditorium. He was in the Centre of the Procession, all through. Drummers and Pipers from Bangalore led the columns while those from Hubli in Karnataka and Cochin in Kerala took, places in intermediate positions. Vedic scholars recited sacred hymns, while students of the Brindavan College walked in the immediate Presence, chanting the Purusha Sukta, the Narayana Upanishad, and other sacred texts, glorifying God. The Auditorium was packed to capacity while thousands filled the open spaces on all sides, eager to watch the scene on television sets and hear the proceedings from the loudspeakers.

Bhagavan lighted the Lamp of Love showering Grace on the silent prying mass before Him. Dr. Vinayak Krishna Gokak welcomed the visitors, guests, delegates and devotees, in a soul-stirring speech. The redemption of mankind is what the spiritual revolution is bound to achieve under the guidance and leadership of Sai, he declared"

Dr. S. Bhagavantam placed before Bhagavan a number of new books, which He formally released. There were two books in German, and one each in Chinese and Japanese, and six in English. Assamese, Oriya, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam books also were placed in the Divine Hands. Bhagavan also released the "Golden Age, 1980", an invaluable treasure of 55 inspiring and instructive articles on Bhagavan. He also released an LP Record, "Sai Katha", featuring Rupak Changkakoti, P. Susheela and others, singing with a rare melody that ecstatically vibrates in the heart, the Divine story of Bhagavan's Life as composed by Sri Adinarayana Rao and set to music by Sri Rajeswara Rao, artistes renowned in the film world of South India.

Sri Indulal announced that the first day of the sessions will be devoted to a symposium on the "Sai Path" with keynote addresses emphasising six special aspects. Bhagavan blessed the gathering with His Divine Discourse. He exhorted mankind to delve into the realm of the spirit and experience the One, the Reality, deluding us as the Many; the awareness of the One can be achieved only through the blossoming of Love in the heart by intense Sadhana. He described how the eternal religion of Bharat had laid down appropriate Sadhanas for ensuring peace, strength and progress on the spiritual path.

As part of the Symposium, Dr. John Hislop explained lucidly the qualities that must distinguish the Sadhaka on the Sai Path. He spoke on the means and methods which Study Circles of Sai devotees can adopt in order to develop these qualities and attain spiritual progress. Dr. Bashiruddin, Professor, Osmania University, proclaimed that the study of Bhagavan's teachings had clarified and confirmed his faith in the Holy Quran and encouraged him to believe that he could become a better Moslem by following His teachings.

Dr. S. Bhagavantam dealt with the Interrelations of Spirituality, Service and Daily Life and demonstrated that spirituality fulfils science and daily life is never divorced from spiritual knowledge and experience. Mr. Victor Kanu, from Sierra Leone in Africa, now in London, while speaking on the role of Sai Seva Organisations in the spiritual renaissance said that the Organisation is creating a revolution much more fundamental than a renaissance. "It has resulted in sudden but lasting transformation of thousands of lives in Africa and elsewhere," he announced. Rev. Robert Pipes of the Baptist Church, Washington D.C., listed the attitudes and modes of behaviour, the styles and trends of thought and action that have to characterise the Sai devotee.

Mrs. Elsie Cowan, the nonagenarian devotee from Tustin, California, dear to all Sai devotees for her deep and sincere devotion to Bhagavan, spoke on Bhagavan as Divinity come as man to save mankind. Mr. Jagathesan from Malaysia said that the Sai Message is striking root and transforming many lives all over the globe. He said that Bhagavan is the sole hope for the world which is fast deteriorating into disintegration through physical and moral pollution.

A heart-warming feature of the Symposium was the participation, on an equal level with elders, of many brilliant youths from the Colleges of Bhagavan, who by the depth of their devotion and the breadth of their vision promise to shine as exemplars of His Message and exponents of His Message. Sri Nityananda Menon, M. Com., M. Phil., analysed the roles that spirituality and science can play without conflict, to uplift the human race. Sri Anup Jalani, M Com. described the major aspects of the spiritual revolution as guided and controlled by Sal. Sri Kamal Sawhney, M.Com., narrated the qualities of head and heart and hand that form the core of devotion to Sai. Sri C. Srinivas, M. Com., related a few of the thrilling incidents revealing the universality of Bhagavan's compassion and of His Message and confirmed the widely held view that He is the one World Leader who can and will save mankind.

At the conclusion of the Symposium, the delegates had the pleasure of listening to a violin recital by the famous Pandit V. G. Jog and to the enchanting music on the flute by Sri Hariprasad Chaurasiya.

November 20 was devoted to what can be called specifically, matters pertaining to the Organisations. Delegates from each State sat separately and deliberated on the adequacy or otherwise of the guidelines suggested by the World Council for restructuring and expanding the units of the Organisation in order to make them more spiritually effective for individual and social transformation, both in India and abroad. They evolved plans for avoiding the overlapping of advisory functions, expanding service activities especially in villages and among industrial labourers, stimulating and streamlining Bal Vikas educational units, training Seva Dal members for health education and Gurus on the new scheme of education in human values, and establishing greater coordination and cooperation between the three wings of the Organisation—the Samiti, the Mahila Vibhag and the Seva Dal, and also between the Administrators of the Organisation in each State and the Sathya Sai Trust in that State.

That evening, the dedication of the delegates to the Sai ideals of service, especially in the field of education, was reinforced when Dr. V. K. Gokak addressed them on the supreme need, to reshape the educational system, right from the level of children to the universities. Dr. Gokak was able to install Bhagavan in the hearts of his listeners, as the Supreme Teacher of all times and therefore, as the greatest World Leader. Thereafter, Pandit Shiv Shankar Sarma gave a magnificent performance on the Santoor, accompanied by Sri Swapan Choudhury on the Tabla. Sri Minoo Purushotham and Sri Mahendra Kapoor, famous playback singers, rendered devotional songs composed by Sri Manoj Kumar, Film Director and Actor.

On November 21, the consolidated versions of the various State Committee Reports were presented to the Conference and delegates were invited to offer their opinions thereon. During the final session that evening, Sri Indulal Shah announced the decisions arrived at, on the basis of the reports, to promote further the objectives of the Organisation. A greater stress was to be laid henceforward on the expansion of Bal Vikas, Study Circles, Sadhana Programmes and Health Education in rural areas.

Charles Penn, whose trans-oceanic contacts with Bhagavan have given inspiration to thousands, spoke on his eventful pilgrimage to His Feet. Dr. Benito Reyes, Founder, World University, Ojai, California described how Bhagavan's blessings on his venture transmuted it from a 50 dollar

escapade into a multi-million success, with affiliated Institutions in many continents. Mr. Curth Orefjaerd from Sweden spoke on the benefits he has derived in his yogic sadhana from the direct personal teachings of Bhagavan.

During His valedictory address, Bhagavan directed the delegates to give up pride and selfishness and exhorted them to alleviate the misdeeds of fellow beings. "Each household should every day feed one person suffering from hunger and struggling for food," He pleaded. He asked the members of the Organisation to regulate their activities in accordance with the guidelines and rules laid down, and to be ever conscious of the need to become aware of the Atma as the Reality in themselves and others.

The renowned vocalists Smt. Radha and Smt. Jayalakshmi, ardent devotees of Bhagavan since many years, sang devotional songs and delighted the vast gathering.

November 22 was celebrated as "The Kingdom of Sathya Sai" Day, the Second Annual Day of the Old Boys' Association of the Sathya Sai College. The members came in procession to the Auditorium and paid homage to Bhagavan on the exquisitely decorated dais. Sri Nityananda Menon, Sri C. Srinivas and Sri Kamal Sawhney spoke on the affection and care that the members were receiving from Bhagavan every moment of their lives. The prize of Rs. 1116 offered by the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust to the best outgoing student was given by Bhagavan to Sri Amit Singh. He spoke of his educational career from a Bal Vikas class in Delhi to the Brindavan College and of the holy companionship he was privileged to share at Brindavan in the College and Hostel. Bhagavan gave the Gold Medals which the Kingdom of Sathya Sai has endowed for the best students of Sathya Sai Colleges to Shivsankar Sai (Brindavan), Rashmi Nagnantapur, Tervinder Kaur (Bhopal) and Urmila Suryavamsi (Jaipur). He also blessed the Principals of the Brindavan, Puttaparthi, Anantapur, Bhopal and Jaipur Colleges and gave them precious gifts of gold pens. While addressing the vast concourse of students and other devotees Bhagavan wanted the youth of India to serve the Motherland with all their heart and equip themselves fully for that mission. He deprecated the present trend towards migration overseas in search of larger material gains. He wanted them to give up imitating outlandish styles of dressing, speaking, living and thinking, which estrange them from their own fellow beings. He exhorted them to engage themselves in the Sadhana of Seva so that they may experience the One God who is present in all.

That evening, Pandit Ravi Shankar, the illustrious Sitar artist with the renowned Ustad Alla Rakha accompanying him on the Tabla entertained the devotees with their delightful music. Thereafter, the members of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai enacted the play "The Kingdom of Heaven" based on the Life of Jesus Christ with Rupak Changkakoti acting the leading role of Jesus. The extraordinary histrionic talents of the young members shone even more splendidly as a result of the final touches gladly given by Christopher St. John, Film Producer and Director from Hollywood. It was indeed a masterpiece of theatre art—dialogue, acting, dress, music, lighting effects, each one contributing to the wholesome spiritual catharsis that the play produced in every person who witnessed it.

During the Birthday Week, the unique Exhibition of Photographs and Paintings depicting the Service Activities of the units of the Organisation in India and in many overseas countries drew streams of people eager to view it and get enthused towards wider fields of Seva. Bhagavan's

Message was clarified therein, through many diagrams, symbols and models. The large collection of intimate colour-prints of Bhagavan taken by the students of the College at Brindavan and in Kashmir provided a feast for the eye and a festival for the heart.

November 23—the Day of Days, the Day on which millions offer their grateful homage to God for condescending to come as man among men. The Nilayam Campus was packed thick with people of all the nations of the world, of all races and creeds. Bhagavan gave them Darshan in the early hours and moved in procession to the mausoleum of the Parents, and thence to the site where the new and vastly more spacious Hospital with a bed-strength of 100 is to be built. He blessed the spot on the north-east of the site, consecrating the first line of stone.

Bhagavan moved in procession over the floral carpet laid by devotees from the Mandir to the Poornachandra Auditorium, accompanied by Vedic Pandits, Members of the World Council and the Central Trust, cheering the hearts and brightening the faces of thousands of devotees who lined the path. Bhagavan accepted the garlands offered by nationals from over 50 overseas countries, chosen by the devotees present at the Nilayam. The names of the countries were read, over the microphone, by Dr. S. Bhagavantam. They ranged from Peru and Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela and Trinidad, the States, Canada and Iceland, through the British Isles, Sweden and Germany, Spain, Italy and Greece, North, West, South and East Africa, the countries of the Middle East, to the States adjacent to India and even far to the East, like Japan, Fiji, Australia and New Zealand. The members of the World Council and the Sathya Sai Central Trust also offered garlands to Bhagavan.

Hon'ble Sri S. B. Chavan, Former Chief Minister of Maharashtra State, now Minister for Education, Government of India, addressed the gathering, felicitating the devotees on the unique good fortune of offering homage to Bhagavan on his Birthday. He spoke of the many inadequacies of the educational set-up in India and commended the pioneering service the Sal schools and colleges are rendering to establish an integrated value-oriented system. Sri Govind Narain, Governor of Karnataka, elaborated on the love and compassion of Bhagavan. His world-encompassing Presence, he said, brought seekers of the spirit from all lands to this Festival. Bhagavan in his Birthday Message asked the devotees to offer Him one gift. "Resolve to reduce your selfishness. Give up greed and envy. Your sincere service to living beings is the gift most value" He said. With the blessings of Bhagavan, the Birthday Prasadam, laddus, were distributed to the devotees, more than 300,000 in number, wherever they were.

That evening, Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, internationally famous singer and a devotee since many years, enthralled the gathering with her rendering of songs composed on Sai Avatar. Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, the renowned singer of the Hindustani School of Music rendered the Deepak Rag made immortal by the court musician of Akbar, Tansen.

Bhagavan delighted every one of the hundreds of thousands present, during the Jhoola Festival which He characterises as the outer symbol of the Ananda Swaroopa that He is, swinging on the Jhoola installed in their own immaculate hearts. While Bhagavan was showering the Ananda of Darshan on the Jhoola, the immortal story of His own former Advent as Rama was sung in mellifluous Telugu by Smt. P. Susheela and party. The programme of the "Rams Katha" recital

thrilled every one into ecstasy. An impressive fireworks display was on, when the devotees emerged happy from the Auditorium.

On the evening of November 24, Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer of the Supreme Court of India spoke on the Avatarhood of Bhagavan in clear convincing words. Dr. V. K. Gokak also addressed the assembly on the significance of the first ever declaration by Bhagavan at Uravakonda about His Divine Task of saving humanity from suffering and sorrow. Brahma-sri Jemmalamadaka Madhavarama Sarnia, the encyclopaedic scholar and linguist placed at the Lotus feet of Bhagavan, his holy magnum opus epic, the Sai Purana, containing over 30,000 lines of poetry.

Bhagavan in His Discourse categorised mankind as Pushti, Maryada and Pravaha (the Integrated, the Limited and the Inert) and called upon all to rise to higher levels of consciousness and expand to wider horizons of Love. From 7 P.M. that day, the huge gathering was entertained by an inimitably authentic Kathakali dance-play, depicting classic scenes from the Ramayana—the Encounter with Parasurama, Hanuman in the Court of Ravana and the Coronation of Sri Rama in Ayodhya. The troupe was the world renowned Natya Kala Sangh of the Kottakkal Ayurveda Society, Kerala. The magnificent presentation of the Coronation was an appropriate finale for the week-long cultural programmes.

On November 25, at 9 a.m. Bhagavan distributed Vibhuti to every one of the devotees from abroad in the Auditorium. This spontaneous flow of Grace prompted joyful response to the blissful experience. They sang in chorus the Aarati Song, and waved the sacred camphor flame of Love. One could feel the heart-throb of each participant, resonant with the resolution to cultivate Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love, so that the Golden Era of Sai might dawn on every home, village, town, city and nation throughout the world.

Millions of Bhagavan Baba's devotees all over the world today constitute the Sai family; the time is not far off when the Sai family and the human family will become one. The message of Love and Service that has gone forth from Prasanthi Nilayam should fill devotees everywhere with new hope and courage and inspire them to strive for transforming the world into Prasanthi Nilayam, the Abode of Peace.

NOTE:[Divine Discourses of Bhagavan during the Conference and Birthday Festival will be published in Jan. 1981 Number].

—Ed.

Sathya Sai Vahini

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

23

There are a few other forms of worship which merit mention. The *Gowdeeyopasana* is one such. Sri Krishna, formulated and incorporated in the unmanifest Immanence, as Purushottama and Radha, formulated and incorporated as unmanifest Universal Energy, are both visualised, and known as Krishna-Radha or more commonly, Radha-Krishna. Madhava is another name of Kri-

shna, signifying that He is the master of Cosmos; or Prakriti. So, the name used in this Upasana or worship is Radha-Madhava. The recitation of this Name is held by the adherents of this path of worship to be capable of leading to the ecstasy that can confer liberation from all forms of bondage. The Acharyas or founders of this Upasana declare this to be the attainable goal. The Lord is the very embodiment of the nectar of delight. Living beings can get immersed in spiritual delight only when they imbibe that nectar. The Sruti texts proclaim that those born in Ananda can live only in and through Ananda. The sacred name Radha-Madhava is the key, it is said, to the treasure house of that precious nectar.

Radha-Madhava is Prakriti-Purusha and this dual category is assumed to represent the duality of Jivatma and Paramatma, the Individual Soul and the Universal Soul, the Wave and the Ocean. Worship is offered to both through that Name. Vallabhacharya proclaimed "Krishnasthu Bhagavan Swayam" (Krishna is the Lord Himself, Alone, by Himself). Attaining Him was explained to be equal to merging in the Universal, the goal of genuine monists.

Saivopasana is also a notable path. This emphasizes the worship of Siva as formulated in the Lingam or Symbol. "Lingam Sarva Kaalam." The Infinite Lingam is the symbol of the Primal Energy which forms the basic cause of the origin, condition and progress of the 'elements' that compose the Cosmos. The Lingam is the Form of Siva Himself and realising it as such is asserted as the ultimate goal, liberation.

Virasaivopasana advocates the worship of Siva, the Lord or Easwara, as the one and only, everywhere and always. The merging of the individual in the splendour of the Linga or Easwara is the acme of all Sadhana, the achievement of Liberation.

Pasupathopasana: The individual entity (Jiva) is tied by the bond (pasa) of the qualities or modalities arising from nature. Pashupati (Siva) is worshipped in order to earn freedom from Bondage.

Sapkthopasana: "Sarva deva mayee Devee." "Devi is all Gods." The Primeval Universal Energy, Adi Para Shakti, Is conceived as the matrix of all forms of Divinity. The Cosmic Urge, the Prakriti, Is the cause of the variety and multiplicity of expression, the manifold forms. The Maheshwara (Supreme Divinity) has this capacity to manifest and is therefore so named. Maheshwara and Parashakti are two aspects of the same Force. This dual faceted Force motivates the Universe, from the vast expanse of the sky to the entire earth. The unmanifest Supreme Person manifests as the Feminine Universal, the Maya, the Parashakti. In each individual, it is experienced as knowledge, strength and activity.

Jainopasana: (The Marwari community, in worshipping the Lord, adopt a Vaishnavite slant. Idols of Vishnu, with the traditional equipment of the Conch, the Wheel, the Mace and the Lotus, are found in temples). The Jains have as their mantra:

`Namo arihanthaanaam
Namo Siddhaanaam
Namo ayiriyaanaam
Namo uvajjhayaanaam

Namo Loye sabba saahoonaam'

Meaning:

"Salutations to the great heroes (Mahavira) who have conquered desire etc.
Salutations to the Siddhas (those equipped with supernatural powers)
Salutations to the great Masters of Spiritual Wisdom,
Salutations to the great Teachers who transmit the wisdom
Salutations to the good persons of all lands."

This five-fold adoration helps remove the evil effects of all sinful acts. Experiencing the meaning of this mantra gives one the sum of prosperity. The Jains declare that when one merges in this universal adoration, one is liberated and attains Moksha.

Sikh-upasana: The Preceptor (Guru), who reveals the Atma and makes one conscious of Its Existence as one's Reality, has the highest place in this system of worship. The collection of the teachings of the Gurus—referred to as the Granth Saheb—is extolled and revered by the Sikhs. It is derived from the spring of Bharatiya spiritual traditions. Its ideas form the very core of Bharatiya cultural traits.

Christ-upasana: Lord Jesus is the Saviour. Man is by nature prone to fall into sin, knowingly or unknowingly. Jesus shed his heart-blood on the Cross to free man from sin and cleanse his soul. Follow this Lord and his teachings contained in the Bible and worship him—this is Christ-upasana. Sing his glory and adore him through hymns—this is the mode of worship which this Upasana envisages.

Muhammadan-upasana: "Imaamdaaree khaidaa mey ho, Pygambar mey bharosa." Acquire self-confidence and place all burdens on God; have implicit faith in the Power of God every moment of living; recognise it at every step; —these are the rules for meaningful life. One has to evidence one's rectitude in the Durbar of the Lord, when one lays down his body. So, one has to follow the straight path laid down by the Lord until the very end. For this, the Holy Quran is the guide; it has to be revered and observed, down to the very letter. This is the spiritual instruction to be observed in this Upasana.

"Allaho Akbar; La Illah Ill Allah." This is the sacred formula of Islam. It signifies that God is the super most Sovereign; Allah is the undisputed unexcelled Ruler of Creation. He alone is worthy of worship. In the Bhagavad-Gita, Lord Krishna says, "There is nothing higher than Me." The Quran formula says the same. The Muhammadan upasana too is a Form of the same spiritual practice, based on the same Truth.

All these upasanas reveal that, since man initiated his age-long inquiry into his own truth, he has accumulated, especially in Bharat, a vast spiritual treasure which can save him from sorrow and bondage. The treasure is so vast and so deep that, it has survived the passage of centuries as vast and as deep as ever it was, unaffected by the emergence of different modes or the influx of other forms of worship.

Besides, the spiritual wisdom of India is today a triumphant Beacon, shining in One resplendent flame in the thickening darkness, illumining all lands, encompassing all races and enchanting all mankind.

There is no fortune more splendid than being born on this sacred land, Bharat, repository of this magnificent and beneficent culture, which can save the world. Becoming aware of this blessing is, indeed, a spring of immeasurable Ananda.

(To be continued)

The Vibhuti Box

The mail brought me a letter from the State President of the U. P. State Sai Samiti informing me that Swami had approved my name to act as the Group-teacher of the U. P. girl-students selected for the summer course at Brindavan 1978. Difficulties which would otherwise have made my participation in the Summer Course impossible, had suddenly been removed. We arrived at Whitefield two nights before the Summer Course commenced.

The balmy breezes of Brindavanam roused us from our sleep in the early dawn of our first day, which incidentally was a Thursday.

We hurriedly got ready to take our seats among the crowd already assembled in the spacious grounds, along the drive. Under the circular shed and a huge banyan tree stood a lovely idol of Lord Krishna along which Swami's chair awaited His arrival. At a short distance a large idol of Goddess Saraswati added sanctity to the scene. A melodious Bhajan session was already in full swing. The whole atmosphere was charged with divinity. Presently Swami's ochre-robed figure emerged as if from nowhere. All eyes hungrily turned in His direction as everyone yearned to drink deep the nectar of the Divine Vision. How full of Blessedness was that first glimpse of the Master!

And, next day, the Summer Course commenced with all its momentum. The daily schedule consisted of three sessions of lectures on religious and spiritual subjects by eminent scholars from far and wide. The morning session of 3 hours duration was preceded by Suprabhatam, Nagarsankirtan, Swami's Darshan from the balcony of His residence and breakfast. The second, the one hour long afternoon Session followed lunch and siesta. After tea, the third session would begin with reading a summary of daily lectures by students from different States—in alphabetic order, Bhajan singing by College students and conclude with His own illuminating Discourse and Bhajans and Arati.

The morning Session of the Valedictory function started with Swami's Discourse consisting of references to the ordeals of His student-life and ending with His exhorting the students to lead a life of Discipline, Duty and Devotion. Then He graciously allowed all participants the most coveted opportunity of 'Padanamaskar', turn by turn, and giving them 'Vibhuti packets' with His

own hands. When my turn came, I prostrated myself at His feet and touching them. As I stood up, I uttered, inadvertently "Swami. Please bless me so that I can translate your 'Chinna Katha' in Urdu." Swami, then looked at me closely for a moment and smiled. He graciously nodded and said, "Yes, Yes, Do it." Then He blessed me with eight packets of Vibhuti. I was too overwhelmed with joy to remember how I walked back to my seat. The fact that Swami spoke to me and blessed me made me feel an inward sense of spiritual wealth. After His Discourse was over, we returned to our dormitory. I carefully preserved this Blessed Vibhuti in an empty yellow tin box and tightly closed its lid.

In the early morning of the 21st June '78 while the grounds of Brindavan were echoing the holy chantings of the Suprabhatam and the Nagarsankirtan was about to move, we were tearfully boarding the minibus—casting a last lingering look at the Sanctuary of Peace—the sacred Residence of our Master—our dormitory—the drive in front of it and the spacious lawn—all of which had been our abode of bliss for the whole past month. As the minibus left we looked out of its windows with a yearning to have His Darshan once again on our last day. The early morning breeze only fanned the pang of separation. As the bus drove—we sobbed. Hardly had we outgrown our sad farewell sentiment when we found ourselves at Bangalore railway station. We easily managed to locate our trains. To our great relief we found the self-same coupe exclusively reserved for us. Was Swami's invisible hand working for our secure journey?

Soon we settled down in our seats. We closed the sliding door of the coupe from inside, and set about attending to morning chores. The Guard whistled and the train left Bangalore. After a short time it passed through 'Whitefield' and once again we became sentimental as through the windows of our train we spotted the lovely pink-blue building of Sri Sathya Sal College. We were reminded of the auditorium where only till yesterday we had been sitting at the feet of Swami hearing His sweet voice. And now every jerk of the train was taking us further away from Him. Soon the beloved scene of Whitefield receded into oblivion and we had to resign ourselves to our lot. At about 9 a.m. I remembered it was time I took the morning dose of my Blood Pressure medicine. Usually I took it soon after my breakfast but we had journeyed a good many miles from Whitefield. Not once did I remember it! I hurried to secure the medicine. But where was it? Evidently I had misplaced it while hastily packing the things last night. I looked for it in my box and in my handbag and in my purse but it was nowhere. Perplexed I sat down in my seat next to the window and tried to recall where I could possibly locate it. Then the idea came to my mind that I might have kept it with Baba's Vibhuti. At once I reached for the yellow tin in my box. Taking it in my hand, I opened the lid carefully but the medicine was not there either. My next concern was to keep the Sacred Vibhuti tin safely back into my box but before I did that, I had to close the lid first. The train had now picked speed and its jerky motion made my hands too shaky to close the lid tightly. Thinking that I could accomplish a tight closure against a hard background, I placed the tin on the windowsill of the train and thumped hard on its lid. To my horror, it suddenly slipped from my hand and rolled out of the window, down the railway track and fast faded from view as the train moved on. I was shocked. The world of Bliss seemed to have slipped from my grasp. I became frantic to the consternation of all present. "My Tin, My Tin, My Vibhuti tin—Oh, I have dropped it. I must get it back, I am going". I shrieked, and rushed towards the sliding door. My frantic behaviour frightened my students. They tried to stop me. "Where are you going? We will give you our Vibhuti—Oh stop—Please don't go". But I had no ears for them. I had only one thought; I must get back my Vibhuti tin. It was Swami's gift.

How could I go back leaving it behind? No, I must find it—come what may. In this frenzy I almost forgot that to open the door it had to be slid. Instead I violently pushed it forward and when it would not open I put all my pressure to break it open. To everyone's horror the hinges which held the door tight suddenly loosened and the disjointed door fell against the upper berth facing it. Fortunately it was unoccupied. But the gentleman on the lower berth was alarmed as he saw me emerging and then frantically rushing towards the entrance door of the train. "What are you going to do?" But before he could reach me I plunged out. The train was running fast and I could have met my death but miraculously I was unhurt. Barefooted as I was, I now started running backwards on the pebbles between the railway lines on which the train had run a few moments ago and leaving which it was now speeding off in the opposite direction. I had no thought that I was running bare-footed—or that there was no certainty that I would find my precious Vibhuti or that having left my train, how I would return-penniless as I was. I even forgot that I was a woman or that I had left my wards in the train or I was a patient of blood-pressure and was not medically permitted to do hard physical activity; and here I was running fast—gasping for breath, each of which spoke only one prayer: "O Baba, please help me find my Vibhuti".

Back in the train there was confusion. Most of the passengers thought I had gone mad to have jumped out of the running train. Those who knew, were much worried about my safety. Some tried to persuade the guard to stop the train. Unaware of all this I was running on in the direction of my tin. The villagers on their way to the nearby fields were alarmed as they saw me running in the middle of the railway track. "Oh Amma, do not run there—the train will be here any moment. Oh, you will be crushed to death. Have you no fear?" Deaf to their cries I still ran on. I was desperate when I inwardly spoke, "O Baba, what shall I do if I do not find my Vibhuti? Yes, I shall return to Whitefield may be on foot only to have Vibhuti again from your hands. I won't go back to Kanpur without the Vibhuti". When casually I looked back, I found to my surprise, my train had travelled far off as the growing distance made it look smaller and smaller. I then realised I was left miles behind it but I was un-daunted. I only wanted to retrieve my tin, so I ran on. I now had arrived on a point where another railway track intersected the one I had been following. It was difficult to decide which of the two tracks had been the one on which my train had run, for that alone could lead me to the spot where the tin had fallen. One step on the wrong track would take me further away from it and if I missed it, all this mad race would be of no avail. "Won't you show me the correct path O Baba?" I cried, as hot tears rolled down my cheeks. Next moment I was running again. Surely I had made the choice of my course but whither was it leading me? There was no going back now and so I ran on. And lo, suddenly in the green bushes down the railway track, there glittered a small yellow circular thing. It was the Vibhuti tin indeed. Ah, I had found it. I hungrily jumped towards it and picking it I pressed it against my heart and touched it with my head. Overwhelmed with joy I found myself crying again—but now the tears were of Gratitude.

Instinctively then, I wanted to run back to my train to share my Joy with the Sai devotees aboard it. I looked back; but where was the train? Evidently it had travelled far off. From the distance between us it appeared like a small toy-train. But still like one possessed I started running towards it. The return race was an ordeal. My feet seemed to be out of gear. I was panting with fatigue but I had no other way. Presently the train began assuming proportion and it looked larger in size. Had it come to a standstill or had I covered the gaping distance? I wondered. In the

next few moments I was in a close range of it. Visibly there was no railway station for its stoppage, and yet the train had stopped, as if only to collect me! How could this be? But before I could think more I almost collapsed. The good doctor and some others helped me get into the train. They laid me on my berth and gave me Vibhuti dissolved in water to drink and also applied some of it on my forehead. Soon I recovered. I needed no more medicine.

—*Nand Kishori Saxena, Kanpur*

The Worthwhile Life

"When clouds gather in the sky, lightning appears and illuminates the cloud. Similarly, wisdom must illuminate education. This word of Sal is the path of Truth. Smaller than the smallest atom, bigger than the biggest thing, witness of everything, the Atma is Brahman and Brahman is Atma."

Students! From sunrise to sunset the day continues and is rounded up with sleep. Thus the life of man on earth goes on and on. When the sun rises in the east, we say the day dawns, and when the sun sets in the west, we say that night has set in. According to man the rising and the setting of the sun is the cause of night and day and he divides time accordingly, but is not the rise and setting of the sun a baseless belief? Man points out four directions as east, west, north and south determining each other's position according to these imagined concepts. But do they in fact exist? When we recognise that the earth is spherical such divisions are untrue.

Thus the daily experience of man differs from truth, but man depends on that experience. For example, when we sit in a bus or car or train or plane and they move we also move with them; but we think we are stationary. Thus it is a natural experience of man that while the earth moves round itself and round the sun, we find it at rest. Though the earth is in motion we think it is stationary, and though we are stationary on earth, we are ever in motion. Even the greatest scientist acts according to his apparent experiences, not according to the Truth. Though there is no sunrise and sunset, he believes them to be and though there cannot be any east, west, north, south he accepts them to be. The scientific standards are observation and experiment.

When the first space-man Gagarin declared that he had not seen God anywhere in outer space he depended upon mechanical device to come to this conclusion. He never carried on any investigation on the mind. To arrive at the truth one must go behind what we see, for what we see with the eyes is not true knowledge. True knowledge consists in cognising that for all that you see there is always a hidden cause. It cannot be known by studying machines (Yantra) alone, but by studying the mind and taking to mental enquiry (mantra).

Bamboo is valued for its form and strength, sugarcane for its juice, animals for their strength and beauty. Similarly the real worth of man lies in his intelligence. His intelligence has come to him over many lives and the real value of his Buddhi is to practise Thyaga or renunciation. But our Buddhi is covered by illusion which is only unreal reflection of the Truth. When we throw away

the water in the pot, we throw away the reflection of the sky as well. The reflection of truth in our minds is only the conglomeration of our desires.

We talk of Moksha. What is it? It is only giving up the Anatma, the unreal. Suppose you want a tumbler of pure fruit juice. Unless you throw away the water already in the tumbler, you cannot pour the pure juice in the tumbler. Similarly unless you give up anatmabhava, atmabhava cannot come to you. Moksha is not a distinct and different sadhana. It is only giving up unnecessary desires. Through anger all wisdom is lost. Of anger disharmony is the cause; of disharmony, jealousy and of jealousy, ignorance is the cause.

The Upanishads say the whole Viswa is the form of Vishnu. So real Jnana is seeing of the One, Advaitadarshan. Due to duality or difference, wisdom declines.

There are three types of knowledge. Knowledge of matter energy, knowledge of mental energy and knowledge of cosmic energy. The cosmic energy works in every person, in the form of divine knowledge. Matter in all forms is only energy. Without atoms you cannot have any matter, and in the atom, energy has the form of electron, proton, neutron etc. The energy springs from the structure of the atomic constituents. For example if you take water from the ocean in a vessel, it assumes its shape and when breeze blows there are ripples on it, which manifest energy proportionate to the quantity of water in the vessel. But when the whirlwind rages over the ocean the big waves can sink ships and pulverize mountains. Scientists only work on the external source of energy, they don't investigate the internal sources. You go millions of miles into space, but you don't go half-an-inch within, where lies your strength, the Atmashakti.

People think they live on food. Then how is it that while the wealthy who can afford all kinds of food succumb to untimely death, the poor still live? Man does not live by food alone. In fact he lives by the power of the Atma. So you must use your strength of body, mind, wealth and education with intelligence. In order to realize the power of the soul. Without discrimination what is the use of physical strength? Dhritarashtra had a hundred sons and hundreds of thousands of soldiers on whom he depended. But what happened to him? To presume that either from wealth or from kith and kin you can derive mental peace is a great error. Such peace comes only from God in fact, there is no strength superior to Love; where Love is, there anything is. So you must live in God, and live a love, then everything shall be right. You must make others also live in love.

Alfred Nobel worked on and discovered dynamite, which caused great destruction. Alfred was very unhappy seeing this. He had a lot of money and fame, but he felt so miserable for the destruction he brought to humanity that he made a will and donated all his wealth for the good of humanity.

This college has been established to give you ethical, moral and spiritual strength. Just think how much your parents sacrifice to give you proper education. So don't waste time; if you waste time you will be wasting your life. Make your body and mind pure. This place is like a workshop where broken down cars are repaired and made whole. Don't entertain bad thoughts and do bad deeds. Life is holy, sacred. Go through it with joy and happiness. Some of you carry gloomy and unhappy faces. Happiness is union with God. This period of your life is sacred. If you cannot

derive happiness and live in bliss at this age, can you be blissful when you grow old? Now you have only two legs to carry you. You can jump about freely. But when you marry and rear up a family you will move like a caterpillar with many legs! People must be able to identify the students of Sri Sathya Sai College by looking upon their effulgent and joyous faces. Fill your hearts with love, and do all your work with love.

Some of you do not sing loud in Bhajan. When a man has fallen into a well and is unable to get out, he does not mutter to himself. He shouts loud to get men to save him. What do you do to drive away birds sitting on a branch, in plenty? You clap your hands loud. Similarly sing the names Govind, Gopal, Narayana loud and clap your hands with vigour so that the birds of evil passion, the Kama, Krodha, Lobha infesting your mind shall fly away. Make your life worthwhile

—Divine Discourse, 21-9-80 Prasanthi Nilayam Hostel